

# The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)

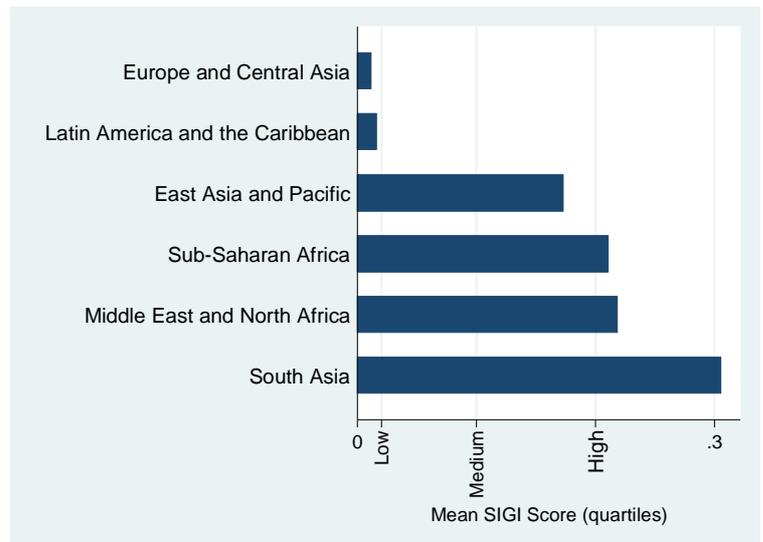
**A Different Index on Gender Inequality:** Existing measures of gender equality focus on inequality outcomes, such as educational attainment, the health status, or economic and political participation. By capturing inequalities that are based on social institutions, the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) measures important *inputs* to such outcome inequalities in 102 non-OECD countries. Social institutions are conceived as long-lasting codes of conduct, norms, traditions, and informal and formal laws that impact on gender equality.

**Regional Trends:** The SIGI indicates a high level of discrimination in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa, as illustrated by Figures 1 and 2. East Asia and the Pacific contains countries with both very low and very high inequality levels, while countries in Europe and Central Asia as well as Latin America and the Caribbean show a much lower level of inequality on average.

**Top and Bottom:** Half of the countries at the bottom of the index are located in sub-Saharan Africa, with Sudan showing the highest level of inequality (see Table 1). At the top, we find countries from Latin America, Eastern Europe and Central Asia with Paraguay on top.

**Reform can work:** Interestingly, even in the most problematic regions, some countries rank much better compared to their neighbours. Tunisia, ranking 25<sup>th</sup> on the SIGI scale, is a notable example of successful reform in a region where the SIGI generally shows a very high level of discrimination. In 1956, the Tunisian government changed the family code and banned discriminatory practices such as polygamy and repudiation, promoted consensual marriage and introduced equal divorce proceedings. These reforms also led to higher enrollment rates for both girls and boys.

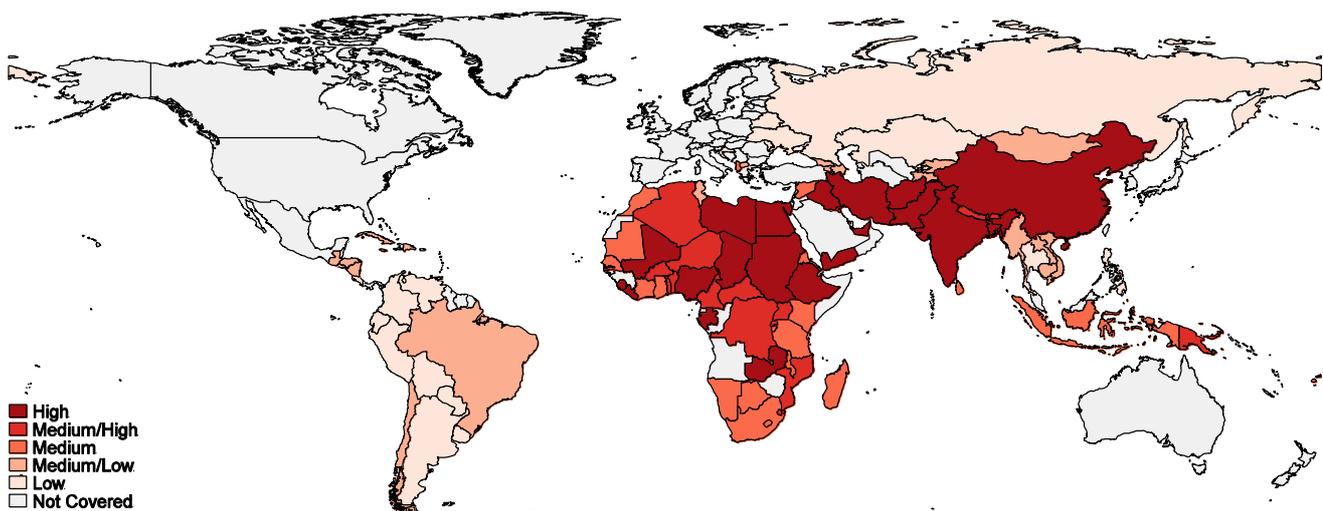
**Figure 1: Social Institutions and Development Index by Region, weighted by population**



**Table 1: The SIGI Index Ranks and Scores:**

1	Paraguay	0.00248	93	Iraq	0.27524
2	Croatia	0.00333	94	Pakistan	0.28324
3	Kazakhstan	0.00348	95	Iran, Islamic Rep.	0.30436
4	Argentina	0.00379	96	India	0.31810
5	Costa Rica	0.00709	97	Chad	0.32258
6	Russia	0.00725	98	Yemen	0.32705
7	Philippines	0.00788	99	Mali	0.33949
8	El Salvador	0.00825	100	Sierra Leone	0.34245
9	Ecuador	0.00914	101	Afghanistan	0.58230
10	Ukraine	0.00969	102	Sudan	0.67781

**Figure 2: SIGI Scores Around the World**



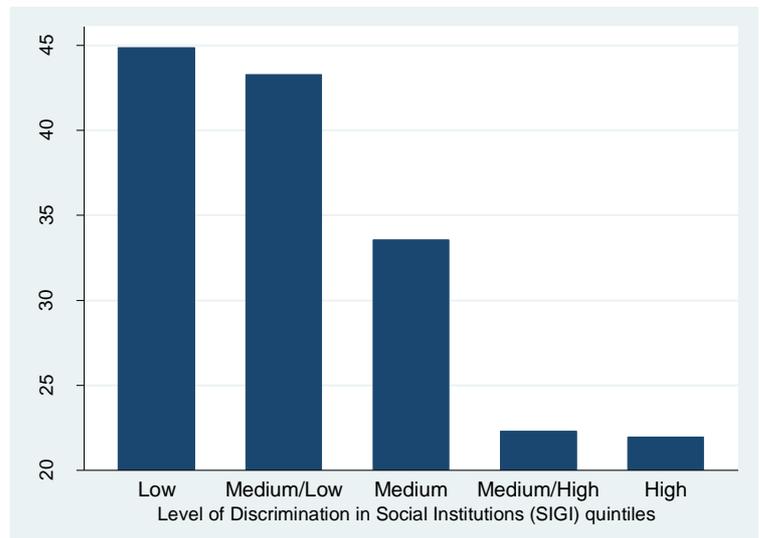
## Applying the SIGI

The SIGI suggests that social institutions are an important determinant of gender inequality outcomes in areas such as employment, education and health, which may affect a country's overall economic performance, as illustrated in figures 3 to 5.

### Figure 3: Discrimination in Social Institutions and Women's Participation in the Labour Force

As illustrated in Figure 3, women's participation in non-agricultural wage employment is strongly correlated to discrimination based on social institutions, particularly family code and early marriage. Among the countries which score low in the SIGI, labour force participation is close to 50 percent, while in countries that show high discrimination, women's average participation rate is just above 20 per cent.

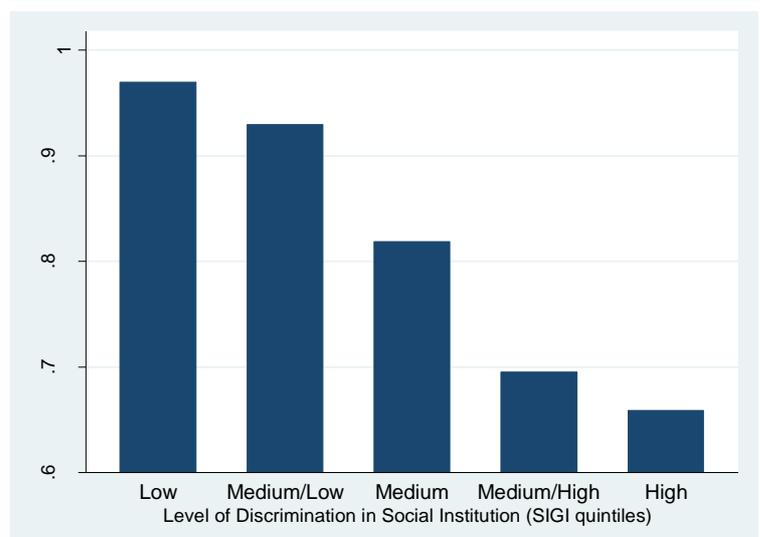
Women's access to paid jobs is crucial for both their personal well-being and the overall economic development of a country.



### Figure 4: Discrimination in Education and Literacy

A strong relationship can equally be found between social institutions and literacy ratios. As illustrated in Figure 4, countries in which the SIGI scores are low show a ratio of female to male literacy of close to 1. The ratio is significantly lower in countries where discrimination is high.

The indicator on early marriage seems to have a particularly strong effect on this relationship. Marriage at a young age limits women's access to education. Several studies find that gender differences in education have a negative impact on a country's economic growth potential.



### Figure 5: Physical Integrity and Fertility

A strong relationship also exists between the SIGI and fertility rates. In particular, violence against women and prevalence rate of female genital mutilation seem to be associated with a high number of children per woman.

Empirical research shows that high fertility has negative implications for women's access to education and economic opportunities, which in turn has a negative impact on economic growth.

