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Gender Inequality in the World and Its Implications

Marianna Khachaturyan
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

E. Wesley F. Peterson
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension



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Market Report	Year Ago	4 Wks Ago	1/9/15
Livestock and Products,			
Weekly Average			
Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight.	*	162.97	169.71
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb.	173.83	300.66	297.23
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb.	151.36	242.09	233.56
Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass.	193.81	249.05	252.76
Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated.	82.30	83.03	72.67
Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass 51-52% Lean.	83.42	91.96	82.80
Slaughter Lambs, Ch. & Pr., Heavy, Woolled, South Dakota, Direct.	107.75	147.00	*
National Carcass Lamb Cutout FOB.	299.16	375.96	379.18
Crops,			
Daily Spot Prices			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Imperial, bu.	7.42	5.81	5.42
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Nebraska City, bu.	7.22	3.73	3.72
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Nebraska City, bu.	13.78	9.92	9.92
Grain Sorghum, No.2, Yellow Dorchester, cwt.	11.96	7.46	7.32
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, Mn, bu.	3.81	3.45	3.36
Feed			
Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton.	247.50	193.75	222.50
Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton.	230.00	85.00	75.00
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Good Nebraska, ton.	212.50	75.00	82.50
Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture Nebraska Average.	270.00	157.00	179.00
Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture Nebraska Average.	103.50	49.00	59.50
* No Market			

Worldwide one in three women will be abused sexually or will encounter physical violence during her lifetime (Human Development Report (HDR), 2014). That amounts to about 1.2 billion women. Although gender-related abuse and violence exist everywhere, the issues that come to mind when contemplating gender inequality in high-income countries are usually related to job opportunities, career advancement, or wage disparities. In many developing countries, gender inequality is a much more severe problem; it is manifested in health disparities, limited access to education, and even in the violation of human rights.

For instance, in a recent New York Times opinion piece, Mona Eltahawy, an Egyptian author, argued that a common practice in many countries in Africa and the Middle East is female genital mutilation, an example of a severe human rights violation directed at women and girls. This practice involves removal or cutting of the external female genitals of girls usually less than 15 years old with the possible side-effects of severe bleeding, infections, infertility, and complications in childbirth. The United Nations (UN) has launched an effort to stop this practice, a medically unnecessary procedure, that, according to the UN, was performed on as many as 125 million females in a number of African and Middle Eastern countries (Voice of America (VOA) 2014).



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The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) publishes an annual report on the state

of human development in the world. The HDR is built around a statistical measure known as the Human Development Index (HDI). This index is computed for 187 countries as the average of life expectancy at birth, per capita income, and a measure of educational attainment. The authors of the HDR also estimate two indexes related to gender: (1) the Gender Inequality Index (GII), based on maternal mortality rates, adolescent pregnancy rates, and the percentage of national parliaments made up of women; and (2) the Gender Development Index (GDI), based on comparisons between males and females in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment, and income (HDR, 2014).

Data related to the GII are only available for 152 countries, some of which are included in the Table below. Slovenia scores the highest, while Yemen is at the bottom of the list. The United States ranks fifth on the HDI index (Norway is first), but falls to 47th on the GII. The reason for this change is that maternal mortality is somewhat higher in the United States than in other high-income countries, the US teen pregnancy rate is fairly high, and the number of women in the US Congress is low. It has been widely reported that women in the United States earn, on average, only \$0.78 for every dollar males earn and this disparity cannot be fully explained by differences in career choices (American Association of University Women (AAUW), 2014). Note that the GII scores for the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, and Libya are lower than the US score. These countries are middle-income countries that would not be expected to have greater gender equality than the United States. Most high-income countries appear to have relatively low gender inequality making the United States something of an outlier.

In some countries, the mistreatment of girls and women is even more extreme. Violence against women in the form of “honor” killings, when a woman is thought to have behaved in ways that dishonor the family, and rape, both as a weapon of war and as a part of ordinary domestic violence, are common. In addition, intra-family discrimination in favor of boys means that girls often lack adequate health care, good nutrition, and access to education. Amartya Sen, a Nobel Prize winner in Economics in 1998, estimated that there were

100 million “missing” women as a result of discrimination (e.g., in health care and nutrition), infanticide through neglect, and abortion of female fetuses (Sen, 2003). Guilmoto (2007) has updated Sen’s estimates concluding that there are now 163 million “missing” women in Asia alone (this is equivalent to about half of the US population), as a result of sex selective abortions and other forms of discrimination. Kristoff and WuDunn (2010) report that more girls were killed in the past 50 years than men killed in all the wars of the 20th century. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Cambodia, and India are among the countries that Kristoff and WuDunn (2010) focus on in their book. All four, but especially Afghanistan, have high levels of gender inequality (see Table).

The authors of the HDR point out that laws and regulations are not enough because social and cultural practices are deeply ingrained and difficult to change. The attention drawn to this issue, however, may be helping to encourage changes in national legal systems as well as campaigns to influence traditional attitudes toward women. The Kenyan government has officially banned female genital mutilation making it harder for this practice to continue and campaigns are underway in Senegal, Mauritania, Guinea, Mali, and elsewhere to convince people to end the practice (Tostan, 2014). In addition to the work of many others, the effectiveness of Malala Yousafzai and her co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, Kailash Satyarthi, in advocating for girls’ educational opportunities is another promising sign that the slow process of ensuring gender equality may have finally begun

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TABLE. Gender Inequality Index

HDI rank	Country	Gender Inequality Index Value 2013	Gender Inequality Index Rank 2013	Maternal Mortality Ratio 2010	Adolescent Birth Rate 2010/2015	Share of seats in parliament 2013
1	Norway	0.068	9	7	7.8	39.6
2	Australia	0.113	19	7	12.1	29.2
5	USA	0.262	47	21	31.0	18.2
6	Germany	0.046	3	7	3.8	32.4
14	UK	0.193	35	12	25.8	22.6
17	Japan	0.138	25	5	5.4	10.8
25	Slovenia	0.021	1	12	0.6	24.6
31	Qatar	0.524	113	7	9.5	0.1
40	United Arab Emirates	0.244	43	12	27.6	17.5
49	Argentina	0.381	74	77	54.4	37.7
55	Libya	0.215	40	58	2.5	16.5
57	Russia	0.314	52	34	25.7	12.1
62	Malaysia	0.210	39	29	5.7	13.9
79	Brazil	0.441	85	56	70.8	9.6
91	China	0.202	37	37	8.6	23.4
110	Egypt	0.580	130	66	43	2.8
118	South Africa	0.461	94	300	50.9	41.1
135	India	0.563	127	200	32.8	10.9
136	Cambodia	0.505	105	250	44.3	18.1
146	Pakistan	0.563	127	260	27.3	19.7
147	Kenya	0.548	122	360	93.6	19.9
154	Yemen	0.733	152	200	47	0.7
166	Sudan	0.628	140	730	84	24.1
169	Afghanistan	0.705	149	460	86.8	27.6

Source: HDR (2014); The table from HDR on GII is available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-4-gender-inequality-index>

Note: GII values closer to 0 mean greater equality.

Marianna Khachaturyan, PhD
Dept. of Agricultural Economics
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
marianna@huskers.unl.edu

E. Wesley F. Peterson, Professor
Dept. of Agricultural Economics
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
(402) 472-7871, epeterson1@unl.edu