

ECONOMIC FREEDOM AND GENDER NORMS

ROSEMARIE FIKE



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Economic Freedom and Gender Norms

Rosemarie Fike



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Executive Summary

This study presents a cross-country comparative institutional analysis that explicitly examines the relationship between economic freedom as measured by the Fraser Institute's *Economic Freedom of the World* index, and a unique measure of gender norms created using World Values Survey (WVS) data. It provides a discussion of several theoretical arguments that suggest greater economic freedom ought to result in more equitable gender norms, as well as those arguing that gender norms will be more equitable under central planning. The results of the empirical analysis suggest that greater economic freedom is associated with gender norms that exhibit less of a male preference. These results hold even when the measure of economic freedom is lagged by five and 10 years. Overall, this analysis provides empirical support for the *doux commerce* thesis.

Introduction: Why Informal Institutions Matter

Reality is processed through the lens of culture. As such, different cultural lenses can and do give rise to different conceptions of the good, different economic choices and so different economic outcomes. (Storr 2013: 4).

For people to have the ability to flourish, it is essential that they are able to direct the course of their own lives. Economic freedom refers to the set of formal institutions (or rules) that allow us to choose for ourselves where to live, who to interact with, what type of occupation to pursue, who to conduct business with, and how to spend our time. These rules protect our ability to engage in voluntary agreements with others to earn an income, acquire property, and choose how to manage or trade the resources we acquire. In many countries across the world, women often face formal legal barriers that limit their ability to exercise the same economic rights as men (World Bank, 2020).

Previous empirical work (Fike, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2023) suggests that women’s overall wellbeing tends to improve as the level of economic freedom in a society increases. Does this mean that improvements in formal economic freedom benefit all aspects of women’s lives? Certainly not. The *Economic Freedom of the World* index, *Gender Disparity Index* (GDI), and other measures of economic institutions only capture the formal rules. These measures do not fully capture the extent to which the informal rules in practice support the formal legal and regulatory environment. It is quite possible that women in some places have the same economic rights as men on paper but prevailing social norms (specifically gender norms) can act as a barrier that prevents them from exercising those rights.¹

Martha Nussbaum’s work, for example, discusses how informal institutions (like gender norms and the remnants of a caste system), can prevent women from being able to exercise economic rights, stating that some women “have been raised in a nation in which women are formally the equals of men... (but) have also suffered from deprivations that do arise from sex discrimination” (2000: 20). These informal barriers mean that the *de jure* rules are far removed from the *de facto* experiences of women in many places. Economic freedom in name is less valuable if gender norms make it difficult for women to participate

1 It is likewise possible that gender norms are such that women’s economic rights are better respected in practice than they are on paper, and that people turn a blind eye to formal rules that limit women’s rights in some cases.

in the market. Examining social norms more directly is an important next step to advancing our understanding of the full set of constraints that affect women's economic decisions.

Social norms are the dominant expectations about how people should or should not behave. Social norms are broad and encompass both rules and defined roles. Punishments for violating social norms tend to be enforced socially, and not through formal governance structures (i.e., you won't be fined or imprisoned for violating a social norm unless it has been embedded in the formal law).

Social norms are a part of a society's broader culture. Storr defines culture as "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings that is shared by a group of people and learned by new members as they become a part of the group" (Storr 2013: 3). Similarly, Mokyr defines culture as "a set of beliefs, values, and preferences, capable of affecting behavior, that are socially (not genetically) transmitted and that are shared by some subset of society" (Mokyr, 2018: 8). In this view, culture has an evolutionary element because it involves social learning and social selection since these beliefs, values, and preferences are passed from one generation to the next through socialization and not genetic means. This socialization takes the form of direct (often subconscious) imitation as well as symbolic means—spoken and written language, and images. These informal rules can show up as unspoken constraints that shape our major life choices – often without our being consciously aware of their influence.

In this analysis, the term *gender norms*, is used to refer to shared expectations about the role(s) men and women should play, the rules men and women should follow, and the behaviors men and women should adopt or avoid.

Gender Norms Affect Our Economic Choices

Gender norms undoubtedly shape our expectations about who should be primarily responsible for childcare and other household tasks and whether it is appropriate for women to work in certain industries or at certain times of the day. These beliefs, values, and preferences shape the choices that individuals make about human capital investments, and they influence the decisions families make about which partner should remain in the labor force and which one should step away from their job to spend more time caring for the children and the household.

According to Claudia Goldin, gender norms dictate that women ought to bear more of the responsibility to care for children and other household members through unpaid labor. These expectations about how household labor should be divided result in men and women making distinctly different labor market choices. For example, women who have children tend to gravitate toward positions that allow them the flexibility of being the “on-call” caregiver, and many of these types of positions come with lower wages (Goldin, 2021: 171). When discussing the education and labor market choices of women in the US in the 1950s Claudia Goldin states that “(t)he greatest constraints on these women were the norms of their day that dictated to those with young children that they *should* stay at home and that their children would ‘suffer’ if they worked” (Goldin, 2021: 100).

Furthermore, women who dared to challenge gender norms were often met with harassment, isolation, or even threats of violence. For example, Lemke (2022) discusses the challenges Elinor Ostrom faced when attempting to pursue her Ph.D.² She states, “(m)any in the political science department also opposed her admission to graduate study in political science on the grounds that funding women was likely to be a waste of resources if not downright harmful to the reputation of the department” (Lemke, 2022: 107). In addition, Ostrom’s husband at the time was so disapproving of her choice to pursue her graduate studies that they divorced. In other words, prevailing cultural norms not only dictate that it is unacceptable for women to enter certain fields, but they can also empower others to harass women for challenging the norms.

An alternative argument is that biological differences between men and women, rather than gender norms, are the driving factors determining who cares for small children. This

2 In 2009, Elinor Ostrom became the first woman to win the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel.

was certainly true prior to the twentieth century, implying that these physiological differences likely played a role in shaping the gender norms of many generations ago, which still affect our economic decisions today. It is also important to acknowledge that technological developments have enabled women to use breast pumps or formula and take other steps to meet their children's needs without being physically present.³ Outside of the immediate healing time that people need after giving birth, women do not have obvious physical constraints that should prevent them from joining the labor force if they desire. Fathers seem equally capable of holding bottles, changing diapers, helping to educate their children, and providing other types of household caring labor even when children are still very young. Similarly, technological advancements in construction, farming, mining, and other physically intensive forms of economic production have made it so that brute strength is not as necessary to achieve success in many occupations traditionally dominated by men. Gender norms that reinforce a default assumption that women have the comparative advantage in providing caring labor may result in many women (and men) making suboptimal economic decisions. At the societal level, this could result in a major misallocation of labor.⁴

Goldin's work reinforces and builds upon the important insights of earlier economists who studied the drivers of gender differences in labor market outcomes. Much of this literature (Becker, 1985; Goldin, 1990; and Blau and Kahn, 2017) attributes the underlying causes of the gender-wage gap to different choices that women and men make when it comes to their human capital investments and decisions about how much time to spend in the labor market. In a case study using data on Uber drivers, Cooke et al. (2019) similarly found that the main drivers of the gender pay gap for Uber drivers again reflected systematic differences in the choices that men and women make about what times to work, how fast to drive, and how much experience they acquire.

3 Access to these tools is also likely to become more widespread at higher levels of development. Since economic freedom has been shown in the literature to cause higher levels of per capita income, there is even more reason to expect that gender norms will exhibit less of a male preference as economic freedom rises. The physiological differences between men and women should not be as binding of a constraint on the division of household labor in places with more economic freedom.

4 Gender norms can also prevent men from pursuing opportunities they would excel at and can limit men's choices in important ways. For example, if courts tend to be biased in favor of mothers when it comes to child custody hearings then there will be a systematic misallocation of parental rights, i.e., some children would be placed with female guardians who are less fit than their male counterparts. Presumably, a court system acting within a society that possesses gender norms with less of a "female preference" in this area would better ensure that children are placed in the hands of the parent better suited to ensure their physical and emotional needs are met. As Nancy Folbre observed "(g)ender identity in general is expensive. Just as femininity imposes costs on women, masculinity imposes costs on men. Men face pressures not to display weakness, and sometimes, to sacrifice their lives in military combat or other dangerous jobs" (2009: 313).

It is important to note that these choices, however, are *always* embedded in a broader institutional context that is made up of both formal rules and informal social norms. Since gender norms are likely to influence these choices in important ways, they are worthy of further examination. When discussing potential ways to help women get ahead in the labor market, Goldin suggests altering social norms so that an individual's career/family tradeoffs no longer depend on gender (2021: 219).⁵ That is, if gender norms were such that the expectation that household labor would be shared equally by men and women, then labor market outcomes would likely exhibit greater gender equality. But how do social norms change?

A state can mandate equal pay and institute gender quotas, but these rules do not change the underlying shared beliefs that people hold regarding the "appropriate" roles and behaviors for men and women. Government mandates focus on imposing a particular outcome that has been deemed desirable by the political process. If policy changes do not address the underlying gender norms, they may interact with informal norms in unpredictable, and potentially counterproductive ways. One memorable example of the difficulty in instituting policy changes to improve women's labor market outcome is detailed in the Antecol et al. (2018) analysis of a gender-neutral, family-friendly formal policy allowing those who take parental leave to stop the tenure clock with the hopes that it would close the gender-gap among tenured college faculty. While men and women were equally likely to take advantage of this policy, their time at home was spent differently. As a result, the policy improved the odds that men would receive tenure but reduced the odds that women would receive it.

Examining the relationship between gender norms and the quality of a society's economic institutions could help us begin to understand a bit more about how formal and informal institutions interact. The empirical relationship between formal economic institutions and informal gender norms, however, has not been extensively explored in the literature. North (1990) argues that there is feedback between formal and informal institutions, they are complementary, and each can constrain and shape the development of the other. Boettke et al. (2008) provide a theoretical model to illustrate how the interaction between formal and informal institutions can stand in the way of meaningful social change and economic development when there is a significant mismatch between the informal and formal rules. Williamson (2009) further argues that formal institutions only work well when embedded in a set of informal rules that are consistent with, and supportive of, the formal rules. This report contributes to the literature on formal and informal institutions by presenting a cross-country comparative institutional analysis that explicitly examines the relationship between economic freedom and a measure of gender norms.

5 Goldin (2021) does not explicitly offer suggestions regarding how to go about altering gender norms.

Economic Freedom, *Doux Commerce*, and Gender Norms

In *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu stated that “[c]ommerce is a cure for the most destructive prejudices; for it is almost a general rule that wherever we find agreeable manners, there commerce flourishes; and that wherever there is commerce, there we meet with agreeable manners” (1748: 346). This claim that participating in commercial activity civilizes people and encourages them to engage in virtuous behavior has come to be referred to as the *doux commerce* thesis. Scholars like Bernard Mandeville (1732), Voltaire (1733), Adam Smith (1763), and David Hume (1777) were among the first to argue that markets tend to encourage people to become more virtuous and agreeable. To benefit from market interactions, one must interact and cooperate with countless other individuals who have different preferences, purposes, religious beliefs, and cultural traditions. Those who succeed in markets are alert to what others desire and can cooperate peacefully with others, regardless of whether the desires of others align with one’s personal views and goals.

In *Lectures on Jurisprudence* Adam Smith notes that the incentives of markets provide a check on behavior, discouraging people from engaging in immoral or unethical dealings. He states that “[a] dealer is afraid of losing his character and is scrupulous in observing every engagement. When a person makes perhaps 20 contracts in a day, he cannot gain so much by endeavoring to impose on his neighbors. The very appearance of a cheat would make him lose” (1763/2011: 458).

More recent literature exploring the *doux commerce* thesis suggests that markets cultivate cosmopolitan norms and encourage behaviors like honesty, fairness, tolerance, and other *bourgeois virtues* (McCloskey, 2006, 2010, 2016; and Storr and Choi, 2019). People who participate regularly in markets are thus rewarded for exhibiting greater tolerance of others who may look different, have unfamiliar upbringings, and make markedly different life choices than they do. There has been empirical evidence in the literature that supports this position (Berggren and Nilsson, 2013; Storr and Choi, 2019; and Wright, 2020).

In addition, greater economic freedom expands the scope of the market, opens more avenues for economic exchanges to be made, and creates more opportunities to gain from trade. As economic freedom increases, incomes tend to increase (Dawson, 2003), and the demand for goods and services will increase along with it. When people demand more goods and services, this is also going to increase the demand for the labor necessary to

produce those things. Even groups that are marginalized will begin to see their labor market prospects improve.

Becker (1971) showed that the market process will also penalize employers that engage in discriminatory practices. This occurs because firm owners with discriminatory preferences will have to pay a wage premium if they only hire workers from their preferred group. If the prevailing gender norms exhibit a male preference, women will cost less to hire. An entrepreneur who chooses to challenge the dominant gender norms and hire women will have lower labor costs than those who continue to discriminate and will be able to offer their products at lower prices. If other firms do not follow suit, they are at a disadvantage. Thus, the pursuit of profits will encourage people to, at the very least, behave as if they do not hold the discriminatory preference in the first place.⁶

In addition, the market process—unlike the political process—makes room for firms that cater to niche (or minority) opinions, cultures, and populations. In democratic societies, the majority opinion determines how resources are allocated. When markets are contestable, with free entry and exit, if one firm ignores or undervalues the preferences of the minority, it creates an opportunity for another firm to profit by catering to them (Becker, 1971).

Finally, to Montesquieu, “[c]ommerce has everywhere diffused a knowledge of the manners of all nations: these are compared one with another, and from this comparison arise the greatest advantages” (1748: 346). This alludes to the way in which the market process can be a means to discover, via spontaneous order, the types of manners, beliefs, and norms that allow societies to flourish.

If these positions are correct, then we would expect economically free countries to exhibit less of a default male preference.

6 Becker does offer one caveat—if most of the consumers have discriminatory preferences, they may be willing to pay a higher price for products that are not produced by members of the marginalized group. If this is true, an entrepreneur who challenges norms may lose more in revenue than they save in production costs. However, this can only hold in a society that does not interact with people from other, less discriminatory, cultures. Since economic freedom also increases the likelihood that firms will trade with people from other cultural contexts, this is less likely to be an impediment in more economically free societies.

Socialism and Gender Norms

Other scholars have made the case that central planning under socialism created conditions under which women were treated more equitably than they were treated under more market-based economies. For example, Kristen Ghodsee's book, *Why Women Have Better Sex Under Socialism: And Other Arguments for Economic Independence* (2018) argues that women living in capitalist societies have less control over their lives, are treated unequally in terms of pay, and are constantly sexualized through media and advertisements. In contrast, women in socialist societies had greater independence because the state provided more employment and educational opportunities for women, which made them less dependent on men.⁷

Ghodsee and Mead (2018) further explore the ways in which government interventions under socialism brought about many changes that improved the lives of women, such as daycares, abortions, social safety nets, and work-life balance. In addition, they note that women were encouraged to enter STEM fields, and even in 2015, six of the top 10 countries with the largest percentage of female physicians were former soviet countries. The idea that men and women were equal, but different, was always embedded into socialist ideology along with the belief that the state should play a strong role in ensuring women's biological differences did not put them at a disadvantage (Ghodsee and Meade, 2018: 103).

Still others have argued that "while capitalism creates favorable possibilities for women, it also puts limits on these possibilities" (Cudd and Holmstrom, 2011 138). While Holmstrom acknowledges that some women do benefit from the institution of capitalism, she concludes, unlike Cudd, that the negatives outweigh the positives. Economic freedom did not initially apply to everyone, it prioritizes maximizing production output instead of other goals like health or happiness, it is plagued with problems like volatility, unemployment, and inequality. Since women tend to be in more vulnerable positions than men, they will disproportionately bear the negative burdens that come with capitalism. As such, "feminists truly committed to women's well-being...should oppose capitalism" (Cudd and Holmstrom, 2018: 139).

If this alternative position is true, then the empirical relationship between economic freedom and gender norms should show that economically free countries exhibit more of a male bias than countries that are less market oriented.

⁷ There are also examples where people have argued just the opposite, that Soviet central planners tended to ignore women. An excellent collection of such examples can be found in Slavenka Drakulić's *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (1992).

Given that there is some debate about these relationships, examining the empirical evidence could help us gain additional clarity about whether economic freedom is associated with social norms that prioritize men over women when it comes to employment, education, and leadership opportunities, or whether economic freedom is associated with gender norms that treat men and women more equally.

Measuring Gender Norms

Building on the work of Alesina et al. (2013), the World Values Survey data is used to construct an index of gender norms.⁸ This measure of gender norms captures the extent to which society gives priority to males over females when it comes to education, employment, and leadership opportunities.⁹ While these social attitudes don't capture every facet of gender norms that exist in a society, they do provide some insight into what residents of a particular place think is the "appropriate" role for women in society.

There are three questions from the World Values Survey that are used to construct this index. The questions, possible responses, and scoring methods are provided here:

1. When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women.
 - Agree = 0
 - Neither agree nor disagree = 0.5
 - Disagree = 1
2. Men make better political leaders than women do.
 - Agree Strongly = 0
 - Agree = 0.33
 - Disagree = 0.66
 - Disagree Strongly = 1
3. University is more important for a man than a woman.
 - Agree Strongly = 0
 - Agree = 0.33
 - Disagree = 0.66
 - Disagree Strongly = 1

The measure of gender norms is then calculated by taking a simple average of each survey participant's responses across all three questions to arrive at an indexed score between

8 Alesina, et al. (2013) creates their measure of gender norms including only questions 1 and 2 above, while this analysis includes an additional variable to construct a broader indexed measure of gender norms.

9 This measure of gender norms captures whether society has a "male preference" when it comes to jobs, political leadership, and university education. Additional work should explore other aspects of gender norms.

zero and one.¹⁰ These individual norms scores are then averaged together to arrive at a country's macro-level Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) summary score. The macro-level averages are also provided for each individual question.¹¹

Low scores on the GSNI indicate that on average, the dominant view in this society is that men should take priority over women when it comes to formal employment, higher education, and political leadership. Higher scores on the GSNI indicate that a society is less inclined to place a default preference for men over women in these areas. While this measure of gender norms is imperfect, higher scores should be indicative of social attitudes that are more tolerant of women taking on less traditional roles and participating in the formal economy. In practice, no country has a score as low as zero or as high as one. The lowest score in the sample is 0.2684 which belongs to Iraq in the 2005-2008 period, while the highest score of 0.8879 belongs to Norway and occurred during the same period.

10 Observations for which individuals indicated a response of "neither" or "I don't know" were omitted from the sample.

11 Appendix Table A.2 presents the complete set of macro-level gender norms data used in this analysis.

How Gender Norms Have Changed Over the Years (1995-2020)

The World Value Survey collects data in waves, with each wave collecting data from different countries in different years. For some countries, there is data for only a single year, while others have data for multiple years. Given the nature of this data, it is difficult to determine how norms have changed over time. It is also misleading to attempt to look at a global average from period to period, as different countries are sampled in each period provided. The global average may decrease from one year to the next, not because gender norms became less tolerant of women participating in the market—obtaining an education, or becoming political leaders—but simply because an entirely different set of countries is being sampled.

Data showing how the gender norms data changes over time is depicted in Tables 1A to 1D below. This set of tables only includes the 75 countries with more than one year of data.¹²

Out of 75 countries, 31 experienced steady increases in gender norms scores over time, demonstrating less of a gender-bias with each wave of data that is provided. These countries are listed in Table 1A. In Table 1B, there are 10 countries listed that experienced a steady decline in gender norms. In these countries, the gender norms index scores get smaller with each period sampled.

12 Appendix Table A.2 contains a version of this table that does include the 29 countries with data for only one year.

Table 1A: Countries Experiencing a Strict Increase in Gender Norms Scores in All Periods Measured

Country	1995–1998	1999–2004	2005–2008	2009–2013	2014–2017	2018–2020	Difference Final Year–First Year
Albania	0.5180	0.5425					0.0245
Andorra			0.8040			0.8224	0.0184
Armenia	0.3815			0.4984			0.1169
Australia	0.6787		0.7199	0.7591		0.8163	0.1377
Belarus	0.4457			0.5524			0.1067
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.5387	0.6300					0.0913
Bulgaria	0.5270		0.6321				0.1051
Canada		0.7608	0.7697				0.0089
Estonia	0.5233			0.6471			0.1238
Georgia	0.3816			0.4689	0.5457		0.1641
Germany	0.7191		0.7322	0.7512		0.8018	0.0827
Ghana			0.4693	0.4694			0.0001
Hungary	0.5586			0.6894			0.1308
Jordan		0.3004	0.3148		0.3364	0.3785	0.0781
Lebanon				0.5112		0.5522	0.0410
Moldova	0.4419	0.5203	0.5483				0.1063
Montenegro	0.5284	0.5752					0.0468
Netherlands			0.7782	0.7822			0.0040
New Zealand	0.7102	0.7517	0.7620			0.8072	0.0970
North Macedonia	0.5410	0.5962					0.0552
Norway	0.8304		0.8879				0.0575
Poland	0.4785		0.5900	0.6258			0.1473
Puerto Rico	0.6570	0.7392				0.8184	0.1614
Serbia	0.5429	0.6046	0.6732		0.6800		0.1451
Slovenia	0.6081		0.7152	0.7389			0.1308
Switzerland	0.6274		0.7485				0.1211
Taiwan	0.4391		0.5548	0.5938		0.6222	0.1831
Tunisia				0.3887		0.4381	0.0494
United Kingdom	0.7146		0.7262				0.0117
Uruguay	0.5334		0.6967	0.7497			0.2163
Venezuela, RB	0.6137	0.6691					0.0554

Table 1B: Countries Experiencing a Strict Decline in Gender Norms Scores in All Periods Measured

Country	1995–1998	1999–2004	2005–2008	2009–2013	2014–2017	2018–2020	Difference Final Year–First Year
Algeria		0.4066			0.3759		-0.0307
Azerbaijan	0.4063			0.3714			-0.0350
Ecuador				0.6589		0.6001	-0.0588
Ethiopia			0.7807			0.5905	-0.1902
Finland	0.7867		0.7596				-0.0271
Guatemala		0.6929				0.6664	-0.0265
Indonesia		0.5222	0.4894			0.3884	-0.1338
Kazakhstan				0.4932		0.4785	-0.0147
Kyrgyz Republic		0.5135		0.4416		0.3547	-0.0869

In Table 1C, eight countries are listed, all of which experienced a decline in their gender norms scores during the 2005-2013 period, with scores increasing during the 2014-2020 period. Lastly, in Table 1D, there are 27 countries listed that had gender norms scores that increased in the earlier sample periods but experienced a slight regression in their gender norms scores in the 2014-2020 period.

Table 1C: Countries with Scores that Peak in the Last Period Measured but Decline in the Middle Period

Country	1995–1998	1999–2004	2005–2008	2009–2013	2014–2017	2018–2020	Difference Final Year–First Year
Bangladesh	0.4192	0.3391				0.3852	-0.034
Egypt, Arab Rep.		0.2977	0.2606	0.2912		0.3411	0.0434
Hong Kong			0.5904		0.5765	0.599	0.0086
Iran, Islamic Rep.		0.3858	0.351			0.4159	0.0302
Japan	0.4667	0.5094	0.5109	0.4965		0.587	0.1204
Malaysia			0.3976	0.3963		0.4786	0.081
Romania	0.4284		0.5813	0.5763		0.605	0.1766
Thailand			0.5461	0.5389		0.5456	-0.0004

Table 1D: Countries with Scores that Peak in the Middle Period Measured but Decline in the Last Period

Country	1995-1998	1999-2004	2005-2008	2009-2013	2014-2017	2018-2020	Difference Final Year-First Year
Argentina	0.6502	0.6543	0.6679	0.7137	0.7001		0.0499
Brazil	0.5335		0.6725		0.7100	0.6659	0.1325
Chile	0.5960	0.6027	0.5852	0.6844		0.6099	0.0139
China	0.5197	0.5528	0.5038	0.5270		0.5371	0.0174
Colombia	0.5429		0.6401	0.6931		0.6317	0.0888
Cyprus			0.6322	0.6672		0.6027	-0.0295
India	0.5136	0.4444	0.4144	0.4282			-0.0854
Iraq		0.2879	0.2684	0.3799		0.3675	0.0796
Korea, Rep.	0.4624	0.5388	0.5305	0.5656		0.4856	0.0232
Mexico	0.4983	0.6211	0.6404	0.6855		0.6421	0.1438
Morocco		0.2688	0.4834	0.4616			0.1928
Nigeria	0.4097	0.3704		0.3686		0.4085	-0.0013
Pakistan	0.3749	0.4572		0.3276		0.2688	-0.1062
Peru	0.6087	0.6818	0.6892	0.7108		0.6477	0.0391
Philippines	0.4563	0.3948		0.4112		0.4169	-0.0394
Russian Federation	0.4657		0.5126	0.5314	0.5044		0.0387
Rwanda			0.5828	0.5103			-0.0725
Singapore		0.5709		0.5621			-0.0088
South Africa		0.6177	0.5996	0.5585			-0.0592
Spain	0.6450	0.7342	0.7767	0.7563			0.1114
Sweden	0.8605	0.8736	0.8570	0.8596			-0.0008
Trinidad and Tobago			0.7096	0.7096			-0.0001
Turkey	0.4792	0.4985	0.5203	0.4371		0.5034	0.0242
Ukraine	0.4940		0.5445	0.5781		0.5661	0.0720
United States	0.6670	0.7596	0.7192	0.7563	0.7225		0.0555
Vietnam		0.5006	0.5372			0.4960	-0.0046
Zimbabwe		0.5863		0.5877		0.5751	-0.0112

There is not much of a discernable pattern in terms of *where* social norms increased, decreased, or stayed fairly constant over time. Twenty-three countries exhibited gender norms scores that were lower in the final period sampled than they were in the first period sampled. This indicates that people living in these 23 countries have, in general, become less tolerant of women taking on employment, education, and political leadership roles as they were in the late 1990s/early 2000s.

However, there were far more countries that ended with gender norms scores that were higher. In addition to the 31 countries that experienced strict improvements in their gender norms scores over time, there were 21 countries with gender norms scores that were higher in the final period sampled than they were in the first period sampled, despite experiencing some fluctuation in between. In total, 52 of the 75 countries had higher gender norms scores at the end of the sample than they did at the beginning. This provides some loose support for the claim that gender norms, overall, are becoming more tolerant as time progresses. However, there seems to be no strong time trend present.

The Empirical Relationship Between Economic Freedom and Gender Norms

Other studies have attempted to address the question of how informal institutions, like social norms, are shaped and altered over time. For example, Alesina et al. (2013) argues that gender norms were heavily influenced by the type of farming methods that were adopted in a society. They found that traditional use of the plough is associated with gender norms that encourage women to participate more in domestic activities and less in the formal economy (i.e., outside of the household). My analysis is different in that it focuses on how differences in formal economic institutions might affect informal gender norms. This is an important policy question, as it is impossible to change the historical agricultural choices our ancestors made, but it is possible to make changes to the rules that govern our economic, political, and social interactions.

Economic Freedom

The measure of economic freedom used in this empirical analysis is a version of the *Economic Freedom of the World* index summary score that is not adjusted for gender equality under the formal law (Gwartney et al.: 2022). Using the unadjusted version of the economic freedom index ensures that there is less contamination between the dependent variable (gender norms) and independent variable of interest (economic freedom). This measure captures economic freedom regardless of whether it is granted to only half of the population. If the *doux commerce* thesis is correct, then greater economic freedom will be associated with more tolerant gender norms. In this case, the regression coefficient on our economic freedom variable should be positive.

The Contemporaneous Correlation between Economic Freedom and Gender Norms

To begin to understand the relationship between economic freedom and our measure of gender norms, we can examine simple correlations in the data. Figure 1 shows how the average gender norms score changes as we move across each of the four economic freedom quartiles. Both gender norms and economic freedom are captured for the same year. Whether we are looking at the aggregated Gender Social Norms Index scores, or the individual components (Jobs, University, and Politics), there is a clear pattern. Gender

norms scores are higher in countries that have higher levels of economic freedom. This provides some empirical evidence that supports the *doux commerce* thesis, the idea that market institutions and the act of participating in markets cultivates within us virtuous and civilized attitudes, including fostering a greater tolerance of others who may be very different from ourselves. If the alternative thesis were true, that women are treated more equally under a centrally planned, socialist system, the empirical relationships depicted in Figure 1 would run in the other direction.

Figure 1: Economic Freedom and Gender Norms

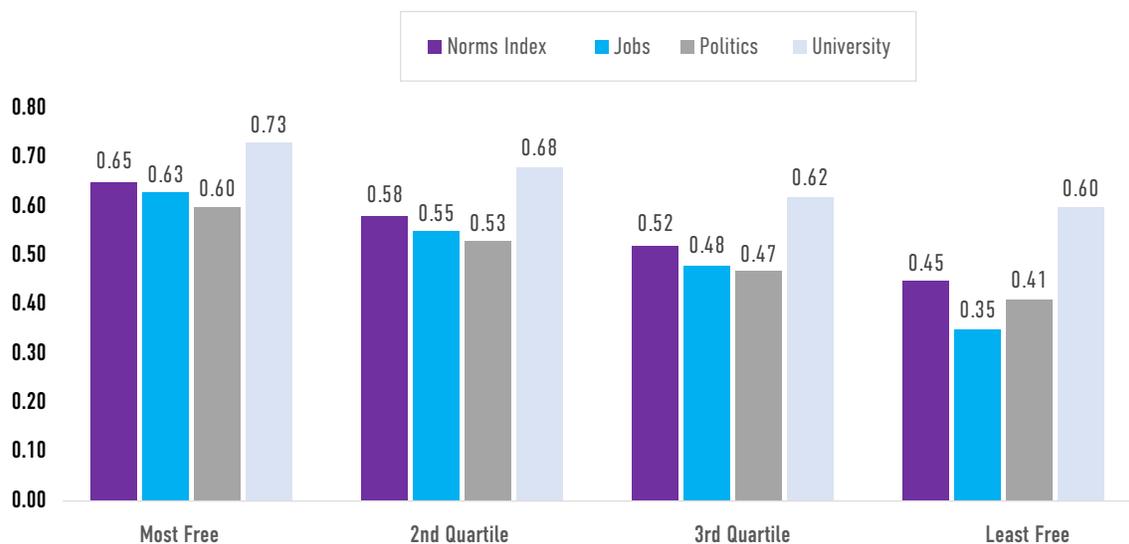
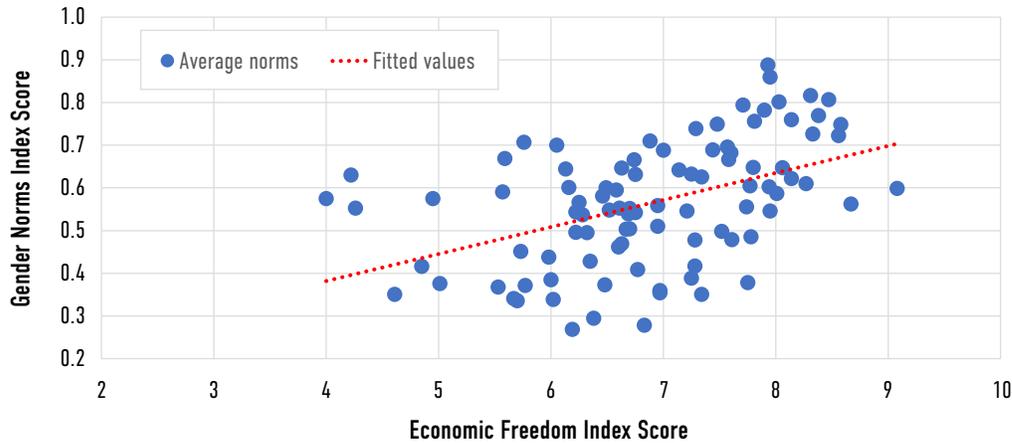


Figure 2 depicts a scatter plot of economic freedom and our measure of gender norms. The image shows a positive correlation between concurrent measures of economic freedom and gender norms at the macro level, essentially reinforcing what is presented in Figure 1. This positive relationship indicates that countries with greater economic freedom are less likely to have gender norms that give preference to males when it comes to employment, education, and political leadership opportunities. Again, if it were true that market institutions create gender norms that are more biased in favor of men, the empirical relationship would be the inverse of what is shown here.

Figure 2: The Relationship Between Current Economic Freedom and Current Gender Norms

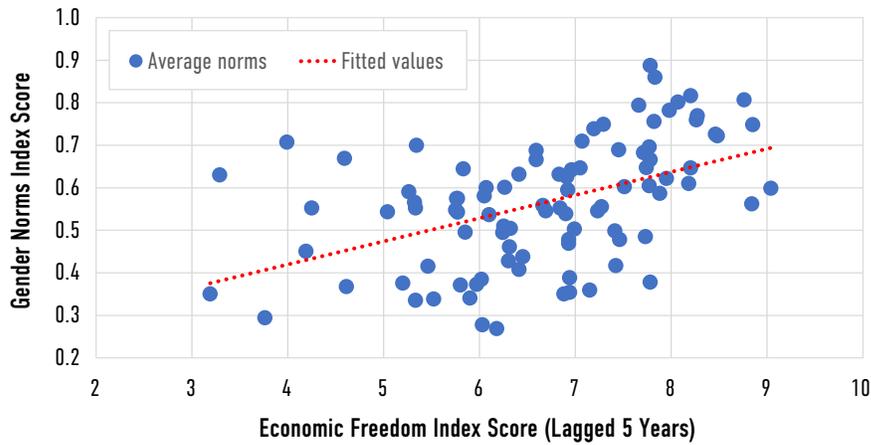


Sources: Gwartney, Lawson, Hall and Murphy, 2023; Inglehart et al., 2014; calculations by author.

The Relationship between Past Economic Freedom and Current Gender Norms

A simple correlation between current economic freedom and current gender norms only tells us that the two are related, it does not address questions about the causal direction of that relationship. Figure 3 represents a first step at causality, by examining the correlation between past levels of economic freedom (lagged 5 years) and current gender norms. Once again, there is a positive relationship indicating countries with greater economic freedom in the recent past are less likely to have gender norms that give preference to males today.

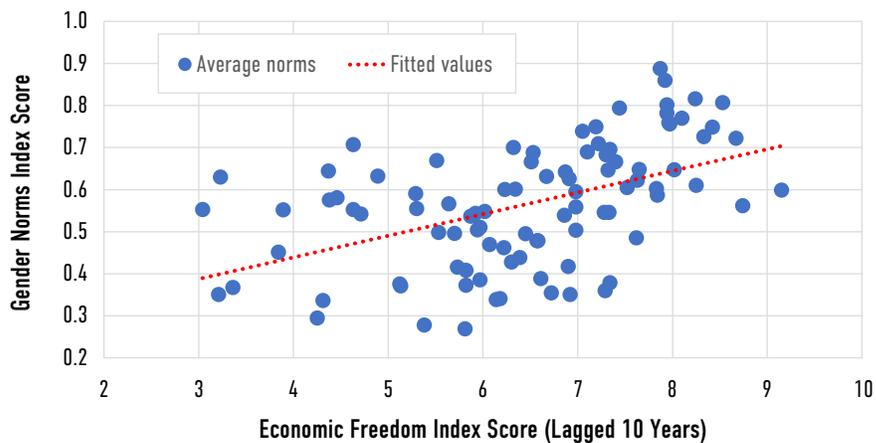
Figure 3: The Relationship Between Past Economic Freedom (Lagged by Five Years) and Current Gender Norms



Sources: Gwartney, Lawson, Hall and Murphy, 2023; Inglehart et al., 2014; calculations by author.

In addition, Figure 4 shows the correlation between past levels of economic freedom (lagged 10 years) and current gender norms. There is a positive relationship between economic freedom in the past and our measure of gender norms. This suggests that in countries that had greater economic freedom a decade ago, citizens are less likely to give preference to males over females when it comes to employment, education, and political leadership opportunities today. The correlation at this interval is not as strong, but it is still distinctly positive.

Figure 4: The Relationship Between Past Economic Freedom (Lagged by 10 Years) and Current Gender Norms



Sources: Gwartney, Lawson, Hall and Murphy, 2023; Inglehart et al., 2014; calculations by author.

Together these images suggest that both current, and past economic freedom levels are positively correlated with the measure of gender norms. This suggests that countries that have formal institutions that are consistent with the ideal of economic freedom are more likely to possess and retain gender norms that treat men and women more equally than they are treated in less economically free countries.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Is more economic freedom associated with greater tolerance of women taking on roles outside of the household? Is the *doux commerce* thesis correct when applied to gender equality? Or is it truly the case that women are treated more equally under economic systems that are more centrally planned? Simple correlations between economic freedom and gender norms alone cannot provide a satisfactory answer. A more in-depth empirical analysis is needed, one that controls for other factors that may also influence gender norms outside of economic freedom.

Due to the limited nature of the World Value Survey data, the analysis is restricted to a set of 95 countries and a single year of observations, the most recent year for which there is gender norms data. Economic freedom data is collected for all countries for the same year. A simple ordinary least squares linear regression is then estimated using robust standard errors and a series of variables that control for the level of economic development, the quality of the political institutions, the degree to which civil liberties are protected, and the percentage of the population that identifies as Muslim.

Level of Development

Per capita income is another factor that may contribute to the overall treatment of women. It may be the case that a natural consequence of economic development is that we have the luxury to afford more equitable gender norms that do not relegate the role of women to caring labor.¹³ If so, we would expect wealthier societies to have higher gender norms scores than impoverished societies. To account for this, per capita income data is used (World Bank, 2022). Since per capita income is so strongly influenced by economic freedom (Gwartney et al., 1999; Dawson, 2003; Hall and Lawson, 2014), this analysis uses a transformed measure of per capita income so that the estimated coefficient on the measure of income excludes the indirect effect of economic freedom that operates through income and that the coefficient on economic freedom shows both the direct and indirect effects.¹⁴

13 Luxury is being used here in the economic sense, as in something that people can enjoy more of as their incomes rise. That is, at lower levels of income the most pressing concern people face is meeting their physical needs. Once they move beyond subsistence, and their physical needs are met, they can then begin to focus on other social issues, like racial and gender equality or even environmental concerns. See Storr and Choi (2019) and Friedman (2005) for a deeper discussion of this.

Political Institutions

It could be the case that political freedom, and the degree to which people can participate in government, could lead to improvements in gender norms. If women can vote and put pressure on government officials to change formal rules, then perhaps this will also allow them to challenge gender norms. The measure of political institutions used here was generated by Freedom House and was gathered from the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA). Data ranges from -10 to 10, with higher numbers indicating greater political freedom or more liberal democratic political institutions.¹⁵ If political freedom is associated with gender norms that treat men and women more equally, then the regression coefficients for this variable will be positive.

Civil Liberties

Other rights, like freedom of speech, expression, association, and religion may also impact the informal rules that dominate a society. If people are not allowed to express opinions that challenge existing political or economic rules, for example, it is less likely that others will hear those opinions and possibly change their own views. The measure of civil liberties used here is created by Freedom House and was gathered using the ARDA. Values range from 1-7 with lower values indicating more freedom. If increased civil liberties lead to gender norms that treat men and women more equally, the regression coefficients for this variable will be negative.

Cultural/Religious Beliefs

Religious traditions and beliefs can also be sources of informal constraints on our behavior. Section 1 of this report demonstrates that there is a large concentration of countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region that have significant formal barriers to women's economic rights. In addition, figures 1A-1D make it clear that many countries in the MENA region have gender norms scores that are generally lower than countries

14 An initial regression is run where the natural log of per capita income is the dependent variable and economic freedom is the explanatory variable. This equation is used to predict a set of fitted values for income. The difference between the predicted income values and actual income values are then captured and the difference (referred to as the residual), is used as the measure of income in the regression analysis. The robust standard errors used in the analysis account for this difference between predicted and actual income values.

15 Keep in mind that there is a positive empirical relationship between economic freedom and political freedom as well (Lawson and Clark 2010), thus some of the effect of economic freedom may be captured by the political freedom coefficients when interpreting the regression results.

located in the Americas and in Europe. To control for the potential influence of specific hierarchical religious beliefs on gender norms, the regression analysis includes a variable measuring the percentage of the population that identifies as Muslim.¹⁶

16 Versions of these regressions were also run including a measure of the percentage of the population that identified as Catholic, and the percentage of the population that identifies as non-religious. These alternative religious control variables were not significant in any of the specifications in which they were included. The inclusion of the percentage of population that is Muslim is only to capture slow-changing, informal cultural beliefs that are separate from gender norms. The results of the regression analysis do not suggest that Islam causes gender norms to be biased in favour of men. The results instead suggest that countries with a higher percentage Muslim population also have cultural characteristics that are associated with gender norms that are less tolerant of women challenging traditional gender roles. This is an important distinction.

Regression Results

Table 2A provides the result of a simple regression analysis examining the relationship between economic freedom and the overall measure of gender norms, while Tables 2B - 2D examine the relationship between economic freedom and each individual component of the gender norms index (Jobs, University, and Political Leaders, respectively).

In Table 2A, we can see that in all five specifications of our linear regression model, an increase in economic freedom is associated with a higher score on the norms index. This positive relationship is statistically significant at the one percent level in four of the five specifications, and at the 10 percent level in the fifth.¹⁷ As predicted, higher levels of economic development, more democratic political institutions, and increased civil liberties are also associated with gender norms that treat men and women more equally.

17 Once the measure of civil liberties is included, the economic freedom variable diminishes its significance in all four tables. When it comes to University and Political Leadership, inclusion of civil liberties eliminates significance altogether, while for the other two cases, it retains statistical significance just at a weaker confidence level. Since there is a positive empirical relationship between economic freedom and civil liberties (Bjørnskov, 2018) and the inclusion of civil liberties variable does not add much in explanatory power to the overall regression, column 4 is the specification of most relevance in each table.

Table 2A: Linear Regression Analysis of the Determinants of Gender Norms

Dependent Variable: Gender Norms Index Summary Score (0-1)					
	1	2	3	4	5
EFW Index	0.0636*** (0.0216)	0.0931*** (0.0165)	0.0630*** (0.0148)	0.0358*** (0.0100)	0.0205* (0.0123)
Ln Per Capita Income		0.0544*** (0.0139)	0.0522*** (0.0122)	0.0463*** (0.0092)	0.0365*** (0.0107)
Polity			0.0110*** (0.0020)	0.0060*** (0.0014)	0.0026 (0.002)
% Muslim				-0.0020*** (0.0002)	-0.0018*** (0.0002)
Civil Liberties					-0.0196** (0.0089)
Observations	95	92	88	88	88
R-Squared	0.1562	0.3553	0.5409	0.7229	0.7340
Robust Standard Errors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Statistical Significance levels are denoted as follows: *** denotes significance at the 1% level; ** denotes significance at the 5% level; * denotes significance at the 10% level.

Tables 2B to 2D show the results of a robustness check that disaggregates the gender norms index and examines the relationship between economic freedom and the individual index components. The same pattern of results emerges. In four out of five specifications, economic freedom has a positive, statistically significant relationship with our measure of gender norms. Greater economic freedom is associated with greater tolerance of women taking on less traditional roles in employment, university education, and political leadership. This statistically significant relationship holds even when controlling for the level of development, the type of political institutions, and the religious makeup of society. Once again, higher levels of economic development, more democratic political institutions, and increased civil liberties are also associated with gender norms that treat men and women more equally.

Table 2B: Linear Regression Analysis of the Determinants of Gender Norms

Dependent Variable: Gender Norms Regarding Jobs (0-1)					
	1	2	3	4	5
EFW Index	0.0930*** (0.0275)	0.1297*** (0.0217)	0.0915*** (0.0192)	0.0515*** (0.0121)	0.0319** (0.0141)
Ln Per Capita Income		0.0619*** (0.0184)	0.0592*** (0.0165)	0.0505*** (0.0127)	0.0381*** (0.0137)
Polity			0.0143*** (0.0028)	0.0069*** (0.0016)	0.0026 (0.0025)
% Muslim				-0.0030*** (0.0003)	-0.0028*** (0.0003)
Civil Liberties					-0.0251** (0.0106)
Observations	95	92	88	88	88
R-Squared	0.1812	0.3324	0.4972	0.7095	0.7192
Robust Standard Errors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Statistical Significance levels are denoted as follows: *** denotes significance at the 1% level; ** denotes significance at the 5% level; * denotes significance at the 10% level.

Table 2C: Linear Regression Analysis of the Determinants of Gender Norms

Dependent Variable: Gender Norms Regarding University (0-1)					
	1	2	3	4	5
EFW Index	0.0388** (0.0180)	0.065*** (0.0135)	0.0448*** (0.0127)	0.0303*** (0.0114)	0.018 (0.0143)
Ln Per Capita Income		0.0454*** (0.0114)	0.0400*** (0.0110)	0.0368*** (0.0096)	0.0290** (0.0120)
Polity			0.0064*** (0.0018)	0.0038** (0.0016)	0.001 (0.0025)
% Muslim				-0.0011*** (0.0003)	-0.0010*** (0.0003)
Civil Liberties					-0.0158 (0.0104)
Observations	95	92	88	88	88
R-Squared	0.0924	0.3123	0.3993	0.4863	0.4982
Robust Standard Errors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Statistical Significance levels are denoted as follows: *** denotes significance at the 1% level; ** denotes significance at the 5% level; * denotes significance at the 10% level.

Table 2D: Linear Regression Analysis of the Determinants of Gender Norms

Dependent Variable: Gender Norms Regarding Political Leaders (0-1)					
	1	2	3	4	5
EFW Index	0.0614** (0.0216)	0.0876*** (0.0179)	0.0556*** (0.0174)	0.0286** (0.0133)	0.0145 (0.0173)
Ln Per Capita Income		0.0574*** (0.0158)	0.0587*** (0.0130)	0.0528*** (0.0105)	0.0439*** (0.0125)
Polity			0.0122*** (0.0025)	0.0072*** (0.0019)	0.0041 (0.0025)
% Muslim				-0.0020*** (0.0003)	-0.0019*** (0.0003)
Civil Liberties					-0.0181 (0.0131)
Observations	95	92	88	88	88
R-Squared	0.1241	0.2930	0.5114	0.6650	0.6730
Robust Standard Errors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Statistical Significance levels are denoted as follows: *** denotes significance at the 1% level; ** denotes significance at the 5% level; * denotes significance at the 10% level.

Taken together, the results of this regression analysis suggest that economic freedom is a vital determinant of having gender norms that are more tolerant of women pursuing employment, higher education, and political leadership opportunities. This is true even when several other important factors are considered. This suggests that markets do not uphold rigid, patriarchal norms, as some feminist scholars have suggested. Instead, when it comes to gender norms, markets are one channel through which patriarchal attitudes can be subverted.

Does Greater Economic Freedom Sow the Seeds for Equal Gender Norms, Or Do Equitable Gender Norms Create a Demand for Economic Freedom?

It seems obvious that formal restrictions on women's economic rights can prevent people from making choices that challenge traditional gender norms. For example, a woman might challenge the dominant view of the types of jobs a woman "should" or "should not" perform by accepting what is considered a dangerous job. But if she lives in a society where there are laws and regulations in place that forbid her from performing that work, she clearly does not have the space to push back against the informal constraint. In theory, it seems like formal institutions, economic rules, could be an important channel through which informal rules are encouraged to change in a way that relaxes the informal gender-driven constraints on everyone's choices. If so, we would expect greater economic freedom to be correlated with gender norms that treat men and women more equally.

It has also been acknowledged in the literature that informal rules, habits, and social attitudes can, and do, shape the direction of economic development and the development of formal institutions. For example, McCloskey (2006, 2010, and 2016) attributes the sharp increase in the living standards that occurred around the time of the industrial revolution to changes in our attitudes towards commercial activities. A shift in social norms that came to view market participation as virtuous, acceptable behavior instead of behavior that ought to be shamed and avoided. Further, Nancy Folbre argues that "(t)he development of new economic institutions weakened some aspects of patriarchal authority and promoted the uneven growth of individualism. But concepts of self-interest embedded in notions of appropriate behavior for men and women shaped the way markets themselves were structured" (2009: xxxi). In other words, a society with gender norms that exhibits less of a male preference may be more likely to demand formal rules that are impartial and do not give priority to one particular gender over others. Since the theoretical arguments regarding the direction of the relationship can cut in both directions, there are concerns about causality that are only provisionally addressed in this analysis but should be more directly considered in future work.

Concluding Remarks

This report examines the relationship between formal economic freedom and informal gender norms. The results of this examination lend support for the *doux commerce* thesis. That is, greater economic freedom is associated with gender norms that treat men and women more equally. This relationship holds even after controlling for the level of income, the quality of political institutions, civil liberties, and religious beliefs. While this analysis does not establish the direction of causality (which, if theoretical arguments are to be taken seriously, is unlikely to be unidirectional), it does refute the thesis that women are treated more equally under centrally planned economies.

It is important to be clear that the results of this analysis do not suggest that the observed relationship is a causal one. These empirical results lend support for the claim that social norms surrounding whether men should take priority when it comes to jobs, political leadership roles, and university enrollment are less likely to show a male bias in societies that are economically free. The empirical exercise presented here is only a first step. Additional work is necessary to determine whether this observed relationship is a causal one, and to explore the specific channels through which economic freedom might be impacting social norms. This is a complex relationship that will require multiple studies using a variety of methods to fully understand.

However, there are serious policy implications that can be drawn from the empirical relationships presented in this report. First, there has been an increase in global efforts to directly improve women's performance in the labor market using policy mandates, such as gender quotas and family-friendly labor laws. These policies attempt to treat the symptom of gender inequality in the labor market without addressing the underlying causes—the systematic differences in choices that men and women make about their human capital, their career path, the hours they work, and other personal choices that are often made jointly within a household bargaining setting. These choices are undoubtedly shaped by the informal gender norms that describe a society's collective view about what is the appropriate role for men and for women when it comes to employment, education, leadership, household production, child rearing, and almost all other aspects of our lives.

One pressing policy issue to consider is what impact the abrupt reduction in economic freedom across the globe that occurred during the pandemic (as documented in Gwartney et al.: 2022) could have on women. One of the commonly cited casualties of the global COVID-19 pandemic is

the progress that women have made towards equality in the workplace.¹⁸ This analysis, however, raises slightly different concerns. First, due to the complex interplay between formal and informal rules, the sharp reduction in formal economic freedom observed across the globe could be particularly harmful to women, especially those living in places where the gender norms already prioritize men over women when it comes to jobs, university, and political leadership. For example, firms operating within a context of a male-preference may disproportionately choose to let go of female workers if faced with a need to cut back on labor. Or, if faced with limited funds for promotions and raises, employers operating in a society where the dominant view is that work is more important for men and women are viewed as secondary wage earners might be more likely to provide those opportunities to their male employees. Second, greater economic freedom is associated with gender norms that exhibit less of a male bias. If this relationship is found to be a causal one, then a reduction in economic freedom could result in a movement toward gender norms that exhibit an increased male-preference. The correlation demonstrated in this study provides enough reason for us to at least be alert to the potential for changing gender norms in the face of the global trend of decreasing economic freedom.

In addition, even informal limitations on women's ability to exercise their economic rights have consequences that are not just felt by women, but for everyone who misses out on the benefits that these women could have created through their economic contributions. Cuberes and Teignier (2014) estimate the cost of gender gaps in the labor market and find that the opportunity costs associated with gender gaps is between 14–27 percent of per capita income per year. The costs were significantly higher in regions of the world where formal and informal barriers to women's labour market participation exist.

The empirical relationship between economic freedom and gender norms suggests that countries that embrace economic freedom are more likely to have gender norms that treat men and women more equally. Gender norms in economically free societies are more tolerant of women taking on roles outside of being a traditional caregiver. Thus, pursuing policies that foster and protect economic freedom as a fundamental human right may be able to offer a channel through which gender norms can change. By removing formal barriers to economic participation, economic freedom empowers us to challenge gender norms that discourage people of all gender identities from pursuing what they perceive as the best course of action for their own life.

18 See Goldin (2022) for a discussion of these claims as they apply to the US labor force. According to Goldin, it was not the case that women exited the labor force to a greater degree than men. However, women who remained in the labor force were also carrying most of the burden of the additional household labor and care work created by the pandemic on top of their formal labor market participation. This leaves them with less time for leisure to physically recover from work and less time to engage in other professional development outside of working hours.

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Appendix

Table A.1 provides the gender norms data for 105 countries for each year the data is available.

Table A.1: Gender Norms from 1995–2020

Country	Gender Norms 1995–1998	Gender Norms 1999–2004	Gender Norms 2005–2008	Gender Norms 2009–2013	Gender Norms 2014–2017	Gender Norms 2018–2020
Albania	0.5180	0.5425				
Algeria		0.4066			0.3759	
Andorra			0.8040			0.8224
Argentina	0.6502	0.6543	0.6679	0.7137	0.7001	
Armenia	0.3815			0.4984		
Australia	0.6787		0.7199	0.7591		0.8163
Azerbaijan	0.4063			0.3714		
Bangladesh	0.4192	0.3391				0.3852
Belarus	0.4457			0.5524		
Bolivia					0.6013	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.5387	0.6300				
Brazil	0.5335		0.6725		0.7100	0.6659
Bulgaria	0.5270		0.6321			
Burkina Faso			0.4512			
Canada		0.7608	0.7697			
Chile	0.5960	0.6027	0.5852	0.6844		0.6099
China	0.5197	0.5528	0.5038	0.5270		0.5371
Colombia	0.5429		0.6401	0.6931		0.6317
Croatia	0.5835					
Cyprus			0.6322	0.6672		0.6027
Czech Republic	0.5461					
Dominican Republic	0.7071					
Ecuador				0.6589		0.6001
Egypt, Arab Rep.		0.2977	0.2606	0.2912		0.3411
El Salvador		0.5553				
Estonia	0.5233			0.6471		
Ethiopia			0.7807			0.5905

Country	Gender Norms 1995–1998	Gender Norms 1999–2004	Gender Norms 2005–2008	Gender Norms 2009–2013	Gender Norms 2014–2017	Gender Norms 2018–2020
Finland	0.7867		0.7596			
France			0.7939			
Georgia	0.3816			0.4689	0.5457	
Germany	0.7191		0.7322	0.7512		0.8018
Ghana			0.4693	0.4694		
Greece					0.6468	
Guatemala		0.6929				0.6664
Haiti					0.4952	
Hong Kong SAR, China			0.5904		0.5765	0.5990
Hungary	0.5586			0.6894		
India	0.5136	0.4444	0.4144	0.4282		
Indonesia		0.5222	0.4894			0.3884
Iran, Islamic Rep.		0.3858	0.3510			0.4159
Iraq		0.2879	0.2684	0.3799		0.3675
Italy			0.6826			
Japan	0.4667	0.5094	0.5109	0.4965		0.5870
Jordan		0.3004	0.3148		0.3364	0.3785
Kazakhstan				0.4932		0.4785
Korea, Rep.	0.4624	0.5388	0.5305	0.5656		0.4856
Kuwait					0.3594	
Kyrgyz Republic		0.5135		0.4416		0.3547
Latvia	0.5449					
Lebanon				0.5112		0.5522
Libya					0.3505	
Lithuania	0.5434					
Macau						0.5813
Malaysia			0.3976	0.3963		0.4786
Mali			0.3390			
Mexico	0.4983	0.6211	0.6404	0.6855		0.6421
Moldova	0.4419	0.5203	0.5483			
Montenegro	0.5284	0.5752				
Morocco		0.2688	0.4834	0.4616		
Myanmar						0.3360
Netherlands			0.7782	0.7822		
New Zealand	0.7102	0.7517	0.7620			0.8072
Nicaragua						0.5948

Country	Gender Norms 1995–1998	Gender Norms 1999–2004	Gender Norms 2005–2008	Gender Norms 2009–2013	Gender Norms 2014–2017	Gender Norms 2018–2020
Nigeria	0.4097	0.3704		0.3686		0.4085
North Macedonia	0.5410	0.5962				
Norway	0.8304		0.8879			
Pakistan	0.3749	0.4572		0.3276		0.2688
Peru	0.6087	0.6818	0.6892	0.7108		0.6477
Philippines	0.4563	0.3948		0.4112		0.4169
Poland	0.4785		0.5900	0.6258		
Portugal						0.6959
Puerto Rico	0.6570	0.7392				0.8184
Qatar				0.3508		
Romania	0.4284		0.5813	0.5763		0.6050
Russian Federation	0.4657		0.5126	0.5314	0.5044	
Rwanda			0.5828	0.5103		
Saudi Arabia		0.2780				
Serbia	0.5429	0.6046	0.6732		0.6880	
Singapore		0.5709		0.5621		
Slovak Republic	0.4689					
Slovenia	0.6081		0.7152	0.7389		
South Africa		0.6177	0.5996	0.5585		
Spain	0.6450	0.7342	0.7767	0.7563		
Sweden	0.8605	0.8736	0.8570	0.8596		
Switzerland	0.6274		0.7485			
Taiwan	0.4391		0.5548	0.5938		0.6222
Tajikistan						0.3730
Tanzania		0.6446				
Thailand			0.5461	0.5389		0.5456
Trinidad and Tobago			0.7096	0.7096		
Tunisia				0.3887		0.4381
Turkey	0.4792	0.4985	0.5203	0.4371		0.5034
Uganda		0.5524				
Ukraine	0.4940		0.5445	0.5781		0.5661
United Kingdom	0.7146		0.7262			
United States	0.6670	0.7596	0.7192	0.7563	0.7225	
Uruguay	0.5334		0.6967	0.7497		
Uzbekistan				0.3533		

Country	Gender Norms 1995–1998	Gender Norms 1999–2004	Gender Norms 2005–2008	Gender Norms 2009–2013	Gender Norms 2014–2017	Gender Norms 2018–2020
Venezuela, RB	0.6137	0.6691				
Vietnam		0.5006	0.5372			0.4960
West Bank				0.3823		
Yemen, Rep.					0.2946	
Zambia			0.5810			
Zimbabwe		0.5863		0.5877		0.5751

About the Author

Rosemarie Fike is an Instructor of Economics at Texas Christian University and a senior fellow at the Fraser Institute. She obtained her MA in economics at George Mason University and her PhD in economics at Florida State University. She is an alumna of the Mercatus Center at George Mason University's MA Fellowship and Adam Smith Fellowship programs. She is the author of the *Women & Progress Report* series and the host of *The Essential Scholars Podcast*, *The Realities of Socialism Podcast*, and *Women, Economic Progress & Markets Podcast*.



Her research focuses on understanding the role that economic institutions play in improving the lives and status of women around the world. In 2017, she received the Addington Prize for Measurement for her work on how to account for gender differences in economic rights when measuring the quality of a country's institutions. Her academic work has been published in outlets including *Eastern Economics Journal*, *Constitutional Political Economy*, and the *Review of Austrian Economics*. She has published opinion editorials in outlets including *The Globe and Mail*, *US News and World Report*, *The Hill*, and *Roll Call*.

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