

# The Persistent Global Gender Gap in 5 Maps

Despite gains, equal rights for women remain elusive.

By **Kelsey Nowakowski**, National Geographic

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Despite progress in establishing equal rights for women, the gender gap persists. In more than 170 countries, women still lack the same rights, protections, and liberties as men.

To mark the 104th anniversary of International Women's Day on Sunday, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) [World Policy Analysis Center \(WORLD\)](#) issued a [report](#) documenting the state of gender equality around the world.

The report—a road map to understanding gender inequality—tracks the progress made in the 20 years since 189 countries signed the

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a global commitment to advance women's rights.

“When policymakers see these maps, they’ll be able to understand where their country is leading and lagging behind,” says Jody Heymann, dean of the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. “That way, leaders can decide how their country stacks up against neighboring or economically similar countries, hopefully encouraging long-term change.”

Though laws and constitutions are generally a matter of public record, deciphering their meaning can be difficult. In relying on a team of economists, lawyers, political scientists, and public health officials, WORLD was able to create an easy-to-comprehend database.

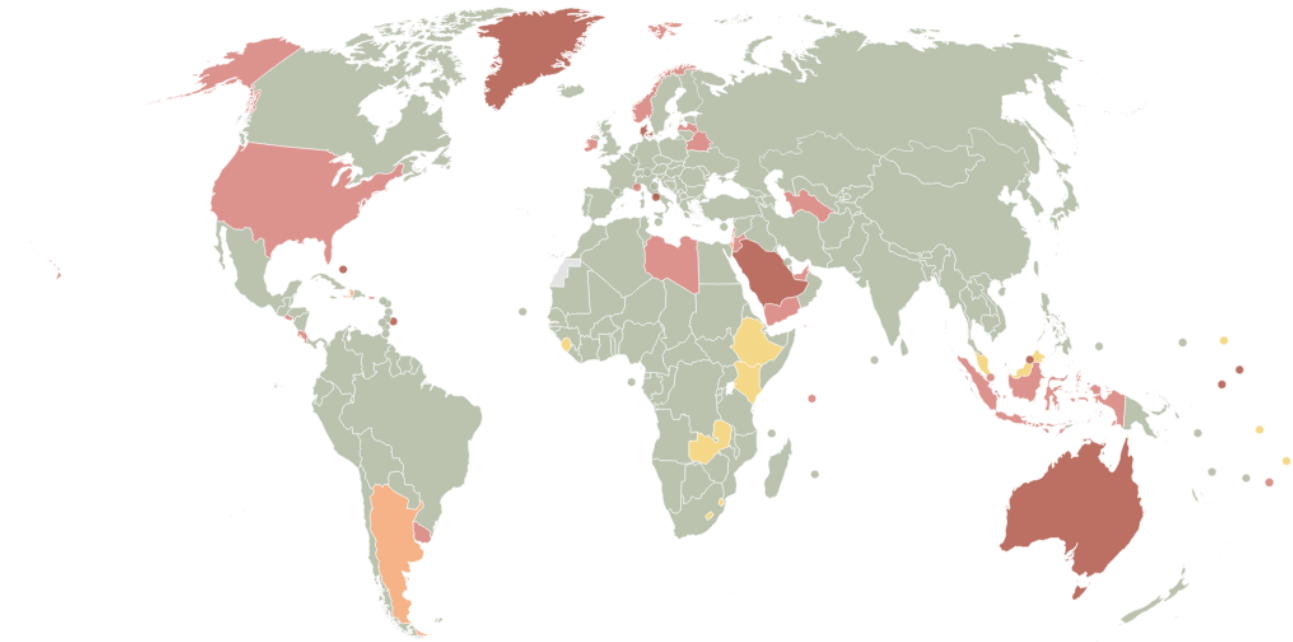
Major strides have been made in advancing gender equality, though much work remains. “The data points to the feasibility of closing the gender gap,” says Heymann. “Countries of all development levels are improving, so there are no more excuses.”



**Gender Equality Laws**

More than 95% of the 56 constitutions adopted in the past 20 years guarantee gender equality, compared with only 79% of constitutions enacted previously. Even so, 32 countries, including the United States, still lack explicitly guaranteed gender equality.

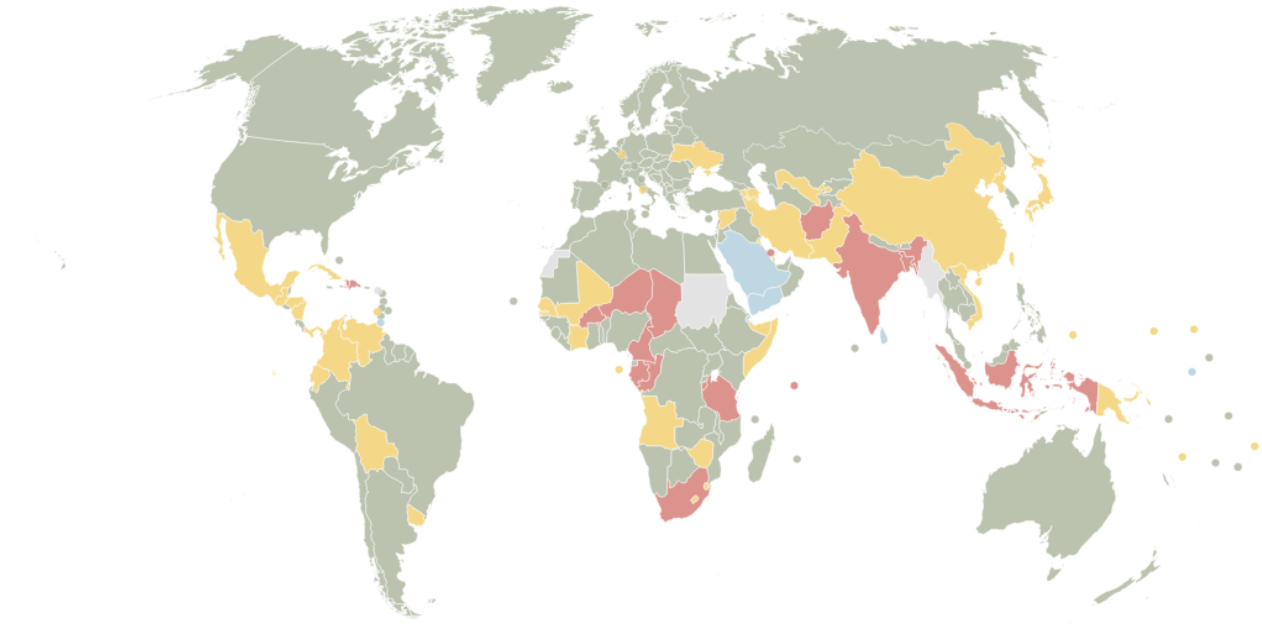
- GUARANTEED
- GUARANTEED, BUT CUSTOM OR RELIGIOUS LAW CAN SUPERSEDE
- SOME PROTECTION FOR WOMEN
- EQUALITY GUARANTEED, GENDER NOT MENTIONED
- NONE
- NO DATA / NOT APPLICABLE



## Legal Age of Marriage

Raising the legal age of marriage continues to be a struggle. In 61 countries, the legal marriage age for girls is less than for boys. By a factor of five, more girls than boys are married before the age of 18—a cause for concern, since girls married before 15 who become mothers have a five times greater risk of infant mortality.

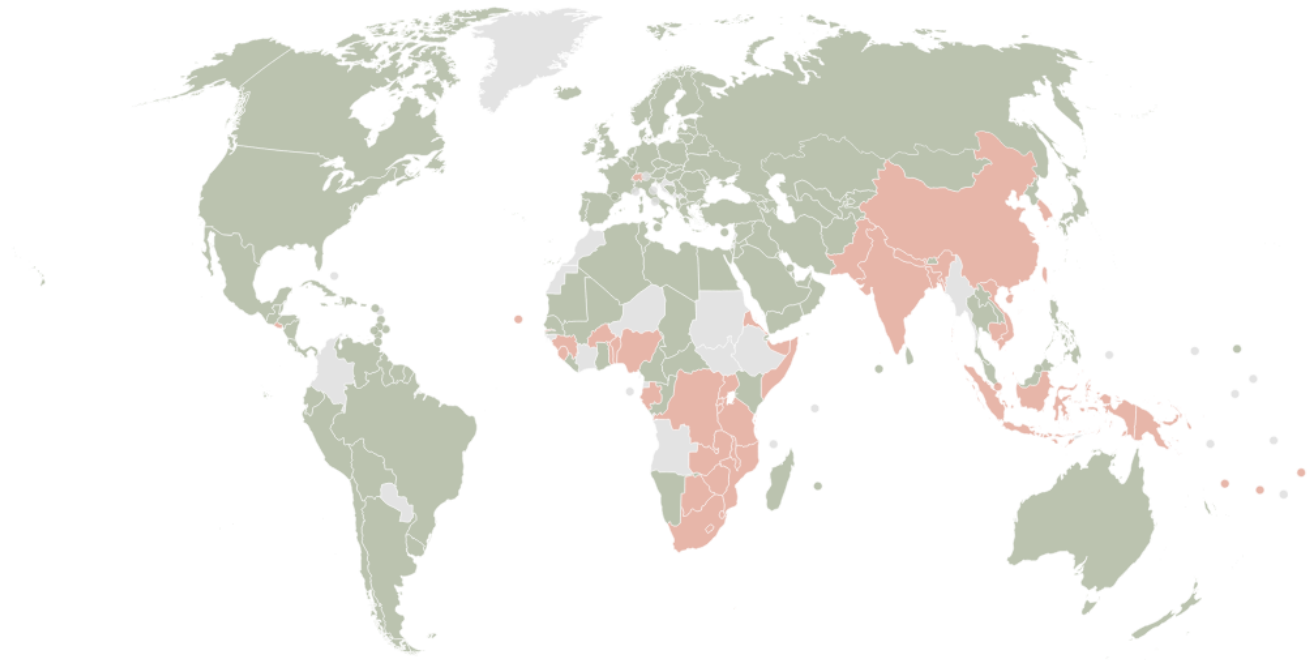
- NO DIFFERENCE IN AGE
- MINIMUM MARRIAGE AGE FOR GIRLS ONE TO TWO YEARS YOUNGER THAN BOYS
- MINIMUM MARRIAGE AGE FOR GIRLS THREE TO FOUR YEARS YOUNGER THAN BOYS
- NO MINIMUM MARRIAGE AGE FOR GIRLS OR BOYS
- NO DATA / NOT APPLICABLE



## The Education Divide

In 40 countries, tuition is charged for secondary school education. These countries reflect the largest gender gap in enrollment; families will opt to send boys to school rather than girls. Over 75% of countries provide tuition-free education through the end of secondary school or age 18.

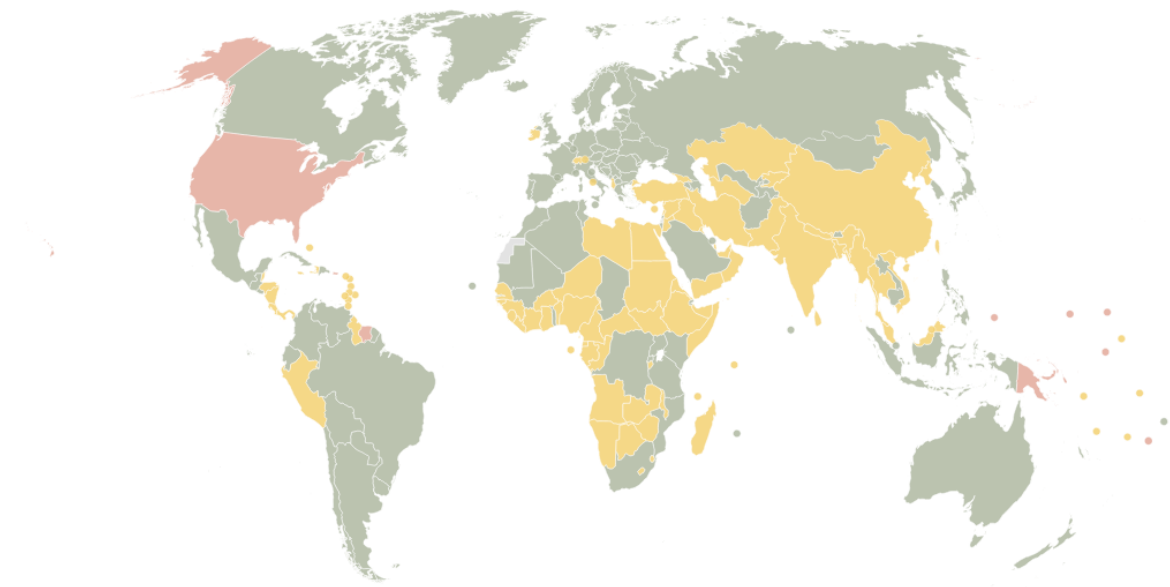
- TUITION-FREE
- TUITION REPORTED
- NO DATA / NOT APPLICABLE



**Paid Paternal and Maternal Leave**

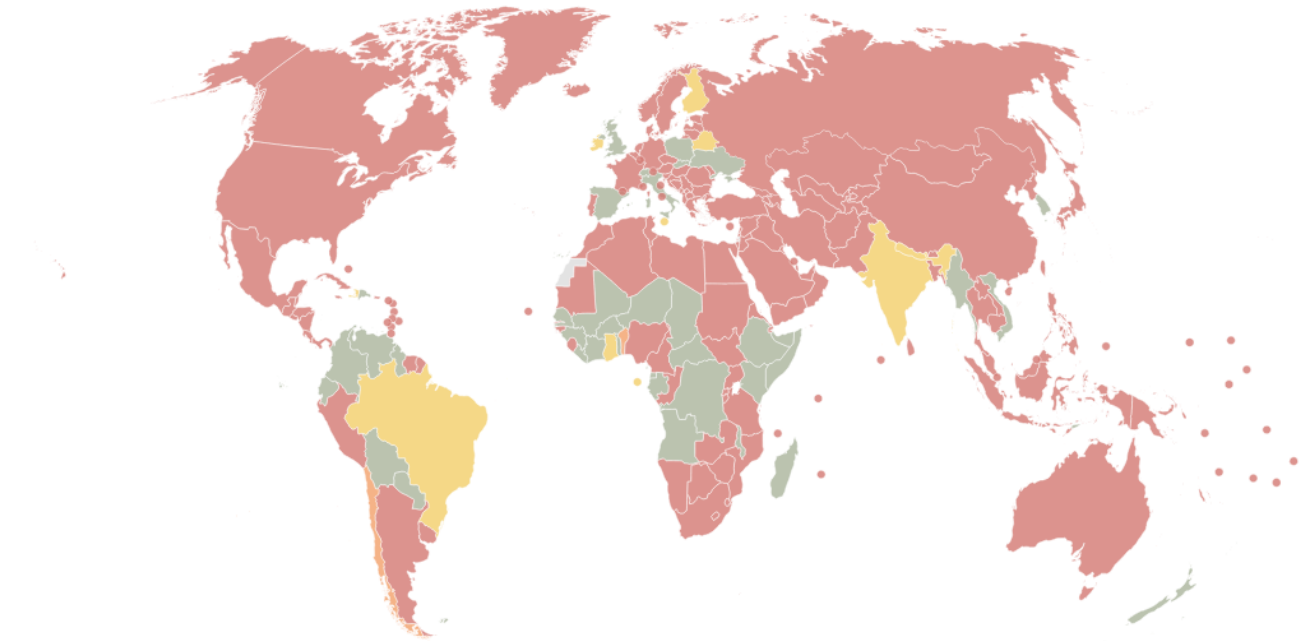
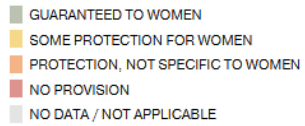
Paid leave for new mothers is provided by 95% of countries; paternal leave is allowed by 49%. The U.S. is among the few countries in the world that do not guarantee paid leave for mothers and one of the only developed countries that doesn't provide it for both parents.

- BOTH PARENTS
- MOTHERS ONLY
- NONE FOR EITHER
- NO DATA / NOT APPLICABLE



## Discrimination in the Workplace

More than a third of constitutions adopted since 1995 protect women from workplace discrimination and guarantee equal pay for equal work, compared with only 12% of those adopted before then.



More information is available at [worldpolicyforum.org](http://worldpolicyforum.org).

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