2020 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES

TACKLING SOCIAL NORMS:

a game changer for gender inequalities

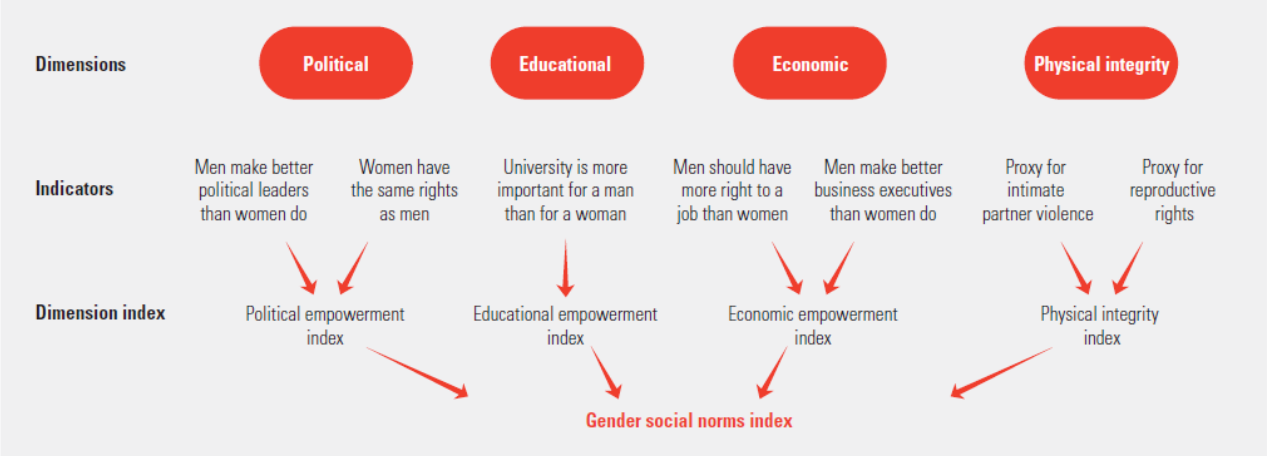
Frequently Asked Questions – Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI)

What does the GSNI measure?

The GSNI is a social norms index. It captures how social beliefs can obstruct gender equality along four dimensions: political, educational, economic and physical integrity. Overall, the GSNI reflects how prevalent are biases from social norms in these dimensions as well as how are they evolving.

What are the dimensions and indicators of the GSNI?

The index comprises four dimensions—political, educational, economic and physical integrity—and is constructed based on responses to seven questions which are used to create seven indicators.



How is the index calculated?

The GSNI is calculated with two methods of aggregation. For each indicator a variable takes the value of 1 when an individual has a bias and 0 when the individual does not.

The core Gender Norms Index (GSNI) is based on the "union approach": it measures the percentage of people with bias(es) across indicators, independent on its number. In many instances, it might take only

one bias from one person to block a woman's progress in society. This aggregation represents the boundaries the social norms. A second Gender Norms Index (GNI2) is based on a simple "intersection approach": it measures the percentage of people with at least two biases across indicators.[1]

How is the GSNI interpreted?

The GSNI ranges from 0 to 1. Higher GSNI values indicate higher bias against gender equality. There is no country without bias against gender equality. The core GSNI can be interpreted as an estimate of the prevalence of biases in a country. On the other hand, the GSNI2 can be interpreted as an estimate of the prevalence of moderate to intense biases in a country.

How are social norms biases defined in each indicator?

For each indicator a variable takes the value of 1 when an individual has a bias and 0 when the individual does not. The answer choices vary by indicator. For indicators for which the answer choices are strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree, the index defines individuals with a bias as those who answer strongly agree and agree. For the political indicator on women's rights, for which the answer is given on a numerical scale from 1 to 10, the index defines individuals with a bias as those who choose a rating of 7 or lower. For the physical integrity indicators, for which the answer also ranges from 1 to 10, the index defines individuals with a bias using a proxy variable for intimate partner violence and one for reproductive rights.

Dimension	**Indicator**	**Choices**	**Defining bias**
Political	Men make better political leaders than women do	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree	Strongly agree and agree
	Women have the same rights as men	1 not essential to 10 essential	Intermediate form: 1 to 7
Educational	University is more important for a man than for a woman	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree	Strongly agree and agree
Economical	Men should have more right to a job than women	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree	Strongly agree and agree
	Men make better business executives than women do	Agree, neither, disagree	Agree
Physical integrity	Proxy for intimate partner	1 never to 10 always	Stronger form: 2 to 10

[1] A third Gender Norms Index follows the synthetic Alkire–Foster methodology, which implements a version of the intersection approach (to define the headcount of biased individuals) coupled with a measure of the intensity of biases (see Mukhopadhyay, Rivera and Tapia 2019).

	Violence		
	Proxy for reproductive rights	1 never to 10 always	Weakest form: 1

Source: HDRO using data from the World Values Survey.

What are the sources of data used for calculating the GSNI?

The GSNI uses data from the World Values Survey wave 5 (2005–2009) and wave 6 (2010–2014). The methods are applied to two sets of countries. The first set consists of countries with data for either wave 5 (2005–2009) or wave 6 (2010–2014) includes 75 countries accounting for 81 percent of the world population. The second set consists of only countries with data for both wave 5 and wave 6. This set includes 31 countries accounting for 59 percent of the world population.

Which countries are covered by the GSNI?

The first set of 75 countries accounting for 81 percent of the world population covers the following countries: Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Ecuador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Islamic Republic of, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea (Republic of), Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Moldova, Republic of, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Palestine, State of, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Results for these countries are presented in Table A1 Gender Social Norms Index GSNI last available period and Table A2 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), last available period by gender.

The second set presents 31 countries accounting for 59 percent of the world population that have available data for both periods of time, the countries covered are: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Cyprus, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, India, Japan, Jordan, Korea (Republic of), Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, United States and Uruguay. Results for time trends can be found in Table A3a Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), trends and Table A3b Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), trends by gender.

What is the policy relevance of the GSNI?

The GSNI provides insights into widespread biases against gender equality by country and gender in 75 countries, and across time for 31countries. It can help governments and others understand the extent of biases against gender equality and women's empowerment. The component indicators highlight areas in need of critical policy intervention. The GSNI, like any other global composite index, is constrained by the need for international comparability. But it could be readily adapted for use at the national or local level.

What are the strengths and limitations of the GSNI?

The GSNI is an experimental measure to quantify the extent of biases against gender equality, disaggregated by country and gender.

The GSNI stresses the importance of combining different dimensions to assess biases against gender equality, because they might interact in different ways to block a woman's progress. Social norms are not directly observed but are their effects are influential in defining social outcomes; therefore, they should be monitored. GSNI should be understood as an approximation.

Like all composite measures, GSNI has limitations. Its values depend on methodological choices in terms of the dimensions of analysis, indicator selection, sources, and aggregation. The GSNI is constrained by data availability to measure biases in each dimension.

What is the World Values Survey?

The World Values Survey (www.worldvaluessurvey.org) is a global network of social scientists studying changing values and their impact on social and political life, led by an international team of scholars, with the WVS association and secretariat headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden.

The survey, which started in 1981, seeks to use the most rigorous, high-quality research designs in each country. The WVS consists of nationally representative surveys conducted in almost 100 countries which contain almost 90 percent of the world's population, using a common questionnaire. The WVS is the largest non-commercial, cross-national, time series investigation of human beliefs and values ever executed, currently including interviews with almost 400,000 respondents. Moreover, the WVS is the only academic study covering the full range of global variations, from very poor to very rich countries, in all the world's major cultural zones.

The WVS seeks to help scientists and policy makers understand changes in the beliefs, values and motivations of people throughout the world. Thousands of political scientists, sociologists, social psychologists, anthropologists and economists have used these data to analyze such topics as economic development, democratization, religion, gender equality, social capital, and subjective well-being. These data have also been widely used by government officials, journalists and students, and groups at the World Bank have analyzed the linkages between cultural factors and economic development.

When will the World Values Survey be updated?

In 2015 the WVS association started planning the 7th wave to be conducted worldwide in 2017-2020. Subsequent waves are planned every five years. Data and all related survey documentation is expected to be available at the WVS web-site in free access in July 2020.