



wp
WOMEN AND PROGRESS

2025 REPORT

Women, Economic Freedom, and Prosperity around the World

ROSEMARIE FIKE



Copyright © 2025 Fraser Institute. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief passages quoted in critical articles and reviews.

The author would like to thank the Sarah Scaife Foundation for its generous support of this project.

ISBN: 978-0-88975-829-2

Please cite as Rosemarie Fike (2025). *Women, Economic Freedom, and Prosperity around the World*. Women and Progress 2025. Fraser Institute.

Abstract

This year's *Women and Progress* report details the current state of women's economic rights across the globe and how this contributes to the overall status of economic freedom. It discusses the state of women's rights across regions and how those rights have changed between 2020 and 2022. Historical trends in the data are discussed at both the global and regional levels. Finally, the empirical relationship between economic freedom and a variety of measures of women's well-being are examined.





Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	The Gender Disparity Index for 2022 and <i>Economic Freedom of the World</i>	4
3.0	Gender Disparity Across Global Regions, 1970–2022	10
4.0	Economic Freedom and Measures of Women’s Well-Being	12
5.0	Concluding Remarks	23
	References	24
	Appendix	25



Between 2020 and 2022, 15 countries improved their Gender Disparity Index score by relaxing restrictions on women's economic rights.

1.0 Introduction

Let woman choose her own vocation just as man does his. Let her go into business, let her make money, let her become independent, if possible, of man.

—Maggie Walker, July 14, 1912

People are more economically free when they are allowed to make more of their own economic choices. Economically free societies have rules in place that allow their citizens to choose where they want to live and work. They allow people to decide for themselves who to conduct business with and how to spend their time. More specifically, economic freedom refers to rules that concern our ability to engage in voluntary agreements with others, to earn an income, to acquire property, and to manage the resources we obtain. In many countries, women do not have access to the same economic rights as men. Many societies place additional barriers on women's economic rights that men do not have to face. These restrictions have consequences for women as well as for the rest of society. When approximately 50 percent of the population cannot fully and freely participate in the economy, societies give up potentially significant economic gains. Women themselves lose. But everyone misses out on the entrepreneurial ideas and other talents that women could have contributed through their participation in the market process.

Since 2017, the Women and Progress project has been tracking data produced by the World Bank that measures the extent to which men and women have equal access to key economic rights. This information is then used to adjust

the data published in the *Economic Freedom of the World* report to take into consideration the differences in economic rights experienced by men and women. While the gender disparity data are briefly discussed in *Economic Freedom of the World* (Gwartney, Lawson, and Murphy, 2024), this report provides a detailed discussion of the Gender Disparity Index, the changes in the data over time, and the empirical relationship between economic freedom and measures of women's well-being.

The remainder of this report proceeds as follows. The rest of section one discusses the construction of the Gender Disparity Index (GDI). Section two presents the GDI scores and rankings for the 165 countries included in *Economic Freedom of the World: 2024 Annual Report* (EFW report) as well as the overall global trend from 1970 to 2022. It concludes by highlighting countries that experienced significant changes in gender disparity under the law between 2020 and 2022. The third section examines the historical trends in GDI scores across global regions and identifies regions where little progress toward gender parity under the law has been made. Section four discusses the relationship between economic freedom and a variety of measures of women's well-being. Finally, section five concludes.

Calculating the Gender Disparity Index

Since the last *Women and Progress* report was released (Fike, 2023), there have been no notable changes in how the Gender Disparity Index (GDI) is calculated. There are 17 questions used to calculate the GDI. Each question captures an aspect of economic freedom that falls into one of four categories: Freedom of Movement, Freedom to Work, Property Rights, and Legal Status.

While the Women, Business, and the Law dataset also tracks gender-equality mandates and other forms of positive

entitlements, none of those variables are used to construct this index. All subcomponents of the GDI are consistent with a negative conception of economic (Berlin, 1969).

The following list shows the 17 questions used to construct the Gender Disparity Index. The method for calculating the gender-adjustment score for each country remains unchanged. For each question, if the written law treats men and women equally that country receives a “1” for that question and a “0” if women face additional restrictions that men do not face. The overall gender disparity measure is a simple average of a country’s score for each of these 17 questions.

1. Can a woman apply for a passport in the same way as a man?
2. Can a woman travel outside the country in the same way as a man?
3. Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?
4. Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?
5. Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?
6. Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man?
7. Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man?
8. Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man?
9. Is there no legal provision that requires a married woman to obey her husband?
10. Can a woman be head of household in the same way as a man?
11. Can a woman sign a contract in the same way as a man?
12. Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man?
13. Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as a man?
14. Do men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property?
15. Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents?
16. Do male and female surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?
17. Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?

The Four Categories of the Gender Disparity Index

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

When people have Freedom of Movement they may choose where to travel, live, and work based on their own preferences, goals, and priorities. If women's freedom of movement is limited, they may miss out on opportunities to flourish by pursuing an education or a job in a new location. They may even be prevented from leaving an undesirable home situation when freedom of movement is lacking.

FREEDOM TO WORK

Freedom to Work represents another key channel through which a woman might be able to make choices to improve her well-being. Restrictions on the types of employment women are permitted to pursue are common across the world, and they limit the set of options women have when it comes to making a living. A dangerous occupation may not be attractive to many women, but it may represent the best option for some. Limiting women's occupational choices restricts their ability to make choices that may improve their lives.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Property Rights are an essential economic right. If women do not have the ability to own or inherit property, they have little incentive to contribute their talents and ideas to the market. What is the point of working outside of the home when the fruits of your labor are legally considered the property of another? What incentive do people have to accumulate wealth for all their children, if their daughters are not able to inherit it? The ability to own property, improve upon it, receive income from it, or trade it with others is essential for human flourishing.

LEGAL STATUS

Legal Status refers to the way in which women and men are seen as competent, autonomous individuals capable of making independent decisions. Can both women and men serve as the legal head of household? Do women legally have to obey the will of their husbands or fathers, or can they make decisions on their own without fear of legal retribution? Can they enter contracts or open bank accounts without someone else's permission? If the answer to any of these questions is "no," then women do not have the same legal status as men, which limits their ability to direct the course of their own lives.

In the least free economies, only 13.99% of women aged 25 and older have completed post-secondary education or training. In the most economically free societies, however, 43.81% of women have completed post-secondary education.

2.0 The Gender Disparity Index and *Economic Freedom of the World*

The Gender Disparity Index (GDI) is used in the index published in *Economic Freedom of the World* (EFW index) to provide a gender adjustment to Area 2: Legal System and Property Rights. Countries with a GDI score of “1” do not receive a downward adjustment to their rule-of-law score. Countries with any gender disparity in the laws and regulations governing access to economic rights will see a downward adjustment to their Area 2 score.³ The more pervasive the gender disparity is, the bigger the downward adjustment to the EFW score.

The GDI score tells us whether there are additional legal or regulatory barriers to economic rights that only women must face, but it does not tell us a country’s overall level of economic freedom. As such, a GDI score of “1” does not indicate that the country is economically free. Rather, a GDI score of “1” simply means that men and women are subject

to the same legal and regulatory barriers. Whether men and women are equally free or equally unfree is determined by a country’s overall score on the EFW index (Gwartney et al., 2024).

Countries with no gender disparity under the law

Out of the 165 countries that are tracked in the 2024 edition of the *Economic Freedom of the World*, 69 earned GDI scores of “1” indicating that these countries have no gender disparity codified in formal laws and regulations. Since 2020, seven new countries have gained the distinction of eliminating gender disparity under the formal law: Bhutan, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, Kazakhstan, Uganda, and Viet Nam. The full list of countries is provided in table 2.1 below.

³ Gender-Adjusted Area 2 Score = $\frac{1}{2} * (\text{GDI Score}) * \text{Raw Area 2 Score} + \frac{1}{2} * \text{Raw Area 2 Score}$.



TABLE 2.1

Countries with No Gender Disparity under the Formal Law, 2022

1	Albania	19	Dominican Republic	36	Latvia	53	Rwanda
2	Armenia	20	Ecuador	37	Liberia	54	Serbia
3	Australia	21	El Salvador	38	Lithuania	55	Singapore
4	Austria	22	Estonia	39	Luxembourg	56	Slovak Republic
5	Bahamas, The	23	Finland	40	Mauritius	57	South Africa
6	Belgium	24	France	41	Mexico	58	Spain
7	Bhutan	25	Gabon	42	Moldova	59	Sweden
8	Bolivia	26	Georgia	43	Mongolia	60	Switzerland
9	Brazil	27	Germany	44	Netherlands	61	Taiwan
10	Bulgaria	28	Greece	45	New Zealand	62	Timor-Leste
11	Cabo Verde	29	Hong Kong SAR, China	46	Nicaragua	63	Togo
12	Cambodia	30	Hungary	47	Norway	64	Uganda
13	Canada	31	Iceland	48	Paraguay	65	United Kingdom
14	Costa Rica	32	Ireland	49	Peru	66	United States
15	Côte d'Ivoire	33	Italy	50	Poland	67	Venezuela, RB
16	Croatia	34	Kazakhstan	51	Portugal	68	Viet Nam
17	Czechia	35	Lao PDR	52	Romania	69	Zimbabwe
18	Denmark						

Countries with high levels of gender disparity

On the other hand, there were 35 countries in the EFW index that had a gender disparity score below 0.80 (the 2022 global average was 0.88), indicating severe gender inequality under the law. These countries are listed in table 2.2. Most countries that place additional restrictions on the economic rights of women are concentrated in two global regions: the Middle East and North African (MENA) region has 15 countries on this list and the Sub-Saharan African region has 16 countries represented. The remaining four countries are in South Asia (Bangladesh and Pakistan) and East Asia (Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia). While Sudan still has the lowest GDI score of all 165 countries in this report, its 2022 score of 0.35 is higher than the 0.29 that it earned in 2020.

TABLE 2.2

Countries with Gender Disparity Scores Below 0.8, 2022

Country	GDI Score	Country	GDI Score
Bangladesh	0.7647	Congo, Rep.	0.5882
Congo, Dem. Rep.	0.7647	Guinea-Bissau	0.5882
Haiti	0.7647	Chad	0.5294
Morocco	0.7647	Eswatini	0.5294
Pakistan	0.7647	Oman	0.5294
Algeria	0.7059	Qatar	0.5294
Brunei Darussalam	0.7059	Syrian Arab Republic	0.5294
Comoros	0.7059	Cameroon	0.4706
Libya	0.7059	Iraq	0.4706
Mali	0.7059	Jordan	0.4706
Saudi Arabia	0.7059	Kuwait	0.4706
Senegal	0.7059	Mauritania	0.4706
Tunisia	0.7059	Egypt, Arab Rep.	0.4118
Bahrain	0.6471	Iran, Islamic Rep.	0.4118
Djibouti	0.6471	Niger	0.4118
Madagascar	0.6471	Yemen, Rep.	0.4118
Malaysia	0.6471	Sudan	0.3529
Somalia	0.6471		

In addition, there were 61 countries with GDI scores below 1 but above 0.80, indicating a moderate level of legal gender disparity. These countries (table 2.3) are largely located in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The main drivers of gender disparity in countries on this list are

TABLE 2.3

Countries with Gender Disparity Index Scores Below 1.0 but Above 0.8, 2022

Country	GDI Score	Country	GDI Score
Colombia	0.9412	Botswana	0.8824
Cyprus	0.9412	China	0.8824
Fiji	0.9412	Ethiopia	0.8824
Ghana	0.9412	Gambia, The	0.8824
Guatemala	0.9412	India	0.8824
Guyana	0.9412	Israel	0.8824
Honduras	0.9412	Japan	0.8824
Jamaica	0.9412	Kenya	0.8824
Lesotho	0.9412	Korea, Rep.	0.8824
Malta	0.9412	Kyrgyz Republic	0.8824
Montenegro	0.9412	Malawi	0.8824
Mozambique	0.9412	Myanmar	0.8824
Namibia	0.9412	Nigeria	0.8824
Nepal	0.9412	Russian Federation	0.8824
North Macedonia	0.9412	Sri Lanka	0.8824
Panama	0.9412	Suriname	0.8824
Seychelles	0.9412	Tajikistan	0.8824
Sierra Leone	0.9412	Tanzania	0.8824
Slovenia	0.9412	United Arab Emirates	0.8824
Thailand	0.9412	Azerbaijan	0.8235
Trinidad and Tobago	0.9412	Burkina Faso	0.8235
Türkiye	0.9412	Burundi	0.8235
Uruguay	0.9412	Central African Republic	0.8235
Zambia	0.9412	Chile	0.8235
Angola	0.8824	Guinea	0.8235
Argentina	0.8824	Indonesia	0.8235
Barbados	0.8824	Lebanon	0.8235
Belarus	0.8824	Papua New Guinea	0.8235
Belize	0.8824	Philippines	0.8235
Benin	0.8824	Ukraine	0.8235
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.8824		

gender-based labor-market restrictions that limit women’s freedom to choose their occupation and which hours they want to work.

Countries with large decreases in economic-freedom score as a result of the gender adjustment

The set of countries shown in table 2.4 experienced the largest downward adjustment to overall economic freedom once gender disparity under the law was taken into consideration. There is significant overlap between the countries appearing

TABLE 2.4

Countries with the Largest Percentage Decrease in EFW Score After Adjustment, 2022

Country	Decrease in Score	% Decrease in Score
Iran, Islamic Rep.	-0.2720	5.55%
Kuwait	-0.3691	5.42%
Sudan	-0.2214	5.11%
Egypt, Arab Rep.	-0.2824	5.00%
Oman	-0.3298	4.90%
Qatar	-0.3340	4.74%
Niger	-0.2571	4.32%
Yemen, Rep.	-0.1999	4.10%
Jordan	-0.3118	4.08%
Mauritania	-0.2258	3.68%
Guinea-Bissau	-0.1978	3.59%
Cameroon	-0.1991	3.43%
Eswatini	-0.1884	3.36%
Syrian Arab Republic	-0.1392	3.15%
Malaysia	-0.2441	3.13%
Iraq	-0.1640	3.03%
Chad	-0.1511	2.90%
Senegal	-0.1780	2.89%
Bahrain	-0.2220	2.87%
Algeria	-0.1316	2.87%
Congo, Rep.	-0.1444	2.87%
Tunisia	-0.1557	2.56%
Brunei Darussalam	-0.1810	2.52%
Djibouti	-0.1561	2.45%
Pakistan	-0.1251	2.18%
Morocco	-0.1416	2.15%
Mali	-0.1174	2.04%

in table 2.2 and those in table 2.4. Most of the countries experiencing sizeable reductions in their EFW scores are in the MENA and Sub-Saharan African regions. Iran experienced the largest percentage decrease in EFW score after the adjustment for gender disparity, 5.55%, followed by Kuwait (5.42%), Sudan (5.11%), Egypt (5.00%), and Oman (4.90%).

Countries that fall in their economic-freedom ranking because of the gender adjustment

Poor quality economic institutions, like weak property rights protection and a burdensome regulatory environment make a country less attractive for people to conduct business in, visit, or live. Countries that experience a large downward

TABLE 2.5
Countries with a Decrease in Rankings Due to Gender Adjustment, 2022

Country	Change in EFW Rank	Country	Change in EFW Rank
Jordan	-22	Kenya	-3
Qatar	-16	Morocco	-3
Bahrain	-14	Azerbaijan	-2
Kuwait	-14	Bangladesh	-2
Mauritania	-14	Djibouti	-2
Oman	-14	Eswatini	-2
Malaysia	-13	Guinea-Bissau	-2
Niger	-9	Iraq	-2
Tunisia	-8	Korea, Rep.	-2
Brunei Darussalam	-7	Saudi Arabia	-2
Chile	-7	Slovenia	-2
Egypt, Arab Rep.	-6	United Arab Emirates	-2
Israel	-5	Algeria	-1
Senegal	-5	China	-1
Barbados	-4	Congo, Rep.	-1
Cameroon	-4	Kazakhstan	-1
Madagascar	-4	Malta	-1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-3	Montenegro	-1
Comoros	-3	Philippines	-1
Indonesia	-3	Somalia	-1
Iran, Islamic Rep.	-3	Tanzania	-1
Japan	-3		

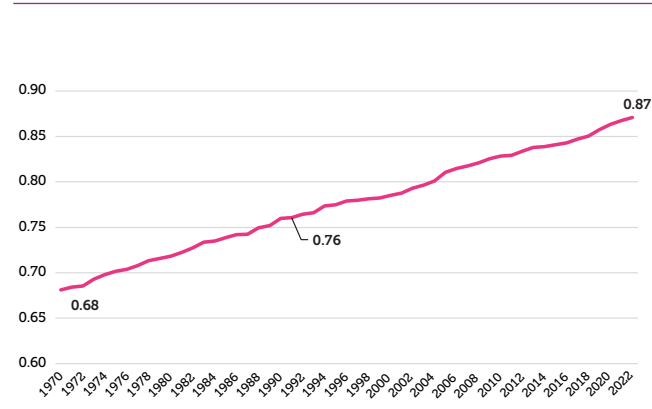
adjustment for gender disparity look like a much riskier investment opportunity. After adjusting the EFW score for gender disparity, 42 countries fall in their relative rankings. Table 2.5 shows the complete list of these countries and the magnitude of their decline in rank because of the gender adjustment. Seven countries drop significantly, by 10 positions or more: Jordan, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Mauritania, Oman, and Malaysia.

Global trends in gender disparity under the law from 1970 to 2022

The Gender Disparity Index includes data for all countries, for all variables going back to the 1970s. With this complete set of data, we can be more confident that the patterns we observe over time reflect actual changes in gender equality under the law and are not an artefact of gaps in the availability of data for certain components in earlier years.

When examining the changes in gender disparity under the formal law over time, there is reason to be optimistic. Figure 2.1 depicts the trend in the global average GDI score from 1970 to 2022. This shows that there was a steady increase in the average GDI score throughout this period, with no single year showing a decline in the global average. In 1970, the global average GDI score was 0.68. This rises to 0.77 in 1995 and by 2022, the global average GDI score reaches 0.87. This is higher than the global average of 0.86 reported for 2020. This means that, on average, the formal economic rights of women and men are more equal in 2022 than ever before.

Figure 1: Global Average GDI Score



Notable changes in the status of women between 2020 and 2022

Between 2020 and 2022, there were 15 countries that improved their gender disparity scores by relaxing several key legal restrictions that affected women's access to economic rights. At the same time, there were two countries that experienced a decrease in their overall scores on the Gender Disparity Index. Table 2.6 provides the full list of countries that saw a change in GDI score between 2020 and 2022.

Gabon has made the most sweeping improvements in the formal economic rights of women during the past few years. In 2020, Gabon's GDI score of 0.41 placed it among the set of countries with the most pervasive restrictions on women's economic rights. Gabon's GDI score increased to 0.82 in 2021 after removing barriers to women's ability to own property, open a bank account, be head of household, work a job, and choose where to live. It also eliminated the legal requirement for women to obey their husbands in 2021. In 2022 Gabon eliminated all remaining gender disparity in

TABLE 2.6

Countries with Notable Changes in GDI Scores Between 2020 and 2022

Countries with an Improvement in GDI Score Between 2020 and 2022						
Country	GDI 2020	GDI 2021	GDI 2022	Change 2020–2021	Change 2021–2022	Change 2020–2022
Gabon	0.4118	0.8235	1.0000	0.4118	0.1765	0.5882
Guinea-Bissau	0.4118	0.4118	0.5882	0.0000	0.1765	0.1765
Uganda	0.8235	0.8235	1.0000	0.0000	0.1765	0.1765
Bahrain	0.5294	0.6471	0.6471	0.1176	0.0000	0.1176
Côte d'Ivoire	0.8824	0.8824	1.0000	0.0000	0.1176	0.1176
Kazakhstan	0.8824	0.8824	1.0000	0.0000	0.1176	0.1176
Benin	0.8235	0.8824	0.8824	0.0588	0.0000	0.0588
Costa Rica	0.9412	0.9412	1.0000	0.0000	0.0588	0.0588
Cyprus	0.8824	0.9412	0.9412	0.0588	0.0000	0.0588
Nigeria	0.8235	0.8824	0.8824	0.0588	0.0000	0.0588
Oman	0.4706	0.5294	0.5294	0.0588	0.0000	0.0588
Senegal	0.6471	0.6471	0.7059	0.0000	0.0588	0.0588
Sri Lanka	0.8235	0.8235	0.8824	0.0000	0.0588	0.0588
Viet Nam	0.9412	1.0000	1.0000	0.0588	0.0000	0.0588
Pakistan	0.7059	0.7059	0.7647	0.0000	0.0588	0.0588
Countries with a Decline in GDI Score Between 2020 and 2022						
Country	GDI 2020	GDI 2021	GDI 2022	Change 2020–2021	Change 2021–2022	Change 2020–2022
Niger	0.4706	0.4706	0.4118	0.0000	-0.0588	-0.0588
Saudi Arabia	0.8824	0.8824	0.7059	0.0000	-0.1765	-0.1765

its formal legal and regulatory code, earning a GDI score of 1 for the first time. Such progress in advancing women's economic rights over a relatively short period should provide more opportunities for women in Gabon to flourish. It will be interesting to see how things change for women over the next few years.

In addition to the notable reduction in gender disparity that occurred in Gabon, 14 other countries took steps to remove barriers to women's economic rights between 2020 and 2022: Guinea-Bissau, Uganda, Bahrain, Cote d'Ivoire, Kazakhstan, Benin, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Nigeria, Oman, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, and Pakistan.

In the last *Women and Progress* report (2023), Saudi Arabia was highlighted for eliminating many gendered legal barriers that restricted women's economic rights, bringing its

GDI score up to 0.88 by 2020. However, between 2021 and 2022, Saudi Arabia reinstated formal restrictions on women's mobility, taking away women's right to choose where to live or travel outside of the country in the same way men can. As a result, Saudi Arabia's GDI score fell to 0.71 in 2022. Despite this decline, Saudi Arabia still grants women greater economic rights than it did in 2018.

The other country that experienced a decline in its GDI score between 2020 and 2022 was Niger. The GDI score for Niger fell from 0.47 in 2021 to 0.41 in 2022. While women's economic rights were already severely restricted relative to men's in Niger, as of 2022, women face new legal barriers to working industrial jobs. This further reduces the set of choices women in Niger have when it comes to earning a living.



3.0 Gender Disparity Across Global Regions, 1970–2022

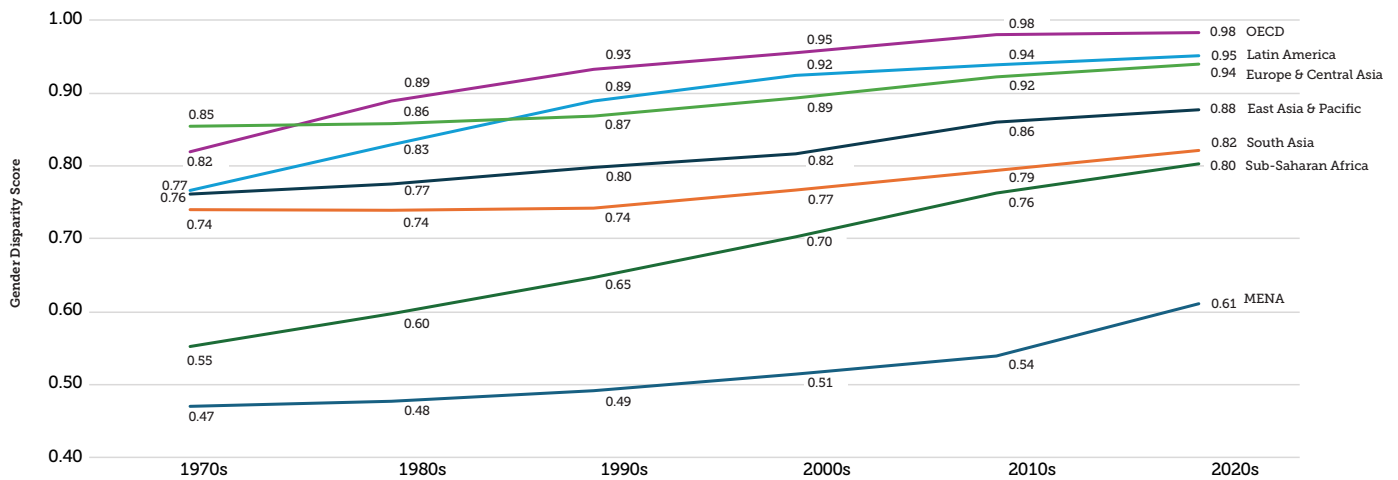
Gender disparity under the law differs significantly depending upon which global region is being examined. In this section, the data are sorted into seven different global regions: East Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa (MENA),

High-Income OECD (countries), South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Figure 3.1 depicts the average GDI scores across these seven regions from 1970 until 2022. Some interesting patterns emerge in the data.



All seven regions experienced an increase in GDI scores between 1970 and 2022.

Figure 3.1: Regional Average Gender Disparity Scores by Decade



Europe and Central Asia started with the highest level of gender equality in the world in 1970 (0.85). However, this region experienced minimal improvements in gender equality under the law over the 53-year period. By 2022, the average GDI score for this region was 0.94, placing it third in the world behind the High-Income OECD countries and Latin America.

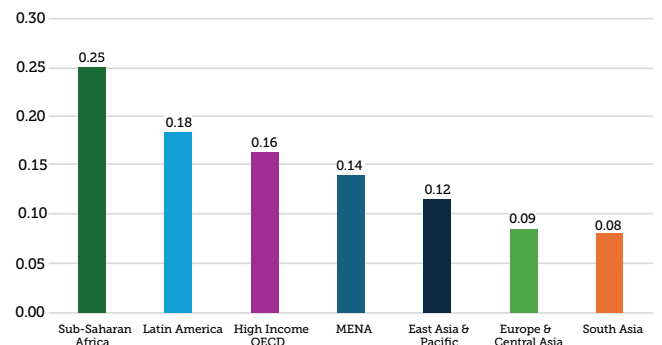
The High-Income OECD countries started in the second position with a relatively high level of gender parity on average in 1970 (0.82). This region experienced more pronounced improvements in GDI scores throughout the period, landing this region in the top position with a score of 0.98 by 2022.

On the other end of the spectrum, the MENA region started in the bottom position in 1970 with an average GDI score of 0.47 and consistently remained in the bottom position throughout the entire period. By 2022, the average GDI score for this region had risen to only 0.61, which is nearly 0.20 points lower than the next closest region, Sub-Saharan Africa. The overall global pattern suggests that most regions of the world are converging to an outcome where men and women have greater equality under the law and where women face very few barriers to exercising their economic rights that

are specific to their gender. Even though the MENA region remains significantly behind the rest of the world, this region still exhibited steady improvement in GDI scores throughout the entire period and more marked improvement in the last decade.

All seven regions experienced an increase in GDI scores between 1970 and 2022, but which have improved the most? Figure 3.2 presents the differences between the average GDI scores in 1970 and 2022 for each global region.

Figure 3.2: Change in Gender Disparity Scores, 1970–2020s



4.0 Economic Freedom and Measures of Women's Well-Being

Why does economic freedom matter for women? In addition to being a good thing in and of itself, economic freedom provides the institutional conditions that allow women to make choices that improve their lives. This section of the report examines some of the empirical relationships between economic freedom and a variety of development outcomes that may be of importance to women. These outcomes fall into three broad categories: labor-market, health, and education.

When possible, the data for both women and men are included to provide a relevant comparison and to show what happens to gender gaps in the outcome as economic freedom increases. All outcome variables examined in this section have been obtained from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (World Bank, 2024) unless otherwise noted. The data examined are from 2022.²

² If a country lacks data for the year 2022, the data from the closest year is provided. If there is no data available within two years of 2022, that observation is eliminated from the analysis.

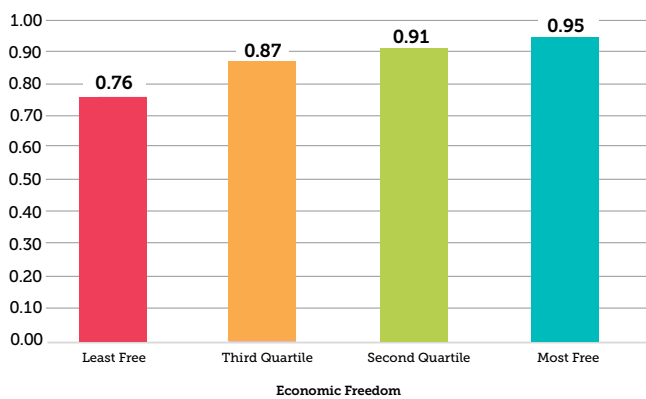


In addition to being a good thing in and of itself, economic freedom provides the institutional conditions that allow women to make choices that improve their lives.

Economic freedom and gender equality under the law

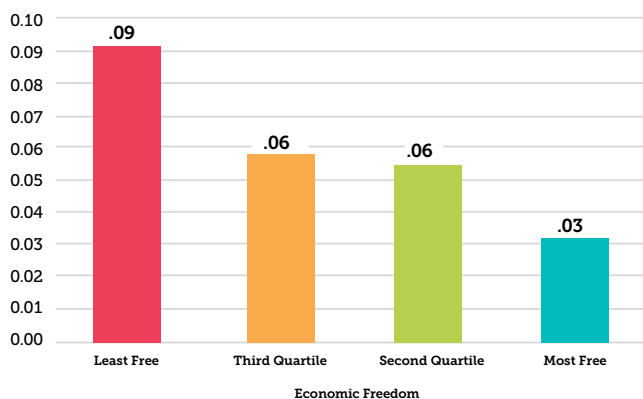
Figure 4.1 depicts the relationship between economic freedom (not adjusted for gender parity) and overall GDI scores. As you can see, average GDI scores increase as the level of economic freedom increases. The average GDI score for the economies in the “most free” quartile is 0.95 while the average score for the economies in the least free category is only 0.76 (which is higher than the 0.72 average for the least free economies in 2020).

Figure 4.1: Gender Disparity Index Scores



The difference between adjusted and unadjusted EFW scores is shown for each quartile in figure 4.2. The larger the difference between these two numbers, the more pervasive the gender disparity in the legal and regulatory code. The average difference for countries in the least free quartile is 0.09 points, but for the world’s freest economies, that difference falls to 0.03 points. Again, when examined in this way gender disparity falls as the level of economic freedom increases.

Figure 4.2: Difference Between Adjusted and Unadjusted EFW Scores



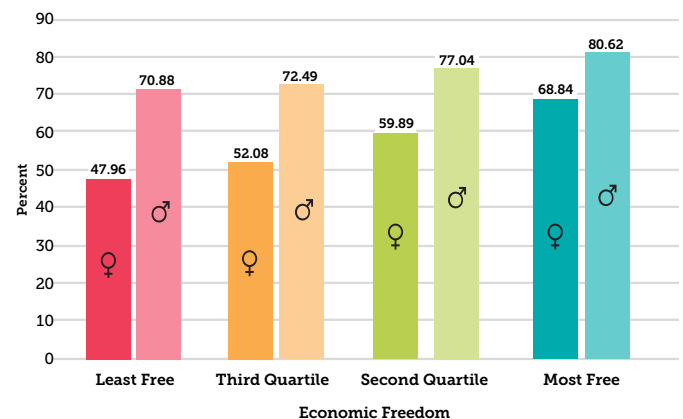
Labor market and financial outcomes

Economic freedom for women is associated with improvements in a variety of women’s labor-market outcomes.

Labor-force participation rate (ages 15–64)

Figure 4.3 provides the average labor-force participation rate in 2022 for both women and men across each economic freedom quartile. For both groups, labor-force participation rates are the lowest in countries that are the least economically free. The average labor-force participation rates also increase as economic freedom increases. For women, the labor-force participation rate increases from 47.96% in the least free countries to 68.84% in the most economically free societies. For men, the increase in labor-force participation is less pronounced, moving from 70.88% in the least free countries and 80.62% in the most economically free countries. While average labor-force participation rates for men are always higher than those of women, the gap between the labor-force participation rates of men and women declines as economic freedom increases. In the least free countries, the gap in labor-force participation is 22.92 percentage points. This gap falls to 11.78 percentage points when looking at the freest economies.

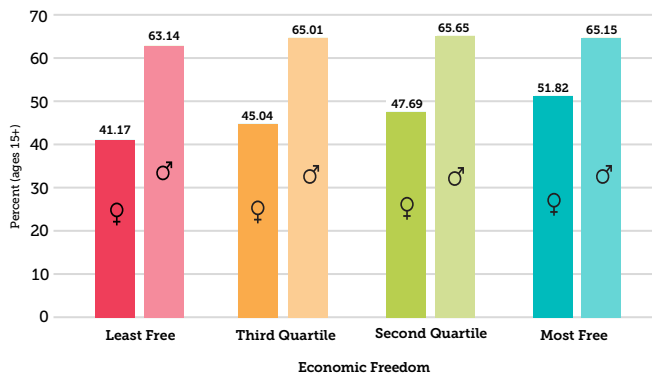
Figure 4.3: Labor Force Participation Rates, (% of Population Ages 15–64)



Employment-to-population ratio

The employment-to-population ratio offers a different way to assess the labor market. While the labor-force participation rate includes both those who are working and those who are actively seeking work, the employment-to-population ratio includes only those who are working. The employment-to-population ratio in 2022 for both men and women is depicted in figure 4.4. Once again, there is a clear pattern in which women's employment-to-population ratios steadily increase as you move from the least free economies to the most economically free. In the least free countries, the employment-to-population ratio for women is only 41.17%, while in the freest economies, it is 51.82%. Interestingly, the level of economic freedom has no observable relationship with the employment-to-population ratio for men, as it stays constant across all quartiles, fluctuating slightly between 63.14% and 65.65% depending on the level of economic freedom. However, the gap between these ratios for women and men still declines as the level of economic freedom increases. In the least free countries, the gender gap is just under 22 percentage points but falls to 13.33 percentage points in the most free quartile.

Figure 4.4: Employment-to-Population Ratio (Ages 15+)

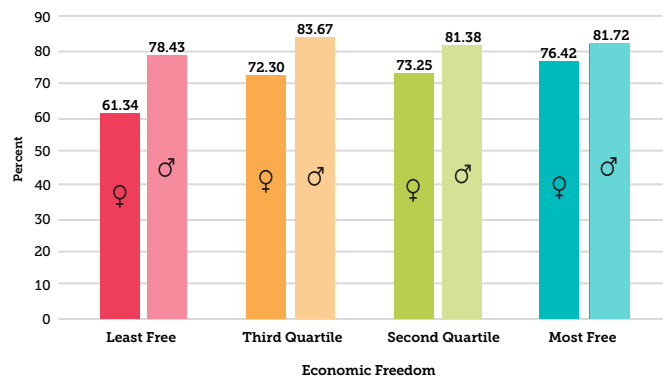


Share of labor force with advanced education

Figure 4.5 presents the percentage of the male and female labor force that had an advanced education in 2022. Advanced education is any post-secondary education ranging from attending a community college or technical school

to obtaining a doctoral degree. In the least economically free countries, only 61.34% of the female labor force had completed some level of post-secondary training, while in the most free countries the share rises to 76.42%. The share of the male labor force with similar training ranges from 78.43% in the least free countries to 81.72% in the most free. The gender gap for this variable is just over 17 percentage points in the least free countries, but only 5.30 percentage points in the freest economies. Once again, this shows that the percentage of female workers with advanced education rises much more dramatically than the percentage of male workers when the level of economic freedom increases. The gender gap in the skill level of the workforce tends to decline as economic freedom increases.

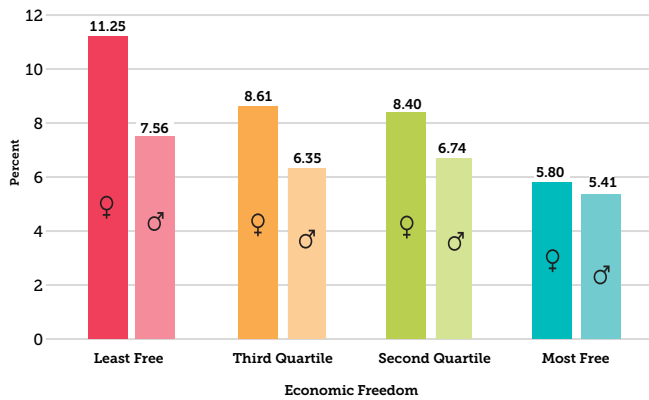
Figure 4.5: Share of Labor Force with Advanced Education (% of Working-Age Population)



Unemployment rate

The relationship between economic freedom and the 2022 unemployment rates for men and women is depicted in figure 4.6. The clear relationship between economic freedom and the other labor-market outcomes continues. The average unemployment rate for women in the least free economies is 11.25%, while in the freest economies women's average unemployment rate is only 5.80%. Women's unemployment rates steadily fall as the level of economic freedom increases. The gender gap in unemployment rates also narrows as we move from the least free to the most free economies, falling from a 3.69 percentage point gender gap to only 0.39 percentage points.

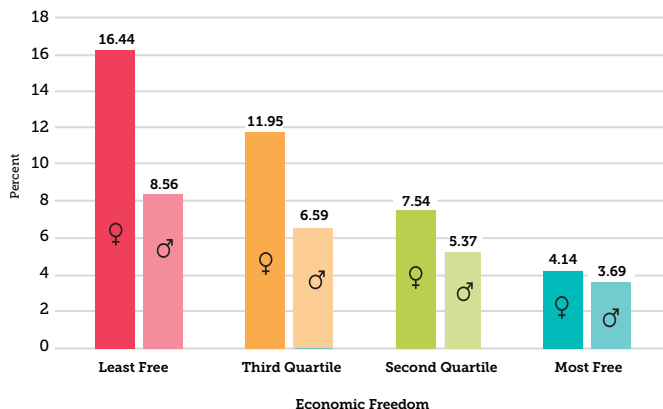
Figure 4.6: Unemployment Rate (% of Labor Force)



Unemployment rate for workers with advanced education

Figure 4.7 examines the unemployment rates of a particular subset of workers, those who have completed some form of post-secondary educational training. Once again, the same relationship between economic freedom and women’s well-being emerges. Both women and men with advanced education fare better in the most economically free societies, with unemployment rates of 4.14% for women and 3.69% for men. The difference in unemployment rates for highly skilled men and women is negligible at 0.45 percentage points. On the other hand, in the least economically free economies, the unemployment rates for these highly skilled workers are significantly higher at 16.44% for women and 8.56% for men. In these economically unfree economies, the gender gap in the unemployment rates of workers with advanced degrees grows to 7.88 percentage points.

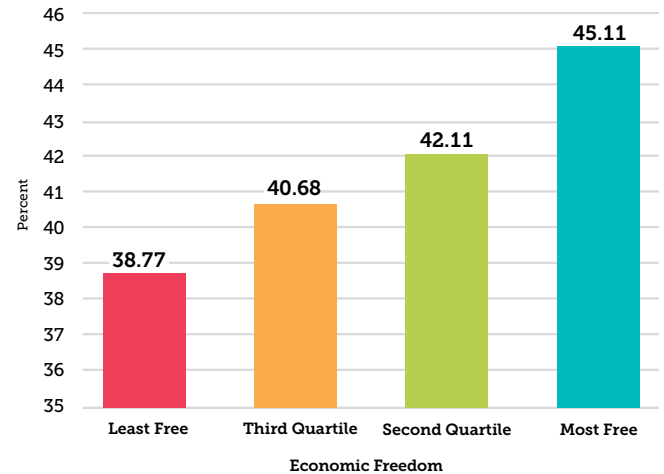
Figure 4.7: Unemployment with Advanced Education (% of Labor Force with Advanced Education)



Female percent of total labor force

The relationship between economic freedom and the female-share of the entire labor force is presented in figure 4.8. In the least free economies, women make up only 38.77% of the total labor force, whereas in the freest economies 45.11% of the labor force is female. Economic freedom seems to enhance women’s ability to participate fully in the formal economy.

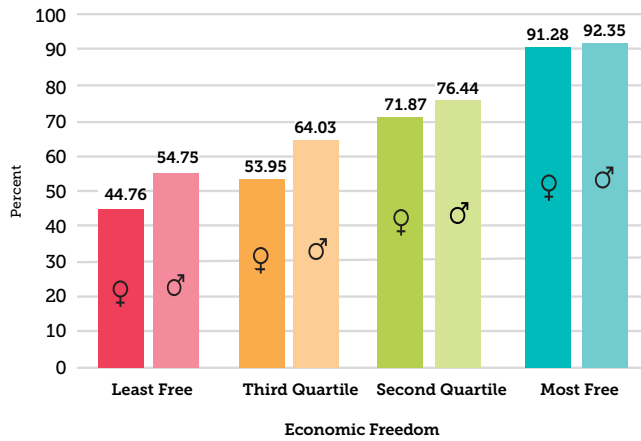
Figure 4.8: Labor Force, Female (% of Total Labor Force)



Ownership of an account at a financial institution or mobile money service provider

Figure 4.9 depicts the relationship between economic freedom and the percentage of the population with an account at a financial institution. Having a bank account in her own name provides a woman with a crucial source of financial independence. A woman with her own bank account can earn money that others do not know about, she can save for emergencies or for business opportunities without providing access to those who might undermine her financial goals. Financial independence leaves women less vulnerable to abuse by providing them with a means to work toward an escape. In the least economically free countries, only 44.76% of women have bank accounts, compared to 54.75% of men—a gender gap of 9.99 percentage points. In the most economically free societies, 91.28% of women and 92.35% of men have bank accounts, a much smaller gender difference of only 1.07 percentage points.

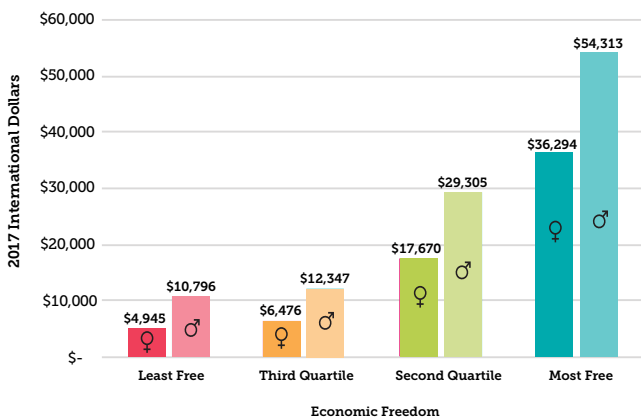
Figure 4.9: Account Ownership at a Financial Institution or with a Mobile Money Service Provider (% of Population Ages 15+)



Gross National Income Per Person

Figure 4.10 shows gross national income per person, broken down by gender. On average, women in the most economically free quartile earn \$36,294 while those in the least-free earn just \$4,945. In other words, women in the most economically free nations earn 7.3 times as much as those in the least-free. The gender gap is also smaller in freer nations. While men earn 50 percent more than women in the most economically free nations, they earn 2.2 times as much as women in the least economically free nations. Taken

Figure 4.10: Gross National Income per Person, by Gender



together, these results suggest that both women and men enjoy improved labor-market outcomes when the society they live in embraces economic freedom. Economically free societies

have fewer restrictions on international trade, creating a greater scope of the market which presents people with more opportunities to divide labor more extensively and develop specialized skills. Economically free societies also have fewer laws and regulations that create barriers to entrepreneurs trying to start businesses and fewer limits on the types of occupations individuals can choose to pursue resulting in less involuntary unemployment. All of this suggests that there are more opportunities to benefit from exchanging with others. As a result, there are higher rewards for participating in the formal economy in economically free places.

Health outcomes

While labor-market outcomes are important markers of women’s well-being, they only capture one small aspect of a woman’s quality of life. For a more complete picture of how economic freedom affects women’s lives, we need to also examine the relationship between economic freedom and women’s health.

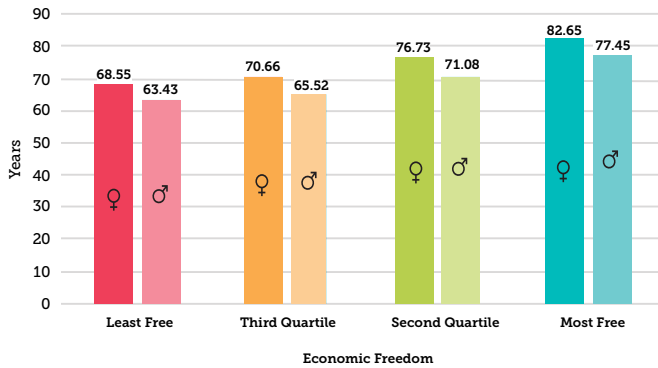
It is important to note that there is a well-documented positive relationship between economic freedom and per-capita income levels (Dawson, 2003; Hall and Lawson, 2014; Lawson, 2022; Lawson et al., 2024). Higher levels of income and greater economic development brings along with it better medicines and more widespread access to them, cleaner drinking water, and greater food security. These advancements certainly work to improve many of the health outcomes examined here. As a result, most of the relationships discussed below should not be interpreted as causal. It is likely that the effect of economic freedom on health outcomes is indirect and flows through the channel of higher living standards.

Life expectancy at birth

Figure 4.11 depicts the relationship between life expectancy and economic freedom. In the least economically free countries, women are expected to live to 68.55 years on average, and men 63.43 years on average. In the most economically free societies, however, women are expected to live to be 82.65 years old and men to 77.45 years, on average. For both women and men, being born in one of the freest societies instead of one of the least free means that life

expectancy grows significantly. In the freest societies, both women and men can expect to live about 14 years longer than their counterparts in the least free economies.

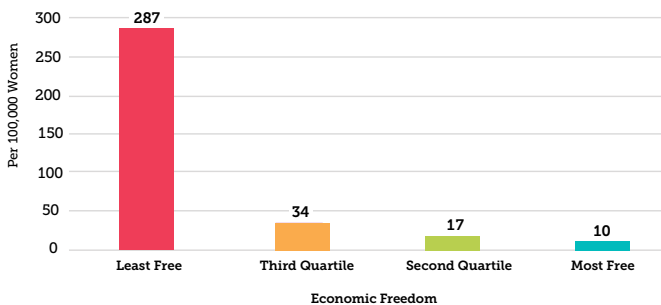
Figure 4.11: Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)



Lifetime risk of maternal death

While advancements in medicine have reduced the likelihood of death due to pregnancy or giving birth, maternal mortality still poses a risk to women across the world. Figure 4.12 depicts the relationship between economic freedom and a woman’s lifetime risk of maternal death expressed as the expected number of maternal deaths per 100,000 women. In the least free economies, we expect to see 287 pregnancy-related deaths for every 100,000 women (or one out of every 348 women are expected to die due to maternal causes). In the most free societies, however, there are only 10 expected deaths due to maternal causes for every 100,000 women (or one maternal death for every 10,355 women). As you go from the least free to the most free economies, a woman’s lifetime risk of maternal mortality falls by almost a factor of 30.

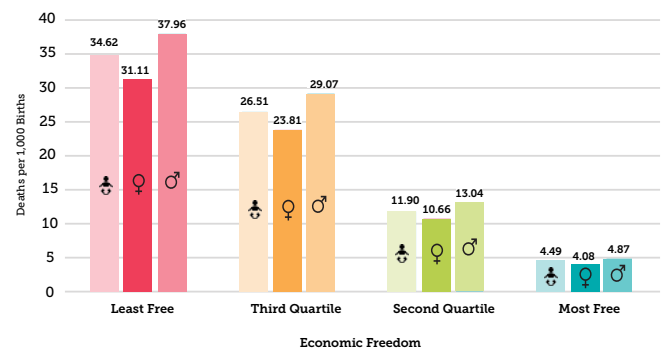
Figure 4.12: Lifetime Risk of Maternal Death (per 100,000 Women)



Infant mortality rates

In addition to maternal health, it is important to understand the relationship between economic freedom and the health of children. The overall infant mortality rate and the separate infant mortality rates for males and females are all depicted in figure 4.13. The overall number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births falls dramatically when moving from the least free economies (34.62) to the most free economies (4.49). In the countries with the lowest levels of economic freedom, the infant mortality rate is 31.11 deaths per 1,000 female births and 37.96 for 1,000 male births. This number falls to 4.08 deaths per 1,000 births for females and 4.87 for males in the most economically free countries. Males are more likely to be born prematurely, increasing their odds of life-threatening respiratory conditions which is why this is one of the few gender disparities that favors females. Note that the gap closes as economic freedom increases.”

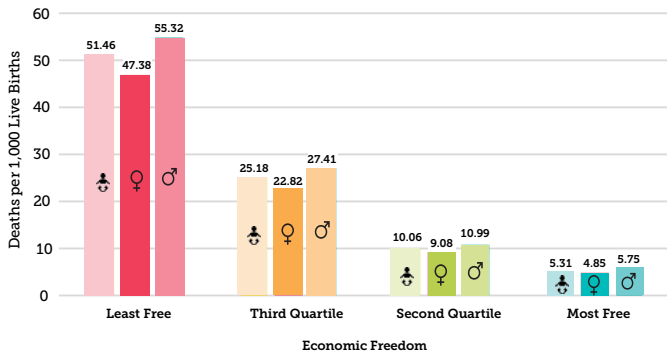
Figure 4.13: Infant Mortality Rate (Deaths per 1,000 Live Births)



Mortality rates for children under 5 years

Figure 4.14 examines the relationship between economic freedom and childhood mortality rates in 2022. The childhood mortality rates for females and males indicate that all children are far less likely to die at a young age in countries that are economically free than they are in the least free countries. In the least free countries, the childhood mortality rate for females is 47.38 deaths per 1,000 births and 55.32 for males. In the most free economies, this falls to 4.85 deaths per 1,000 births for females and 5.75 for males, narrowing one of the few gender gaps that favors women as well.

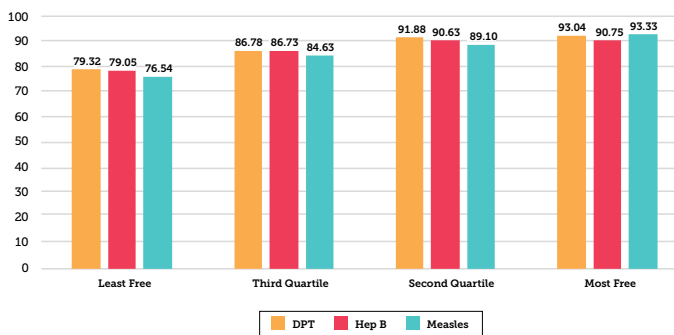
Figure 4.14: Mortality Rate, Under 5 (Deaths per 1,000 Live Births)



Childhood immunization rates

Vaccinations help children across the world avoid preventable diseases that would otherwise result in severe illness or death. Figure 4.15 shows the rate of immunization for children against three common sets of diseases: diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus (DPT); hepatitis B; and measles. For all three, immunization rates increase when moving from the least free to the most free economies. The least free societies had immunization rates of only 79.32% for DPT, 79.05% for hepatitis B, and 76.54% for measles. In the most economically free societies, the rates increase to 93.04% for DPT, 90.75% for hepatitis B, and 93.33% for measles.

Figure 4.15: Child Immunization Rates (%)

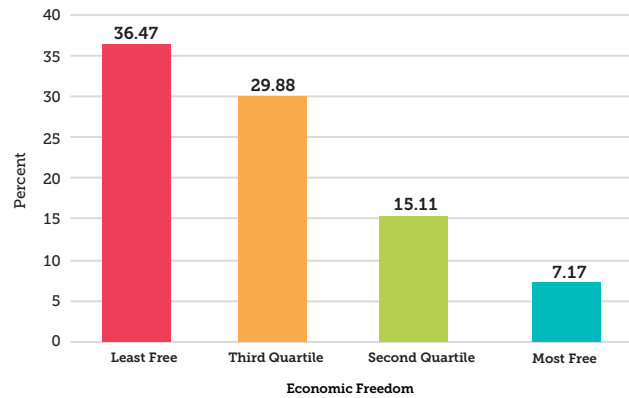


Death from preventable causes

Given the information presented in figure 4.15, it ought to be no surprise to find that countries that severely restrict economic freedom have a much larger percentage of deaths that are due to preventable conditions such as communicable diseases,

nutritional conditions, or a lack of maternal or prenatal care. Figure 4.16 depicts the relationship between economic freedom and the percentage of total deaths from this set of preventable causes. In the least free economies, 36.47% of all deaths can be attributed to some preventable condition that access to better health care or nutrition could have avoided. In the most free economies, however, only 7.17% of deaths can be attributed to these causes.

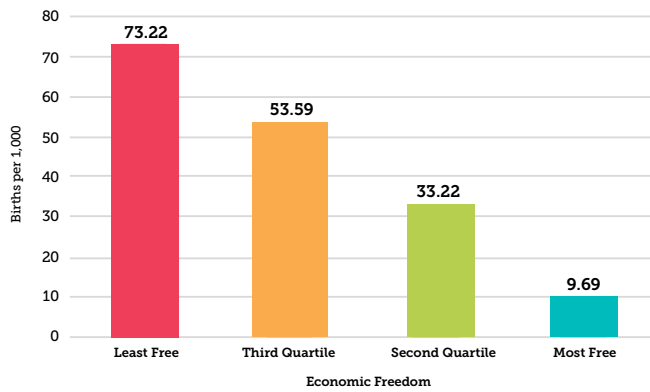
Figure 4.16: Deaths by Communicable Diseases and Maternal, Prenatal, and Nutritional Conditions (% of Total Deaths)



Adolescent fertility rate

Figure 4.17 examines the relationship between economic freedom and the adolescent fertility rate, or the number of births that occur for every 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 years old. In the least free economies, there are 73.22 births per 1,000 adolescent girls. In the most free economies, these adolescent births are far less common at 9.69 births per 1,000 adolescent girls. There are many reasons that this might be the case. As mentioned earlier, access to health care tends to grow along with a country's living standards. This is likely also the case for access to the contraceptives that would prevent teen pregnancy. In addition, in countries that are economically free, the job market prospects for women are more promising than they are in places where the scope of the market is more restricted. In this way, economic freedom can raise the opportunity cost of having a child at a young age. Finally, greater access to education may also play a role (see below).

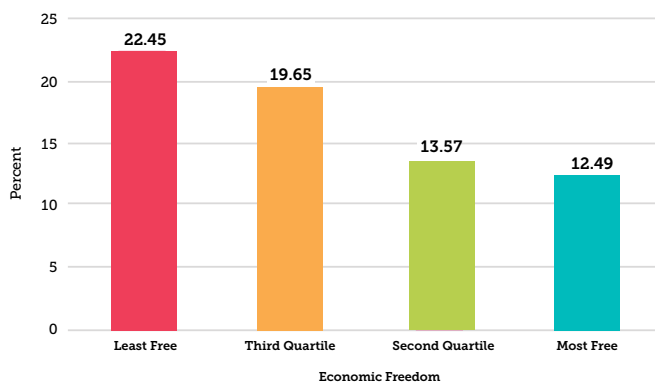
Figure 4.17: Adolescent Fertility Rate (Births per 1,000 Women Ages 15–19)



Unmet need for contraception

In Figure 4.18, the relationship between economic freedom and the percentage of married women (ages 15–49) who have an unmet need for contraception is depicted. For women, greater control over the choice of whether and when to have a child makes it easier to pursue higher education opportunities and invest in one’s career. Unplanned pregnancies can delay or even derail these plans. As such, having access to reliable methods of contraception should enable women to have greater control over their reproductive destinies. In the least free economies, over one-fifth of married women (22.45%) have an unmet need for contraception. Whereas in the most economically free societies, this falls to 12.49% of married women.

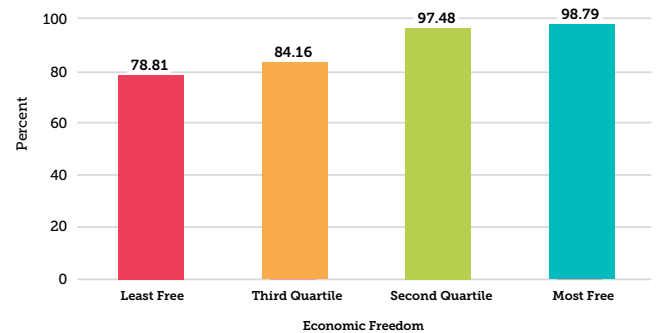
Figure 4.18: Unmet Need for Contraception (% of Married Women Ages 15–49)



Percentage of births attended by skilled staff

The likelihood that both parent and child will survive the childbirth process is improved when the person giving birth is attended by trained professionals. Figure 4.19 shows the relationship between economic freedom and the percentage of births attended by skilled staff. As with the other measures examined so far, greater economic freedom is associated with better outcomes, in this case, a higher percentage of births attended by trained professionals. In the least free economies, 78.81% of births are attended by skilled medical staff. In the most free societies, 98.79% of births have a trained professional in attendance.

Figure 4.19: Births Attended by Skilled Health Staff (% of Total Births)

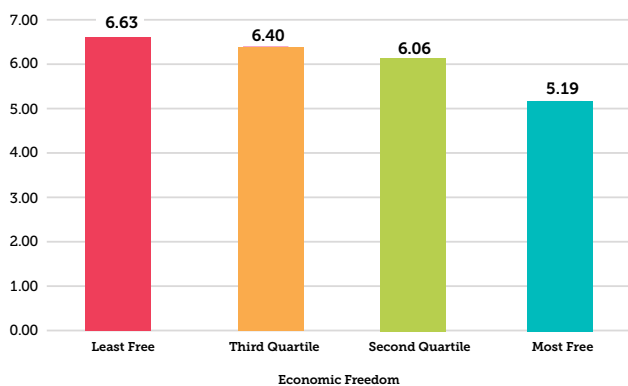


Prevalence of human trafficking

Figure 4.20 describes the relationship between economic freedom and the prevalence of human trafficking. Human trafficking data is obtained from the *Global Organized Crime Index* (2023). Higher numbers indicate that human trafficking is more pervasive in that society.³ In the least free economies, the human trafficking index score is 6.63 while it is only 5.19 in the most free economies. There is a steady decline in the prevalence of human trafficking as the level of economic freedom is increased.

The data presented in the figures above suggest the women (and men) living in economically free countries have better health outcomes than those living in unfree societies. They enjoy longer lives, have better control over their reproductive choices through access to contraception, and are more likely to have their births attended by skilled healthcare professionals. In free societies more of our children receive life-saving vaccinations and there are fewer deaths due to preventable causes. In the freest countries, there are also lower rates of maternal, infant, and childhood mortality. Finally, women living in economically free countries are less likely to be victims of human trafficking.

Figure 4.20: Prevalence of Human Trafficking, Global Organized Crime Index



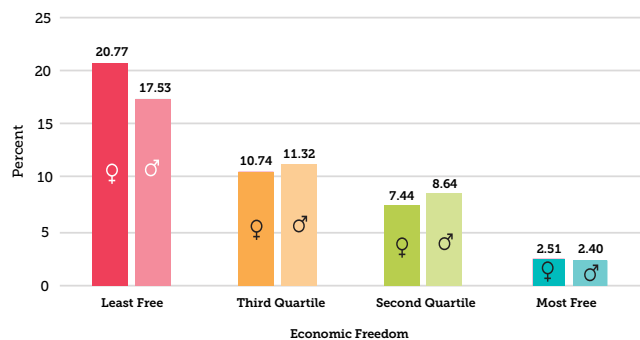
Education outcomes

The last set of development outcomes discussed in this report are focused on education. In economically free societies, people have more opportunities in the labor market that require highly specialized skills. As a result, we expect individuals living in free economies will have a stronger incentive to invest in acquiring the skills necessary to be competitive in the labor market. We should observe higher rates of enrollment and completion, at all levels of education, as we move from the least free to the most free economies.

Primary-aged children not in school

Enrollment in primary school captures the extent to which parents are willing and able to send their children to acquire basic reading and mathematics skills. Many countries across the world have compulsory education laws that require children to attend this level of schooling. Even still, there is some variation in primary school enrollment across countries. Figure 4.21 shows the relationship between economic freedom and the percentage of primary school-aged children not enrolled in school. In the least economically free countries, the percent of primary school-aged children not enrolled in school is 20.77% for girls and 17.53% for boys. In the most economically free societies, this falls to 2.51% for girls and 2.40% for boys. Once again, the gender gap in this outcome narrows from 3.24 percentage points to only 0.11 percentage points as you move from the least free economies to the freest.

Figure 4.21: Children Out of School (% of Primary School-Age)

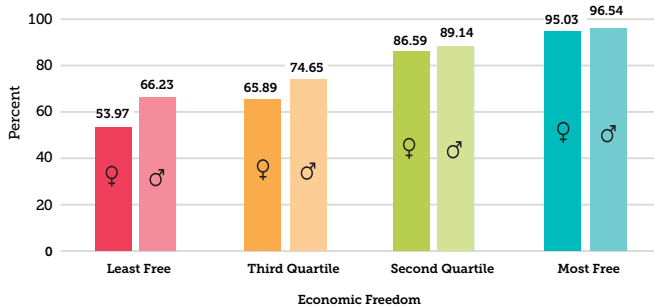


³ This measure of human trafficking activity captures all stages of human trafficking from recruitment efforts to the transfer and receipt of trafficked persons. It reflects human transactions based on coercion and deception for the purposes of exploitation (e.g., forced prostitution, organ harvesting, and slavery). It does not include human smuggling activities (i.e., facilitating illegal immigration). This measure considers the prevalence of the activity, the extent of the organized crime network to support that activity, and an assessment of the capacity for both the state and private actors to combat the activity. See the *Global Organized Crime Index 2023* annual report for a more detailed discussion of the methodology behind this data: <https://ocindex.net/crime/human_trafficking>.

Primary school completion rate

Figure 4.22 shows the percentage of boys and girls that persist to the fifth grade or complete their primary education. In the least free economies, 53.97% of girls and 66.23% of boys completed primary school, a gender gap of 12.26 percentage points. In countries with the highest levels of economic freedom, the primary school completion rate is 95.03% for girls and 96.54% for boys. The gender gap in primary completion rates shrinks to 1.51 percentage points in the freest societies.

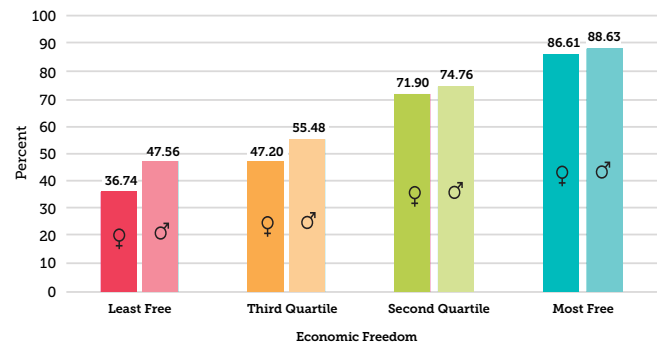
Figure 4.22: Primary Completion Rate (% of Population 25+)



Completion of lower-secondary education

Figure 4.23 examines the percentage of a country's population 25 years or older that has completed lower-secondary schooling. There is a very pronounced difference in the secondary school completion rates of the least free economies and of those that are the most economically free. In the least free societies, only 36.74% of women and 47.56% of men aged 25 or older have completed their lower-secondary education. In the freest economies, 86.61% of women and 88.63% of men 25 years or older have completed this level of schooling. Once again, the gender gap declines steadily as the level of economic freedom is increased. The least free economies have a gender gap in secondary completion rates of 10.82 percentage points, while the gap narrows to only 2.02 percentage points in the freest societies.

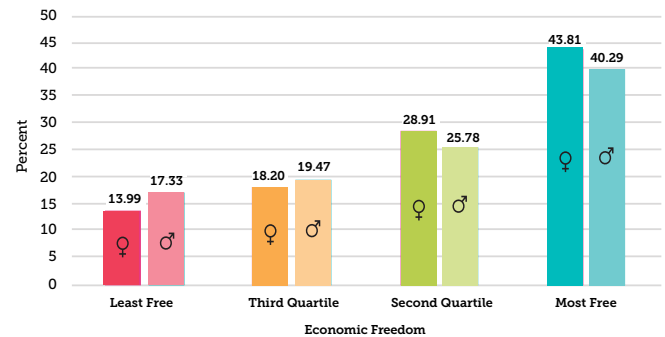
Figure 4.23: Completion of Lower-Secondary Education (% of Population 25+)



Completion of post-secondary education

Figure 4.24 shows the relationship between economic freedom and the percentage of the population aged 25 or older that has completed college or professional technical training beyond high school. At this higher level of education, the differences in completion rates across economic freedom quartiles is more pronounced. In the least free economies, only 13.99% of women and 17.33% of men ages 25 or older have completed post-secondary schooling. In the freest economies, however, the share of women over 25 who have completed higher education is 43.81%, while the post-secondary completion rate is 40.29% for men. Interestingly, the post-secondary completion rates are higher for men than they are for women in the two least free quartiles, but in the top two quartiles we see the reverse.

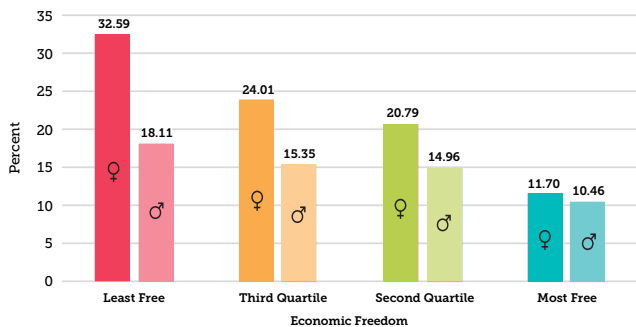
Figure 4.24: Completion of Post-Secondary Education (% of Population 25+)



Share of youth (ages 15–24) not in education, employment, or training

In figure 4.25, we can see the relationship between economic freedom and the percentage of men and women between the ages of 15 and 24 not building some form of human capital through education, training, or employment. Across all quartiles, the percentage of young women not receiving any formal human capital training is higher than that of young men. However, the gap between men and women narrows significantly as you move from the least free to the most free economies. In the least free economies, 32.59% of young women are not receiving any human capital training, while only 18.11% of men are not. This is a difference of 14.48 percentage points. In the freest economies, however, only 11.7% of young women and 10.46% of young men are not engaged in formal human capital formation. The gender difference in the freest economies amounts to only 1.24 percentage points. Once again, as we move from the least free economies to the freest, this educational outcome steadily improves.

Figure 4.25: Share of Youth Not in Education, Employment, or Training (% of Population Ages 15–24)

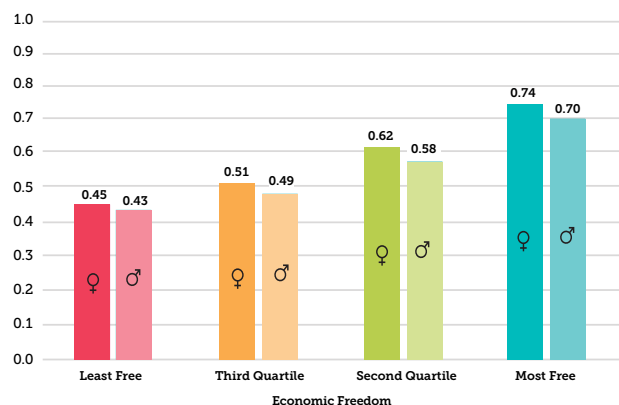


Scores on the Human Capital Index

Lastly, figure 4.26 shows the relationship between economic freedom and scores on the World Bank’s Human Capital Index (Gatti and Kraay, 2018). This index measures the labor-market potential of a child born today based on their estimated likelihood of survival, their expected total years of schooling (adjusted for quality), and their expected health status (adjusting for developmental health problems). Scores closer to 1 indicate widespread access to quality education and health care is likely to have a beneficial impact on the productivity of the average worker in that country. Average human capital index scores for women are consistently higher than they are for men, regardless of the level of economic freedom. However, the human capital scores for both men and women increase as the level of economic freedom increases. In the least economically free societies, the scores on the Human Capital Index for women are 0.45 and 0.43 for men. The scores increase to 0.74 for women and 0.70 for men in the freest societies.

The data discussed here suggest that women (and men) living in economically free societies will attain higher levels of education and build more human capital than those living in places where economic rights are restricted. For each educational outcome examined, greater economic freedom was associated with a better outcome and, typically, a less pronounced gender gap. It is not surprising that educational attainment is higher in societies that are economically free as these societies possess an institutional environment that generates more opportunities to benefit from an investment in human capital.

Figure 4.26: Human Capital Index (Scale 0–1)



5.0 Concluding Remarks

This edition of the *Women and Progress* report gives us several reasons to be optimistic. The historical trend of increasing gender equality under the law at the global level continues through 2022. Seven economies have been newly added to the list of countries with no gender disparity under the law (bringing this total to 69). In addition, there were 15 countries that showed overall increases in their Gender Disparity Index (GDI) scores since 2020, while only two countries showed decreases. Gabon stood out as the country with the most significant improvement in women’s economic rights between 2020 and 2022.

Exploring the differences in the level of gender disparity across seven regions of the world also brings several observations to light. Notably, most of the world seems to be converging toward gender parity over time. The Middle East and North Africa region is being left behind as their GDI scores still fall well below the rest of the world. That said, every region of the world exhibited some improvement in GDI scores throughout the entire period, even those where gender disparity is still high relative to the global average.

Further, the positive relationship between economic freedom and women’s well-being identified in previous versions of

Women and Progress is reinforced with updated data for the year 2022 and an expanded set of health outcomes. This report examines eight measures of labor-market success, 10 health variables, and six measures of educational attainment. For each and every outcome examined, the pattern in the data suggests that women are more likely to flourish in economically free societies than in societies that restrict economic rights.

Where possible, this report also compares the development outcomes of women and men. In doing so, we can see that economic freedom benefits both. We see that there is no instance in which men or women were made worse off by more economic freedom. This comparison also allows us to examine gender gaps. We find that in nearly every instance, the gender gap narrows as economic freedom increases.

Overall, the empirical relationships presented here suggest that economic freedom provides many benefits to women. By granting women permission to choose their own path and expanding the set of education and employment options available to them, economic freedom enables women to take control over their lives. Economic freedom also allows every member of society to benefit from the talents and ideas that women have to offer through their participation in the market.

The opinions expressed by the author are her own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Fraser Institute, its Board of Directors, its donors and supporters, or its staff. This publication in no way implies that the Fraser Institute, its Directors, or staff are in favor of, or oppose the passage of, any bill; or that they support or oppose any particular political party or candidate.

References

Berlin, Isaiah (1969). Two Concepts of Liberty. In *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford University Press): 118–172.

Dawson, John W. (2003). Causality in the Freedom-Growth Relationship. *European Journal of Political Economy* 19, 3 (September): 479–495.

Fike, Rosemarie (2023). *Women and Progress: Moving Closer to Gender Equality?* Fraser Institute. <<https://womenandprogress.org/sites/default/files/women-and-progress-2023-moving-closer-to-gender-equity.pdf>>, as of February 19, 2025.

Gwartney, James, Robert Lawson, and Ryan Murphy (2024). *Economic Freedom of the World: 2024 Annual Report*. Fraser Institute. <<https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/economic-freedom-of-the-world-2024.pdf>>, as of February 25, 2025.

Hall, Joshua C., and Robert A. Lawson (2014). Economic Freedom of the World: An Accounting of the Literature. *Contemporary Economic Policy* 32, 1 (January): 1–19.

Lawson, Robert (2022). Economic Freedom in the Literature What Is It Good (Bad) For? In James Gwartney, Robert Lawson, Joshua Hall, and Ryan Murphy, *Economic Freedom of the World: 2022 Annual Report* (Fraser Institute): 187. <<https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/economic-freedom-in-the-literature.pdf>>, as of February 24, 2025.

Lawson, Robert, Vincent Miozzi, and Meg Tuszynski (2024). Economic Freedom and Growth, Income, Investment, and Inequality: A Quantitative Summary of the Literature. *Southern Economic Journal* 90, 4 (April): 1099–1135.

Walker, Maggie Lena (1912). Let Woman Choose Her Own Vocation. Speech to Negro Young Person's Christian and Educational Congress, Hampton, Virginia, July 14, 1912.

Data Sources

Gatti, Roberta, and Aart Kraay (2018). *The Human Capital Project*. Human Capital Project, World Bank Group. <<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/363661540826242921>>, as of March 11, 2025.

Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (2023). *Global Organized Crime Index, 2023*. Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. <https://ocindex.net/crime/human_trafficking>, as of March 11, 2025.

Gwartney, James D., Robert A. Lawson, Joshua Hall, and Ryan Murphy (2024). Economic Freedom Dataset, published in *Economic Freedom of the World: 2024 Annual Report*. Fraser Institute. <<https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/economic-freedom-of-the-world-2024.pdf>>, as of February 19, 2025.

World Bank (2024a). *Women, Business, and the Law 2024*.

World Bank (2024b). World Development Indicators. <<http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators>>, as of February 24, 2025.

Appendix

Figure A.1 depicts the Gender Adjustment Index Summary Score for all 165 countries listed in decreasing order according to overall GDI score.

Table A.1: List of Countries, Gender Disparity Index Scores and Rankings for 2022

Country	GDI Score	GDI Rank	Country	GDI Score	GDI Rank
Albania	1	1	Kazakhstan	1	1
Armenia	1	1	Lao PDR	1	1
Australia	1	1	Latvia	1	1
Austria	1	1	Liberia	1	1
Bahamas, The	1	1	Lithuania	1	1
Belgium	1	1	Luxembourg	1	1
Bhutan	1	1	Mauritius	1	1
Bolivia	1	1	Mexico	1	1
Brazil	1	1	Moldova	1	1
Bulgaria	1	1	Mongolia	1	1
Cabo Verde	1	1	Netherlands	1	1
Cambodia	1	1	New Zealand	1	1
Canada	1	1	Nicaragua	1	1
Costa Rica	1	1	Norway	1	1
Côte d'Ivoire	1	1	Paraguay	1	1
Croatia	1	1	Peru	1	1
Czechia	1	1	Poland	1	1
Denmark	1	1	Portugal	1	1
Dominican Republic	1	1	Romania	1	1
Ecuador	1	1	Rwanda	1	1
El Salvador	1	1	Serbia	1	1
Estonia	1	1	Singapore	1	1
Finland	1	1	Slovak Republic	1	1
France	1	1	South Africa	1	1
Gabon	1	1	Spain	1	1
Georgia	1	1	Sweden	1	1
Germany	1	1	Switzerland	1	1
Greece	1	1	Taiwan	1	1
Hong Kong SAR, China	1	1	Timor-Leste	1	1
Hungary	1	1	Togo	1	1
Iceland	1	1	Uganda	1	1
Ireland	1	1	United Kingdom	1	1
Italy	1	1	United States	1	1

Table A.1 Continued: List of Countries, Gender Disparity Index Scores and Rankings for 2022

Country	GDI Score	GDI Rank	Country	GDI Score	GDI Rank
Venezuela, RB	1	1	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.8824	94
Viet Nam	1	1	Botswana	0.8824	94
Zimbabwe	1	1	China	0.8824	94
Colombia	0.9412	70	Ethiopia	0.8824	94
Cyprus	0.9412	70	Gambia, The	0.8824	94
Fiji	0.9412	70	India	0.8824	94
Ghana	0.9412	70	Israel	0.8824	94
Guatemala	0.9412	70	Japan	0.8824	94
Guyana	0.9412	70	Kenya	0.8824	94
Honduras	0.9412	70	Korea, Rep.	0.8824	94
Jamaica	0.9412	70	Kyrgyz Republic	0.8824	94
Lesotho	0.9412	70	Malawi	0.8824	94
Malta	0.9412	70	Myanmar	0.8824	94
Montenegro	0.9412	70	Nigeria	0.8824	94
Mozambique	0.9412	70	Russian Federation	0.8824	94
Namibia	0.9412	70	Sri Lanka	0.8824	94
Nepal	0.9412	70	Suriname	0.8824	94
North Macedonia	0.9412	70	Tajikistan	0.8824	94
Panama	0.9412	70	Tanzania	0.8824	94
Seychelles	0.9412	70	United Arab Emirates	0.8824	94
Sierra Leone	0.9412	70	Azerbaijan	0.8235	120
Slovenia	0.9412	70	Burkina Faso	0.8235	120
Thailand	0.9412	70	Burundi	0.8235	120
Trinidad and Tobago	0.9412	70	Central African Republic	0.8235	120
Türkiye	0.9412	70	Chile	0.8235	120
Uruguay	0.9412	70	Guinea	0.8235	120
Zambia	0.9412	70	Indonesia	0.8235	120
Angola	0.8824	94	Lebanon	0.8235	120
Argentina	0.8824	94	Papua New Guinea	0.8235	120
Barbados	0.8824	94	Philippines	0.8235	120
Belarus	0.8824	94	Ukraine	0.8235	120
Belize	0.8824	94	Bangladesh	0.7647	131
Benin	0.8824	94	Congo, Dem. Rep.	0.7647	131

Table A.1 Continued: List of Countries, Gender Disparity Index Scores and Rankings for 2022

Country	GDI Score	GDI Rank
Haiti	0.7647	131
Morocco	0.7647	131
Pakistan	0.7647	131
Algeria	0.7059	136
Brunei Darussalam	0.7059	136
Comoros	0.7059	136
Libya	0.7059	136
Mali	0.7059	136
Saudi Arabia	0.7059	136
Senegal	0.7059	136
Tunisia	0.7059	136
Bahrain	0.6471	144
Djibouti	0.6471	144
Madagascar	0.6471	144
Malaysia	0.6471	144
Somalia	0.6471	144
Congo, Rep.	0.5882	149
Guinea-Bissau	0.5882	149
Chad	0.5294	151
Eswatini	0.5294	151
Oman	0.5294	151
Qatar	0.5294	151
Syrian Arab Republic	0.5294	151
Cameroon	0.4706	156
Iraq	0.4706	156
Jordan	0.4706	156
Kuwait	0.4706	156
Mauritania	0.4706	156
Egypt, Arab Rep.	0.4118	161
Iran, Islamic Rep.	0.4118	161
Niger	0.4118	161
Yemen, Rep.	0.4118	161
Sudan	0.3529	165



