

Gender Equality and the Differences Between the Highest and Lowest-Ranking Nations in the Women, Peace, and Security Index

L.J. Andrews

PLIR 4500, Fall 2019

Paper #4

12/03/2019

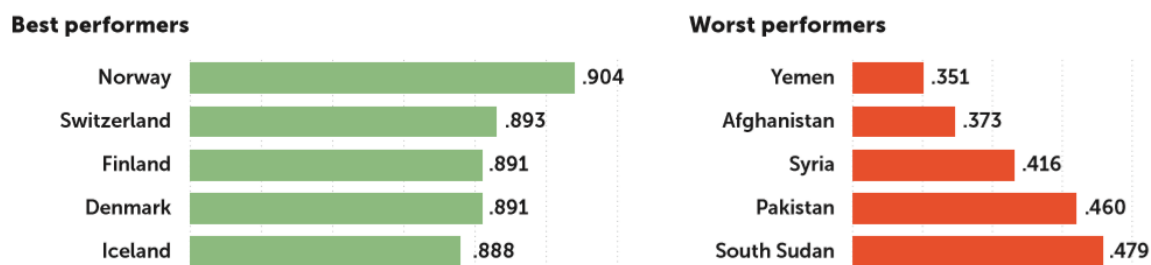
Abstract

World Bank (2012) chapter 6 stipulates that “...gender differences in access to market work and persistent employment segregation by gender could severely undermine the country’s capacity to compete internationally and ultimately hamper economic growth.” The objective of this paper is to assert an observable implication that the nations with the highest rankings according to the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index, which measures women’s well-being globally, heavily outweigh the nations with the lowest rankings according to the WPS in globalization and economic security. Furthermore, I argue that this disparity is due to three reasons: women have more political abilities in the higher-ranking countries, women have less employment opportunities in lower-ranking countries, and high-ranking countries have specific policies in place that benefit women.

According to research by the World Bank, "...gender differences in access to market work and persistent employment segregation by gender could severely undermine the country's capacity to compete internationally and ultimately hamper economic growth."¹ If gender inequalities such as unemployment segregation inhibit economic growth, then it must be true that countries that promote women's equality are more globalized and economically secure. The Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index measures women's general well-being by country and ranks countries according to said well-being. Thus, the countries that are ranked the highest according to the WPS Index are some of the most globalized and economically secure. This is a result of three factors in these countries: women have more political power, they have more diverse employment opportunities, and the governments have specific policies to benefit women.

FIGURE 1 The dozen best and worst performers on the WPS Index

2



According to the WPS Index, the five countries on the left are where women have the best well-being, while those on the right have the worst based on a variety of factors such as inclusion, justice, and security.³ The World Bank's 2012 report claims that globalization can positively affect gender equality.⁴ Recent data from the KOF suggest that it already has. The KOF Index of Globalization ranked Switzerland, Denmark, and Finland in the top ten for most

¹ "Globalization's impact on gender equality: What's happened and what's needed," in *World Development Report 2012* (World Bank, 2012), 264, accessed December 2, 2019.

² *Women, Peace, and Security Index* (Washington, DC: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security, 2019), 2, accessed December 1, 2019, <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/WPS-Index-2019-20-Report.pdf>.

³ *Women, Peace, and Security*, vi.

⁴ "Globalization's impact," 271.

globalized nations, while Norway sat at eleventh and Iceland at forty-eighth.⁵ The five low-ranking countries did not appear in the top 50.⁶ While these statistics suggest that gender equality defines success in globalization, it is important to note that a myriad of other factors can help account for a nation's globalization or lack thereof. For example, the countries that perform worse in the WPS Index and have a low globalization ranking have been stricken with war by radical extremist groups. Additionally, Europe as a whole is a well-integrated economic powerhouse and has been for the last 500 years, which could make the five high-ranking nations more attractive to emigrate to, invest in, and trade with. The high-ranking nations are also more militarily secure; Denmark, Iceland, and Norway are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁷ Contrarily, the lowest-ranking countries lack powerful, globalized allies. Developed countries may also be less prone to corruption. Nonetheless, gender equality has played a key role in strengthening the five high-ranking European nations.

The first dimension that causes increased globalization and economic security in the high-ranking nations is their presence of women in politics. According to the World Bank, every nation in the top five has a higher proportion of seats in national parliaments held by women.⁸ This is important for a multitude of reasons. The first is that a higher presence of women in politics enhances a nation's image on the international stage. There is "growing international pressures for countries to grant and enforce formal rights for women."⁹ Putting women in leadership positions is a crucial step towards gender equality. Moreover, absence of gender

⁵ Erin Duffin, ed., "KOF Index of Globalization - 100 most globalized countries 2018," Statista, last modified April 29, 2019, accessed December 2, 2019, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/268168/globalization-index-by-country/>.

⁶ Duffin, "KOF Index," Statista.

⁷ NATO Member Countries," NATO, last modified January 4, 2018, accessed December 3, 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/nato_countries.htm.

⁸ "Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)," World Bank, last modified 2018, accessed December 2, 2019, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS>.

⁹ "Globalization's impact," 264.

equality diminishes a country's international standing.¹⁰ Poor international standing can be detrimental to globalization and economic growth because gender inequality carries more costs in a globalized world and could affect trade volumes and patterns in the short run.¹¹ A second major reason why women in politics is important is that governments with high female representation tend to be tougher on corruption. The inclusion of women in government is strongly negatively associated with petty and grand corruption.¹² Corruption of any kind can inhibit economic security within the population and negatively impact trade and foreign direct investment. Of the highest-ranking nations in the WPS Index, all five are in the top twenty least corrupt nations, with four of them in the top ten.¹³ Of the lowest-ranking nations in the WPS Index, four of the bottom five are in the top ten most corrupt countries.¹⁴ Third, women in representation are more likely to pursue services that benefit women as opposed to their male colleagues.¹⁵ If women are more likely to pursue policies that promote gender equality, then nations with higher percentages of women in government will have a more positive international standing, be more globalized, and be more economically secure. Another factor that increases globalization and economic security is enhanced employment opportunities for women.

The second dimension that increases globalization and economic security in high-ranking nations is better employment opportunities for women. According to the WPS Index, "the Middle East and North Africa performs poorly overall, which is traceable largely to high levels of organized violence and discriminatory laws that disempower women, often coupled with low rates of inclusion, especially in paid employment."¹⁶ It is notable that four of the five lowest

¹⁰ "Globalization's impact," 254.

¹¹ "Globalization's impact," 264-265.

¹² Monika Bauhr, Nicholas Charron, and Lena Wängnerud, "Exclusion or interests? Why females in elected office reduce petty and grand corruption.," *European Journal of Political Research* 58, no. 4 (November 2019): 1060-1061, accessed December 2, 2019.

¹³ "Corruption Perceptions Index 2018," Transparency, last modified 2018, accessed December 2, 2019, <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>.

¹⁴ "Corruption Perceptions," Transparency.

¹⁵ Bauhr, Charron, and Wängnerud, "Exclusion or interests?," 1044.

¹⁶ *Women, Peace, 13*.

ranked countries according to the WPS Index are in the Middle-East, and Muslim-dominated countries; "...the prescribed role of women in Islamic theology and law is a major determinant of women's status."¹⁷ Furthermore, the type of industries in these low-ranking countries inhibit female employment. "Women in the Middle East are underrepresented in the workforce and in government because of oil: oil production affects gender relations by reducing the presence of women in the labor force."¹⁸ These oil dominated industries leave little room for large-scale manufacturing in feminine industries, such as textiles and agriculture. "The failure of women to join the nonagricultural labor force leads to higher fertility rates, less education for girls, and less female influence within the family."¹⁹ Often, these inequalities create massive wealth inequalities between men and women. This is reflected in that the gender gap ranges as high as 60 percentage points in the Middle East and North Africa.²⁰ Furthermore, this inequality is highlighted by how less than 10 percent of women in Yemen, South Sudan, and Pakistan (three of the lowest-ranking nations in the WPS Index) have financial accounts. Contrarily, about 100 percent of women in Norway and Denmark have financial accounts, which is higher than the average of developed countries.²¹ As a result, these low-ranking nations relying heavily on the oil industry, which leaves workers in other industries, especially women, in risky economic situations. Furthermore, this inhibits globalization.

The third dimension that helps nations overcome gender inequality and thus globalization and economic security is policies that work towards women's benefits. One of these policies is paternity leave. In four of the five highest-ranking nations in the WPS Index, men receive

¹⁷ Liliana Trofin and Madalina Tomescu, "Women's Rights in the Middle East," *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice* 2, no. 1 (2010): 155, accessed December 2, 2019.

¹⁸ Trofin and Tomescu, "Women's Rights," 153.

¹⁹ Trofin and Tomescu, "Women's Rights," 153.

²⁰ *Women, Peace*, 35.

²¹ *Women, Peace*, 35.

fourteen weeks or more of paternity leave, while the lowest-ranking nations receive none or less than three weeks.²² Paternity leave is an example of a policy that takes pressure off women during childcare so that they may focus more on their careers, which could increase economic security. Moreover, it challenges gender roles which have long held women back. A second policy prevalent in the high-ranking Scandinavian countries is public childcare. In Scandinavia, there is "...extensive public childcare facilities such as daycare centers, after-school daycare, and other possibilities to remain in school after hours, available to almost half of all children."²³ Like paternal leave, this extensive policies creates jobs while allowing families to focus on theirs. While other examples exist, these family policies help narrow the gender gap and promote economic security, which helps promote globalization.

The five high-ranking nations in the WPS Index are more globalized, have more employment for women, and have specific policies in play that promote gender equality. In turn, they are more globalized and economically secure. Globalization can help grow gender equality, but gender equality can also help globalization. The high-ranking nations in the WPS Index contain these three factors which have decreased corruption, increased employment opportunities, and created policies geared towards gender equality. As a result, they are perceived better on the international stage. Countries that are looking to globalize and gain economic security should model policies after those of the five highest ranking nations in the WPS Index. Evidently, the WPS Index can predict more than women's well-being; it can predict globalization and economic growth.

²² *Is paid leave available to mothers and fathers of infants?*, 2016, fathers, accessed December 3, 2019, <https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/policies/is-paid-leave-available-to-mothers-and-fathers-of-infants/is-paid-leave-available-for-fathers-of-infants>.

²³ Uwe Becker, "The Scandinavian Model: Still an Example for Europe?," *IPG*, 2007, 44, accessed December 1, 2019.

Bibliography

- Bauhr, Monika, Nicholas Charron, and Lena Wängnerud. "Exclusion or interests? Why females in elected office reduce petty and grand corruption." *European Journal of Political Research* 58, no. 4 (November 2019): 1043-65. Accessed December 2, 2019.
- Becker, Uwe. "The Scandinavian Model: Still an Example for Europe? ." *IPG*, 2007, 41-57. Accessed December 1, 2019.
- "Corruption Perceptions Index 2018." Transparency. Last modified 2018. Accessed December 2, 2019. <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>.
- Duffin, Erin, ed. "KOF Index of Globalization - 100 most globalized countries 2018." Statista. Last modified April 29, 2019. Accessed December 2, 2019. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/268168/globalization-index-by-country/>.
- "Globalization's impact on gender equality: What's happened and what's needed." In *World Development Report 2012*, 254-78. World Bank, 2012. Accessed December 2, 2019.
- Is paid leave available to mothers and fathers of infants?* 2016. Fathers. Accessed December 3, 2019. <https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/policies/is-paid-leave-available-to-mothers-and-fathers-of-infants/is-paid-leave-available-for-fathers-of-infants>.
- "NATO Member Countries." NATO. Last modified January 4, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/nato_countries.htm.
- "Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)." World Bank. Last modified 2018. Accessed December 2, 2019. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS>.
- Trofin, Liliana, and Madalina Tomescu. "Women's Rights in the Middle East." *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice* 2, no. 1 (2010): 152-57. Accessed December 2, 2019.
- Women, Peace, and Security Index*. Washington, DC: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security, 2019. Accessed December 1, 2019. <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/WPS-Index-2019-20-Report.pdf>.