

# How Are Gender Norms Perceived?\*

Leonardo Bursztyn<sup>†</sup>    Alexander W. Cappelen<sup>‡</sup>    Bertil Tungodden<sup>§</sup>  
Alessandra Voena<sup>¶</sup>    David Yanagizawa-Drott<sup>||</sup>

February 20, 2024

## Abstract

Actual and perceived gender norms are key to understanding gender inequality in society. In this paper, using newly collected nationally representative datasets from 60 countries that cover over 80% of the world population, we study gender norms on two distinct policy issues: 1) *basic freedom*, allowing women to work outside of the home, and 2) *affirmative action*, prioritizing women when hiring for leadership positions. We establish that misperceptions of gender norms are pervasive across the world. The nature of the misperception, however, is context-dependent. In less gender-equal countries, people underestimate support for both policies, particularly support among men; in more gender-equal countries, people overestimate support for affirmative action, particularly support among women, and underestimate support for basic freedom. Perceptions of gender norms are highly correlated with actual gender norms across countries but are also systematically distorted. Specifically, using a simple framework we document that false consensus, overweighting of the minority view, and gender stereotyping prevail in our data, with the latter two forces driving the aggregate patterns of misperceptions on both policy issues. Misperceptions of gender norms may obstruct progress toward gender equality but may also contribute to sustaining gender policies that are not necessarily favored by women themselves.

**Keywords:** social norms, misperceptions, gender.

---

\*We are grateful to Abi Adams, Oriana Bandiera, John Conlon, Alice Evans, Raquel Fernández, Michele Gelfand, Nicola Gennaioli, Alex Imas, Rohini Pande, Andrei Shleifer, Matthias Sutter, and numerous seminar participants for helpful comments and suggestions. We also thank Camilla Allocchio, Daniel Carvajal, Bruno Escobar, Giacomo Fraccaroli, Andrei Kim, Lexi Schubert, and especially, Christoph Ziegler for outstanding research assistance. This project was administered by FAIR and financially supported by the Research Council of Norway through its Centres of Excellence Scheme, FAIR project No 262675, Research Grant 236995, and 250415, the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 788433), and the University of Zurich’s Research Priority Program “Equality of Opportunity.”

<sup>†</sup>University of Chicago and NBER. Email: [bursztyn@uchicago.edu](mailto:bursztyn@uchicago.edu)

<sup>‡</sup>Norwegian School of Economics. Email: [alexander.cappelen@nhh.no](mailto:alexander.cappelen@nhh.no)

<sup>§</sup>Norwegian School of Economics. Email: [bertil.tungodden@nhh.no](mailto:bertil.tungodden@nhh.no)

<sup>¶</sup>Stanford University, SIEPR, NBER, CEPR and BREAD. Email: [avoena@stanford.edu](mailto:avoena@stanford.edu)

<sup>||</sup>University of Zurich. Email: [david.yanagizawa-drott@econ.uzh.ch](mailto:david.yanagizawa-drott@econ.uzh.ch)

# 1 Introduction

The lack of gender equality is a major issue in all parts of the world, but the nature of the gender gap varies significantly across countries. It ranges from women not having the same basic rights and freedom as men (Jayachandran, 2015), to women being underrepresented in leadership positions in both private and public sectors (Bertrand, 2018). Actual and perceived gender norms represent major obstacles to progress towards gender equality (Fernández, 2007; Fernández and Fogli, 2009; Field et al., 2021), and thus, it is of great importance to understand how they vary across societies and policies.<sup>1</sup> Simple informational interventions may be able to correct miscalibrated *perceptions* of gender norms and lead to fast changes in the societal equilibrium (Burszty, González and Yanagizawa-Drott, 2020; Burszty and Yang, 2022), while *actual* gender norms are often slow-moving (e.g., Alesina, Giuliano and Nunn, 2013) and may require deeper interventions to be changed (Dhar, Jain and Jayachandran, 2022).

In this paper, we take a global perspective. Using a newly collected nationally representative dataset from 60 countries that represent over 80% of the world population, we study gender norms and perceptions about gender norms on two distinct policy issues: 1) *basic freedom*, allowing women to work outside of the home, and 2) *affirmative action*, prioritizing women when hiring for leadership positions.<sup>2</sup> The global focus allows us to establish a comprehensive understanding of how misperceptions of gender norms on different gender policies vary across the world, and to investigate whether there are general mechanisms that can explain misperceptions in a given society. The study was implemented as part of the Gallup World Poll 2020 with a between-individual survey design. Participants were randomly allocated either to a basic freedom module or to an affirmative action module. We first elicited the participants’ support for the respective policy, before eliciting their perceptions about the extent to which other participants supported the policy. Perceptions were elicited separately for the support among men and the support among women in their country.

When thinking about social norms, one often focuses on “deep values,” for example, what a society thinks about whether women and men are equally qualified to be leaders. Here, we focus on norms on concrete policies as opposed to those deep values. Policy views form an important component of social norms around gender. Consider a person who supports women working outside of the home. If that person’s social circle is strongly against it, that person might hide her opinion

---

<sup>1</sup>We follow Bénabou and Tirole (2011) and think of social norms as the set of ‘social sanctions or rewards’ that incentivize a certain behavior. *Actual* social norms in a given society about a specific issue are therefore summarized by that society’s views and opinions on that issue, defined as the average support in the country in our data. *Perceptions* of social norms are given by individuals’ beliefs about their society’s views on the issue.

<sup>2</sup>These are two relevant policy issues debated in different parts of the world. The “freedom to work outside of the home” question captures a key issue in countries with low levels of gender equality and extends an existing literature (Lowe and McKelway, 2021; Jalota and Ho, 2023). In more gender-equal countries, a highly relevant/debated question is whether women should be prioritized, especially for leadership positions – hence our choice of this policy (Bertrand et al., 2019). To our knowledge, no cross-country data exists on this key issue, even on actual gender norms, not to mention perceived gender norms.

and even act against it: that person is affected by the social norm in her environment. Now consider a CEO who is considering implementing gender-based affirmative action at her company. Whether or not the employees support the policy may affect the CEO's decision: her decision might depend on the existing workplace norm on the topic. It is true that views on policy might not directly map one-to-one to the underlying deep values regarding gender equality. For example, support for gender-based affirmative action might depend on one's deep values but also on one's perception of whether there is a need for such policy in one's society. Still, while policy views may not map one-to-one to deep values, they map one-to-one to actions and to policies – and those are the things that ultimately affect outcomes.

A number of measures were taken to validate our approach. First, we extensively tested the study design with cognitive interviews, conducted in-depth quality checks of the translations to 108 country-language combinations, and followed strict procedures in the interviews. Second, we provide evidence showing that the findings are not driven by social desirability bias. In the survey, we implemented a treatment manipulation where some participants were asked about the extent to which they believed that others “would say that they agree” with the policy, while other participants were asked about the extent to which they believed that others “would truly agree” with the policy. We find only minimal differences in perceptions between the two treatment manipulations, which is consistent with findings from a growing literature indicating that these types of misperceptions are indeed real and not just an artifact of survey measurement issues (see [Bursztyn and Yang \(2022\)](#) for a recent survey and meta-analysis). We also show that direct opinion elicitation, methods with higher degrees of cover, and a different ordering of questions yield very similar responses in both settings with higher and lower levels of gender inequality. Finally, to show that perceptions about gender norms at the national level are also important for perceptions about gender norms in local peer groups, we implement an independent experiment in the United States and provide evidence of gender norms at the national level causally affecting perceptions about gender norms at the state level and at the workplace.

A first contribution of the paper is to provide global evidence on gender norms in terms of actual support for basic freedom and affirmative action for women. We find that there is widespread support for women's basic freedom to work outside of the home across the world: a majority of the population is in favor in every country we study, often by a wide margin. While the share of women in favor is essentially always higher than the share of men in favor, we also find that a majority of men are in favor of women's basic freedom in all countries. However, the difference in the support among men and the support among women is highly heterogeneous across countries. In the least gender-equal countries, like Jordan and Algeria, the average gender gap in actual support is more than 30 percentage points (pp), while this gender gap almost vanishes and there is close to consensus support for basic freedom in the most gender-equal countries, like Canada and Norway. With respect to actual support for affirmative action for women, the picture is more nuanced. In 37

countries, we find that the majority view of both men and women is to support affirmative action; in 12 countries, we find that the majority view of both men and women is not to support it. The level of support for affirmative action for women is strongly negatively associated with the level of gender equality in the country, with, on average, the majority of the population being against affirmative action for women in the most gender-equal countries. Similar to basic freedom, more women than men support affirmative action for women in virtually all countries, with the gender gap being greater than 10pp in two-thirds of the countries in our sample. The largest gender gap in support for affirmative action is in Israel, where only a minority of men support affirmative action for women while a large majority of women support it.

The second contribution of this paper is to provide novel evidence on people's perceptions of the gender norms on these policies across the world. We show that misperceptions of gender norms (defined as the difference between perceived support and actual support) are ubiquitous. How they manifest, however, depends on the policy issue, the level of gender equality in the country, and whether the perceptions are about the support among men or the support among women. We establish four stylized facts about misperceptions of gender norms across the world. *First*, there is a universal underestimation of the support for basic freedom for women. *Second*, people tend to underestimate support for affirmative action for women in less gender-equal countries, while they overestimate support for this policy in more gender-equal countries. Taken together, these two facts suggest that correcting misperceptions of gender norms may be a promising approach to promoting gender equality in countries where the basic freedom of women is challenged, in line with the evidence from Saudi Arabia (Bursztyn, González and Yanagizawa-Drott, 2020). To illustrate, more than 80% of males support women's basic freedom to work outside of the home in Tanzania and Turkey, while this is believed to be a minority view among males. *Third*, men's support for basic freedom is misperceived more than women's support. *Fourth*, misperceptions about support for affirmative action are mostly driven by people underestimating men's support in less gender-equal countries, while it is mainly driven by overestimating women's support for this policy in more gender-equal countries. To illustrate, consider South Africa and Canada. In South Africa, more than 90% of men support affirmative action for women, while the perception is that only a minority of men do; in contrast, in Canada, people believe that almost 70% of women support affirmative action, while it is in fact a minority view. The finding that women's support for affirmative action is systematically overestimated in the more gender-equal countries may be surprising and highlights that misperceptions of gender norms in some situations may contribute to sustaining gender policies that are not necessarily favored by women themselves. Taken together, the four stylized facts about misperceptions suggest that the societal equilibrium in many countries may change quickly if people's perceptions about the gender norms in society are corrected. In an individual-level analysis with country fixed effects, we show that the gender difference in support for these policies is robust to controlling for other background characteristics.



Though it is not causal, the analysis also suggests that education might be particularly important in shaping individual attitudes toward these policies. Education appears to foster support for basic freedom and resistance to affirmative action for women.

Our third contribution is to explore multiple potential mechanisms that can reconcile the main global patterns we observe. We examine three classes of mechanisms commonly highlighted in the social sciences literature as potential drivers of misperceptions: (i) false consensus, defined as a positive correlation between the respondent’s view and their perception of the prevalence of that view among others (Fields and Schuman, 1976); (ii) minority overweighting, by which we denote an array of phenomena that lead respondents to overestimate the prevalence of the actual minority position (e.g., Miller and Prentice (1994)); (iii) gender stereotyping, which leads to an exaggeration in perceived gender differences relative to the gender differences in actual views (Bordalo et al., 2016, 2023). We provide evidence for each mechanism separately by measuring their prevalence in the data, and then examine the extent to which they can contribute to the stylized facts across the global gender equality spectrum, both qualitatively and quantitatively, by building a simple framework to encompass all three mechanisms.<sup>3</sup>

Our framework has two crucial implications we can test in our cross-country data. First, while actual gender norms and perceived gender norms should be positively correlated across countries, the slope of a regression where perceived gender norms are the dependent variable and actual gender norms are the independent variable should be greater than one if false consensus prevails and less than one if minority overweighting prevails. Our data reveals a strong correlation between perceived and actual gender norms and provides strong support for the latter mechanism being the dominant force. Second, by definition, gender stereotyping should lead to the gender difference in average perceived gender norms at the country level to exceed the gender difference in actual gender norms. We observe this pattern arising in almost all countries in our sample to an extent that appears rather stable, reflective of a tendency to characterize men’s and women’s views as different, irrespective of the actual extent of true within-country differences. Most importantly, the analysis through our simple framework establishes that – despite vast cultural, economic and institutional heterogeneity – there are two forces that quantitatively drive misperceptions of gender norms globally, across both policy dimensions: minority overweighting and gender stereotyping. False consensus, while widespread, has a limited impact in shaping the nature of aggregate misperceptions.

This paper connects to several strands of the literature. First, we contribute to the work in economics and other social sciences that has measured individual attitudes and norms, particularly those pertaining to women’s rights and labor market opportunities.<sup>4</sup> While several papers have

---

<sup>3</sup>We explore the unique nature of our dataset that allows to have both information on individual beliefs and variation of ground truth across societies and focus on the general classes of mechanisms driving misperceptions. Future work should focus on decomposing the channels through which these groups of mechanisms operate. For example, minority overweighting could be a consequence of the information available to people (e.g., the representation of different views on television) or be a result of cognitive processes.

<sup>4</sup>There is a rich empirical literature on social norms and misperceptions in sociology and social psychology. Key

exploited ancestral and cultural characteristics to study the persistent effects of gender norms (Alesina, Giuliano and Nunn, 2013; Ashraf et al., 2020; Giuliano, 2020; Becker, 2021), survey data are often used for measuring contemporary attitudes (see, for example, Scott, Alwin and Braun (1996); Treas and Widmer (2000); Brooks and Bolzendahl (2004); Aboim (2010); Cotter, Hermsen and Vanneman (2011); Fortin (2015)).<sup>5</sup> This literature has provided new insights on people’s support for women’s basic freedom, but also documented attitudes towards race-based and gender-based affirmative action in the U.S. and other countries (Parker, Baltes and Christiansen, 1997; Konrad and Hartmann, 2001; Fryer and Loury, 2005; Steinbugler, Press and Dias, 2006). To the best of our knowledge, this is the first paper to examine attitudes and perceptions over both basic freedom and affirmative action among men and women globally, across the distribution of gender equality. We are thus able to uncover general insights and lessons that go beyond specific settings and policy issues.

By measuring *perceptions* about gender norms and comparing them with actual gender norms, we provide a global perspective to the literature that has shown the presence of strong misperceptions in this domain. While Bursztyn, González and Yanagizawa-Drott (2020) show that misperceptions about the gender norm on women’s freedom to work outside the home are strong and relevant in the context of Saudi Arabia, little is known about how this finding generalizes to other contexts. Another novel feature of our study is that we also provide evidence on the extent to which misperceptions of gender norms reflect misperceptions of men or women. Cortés et al. (2022) is an exception, who study how perceived gender norms in the U.S. affect tolerance of mothers using a vignette study. Similarly, work in psychology has documented misperceptions of others’ attitudes toward affirmative action among college students (Van Boven, 2000). We provide the first evidence on the global pattern of misperceptions over the support for affirmative action. We also document the presence of meaningful differences in how the views of men and women are misperceived. While there has been an active and growing recent literature on misperceptions about others (see the review by Bursztyn and Yang, 2022), to our knowledge, our paper is the first to systematically study misperceptions about a given issue *globally*, which allows us to establish that a small set of common mechanisms proposed in the social science literature appear to be present across societies. Our results are broadly consistent with recent work in economics on the micro foundations of belief distortions (Bordalo et al., 2016, 2019; Conlon and Patel, 2022; Exley et al., 2022), including work that predicts that minority overweighting and stereotype thinking can jointly arise when agents base their assessment of what the actual gender norm is by retrieving experiences from memory

---

contributions include Asch (1951); Bicchieri (2005); Cialdini, Reno and Kallgren (1990); Deutsch and Gerard (1955), and Prentice and Miller (1993). Furthermore, more recent work on social norms and misperceptions continues to shed light on these topics in relation to gender norms and other social issues (Tankard and Paluck, 2016; Paluck and Shepherd, 2012; Gelfand et al., 2011; Chung and Rimal, 2016).

<sup>5</sup>A large literature in economics has used different measures of gender norms to assess their role in shaping women’s outcomes (Fernández, 2007; Fernández and Fogli, 2009; Fernández, 2013; Field et al., 2021; Charles, Guryan and Pan, 2022).

(Bordalo et al., 2023).

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. In Section 2, we describe the global dataset, other data sources, and discuss the different validation approaches that we implemented, including the experiment conducted in the United States to study the relationship between perceptions at the national level and perceptions at the local level. In Sections 3 and 4, we provide the main evidence on actual and perceived gender norms across the world. Section 5 provides evidence of general mechanisms that can drive the misperception of gender norms, using individual-level data. Section 6 introduces a simple conceptual framework and studies how the three mechanisms interact and their quantitative importance for understanding misperceptions of gender norms. Section 7 discusses some implications of our findings and concludes.

## 2 Measurement: The Global Dataset

In this section, we provide an overview of the global dataset on actual and perceived gender norms that we collected in collaboration with Gallup World Poll. We discuss measurement challenges such as experimenter demand effects and order effects. We establish the relevance of national-level perceptions of gender norms in local peer groups. Further details about the data set are provided in [Online Appendix B](#).

### 2.1 Global Sample and Survey Implementation

The study was implemented in 60 countries between September 2020 and February 2021, with a median of 1000 respondents in each country and, in total, 66,214 observations. The global sample represents 85% of the world population and 90% of the global GDP. It consists of 10 countries from Western Europe, 8 from Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 7 from the Middle East and North Africa, 11 from Sub-Saharan Africa, 11 from the Americas, 4 from South Asia, and 9 from Southeast Asia and the Pacific. [Figure 1](#) illustrates the geographic coverage of the data, with the country names listed in [Appendix Table A.1](#). In all countries, Gallup World Poll used probability-based sampling, and the samples, adjusting for sampling weights, are nationally representative of the resident population aged 15 and older in terms of age, gender, education, and income.<sup>6</sup>

The research team extensively pre-tested the survey instrument. In addition to the standard testing procedures used by Gallup World Poll, we implemented cognitive interviews with respondents in Brazil, Spain, Tanzania, and Turkey, who represented a balanced mix of the key demographic characteristics. These interviews provided valuable feedback on how respondents understood and interpreted the different questions, which we incorporated into the design of the final

---

<sup>6</sup>The Gallup World Poll provides the respondent’s self-reported gender. It is now broadly recognized that gender is not binary, but only two options were presented in the poll. This could lead to small measurement error in the data.

version of the survey.

The survey was implemented via telephone, except for in India and Pakistan where it was done through face-to-face interviews. The interviews were conducted by local professional enumerators. We translated the survey from English into 108 country-language combinations using standard back-and-forth translation techniques. The research team had native speakers reviewing each translation, in many cases over several iterations, to ensure that the translated version conveyed the same meaning as the English version. The enumerators were instructed to follow the interview script without deviations and were provided with a detailed guide on how to answer a broad range of possible questions from the respondents.

**Figure 1: Study Countries**



**Notes:** The map shows the coverage of the Gallup World Poll 2020. Covered countries are colored, those not covered remain blank. Geo data from [Belgiu \(2015\)](#).

## 2.2 Description of Key Variables

Participants were randomly allocated either to a *basic freedom module* or to an *affirmative action module*. We first elicited the participants’ support for the respective policy, before eliciting their perceptions about the extent to which other participants supported the policy, separately for the support among men and support among women in their country. The detailed survey design is provided in [Online Appendix B](#).

To elicit support for the two policies, we asked them whether they agreed with the following statements:

- **Basic Freedom:** “*Women should have the freedom to work outside of the home.*”
- **Affirmative Action:** “*The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions.*”

We use the share of sampling-weighted respondents who support the policy on basic freedom as a measure of the *actual gender norm* on basic freedom in a country, and correspondingly, we measure the actual gender norm on affirmative action by the share of respondents who support the policy on affirmative action.

To elicit people’s perception of the extent to which these policies are supported in their country, we told them that 100 random individuals in their country would be asked the same question they had been asked. Respondents then reported how many of the 100 random individuals they believed would support the policy, which we use as a measure of an individual’s *perceived gender norm*. We asked two questions separately, one about 100 men and one about 100 women. The order of the target gender was randomized.

At the individual level, we measure the *misperception of the gender norm* as the difference between the *perceived gender norm* and the *actual gender norm*, that is, the difference between the share of the 100 random individuals that the respondent believes support the policy and the share of the population that states that they support the policy. A respondent *overestimates* the support for the policy if he or she reports a higher share than the actual share of support in the country, and *underestimates* the support for the policy if he or she reports a lower share than the actual share of support. Correspondingly, we measure misperception of the gender norm at the country level by the difference between the average perception in the country of how many of the 100 random individuals support the policy and the share that states that they support the policy.

[Online Appendix A](#) describes the other data sources used in the analysis.

### 2.3 Social Desirability Bias

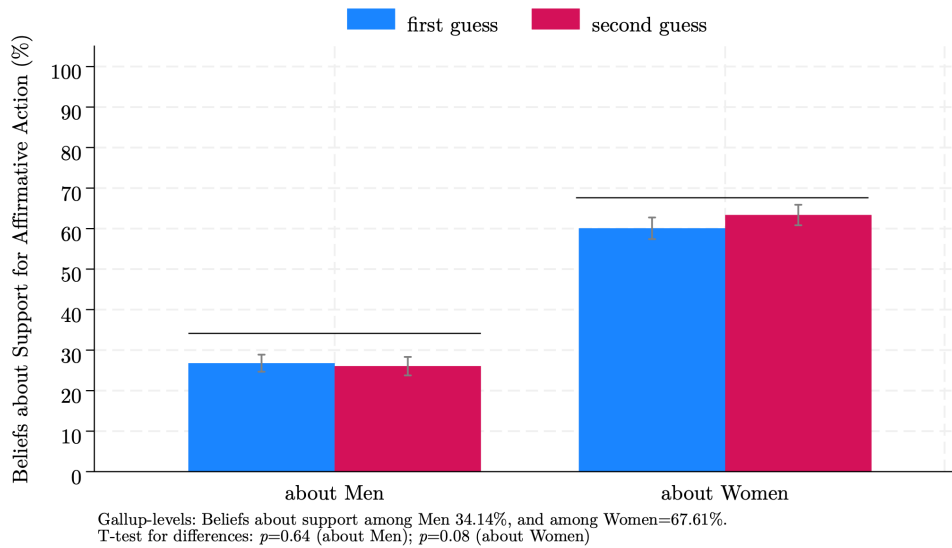
One concern that may arise from interpreting the difference between actual and perceived support for a gender issue is that respondents may have felt that they had to answer in a specific, socially desirable way. In this case, our measure of misperception would not be informative since it would conflate true misperception with social desirability bias (SDB). To address this concern, we developed a novel experimental approach to examine whether SDB is indeed present in our study.

To test for SDB, we randomized participants into one of two versions of the perception questions. In the “Actual” version, respondents were simply asked how many out of 100 random men/women in their country “will say that they agree” with the policy; in the “Truthful” version, respondents were asked how many they think “will truly agree” with the policy. It is reasonable to assume that if respondents were distorting their own answer to the policy question, then they would anticipate that others also distorted their answer. In that case, we should observe a difference in reported perceptions between the “Actual” version and the “Truthful” version of the perception questions. Reassuringly, as we observe in [Figure A.1](#), the answers to the two versions of the perception questions are strikingly similar. In [Figure A.2](#), we show that this is also the case if we consider separately the perception questions about the support among men and the support among women.

The finding that SDB is not a driver of our results is consistent with what the growing literature on misperceptions has uncovered. The meta-analysis in [Bursztyn and Yang \(2022\)](#) shows, across studies, that misperceptions about others are indeed capturing actual misperceptions, and are not driven by SDB or other measurement issues. Two additional pieces of evidence provide further assurance that SDB is not driving our findings, both in less and more gender-equal countries. First, [Bursztyn, González and Yanagizawa-Drott \(2020\)](#) show that the direct elicitation approach used in the present study and an elicitation method providing a higher degree of cover give very similar levels of support for basic freedom in Saudi Arabia. Second, we implemented a pre-registered online survey experiment in the US with approximately 1,000 subjects recruited nationally with the survey platform Prolific, in which we randomized the direct elicitation method or a method providing high cover. The level of support for affirmative action is very similar between the two approaches, and we cannot detect a statistically significant difference.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.4 Order Effects

**Figure 2:** Perceptions about Support for Affirmative Action, randomizing whether asked about perceptions about Men/Women first



**Notes:** The figure shows data from the exact replication study fielded in November 2023. The horizontal lines indicate perceptions of support for the US, as measured in the Gallup World Poll 2020. *Data:* Experimental data and Gallup World Poll 2020.

The design of the global survey involved the randomization of the gender order in which the perception questions were asked, that is, if respondents were asked their perceptions about the

<sup>7</sup>See [Figure A.3](#) for more details. [Figure B.2](#) and [Table B.2](#) in [Online Appendix B](#) contain the experimental documentation. We pre-registered the experiment and our hypothesis in the AEA RCT Registry (#0010779).

views of women or men first. Unfortunately, the information on the order was not stored by Gallup. Examining the presence of ordering effects is generally important in surveys and experiments. In addition, in our setting, the order in which perceptions of men’s and women’s support are asked could, in principle, mechanically induce some degree of gender stereotyping, and thus generate differences in answers. The logic goes as follows: if perceptions are asked about both genders, but first about men, it is possible that respondents then formed their perceptions about women relative to men, focusing on the *differences* between genders. In that case, only the first question would give a non-contaminated response and one would see order effects.

To examine the role of the gender order of the perception questions, we conducted an exact replication of the study in the US, eliciting support and perceptions about support for affirmative action. We fielded an online survey with a representative sample in November 2023, and targeted the same sample size as in our Gallup data (the final samples were N=486 for Gallup and N=501 for the replication). As we show in [Figure 2](#), the order in which perceptions of men’s and women’s views are asked does not affect answers in a meaningful way. Interestingly, [Figure A.4](#) shows that support for affirmative action remained stable since the original Gallup survey from 2020.

## 2.5 Relevance of National-Level Perceptions

Our global survey studies gender norms at the national level. However, the extensive literature on social influence, and in particular, social image concerns, has established that perceptions about local peers causally influence a wide range of behavior ([Bursztyrn and Jensen, 2017](#)). An important question is therefore whether perceptions about gender norms at the national level also matter for understanding local-level perceptions. To study this we complemented the global study with an incentivized online experiment studying the relationship between national-level and local-level perceptions. We decided to focus on studying this relationship for the affirmative action policy in a country with relatively high gender equality (United States) since there is already evidence on how national-level perceptions affect local-level perceptions for the basic freedom policy in a country with low gender equality ([Bursztyrn, González and Yanagizawa-Drott, 2020](#)).

The study was implemented online with about 500 participants from the state of Texas in the United States, using the survey platform Prolific.<sup>8</sup> The participants were initially asked whether they supported affirmative action, in the same way as in the global study. We then conducted an incentivized elicitation of their perception of the support for affirmative action at the national level in the United States. Participants were next randomized either into a treatment group where they were informed about the actual support for affirmative action at the national level in the United States or a control group that did not get any information. Finally, we elicited their perceptions about the support for affirmative action in the state of Texas and among their co-workers.

---

<sup>8</sup>See [Figure B.3](#) for an overview of the experimental design and [Table B.3](#) for detailed instructions. We pre-registered the experiment in the AEA RCT Registry (#0010130).



We find the same pattern of misperception in the experiment as in the global survey. On average, the participants in the experiment underestimate the support of men and overestimate the support of women for affirmative action both at the national level and at the state level. We also find that having misperceptions about the support at the state level is strongly correlated with having misperceptions about the support at the national level, with a raw correlation of about 0.8 for both women and men (see [Figure A.5](#)).

Most importantly, the experiment provides strong evidence of national-level misperceptions being of major importance for local-level misperceptions. As shown in [Figure A.6](#), correcting misperceptions at the national level causes a significant change in local-level perceptions, both at the state level and among co-workers. When the participants learn that the support among males is about 11pp higher than they believed in the United States, they increase their belief about the support among males at the state level and among male co-workers with almost 8pp. Similarly, when they learn that the support among females is about 18pp lower than they believed in the United States, they decrease their belief about the support among females at the state level with about 8pp and among female co-workers with about 6pp. As a consequence, the treated participants end up having close to correct perceptions of the support for affirmative action in their own state. In other words, by eliminating misperceptions at the national level, we almost completely eliminate misperceptions at the local level. Hence, the experiment strongly suggests that national-level misperceptions may not only affect behavior directly, but also indirectly by shaping local-level misperceptions.

### 3 Gender Norms Around the World

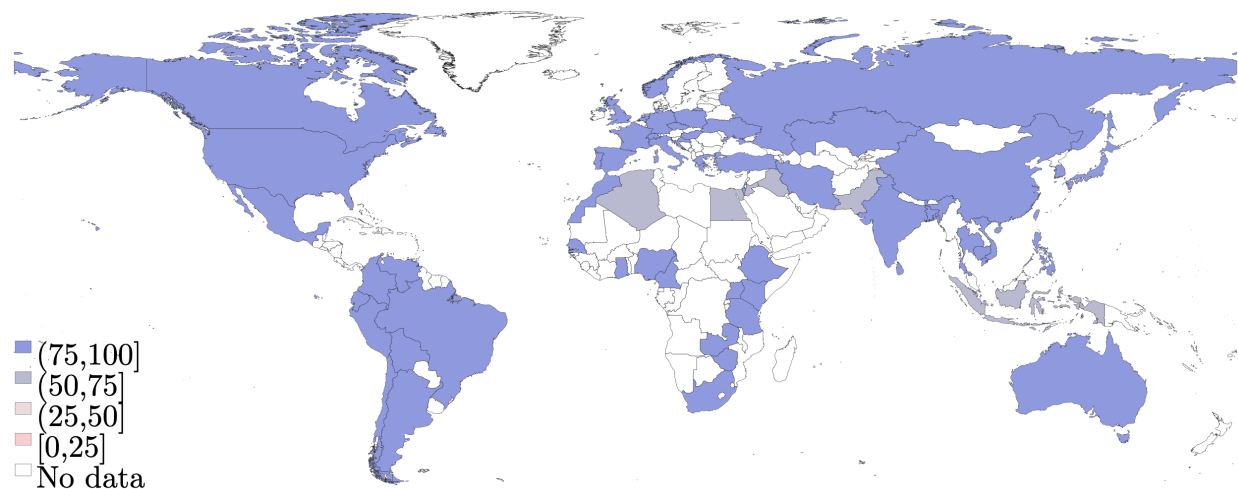
This section provides an overview of the main global patterns of gender norms that emerge from the data collection. We first show how the gender norms on basic freedom and affirmative action for women vary across the world, before we discuss how they reflect differences in attitudes between men and women. Finally, we study at the individual level how the attitudes of the respondents relate to important background characteristics (education, income, employment, age, location, and access to the Internet).

#### 3.1 Basic Freedom

[Figure 3](#) shows the average support for basic freedom in all the countries in the study. We observe that the support for basic freedom for women is widespread. A large global majority agrees that women should have the right to work outside of the home, with a country-level average of 91.3%. In all countries, the majority view is to support basic freedom for women, but there is still substantial heterogeneity in support across countries. The lowest share of support is found in Indonesia (66.0%) and Pakistan (61.0%), while the highest share of support is found in the US

(100%) and the Netherlands (99.8%). In 41 countries, we find that more than 90% of the population supports basic freedom for women.

**Figure 3:** Actual Support for Basic Freedom throughout the World

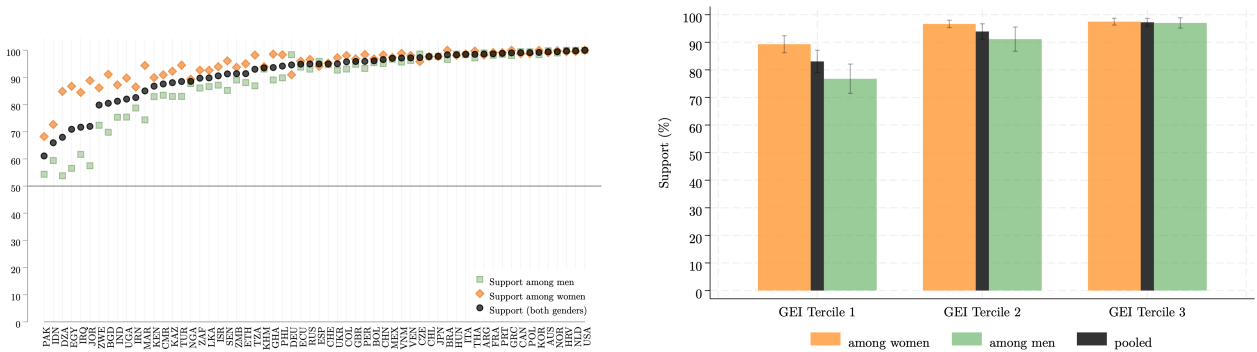


**Notes:** The map shows average support (%) for *basic freedom* in each country, pooled across men and women. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Geo data from [Belgiu \(2015\)](#).

In the left panel in [Figure 4](#), we study the extent to which attitudes differ between men and women by country. We observe that in most countries, the large majority of both men and women support basic freedom for women, with a global gender difference in the share of support of 6.2pp: 94.4% among women versus 88.2% among men. The lowest share of support for basic freedom is found among men in Pakistan (54.4%) and Algeria (53.8%), and among women in Indonesia (72.7%) and Pakistan (68.2%). But even in these countries, it is a minority view both for men and women not to support basic freedom for women. The largest gender difference in the share of support for basic freedom is in Jordan (88.8% support among women versus 57.5% support among men) and Algeria (84.8% versus 53.8%). However, in many countries, the gender difference in support is rather small: in 34 countries, there is less than a 5pp difference in the share of support of men and women.

In the right panel in [Figure 4](#), we relate the support for basic freedom for women to the level of gender equality in the countries. We split the countries into three terciles depending on how the country ranks on the Gender Equality Index (GEI), based on UN data, with the top tercile representing the countries with the highest level of gender equality. We observe that the lowest level of support for basic freedom for women is in the countries with the lowest levels of gender equality, where we also observe a large gender difference in support. However, even in these countries, we find that the overwhelming majority of both men and women support women’s freedom to work outside of the home. We find almost universal support for basic freedom for women in the most gender-equal societies, both among men and women.

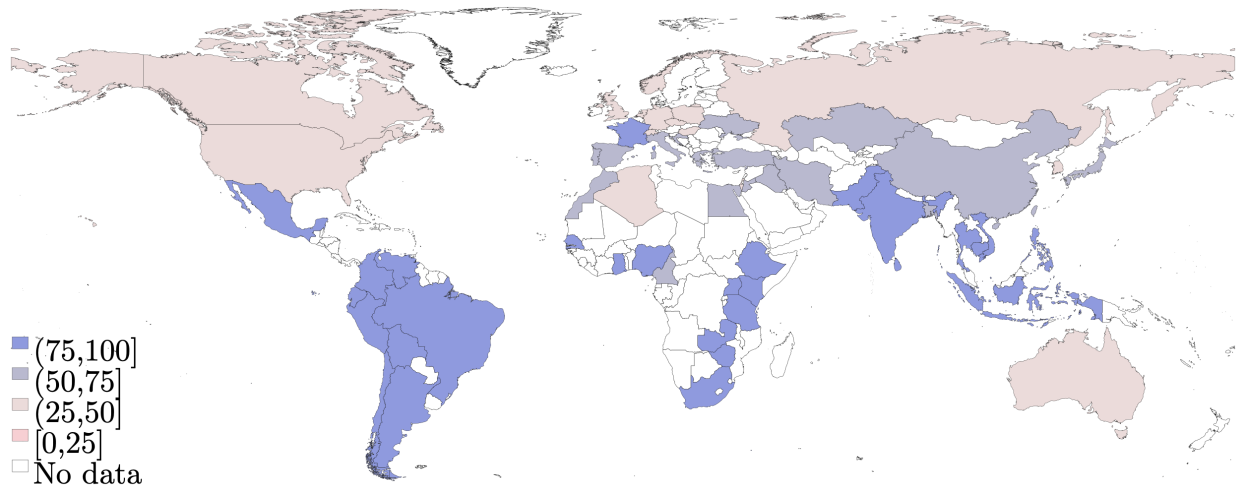
**Figure 4: Global Outlook: Basic Freedom**



**Notes:** The left panel shows average support (%) for *basic freedom* among women (orange), among men (green), and pooled across gender (black) in a given country. The right panel shows average levels of support (%) for *basic freedom* conditional on how gender-equal a given country is on a global spectrum, as measured by tertiles of a gender equality index (GEI). The GEI increases with the equality between women and men. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on [UNDP \(2022\)](#).

### 3.2 Affirmative Action

**Figure 5: Actual Support for Affirmative Action throughout the World**

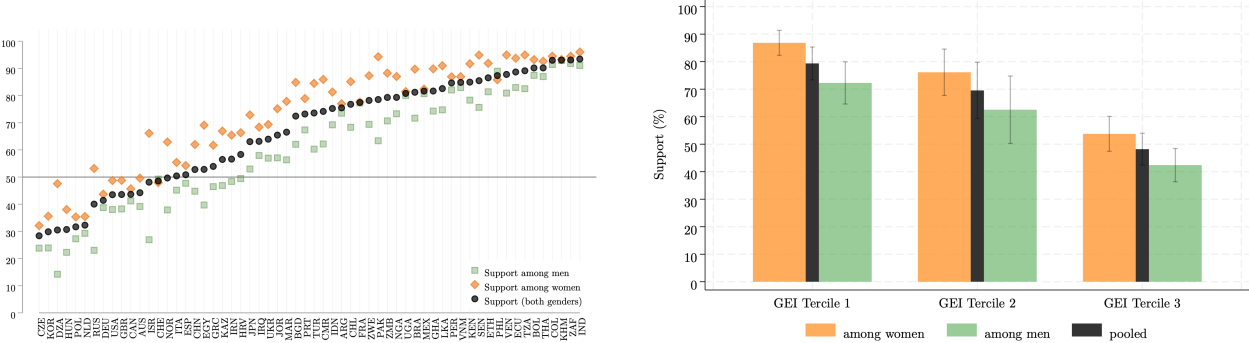


**Notes:** The map shows average support (%) for *affirmative action* in each country, pooled across men and women. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Geo data from [Belgiu \(2015\)](#).

Figure 5 shows the average support for affirmative action in all the countries in the study. The global majority, 66.6%, supports that the government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions, but there is significant resistance against affirmative action in many countries. The highest share of support is in India (93.5%) and South Africa (93.1%), while the lowest share of support is in South Korea (29.9%) and the Czech Republic (28.4%). In 15 countries, the majority view is not in favor of affirmative action for women.

In the left panel of Figure 6, we observe that women are more supportive of affirmative action than men in all countries, with a global gender difference in the share of support of 13.1pp: 73.1% among women versus 60.0% among men. However, the support among both men and women is strikingly different across countries. The lowest share of support among men is in Hungary (22.3%) and Algeria (14.2%), while the lowest share of support among women is in Poland (35.3%) and the Czech Republic (32.1%). In 37 countries, we find that the majority view of both men and women is to support affirmative action for women, while in 12 countries the majority view of both men and women is not to support it. The largest gender difference in support for affirmative action is in Israel (66.1% among women versus 26.9% among men) and Algeria (47.6% versus 14.2%), and in most countries, women are substantially more supportive of affirmative action than men. In 46 countries, we find a gender difference of more than 5pp in support for affirmative action for women.

Figure 6: Global Outlook: Affirmative Action



**Notes:** The left panel shows average support (%) for *affirmative action* among women (orange), among men (green), and pooled across gender (black) in a given country. The right panel shows average levels of support (%) for *affirmative action* conditional on how gender-equal a given country is on a global spectrum, as measured by tertiles of a gender equality index (GEI). The GEI increases with the equality between women and men. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on UNDP (2022).

In the right panel of Figure 6, we relate the support for affirmative action for women to the level of gender equality in the countries. We observe that the support for affirmative action follows a very different pattern than the support for basic freedom. There is much more support for affirmative action for women in less gender-equal countries than in more gender-equal countries, both among men and women. In the bottom tertile, 71.1% of men and 86.8% of women support affirmative action, while only 42.4% of men and 54.3% of women support it in the top tertile. It follows that in many of the most gender-equal countries, it is a minority view to support affirmative action for women. However, the gender difference in support for affirmative action remains also in the most gender-equal countries, and is comparable to the gender difference in support observed in the less gender-equal countries.

### 3.3 Individual Attitudes: The role of background characteristics

We now turn to study how individual attitudes relate to important background characteristics of the respondent, where we use individual-level regressions with country-fixed effects. [Table 1](#) shows this analysis for basic freedom for women (columns (1)-(4)) and support for affirmative action for women (columns (5)-(8)), both for the global sample and separately for each tercile of gender equality. In [Figure A.7](#) in the Appendix, we report the estimated interaction effects between the gender of the respondent and the different background characteristics.

We observe from the first row in [Table 1](#) that the gender difference in support is robust to controlling for other background characteristics. Women are significantly more supportive of basic freedom and affirmative action for women than men, except for affirmative action in the most gender-equal countries.

From the second and third rows, we observe that the individual attitudes are strongly associated with the educational level of the respondent, where the estimated effect (absolute value) of having a college education is typically as large as the estimated gender difference. However, education relates very differently to support for basic freedom and support for affirmative action. In the global sample, secondary and college education are associated with greater support for basic freedom for women, while they are associated with less support for affirmative action. The positive association between education and support for basic freedom is driven by the less gender-equal countries, and in [Figure A.7](#) in [Online Appendix A](#), we show that it is particularly strong for men. Since one's support for basic freedom for women can be naturally linked to one holding gender-equal attitudes, these findings may suggest that education is an important driver of gender-equal attitudes in a society. In contrast, we observe that there is a negative relationship between education and support for affirmative action, especially in the more gender-equal countries. This negative relationship is present both among men and women, and may suggest that education is associated with support for meritocratic outcomes, and thus more reluctance to affirmative action. The estimated negative effect is stronger for men than for women, see [Figure A.7](#), in line with highly educated men running the risk of being disfavored by such policies.

In contrast to the strong association between individual attitudes and education, we find much weaker relationships with the other background characteristics. In the global sample, high income and living in an urban area are positively associated with support for basic freedom, while high income, employment, and being less than 40 years old are negatively associated with support for affirmative action.<sup>9</sup> However, the estimated effects of these background characteristics are small compared to what we establish for education. Finally, we find that access to the Internet is

---

<sup>9</sup>In terms of the age effect, there is a significant difference between men and women, see [Figure A.7](#). Younger men are more likely than older men to be against basic freedom for women in the least gender-equal countries and against affirmative action for women in the more gender-equal countries, while we do not observe a similar age effect for women.

associated with stronger support for basic freedom for women in the less gender-equal countries, while it is associated with less support for affirmative action in the most gender-equal countries. These patterns may suggest that access to the Internet plays a role in shaping individual attitudes and that it may contribute to increasing the support for the majority view in society.

In Appendix [Table A.2](#), we show that the findings in [Table 1](#) are robust to controlling for a host of other individual-level variables capturing personal attitudes and experiences, policy attitudes, and other background characteristics. In particular, we observe that the estimated effects of education are almost the same in the extended regressions, which shows that the strong association between education and individual attitudes is not driven by educated respondents being different in these other dimensions. Overall, the analysis points to the particular importance of education in shaping individual attitudes in society. Education appears to foster support for basic freedom and resistance to affirmative action for women, which, given the higher share of respondents with college education in the most gender-equal societies, may contribute to explaining the pattern of individual attitudes observed across countries.

The greater resistance to affirmative action in the more gender-equal countries may also reflect that people in these countries perceive there to be less of a *need* for a policy designed to address gender discrimination in labor markets. In the Gallup World Poll, respondents are asked whether they agree with the statement that women are treated with respect and dignity in their country – which is the closest question in the data set to capture the perception of gender discrimination in their country. We find a larger share agreeing with this statement in the most gender-equal countries and, as shown in Appendix [Table A.2](#), a strong negative correlation between agreeing and support for affirmative action. More broadly, the support for affirmative action may depend on whether the respondent has confidence in the institution implementing the policy, and in line with this, we find a strong positive relationship between confidence in the national government, as asked in the Gallup World Poll, and support for affirmative action, see Appendix [Table A.2](#).

## 4 Misperceptions of Gender Norms

We now turn to a discussion of people’s misperceptions of the gender norms in society.

### 4.1 Misperceptions of Support for Basic Freedom

In [Figure 7](#), we see that, in all countries, people underestimate the support for basic freedom for women. The country-level average is that people believe that the share of support for basic freedom for women is 20.6pp lower than the actual support. The largest underestimation of support for women’s basic freedom is in Tanzania (-32.6pp) and Bolivia (-31.6pp), while the smallest underestimation is in Egypt (-7.4pp) and Indonesia (-7.2pp). In 49 countries, we find that more than 70% of the population underestimates the support for basic freedom.

**Table 1:** Determinants of Individual Attitudes

	Support for Basic Freedom				Support for Affirmative Action			
	(1) All	(2) GEI-1	(3) GEI-2	(4) GEI-3	(5) All	(6) GEI-1	(7) GEI-2	(8) GEI-3
Female	6.538*** (1.043)	13.35*** (1.465)	5.760*** (1.491)	0.794 (0.843)	12.51*** (1.230)	14.05*** (2.076)	12.67*** (2.215)	10.87*** (2.146)
Secondary Education	3.982*** (0.936)	7.575*** (1.590)	2.360** (1.081)	-0.324 (0.956)	-3.435** (1.507)	0.143 (1.296)	-4.388* (2.509)	-7.687* (3.761)
College Education	5.877*** (1.152)	14.09*** (2.133)	4.087*** (1.087)	0.318 (1.162)	-9.578*** (2.069)	-6.144* (3.072)	-15.41*** (3.707)	-9.562** (3.645)
High Income	1.567*** (0.466)	2.215** (0.900)	1.095 (0.704)	1.000 (0.765)	-2.935*** (0.790)	-1.334 (1.159)	-4.049** (1.448)	-3.063** (1.344)
Employed	-0.984 (0.640)	-0.515 (1.409)	-1.119 (0.799)	0.436 (0.459)	-2.319*** (0.824)	-0.701 (1.483)	-2.634** (1.056)	-2.123 (1.607)
Age < 40	-0.440 (0.454)	-2.723** (1.024)	0.149 (0.653)	0.404 (0.340)	-2.326* (1.225)	0.186 (1.367)	-3.579* (2.010)	-2.762 (2.147)
Urban	1.007* (0.531)	2.333* (1.179)	0.463 (0.885)	0.0626 (0.486)	-0.818 (0.869)	0.156 (1.269)	-3.178** (1.269)	1.189 (1.710)
Internet Access	3.519*** (0.641)	3.430*** (0.876)	3.817*** (1.170)	3.603* (2.023)	-0.477 (1.281)	1.533 (1.844)	-1.692 (1.738)	-5.906* (3.229)
Mean of dep. var.	92.3	84.6	95.0	97.4	63.3	77.9	64.6	45.6
Observations	31,841	10,417	11,545	9,879	30,777	10,383	10,932	9,462
$R^2$	0.128	0.102	0.097	0.042	0.209	0.113	0.242	0.090

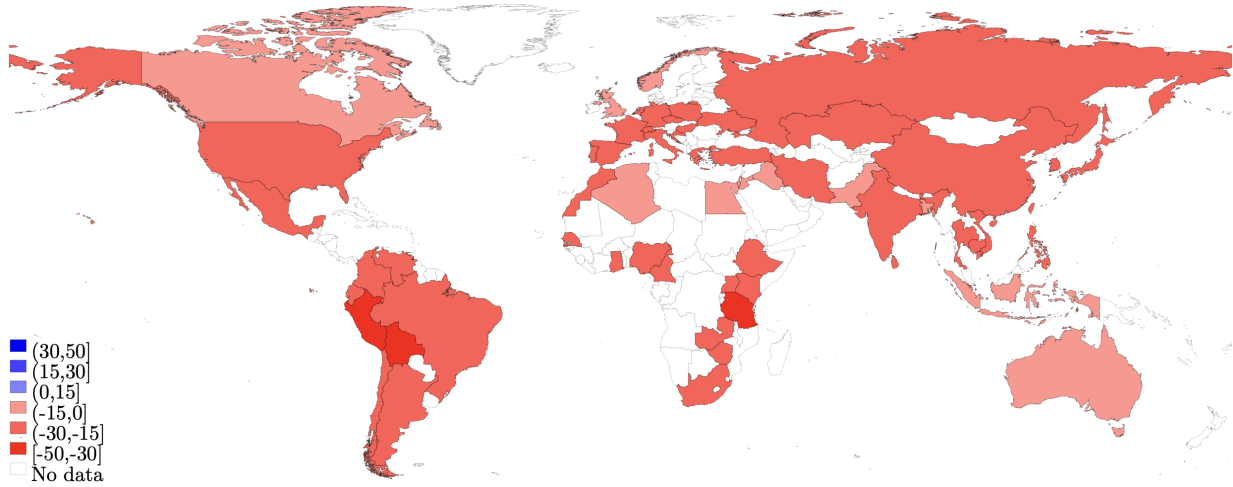
**Notes:** The outcome is support for basic freedom (col. 1-4) and affirmative action (col. 5-8). Standard errors are clustered at the country level. All regressions include country fixed effects. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . Data: Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on [UNDP \(2022\)](#).

Are men or women misperceived more? In the left panel of [Figure 8](#), we show the level of misperception of men and women’s support for basic freedom separately by country. We observe that men’s support of basic freedom for women is underestimated more than women’s support in almost all countries. Men’s support for basic freedom is underestimated the most in Brazil (-46.3pp) and Mexico (-44.5pp), while women’s support for basic freedom is underestimated the most in Tanzania (-23.9pp) and Peru (-21.5pp). The country-level average is that men’s support for basic freedom is underestimated by 28.6pp, while women’s support for basic freedom is underestimated by 13.1pp. In 51 countries, we find that more than 70% of the population underestimates men’s support for basic freedom, while in none of the countries, more than 70% of the population underestimates women’s support for basic freedom. We observe the largest difference in the misperception of men’s and women’s support for basic freedom in Brazil (34.3pp) and Mexico (29.5pp).

Finally, in the right panel of [Figure 8](#), we relate the misperception of support for basic freedom to the level of gender inequality in the country. We observe that the misperception of support

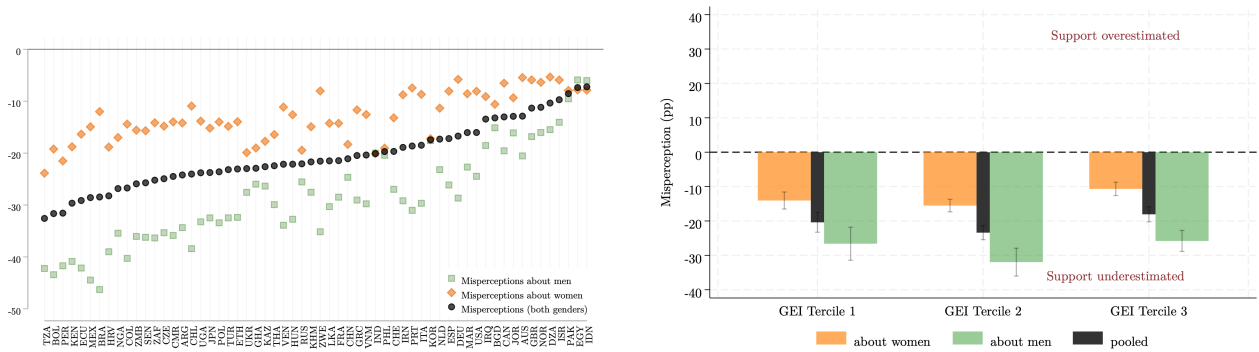


**Figure 7:** Misperceptions about Support for Basic Freedom Across the World



**Notes:** The map shows misperceptions about support (pp) for *basic freedom* in each country. Misperceptions are defined as the difference between a respondent’s perception of the support for the policy in their country and the actual support in their country. A positive value (blue) indicates that support is overestimated. A negative value (red) indicates that support is underestimated. Genders are pooled. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Geo data from [Belgiu \(2015\)](#).

**Figure 8:** Global Outlook: Misperceptions about Basic freedom

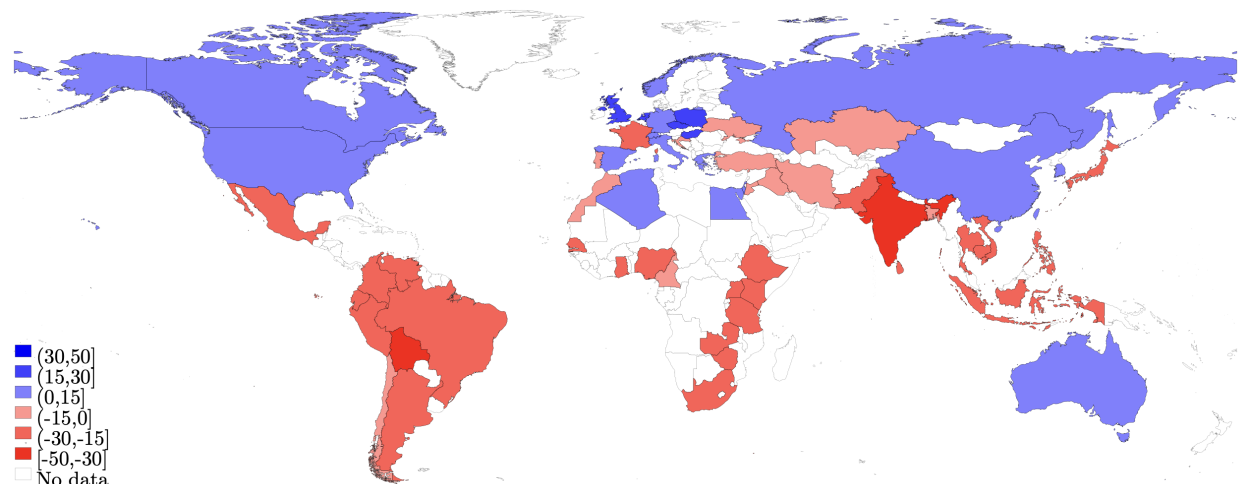


**Notes:** The left panel shows average misperceptions about support (pp) for *basic freedom* among women (orange), among men (green), and pooled across gender (black), in a given country. The right panel shows average misperceptions about support (pp) conditional on how gender-equal a given country is on a global spectrum, as measured by a gender equality index (GEI). The GEI increases with the equality between women and men. Misperceptions are defined as the difference between a respondent’s perception of the support for the policy in their country and the actual support in their country. A positive (negative) value indicates that support is overestimated (underestimated). *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on [UNDP \(2022\)](#).

for basic freedom has the same pattern across the tertiles of gender equality, with men always being misperceived more than women. Women’s support for basic freedom is underestimated with 14.0pp (first tertile), 15.5pp (second tertile), and 10.7pp (third tertile), while men’s support is underestimated with 26.6pp (first tertile), 32.0pp (second tertile), and 25.8pp (third tertile).

## 4.2 Misperception of Support for Affirmative Action

**Figure 9:** Misperceptions about Support for Affirmative Action Across the World

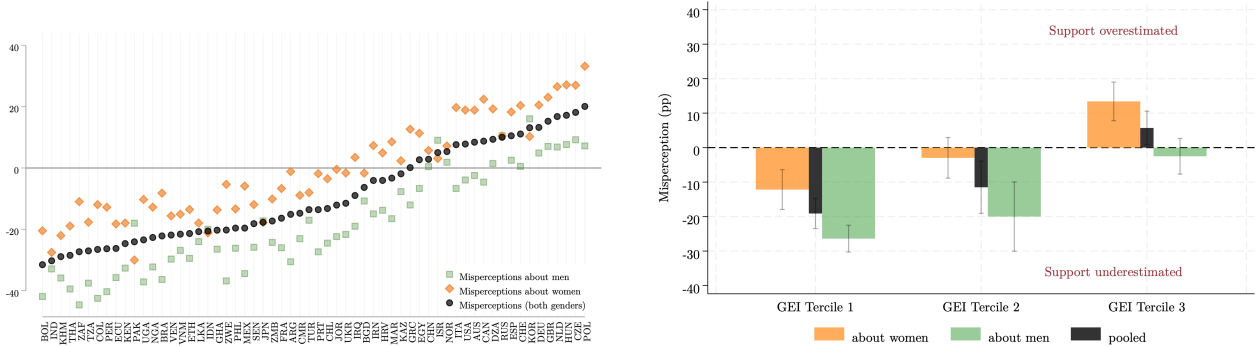


**Notes:** The map shows misperceptions about support (pp) for *affirmative action* in each country. Misperceptions are defined as the difference between a respondent’s perception of the support for the policy in their country and the actual support in their country. A positive value (blue) indicates that support is overestimated. A negative value (red) indicates that support is underestimated. Genders are pooled. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Geo data from [Belgiu \(2015\)](#).

We also find substantial underestimation of the support for affirmative action for women in many countries, as shown in [Figure 9](#). The country-level average is that people believe that the share of support for affirmative action for women is 9.0pp lower than the actual support. The largest underestimation of support for affirmative action is found in Bolivia (-31.5pp) and India (-30.2pp). However, in contrast to the universal underestimation of the support for basic freedom, we find that there is an *overestimation* of the support for affirmative action in 20 countries. The largest overestimation is in Poland (20.1pp) and the Czech Republic (18.1pp). In 31 countries, we find that more than 70% of the population underestimates the support for affirmative action, while in 12 countries more than 70% of the population overestimates the support for affirmative action.

In the left panel of [Figure 10](#), we observe that the pattern of misperception of men and women differs for affirmative action. Men’s support for affirmative action is misperceived more than women’s support in some countries, while women’s support for affirmative action is misperceived more than men’s support in other countries. Men’s support is significantly underestimated in most countries, while women’s support is significantly overestimated in a number of countries. The country-level average is that men’s support for affirmative action is underestimated by 17.6pp, while there is, on average, almost no misperception of women’s support for affirmative action across countries, 0.9pp. Men’s support is underestimated most in South Africa (-44.6pp) and Colombia (-42.5pp), while women’s support is overestimated most in Poland (33.2pp) and Hungary (27.1pp).

**Figure 10:** Global Outlook: Misperceptions about Affirmative Action



**Notes:** The left panel shows average misperceptions about support (pp) for *affirmative action* among women (orange), among men (green), and pooled across gender (black), in a given country. The right panel shows average misperceptions about support (pp) conditional on how gender-equal a given country is on a global spectrum, as measured by a gender equality index (GEI). The GEI increases with the equality between women and men. Misperceptions are defined as the difference between a respondent’s perception of the support for the policy in their country and the actual support in their country. A positive (negative) value indicates that support is overestimated (underestimated). *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on [UNDP \(2022\)](#).

In 32 countries, we find that more than 70% of the population underestimates men’s support for affirmative action, while in 15 countries, more than 70% of the population overestimates women’s support for affirmative action. We observe the largest difference in the misperception of men’s and women’s support for affirmative action in South Africa (33.6pp) and Zimbabwe (31.5pp).

In the right panel of [Figure 10](#), we observe that the misperception of support for affirmative action is very different in the most gender-equal countries than in the less gender-equal countries. In the most gender-equal countries, women’s support for affirmative action is significantly overestimated, 13.4pp, while there is almost no misperception of men’s support, -2.5pp. In the less gender-equal countries, we find that both men’s and women’s support for affirmative action is significantly underestimated, with men being misperceived more than women (-26.4pp versus -12.2pp in GEI tercile 1, and -20.0pp versus -3.0pp in GEI tercile 2).

### 4.3 Individual Misperceptions of support: The role of background characteristics

We now turn to study how individual misperceptions of support relate to important background characteristics of the respondent, where we use individual-level regressions with country fixed effects. [Table 2](#) shows how the overall misperceptions about support for basic freedom for women (columns (1)-(4)) and affirmative action for women (columns (5)-(8)) are related to important individual-level background characteristics, both for the global sample and separately for each tercile of gender equality. In [Figure A.8](#) in [Online Appendix A](#), we report the estimated interaction effects between the gender of the respondent and the different background characteristics.

We observe from the first row in [Table 2](#) that there is no gender difference in the misperception of overall support for basic freedom and only a small gender difference in the support for affirmative action. Women tend to underestimate more than men the support for affirmative action in the less gender-equal countries but at the same time overestimate less the support for affirmative action in the most gender-equal countries. In the second and third rows, we observe that education is strongly associated with underestimating less the overall support for basic freedom for women, particularly college education. The association between education and the misperception of overall support for affirmative action is weaker and differs across the gender spectrum. College education is associated with greater underestimation of the support for affirmative action in the less gender-equal countries but with less overestimation of the support for affirmative action in the most gender-equal countries. In the remaining rows of [Table 2](#), we observe that the estimated effects of the other background characteristics are small and, in most cases, insignificant. However, we note that access to the internet is associated with less misperception of the support for basic freedom. In [Table A.3](#) in [Online Appendix A](#), we show that these patterns are robust to controlling for a host of other individual-level variables.

The corresponding analysis of misperceptions about gender differences in support is reported in [Table A.4](#), where we find that women, educated, and younger people misperceive gender differences more. Finally, in [Table A.5](#) and [Table A.6](#), we show that people have smaller misperceptions about their own gender. But across all groups in society and both policies, we always find that men’s support is underestimated more than women’s support.

The main takeaway from this analysis is that misperceptions of gender norms are prevalent and stable across society. The estimated effects of the different background characteristics are small compared to the average level of the misperception, which means that the misperceptions of gender norms in a country are not particular to a certain gender, socioeconomic background, age, or location. The analysis thus suggests that the misperceptions are largely driven by general mechanisms that apply across the population, as we discuss in more detail in the next section.

#### 4.4 Four Stylized Facts

We summarize the findings on misperceptions of gender norms across the world in the following four stylized facts regarding basic freedom and affirmative action for women:

- Fact #1: Support for basic freedom in the population is universally underestimated
- Fact #2: Support for affirmative action is on average underestimated in low gender equality countries and overestimated in high gender equality countries
- Fact #3: Men’s support for basic freedom for women is more underestimated than women’s support, essentially everywhere

**Table 2:** Misperceptions about Support

	Misperceptions about Support for Basic Freedom				Misperceptions about Support for Affirmative Action			
	(1) All	(2) GEI-1	(3) GEI-2	(4) GEI-3	(5) All	(6) GEI-1	(7) GEI-2	(8) GEI-3
Female	-0.537 (0.404)	0.485 (0.747)	-1.190 (0.858)	-0.731 (0.424)	-2.922*** (0.431)	-2.131** (0.798)	-3.852*** (0.698)	-2.794*** (0.788)
Secondary Education	2.059*** (0.465)	2.342*** (0.707)	2.956*** (0.758)	0.157 (0.606)	-0.00335 (0.682)	1.321* (0.697)	-0.687 (1.340)	-1.410 (0.924)
College Education	4.302*** (0.609)	4.381*** (1.255)	6.203*** (0.804)	1.925** (0.782)	-2.354*** (0.874)	-1.793* (1.031)	-3.430* (1.878)	-2.860** (1.146)
High Income	1.247*** (0.422)	1.123 (0.813)	1.090 (0.789)	1.426** (0.572)	-0.598 (0.412)	1.491** (0.680)	-1.509** (0.575)	-1.663*** (0.476)
Employed	0.844** (0.365)	0.952 (0.631)	0.824 (0.767)	0.720 (0.472)	-0.276 (0.321)	0.194 (0.526)	-0.318 (0.646)	-0.0592 (0.457)
Age < 40	-0.240 (0.436)	-1.352 (0.796)	-1.068 (0.706)	1.598** (0.642)	-0.769 (0.463)	1.083 (0.826)	-1.320** (0.621)	-1.535* (0.773)
Urban	1.122*** (0.369)	2.030*** (0.607)	1.151 (0.731)	0.00474 (0.484)	0.0621 (0.313)	0.639 (0.635)	-0.259 (0.469)	-0.0125 (0.519)
Internet Access	2.698*** (0.575)	2.750*** (0.714)	1.974 (1.300)	4.321*** (1.338)	0.788 (0.488)	0.825 (0.667)	0.489 (0.909)	-0.0150 (0.970)
Mean of dep. var.	-19.6	-18.9	-21.8	-17.9	-9.0	-18.8	-12.5	4.9
Observations	29,955	9,662	10,681	9,612	29,089	9,583	10,167	9,339
$R^2$	0.111	0.115	0.081	0.109	0.409	0.172	0.398	0.271

**Notes:** The outcome is misperceptions of overall support (averaged across genders). Standard errors are clustered at the country level. All regressions include country fixed effects. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on [UNDP \(2022\)](#).

- **Fact #4:** Men’s support for affirmative action for women is more underestimated than women’s support in essentially all countries. In low gender equality countries, both men’s and women’s support are, on average, underestimated, while in high gender equality countries, women’s support is overestimated, and men’s support is not misperceived.

In the next two sections, we turn to an analysis of general mechanisms that may explain these stylized facts about misperceptions of gender norms.

## 5 Mechanisms: What Forces Distort Perceptions of Gender Norms?

In this section, we explore the presence of three forces documented in the literature in distorting perceptions away from rational expectations: *false consensus*, *minority overweighting*, and *stereotyping*. We do so by examining each one in isolation, using individual-level data, country by country, in a transparent and intuitive manner. This is useful for understanding, on a qualitative level, the forces at play. We will then, in the following section, present a framework for studying and quantifying them and establish more precisely how they contribute to the misperceptions we have documented globally.

### 5.1 False Consensus

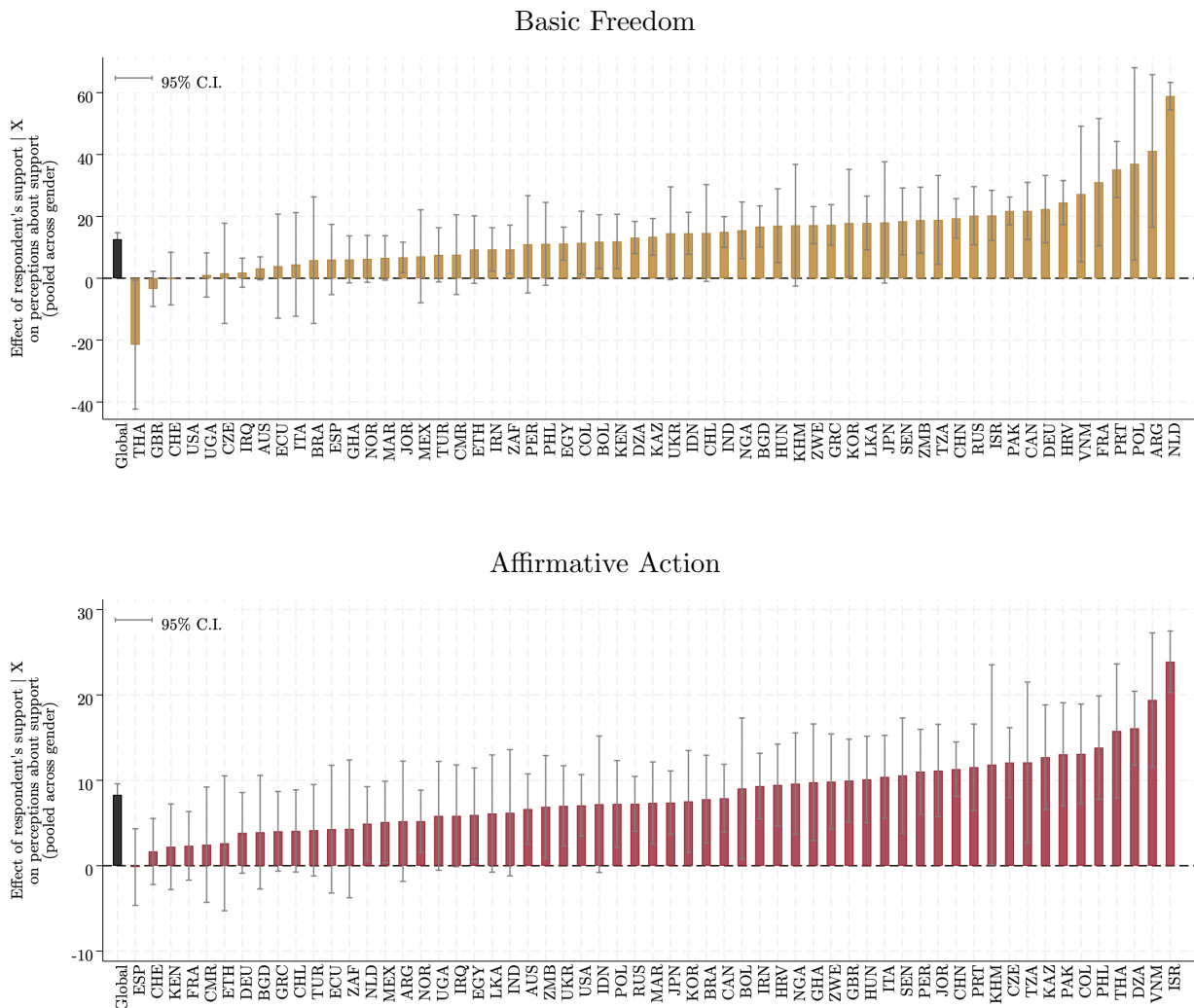
We begin by exploring false consensus, a positive correlation between one’s opinion and the perceived prevalence of such an opinion among others (Ross, Greene and House, 1977; Fields and Schuman, 1976).<sup>10</sup> False consensus could derive from people’s tendency to exaggerate the extent to which others share their views, sometimes denoted as “looking-glass perceptions” in the social psychology literature (Fields and Schuman, 1976). This tendency could be driven by projection bias (Madarász, 2012), motivated reasoning (Bonomi, Gennaioli and Tabellini, 2021), or availability heuristics in peer groups with homophily (Marks and Miller, 1987). Causality could also run in the opposite direction, as discussed in Bursztyn and Yang (2022), where people adopt a particular view if they believe it is relatively more prevalent.

Leveraging our cross-country data, Figure 11 reports the estimated coefficient for the respondent’s own view on the policy in a regression where the dependent variable is the perceived overall support in the country, pooled across gender. We uncover, both for the support of basic freedom for women (upper panel) and for the support of affirmative action for women (lower panel), a positive correlation between a respondent’s own view and their perception of others’ views. This pattern is present in almost every country in our sample, albeit not always statistically significant. At the global scale, on average within countries and across both policy issues (Table A.7), we find that respondents hold beliefs that the same attitude as theirs is about 7 to 15 percentage points more prevalent in the population. The pattern applies both to beliefs about men and women, and it is attenuated when respondents report their beliefs about the other gender.

---

<sup>10</sup>Ross, Greene and House (1977) introduce the term “false consensus” in a seminal work where they provide experimental evidence both in hypothetical and consequential scenarios. Fields and Schuman (1976) investigate false consensus on racial opinions. Marks and Miller (1987) review over 45 studies on the false consensus effect, linking it, among others, to the availability heuristic (Tversky and Kahneman, 1973). Bursztyn and Yang (2022) document robust evidence of such a correlation across 81 studies in economics.

**Figure 11:** Correlation Between Own Views and Perceptions of Others' Views in Sixty Countries



**Notes:** The figure displays regression coefficients estimated for each country separately, with corresponding (robust) 95% confidence intervals. The “Global” coefficient at the very left is estimated on the whole sample, including country fixed effects and standard errors that are clustered at the country level. The dependent variable is perceptions about support (pooled across gender). The explanatory variables include an indicator of whether the individual themselves support the policy (coefficient displayed), whether they are female, whether they received secondary education, whether they received a college education, have a high income, whether they are employed, whether they are younger than 40 years, whether they live in an urban area, and whether they have internet access. All regressions include sample weights. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

## 5.2 Minority Overweighting

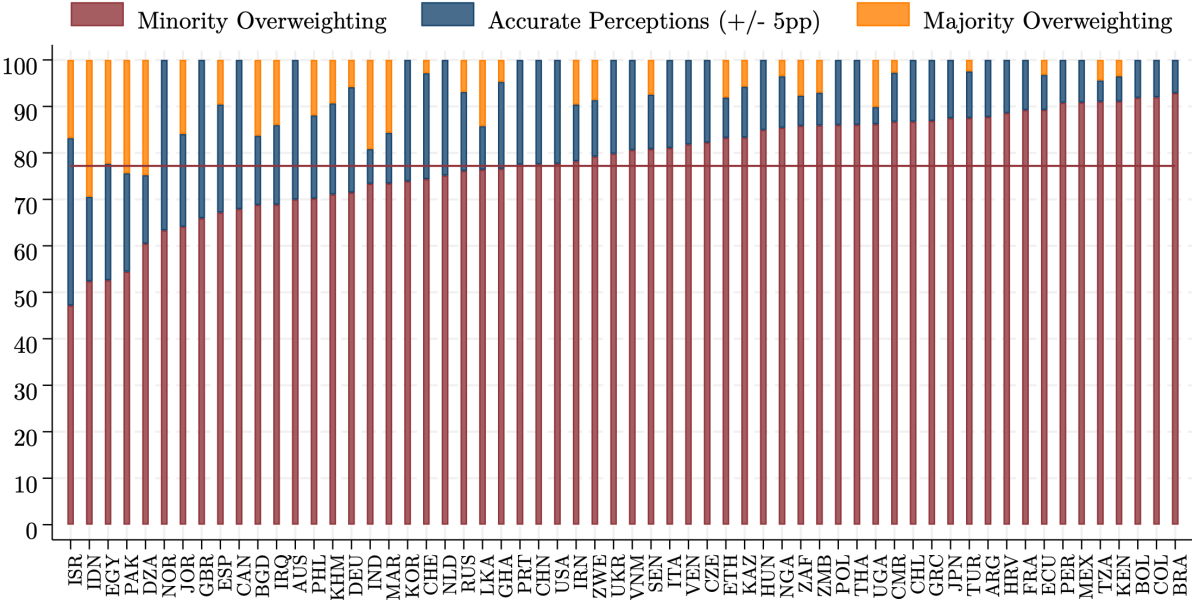
We next consider the extent to which people overestimate the prevalence of the minority view in society. Different forces, including conservative bias, selective exposure to media, and cognitive biases can give rise to this pattern, and its role in driving misperceptions has been discussed



extensively in the social psychology literature (see, e.g., Miller and Prentice (1994) and Miller (2023)). If the overweighting of the minority view is sufficiently strong, it may lead to what is termed *pluralistic ignorance*, i.e., the situation in which the people perceive the minority view to be the majority view.

In Figure 12a and 12b, we use the individual-level data and classify each respondent into one of three categories: having approximately correct perception (+/- 5pp); overestimation of the actual support for the minority view; overestimation of the actual support for the majority view. We find strong evidence of minority overweighting being prevalent in our data. At the global scale, almost 80 percent of the respondents overestimate the support for the minority view in their country on basic freedom for women (Figure 12a), and around 70 percent of respondents overestimate the support for the minority view in their country on affirmative action for women (Figure 12b). We see the same pattern at the country level, with the overestimation of the support for the minority view being the dominant force in almost all countries. Indeed, the extent of overestimation of the support for the minority view is so large that it leads to pluralistic ignorance among a sizable share of the respondents for both policy issues in many countries, as displayed in Appendix Figure A.9.

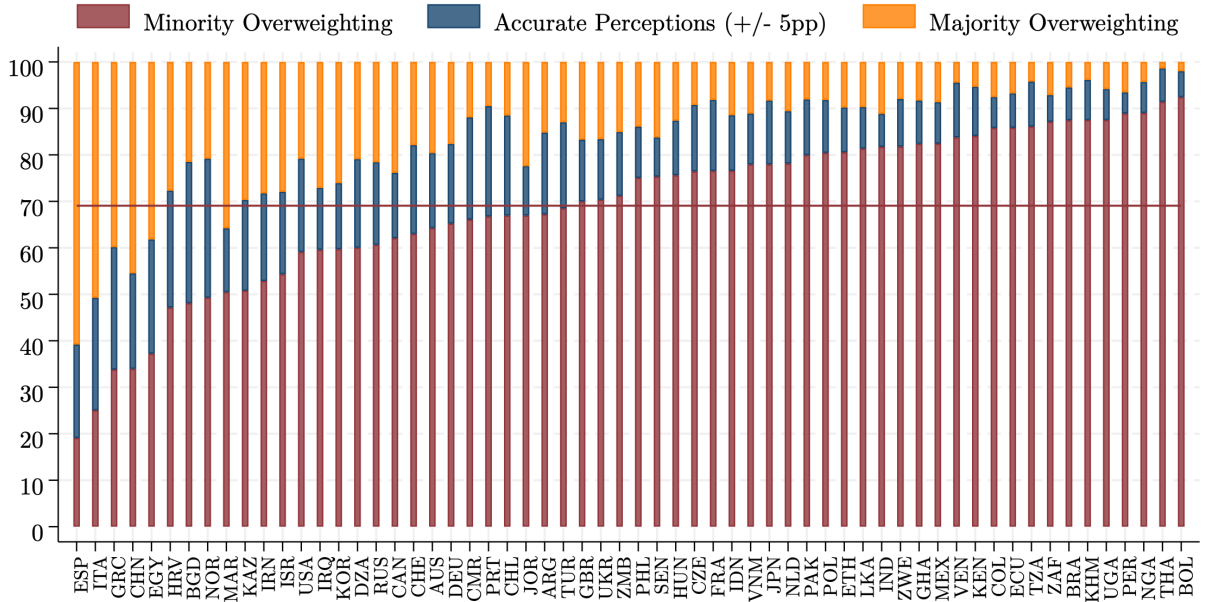
**Figure 12a:** Percentage of Respondents that Overestimate the Prevalence of the Actual Minority Position in Sixty Countries – Basic Freedom



**Notes:** Minority overestimation is defined as perceiving more (less) support than the actual support if a minority of the country supports (rejects) the policy. The horizontal line indicates the share of all respondents (globally) that overweighs the minority view. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

The prevalence of minority overestimation in our study may partly reflect conservative bias

**Figure 12b:** Percentage of Respondents that Overestimate the Prevalence of the Actual Minority Position in Sixty Countries – Affirmative Action



**Notes:** Minority overestimation is defined as perceiving more (less) support than the actual support if a minority of the country supports (rejects) the policy. The horizontal line indicates the share of all respondents (globally) that overweights the minority view. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

(Breed and Ktsanes, 1961; O’Gorman and Garry, 1976).<sup>11</sup> People’s views on these policies may have changed rapidly, while people’s beliefs may reflect an outdated true state of the world. For example, the support for basic freedom for women may have been weaker in the past. Countries may have moved in a more progressive direction in recent decades, which may not be fully reflected in the public debate on the matter or, more broadly, the available information in society. Similarly, support for affirmative action in relatively more gender-equal countries may have been stronger in the past, but as gender gaps in economic outcomes have been reduced, the support for the policy may have waned without this being fully recognized by the general population.

Another source of minority overestimation could stem from how issues are portrayed in mass media. The minority view may get disproportionate coverage, both in debates about basic freedom and affirmative action. This could easily arise from the journalistic tradition of *equally* covering “both sides” of a policy issue.<sup>12</sup> Mass media may find it profitable to highlight tensions in society,

<sup>11</sup>This hypothesis would be testable if we had access to panel data on actual support going back several years. However, this is the first global dataset on people’s support for basic freedom and affirmative action for women, and thus, we are not in a position to test it at present.

<sup>12</sup>Shapiro (2016) argues that reputational incentives may induce journalists to appear not to be “taking sides” in reporting, leaving voters uninformed on matters like climate change.

pointing to the lack of a consensus view. Moreover, since hard statistics are seldom included (or available), it may be difficult for the general population to draw correct inference based on observing both sides of an argument in mass media. Relatedly, vocal minorities may be more active in the public arena compared to their true traction in the public opinion (Miller, 2023). For example, they may be more invested in promoting their position on social media platforms, via public demonstrations, or via political campaigns. Finally, people might form beliefs based on the public stances of politicians. Some politicians might take a specific policy stance that does not necessarily reflect the views of the majority of the population (for example, pushing for gender-based affirmative action), either because these politicians personally want to adopt the policy, because it is important to their constituents, or because they misperceive the level of support by the public at large. The public, in turn, might sustain misperceptions by making inferences based on the choices of politicians.

Finally, cognitive phenomena in belief updating may also lead to minority overestimation in our study, as proposed and documented in a large literature on belief formation. These include phenomena such as “inattention,” “conservatism,” or base rate “insensitivity,” where beliefs tend to be anchored or driven towards the center. People may simply overestimate the size of the minority view on basic freedom affirmative action because their inferences are distorted by a limited ability to cognitively process statistical moments.<sup>13</sup> As modeled in Bordalo et al. (2023), people often rely on experiences and memory to estimate the probability of a given event. The retrieval of these memories may be influenced by frequency, similarity, and interference, which can cause agents to form biased beliefs. To illustrate, memories of people holding the minority view that women should not have the freedom to work outside of the home may thus lead to overestimating the true support of such a view in the population.<sup>14</sup>

### 5.3 Stereotyping

Finally, we consider the extent to which people overestimate the gender differences in support for the two policies, which could be driven both by cognitive processes and broader societal forces (Bordalo et al., 2016, 2019; Carrer and De Masi, 2023).

In Figure 13a and 13b, we use the individual-level data and classify each respondent into one of three categories: having approximately correct perception (+/- 5pp), overestimation of the actual gender difference, and underestimation of the actual gender differences. We find strong evidence of overestimation of the gender difference being prevalent in our data. At the global scale, around 65 percent of the respondents overestimate the gender difference in the support for basic freedom

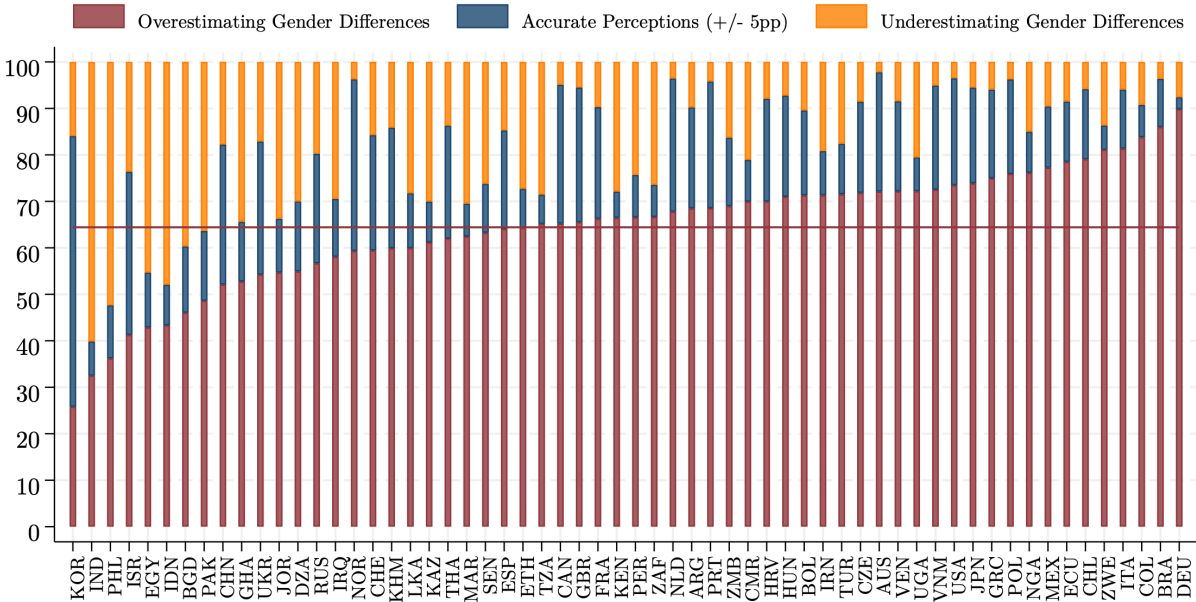
---

<sup>13</sup>The literature on this topic is extensive and goes back decades. Two excellent discussions of the literature, as well as the current frontier, can be found in Gabaix (2019), who covers behavioral inattention, and Enke and Graeber (2021), who treat the issue of cognitive uncertainty.

<sup>14</sup>Measurement error could also give rise, in some cases, to overestimation of the minority view. However, as we show in Section 6, our findings do not appear to be driven by measurement error.

for women in their country (Figure 13a), with a similar share of respondents overestimating the gender difference in the support for affirmative action for women in their country (Figure 13b). We see the same pattern at the country level, with the overestimation of gender differences being the dominant force in almost all countries.

**Figure 13a:** Percentage of Respondents Who Overestimate Gender Differences in Support – Basic Freedom



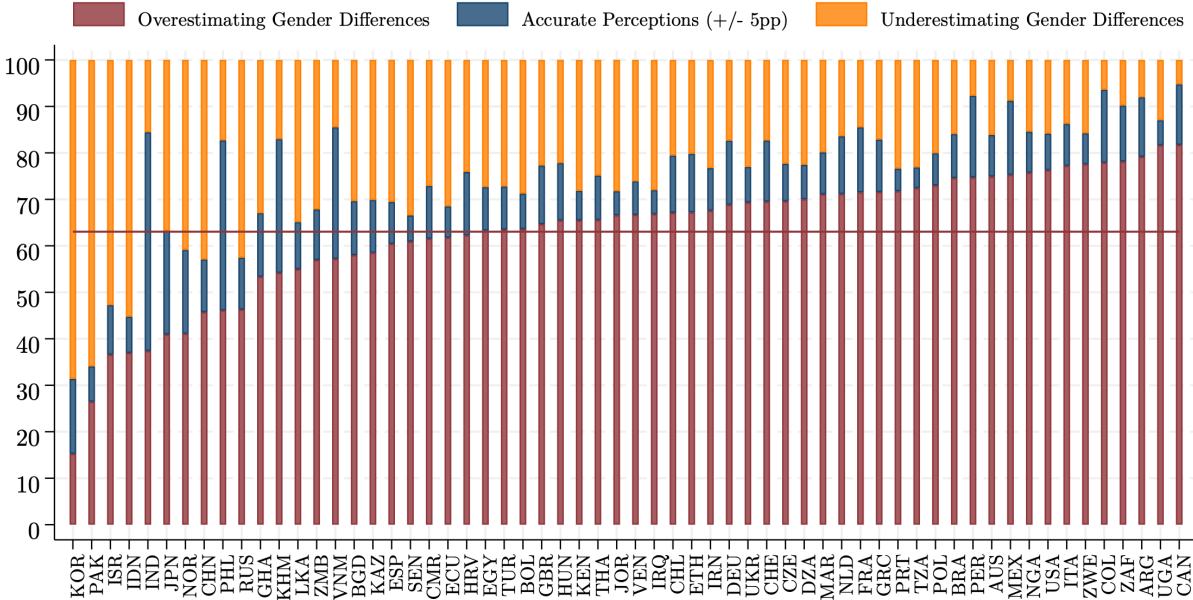
**Notes:** The horizontal line indicates the share of all respondents (globally) that overestimate the gender difference in support. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020

The literature provides some hypotheses for why we observe the overestimation of gender differences in our study. First, as formalized in Bordalo et al. (2016, 2019), heuristics based on “representativeness” would give rise to exaggerated perceptions based on gender. In this model, cognitive processing of otherwise correct information distorts beliefs in a systematic fashion. Bordalo et al. (2023) show that the same cognitive processes could give rise to both availability and representativeness heuristics, simultaneously generating overestimation of the gender differences and the minority view.

Second, broader forces in society could also explain the observed pattern. Available information itself can be imperfect for a number of reasons, where mass media or the entertainment industry may perpetuate stereotypes of how women and men think about basic freedom and affirmative action.<sup>15</sup> Political representation could also play a role. Political representation across genders or

<sup>15</sup>Global evidence from media studies is limited in this regard, but recent evidence from the United States by Ash

**Figure 13b:** Percentage of Respondents Who Overestimate Gender Difference in Support – Affirmative Action



**Notes:** The horizontal line indicates the share of all respondents (globally) that overestimate the gender difference in support. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

the expression of public opinions among their vocal leaders may not reflect the average view of their gender in the population. For example, if female politicians tend to be particularly gender progressive compared to the general female population (Carr and De Masi, 2023), beliefs will get distorted unless people are able to fully account for the selection in the political process, which may be very complex.

Finally, all these different mechanisms may interact. To illustrate, mass media and the entertainment industry may play into cognitive tendencies among people to engage in gender stereotyping. These broad forces, separately or jointly, could thus give rise to the systematic overestimation of gender differences that we observe in our sample.

### 5.4 Taking Stock

We have shown that false consensus, minority overweighting and gender stereotyping are prevalent mechanisms that distort the perceptions of gender norms across the world.

Minority overweighting and gender stereotyping can alone rationalize the four stylized facts about misperceptions of gender that we have established. First, given that support for basic

---

et al. (2022) suggests that the perpetuation of stereotypes in mass media is pervasive.

freedom for women is the majority view in all countries, it follows that minority overweighting leads to the support for basic freedom for women being universally underestimated (stylized fact #1). Correspondingly, minority overweighting leads to the support for affirmative action for women being underestimated in low gender equality countries, where this is the majority view, and overestimated in high gender equality countries, where this is the minority view (stylized fact #2). Third, turning to the stylized facts on misperceptions of gender differences in support. The support for basic freedom is the majority view among both men and women, and minority overweighting thus pulls towards an underestimation of the support for basic freedom for both genders. Gender stereotyping, however, creates opposing forces for men and women. It contributes to further underestimation of the support among men, while it contributes to less underestimation of the support among women. Hence, taken together, the combination of the two mechanisms leads to men’s support for basic freedom being more underestimated than women’s support (stylized fact #3). The same reasoning explains why men’s support for affirmative action is more underestimated than women’s support in low gender equality countries. By contrast, in high gender equality countries, the two mechanisms operate in opposite directions for men, and they appear to cancel each other out in most countries. For perceptions about women, the two mechanisms reinforce each other, pushing perceptions upward. As a result, people tend to overestimate women’s support for affirmative action in these countries (stylized fact #4).

To further investigate how these three mechanisms interact and their quantitative importance for understanding misperceptions of gender norms, we now introduce a simple framework.

## 6 A Quantitative Framework

We here present a structured and systematic investigation of the mechanisms underlying the misperceptions of gender norms, with the goal of quantifying the importance of the different theory-driven hypotheses we have introduced in the previous section in a horse race. This analysis leverages the unique feature of our data that allows us to examine how misperceptions of gender norms vary by the actual gender norm across countries.

### 6.1 Combining all three forces

The individual-level data we have examined in the previous section suggests that false consensus, minority overweighting, and gender stereotyping are important mechanisms underlying the misperceptions of gender norms. What role, more precisely, do these mechanisms play in shaping the cross-country patterns of misperception that we have documented? To gauge the quantitative importance of these forces, we combine them together in a simple framework.

We proceed in steps. Ignoring the target gender dimension for the moment, we characterize the

perceived support of respondent  $i$  in country  $c$  as  $\hat{x}_{ic}$ , relative to true support  $x_c$  as:

$$\hat{x}_{ic} = x_c + \gamma \cdot \text{Support}_i + \lambda \cdot (50\% - x_c) + u_{ic} \quad (1)$$

where  $\text{Support}_i \in \{-1, 1\}$  takes value 1 if respondent  $i$  supports the policy issue of interest, and -1 otherwise. The parameter  $\lambda \in (0, 1)$  captures the extent of minority overweighting, while  $\gamma$  captures the extent of false consensus (when  $\gamma > 0$ ). The terms  $u_{ic}$  capture other country-level or individual-level determinants of perceptions, as those highlighted in [subsection 4.3](#). A respondent has perfect knowledge of the norm if  $\lambda = \gamma = u_{ic} = 0$ . In a rational expectation framework,  $\lambda = \gamma = 0$ , and respondents would have  $\mathbb{E}[u_{ic}] = 0$ .

In the previous section, we showed evidence of false consensus being prevalent in most countries, suggesting that  $\gamma > 0$ . It follows from [Equation 1](#) that false consensus pulls against the overestimating of the minority view because the false consensus effect among those who hold the majority view outweighs the false consensus effect among those who hold the minority view. Consequently, the fact that we still observe systematic overestimation of the minority view suggests that  $\lambda > 0$ . Aggregating at the country level, it follows from  $\mathbb{E}_c[\text{Support}_i] = x_c - (1 - x_c)$  that:

$$\mathbb{E}_c[\hat{x}_{ic}] = (1 + 2\gamma - \lambda) \cdot x_c - \gamma + \lambda \cdot 50\% + \mathbb{E}_c[u_{ic}]. \quad (2)$$

[Equation 2](#) shows clearly how false consensus and minority overweighting have opposite implications for the correlation between the actual gender norm  $x_c$  and the average perceived gender norms  $\mathbb{E}_c[\hat{x}_{ic}]$ : minority overweighting reduces such a correlation, while false consensus increases it. Hence, the framework offers two crucial predictions for how the cross-country variation in the average perceived gender norm relates to the actual gender norm. First, actual support and perceived support should be positively correlated across countries. Second, the sensitivity of the average perceived gender norm with respect to actual gender norms should be steeper than the 45-degree line if false consensus prevails and flatter than the 45-degree line if minority overweighting prevails.

Estimating the correlation between the average perceived gender norm and the actual gender norm is an empirical challenge because it requires substantial variation in the actual norm.<sup>16</sup> Fortunately, our cross-country sample and the nature of our questions provide such a variation.

As shown in [Figure 14](#), in both panels (a) and (b), we observe a robust positive correlation between the average perceived gender norm and the actual gender norm both for basic freedom for women (panel (a)) and for affirmative action for women (panel (b)) across countries. These patterns suggest that respondents are aware, to some extent, of the environment that surrounds them (what [Fields and Schuman \(1976\)](#) call “reality constraints”). Yet, the slope of the relationship

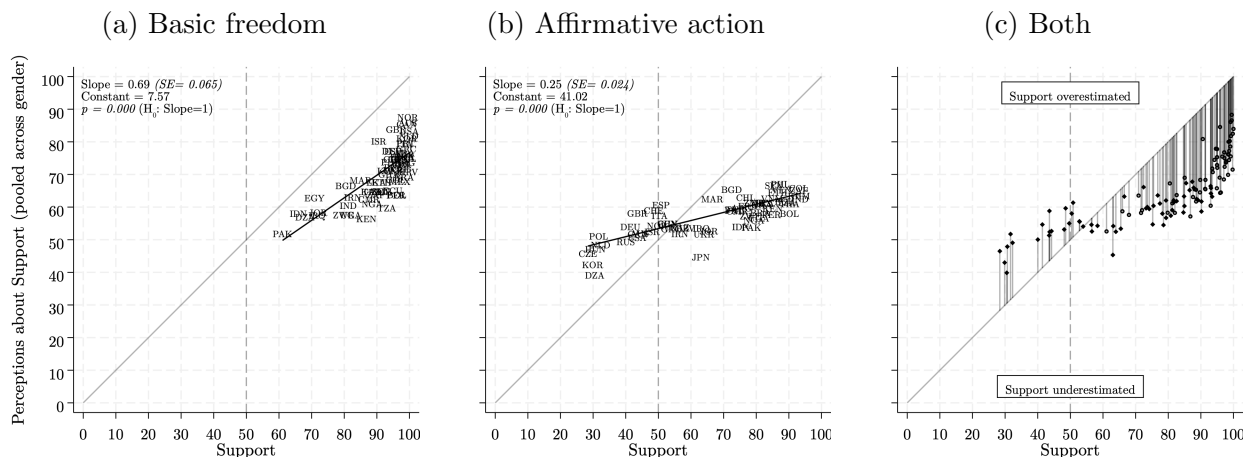
<sup>16</sup>Cross-country data on perceptions of others’ views has so far been complex to gather. As highlighted by the literature review by [Sargent and Newman \(2021\)](#): “We are not aware of any studies that utilize discrete groups as the level of analysis and compare them in terms of the extent to which pluralistic ignorance is in evidence” let alone cross-national studies, given the “paucity of research outside of North America.”



is substantially lower than 1 (equal to 0.69 for basic freedom and 0.25 for affirmative action), which shows that minority overweighting prevails as a driver of the variation in aggregate misperception across countries. In Panel (c), where we plot the data from both questions together, we show that minority overweighting also outweighs the effect of false consensus and leads to an aggregate underestimation of the minority view for both policies within each country. When a majority supports the policy, on average, people tend to underestimate support. When a minority is in favor, people tend to overestimate it.<sup>17</sup>

Importantly, in Appendix Figure A.11 and Figure A.12, we show that every decile of perceived support for a policy is highly correlated with the average view in the country, suggesting that an individual-level disturbance of mean  $\frac{1}{2}$  in otherwise correct perceptions is unlikely to drive the extent of minority overweighting.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 14:** Mapping Average Actual Support to Average Perceived Support Across Countries



**Notes:** Figure illustrates how support for basic freedom (Panel a) and affirmative action (Panel b) relate to perceptions about support across countries. In Panel (c) we show the data for both affirmative action (diamonds) and basic freedom (rings). *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

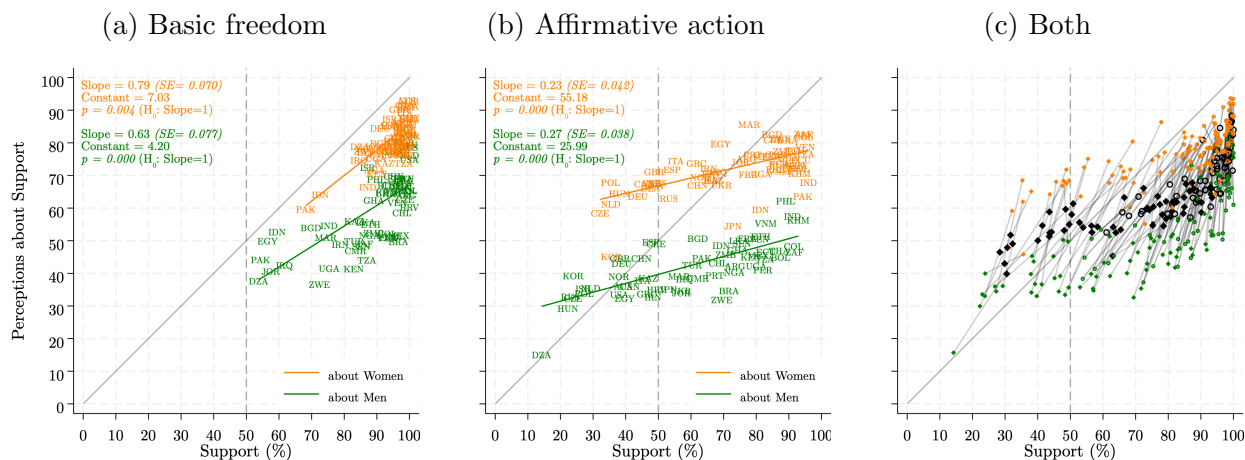
We now extend our simple framework to incorporate the third and final force – *stereotyping* – to examine how it contributes to shaping how men’s and women’s views are perceived. The perception of respondent  $i$  in country  $c$  about gender  $g \in \{m, f\}$ , denoted as  $\hat{x}_{ic}^g$ , is given by:

$$\hat{x}_{ic}^g = x_c^g + \gamma \cdot Support_i + \lambda \cdot (50\% - x_c^g) + \theta \cdot (x_c^g - x_c^{-g}) + \alpha^g + u_{ic}^g \quad (3)$$

<sup>17</sup>In Appendix Figure A.10, we show that the correlation between actual and perceived gender norms across countries is similar between people who hold a certain view and people who hold the opposite view, justifying the assumption that false consensus and minority overweighting are additive.

<sup>18</sup>This rules out that the residual term has a mean of  $\frac{1}{2}$  or heaping in responses concentrated at exactly 50%. We also show that the patterns we document are robust to dropping all observations where believed support of exactly 0%, 50%, or 100% is reported, which we demonstrate in Figure A.13.

**Figure 15:** Mapping of Actual Average Support to Average Perceived Support by Target Gender Across Countries



**Notes:** Figure illustrates how each gender group’s support for basic freedom (Panel a) and affirmative action (Panel b) among women (orange) and men (green) relates to the perceptions about support among women and men across countries. Panel (c) shows the data for both basic freedom (circles) and affirmative action (diamonds) and combined across the genders (black). *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

where  $x_c^g$  is the actual support among gender  $g$  and  $x_c^{-g}$  is the actual support of the other gender. In this framework, gender stereotyping may arise in two different ways. It may be based on actual within-country differences in the views of men and women, which would imply that  $\theta > 0$ , following the notation in [Bordalo et al. \(2016\)](#). But the gender stereotyping may also be based on the perception that women tend to support gender policies that aim at strengthening the position of women in society independent of the actual gender difference in support within a country, which would imply that  $\alpha^f - \alpha^m > 0$ .<sup>19</sup>

We have already established that the actual support among women for the two policies is greater than the actual support for men. It thus follows from [Equation 3](#) that the average perceived support among women for the two policies should unequivocally be greater than the average perceived support among men. In panel (a) in [Figure 15](#), we show the estimated cross-country relationship between the actual support for basic freedom among men and the average perceived support among men, and the corresponding estimated relationship for women. We observe that for all levels of actual support, the estimated cross-country relationship predicts that the average perceived support among women is greater than among men, in line with the framework. We observe the same pattern in panel (b) for affirmative action. Finally, in panel (c), we show that the average perceived support among women is exaggerated more than the average perceived support among men.

We now turn to studying how the average perceived difference in support among women and

<sup>19</sup>We can also denote the constant term as being  $\kappa(x^g - x^{-g})$  where  $x^g$  and  $x^{-g}$  are global averages of the views of men and women, with  $\kappa > 0$ . We omit to do so to avoid introducing further notation for  $x^g$  and  $x^{-g}$ .

men relates to the actual difference in support among women and men. Given the framework, it follows that the average perceived difference in support among women and men is given by the following equation:

$$\mathbb{E}_c[\hat{x}_{ic}^f] - \mathbb{E}_c[\hat{x}_{ic}^m] = (1 - \lambda + 2 \cdot \theta) \cdot (x_c^f - x_c^m) + (\alpha^f - \alpha^m) + (\mathbb{E}_c[u_{ic}^f] - \mathbb{E}_c[u_{ic}^m]). \quad (4)$$

Equation 4 shows that if gender stereotyping is strong (when  $\theta$  and/or  $\alpha^f - \alpha^m$  are large), the average perceived difference in support among women versus men may exceed the actual gender difference in the support.<sup>20</sup> We further observe that the correlation between the perceived gender difference and the actual gender difference also depends on the extent of minority overweighting. Given that women are more in support of both policies than men, minority overweighting becomes a counteracting force to gender stereotyping.<sup>21</sup>

In Figure 16, we plot the actual gender difference and the perceived gender difference and estimate the relationship across countries for basic freedom (panel (a)) and affirmative action (panel (b)). The figure provides three striking findings. First, it shows that for both policies and almost all countries, actual differences are exaggerated because the country-level observation lies above the 45-degree line. Second, there is a systematic level shift in the perceptions of the support among men and women by around 20 percentage points, consistent with  $\alpha^f - \alpha^m > 0$ . This suggests that stereotyping of women as more gender-progressive than men is not primarily driven by an exaggeration of the actual within-country gender differences but rather strongly reflective of widespread views about gender differences that mimic the broad gender patterns we observe in our global data, broadly consistent with the framework laid out by Bordalo et al. (2023).<sup>22</sup> Third, we observe that the slope of the cross-country relationship is less than one for both basic freedom and affirmative action, which suggests that minority overweighting indeed is a counteracting force to gender stereotyping and moderates the perceived gender differences in support. The interplay between minority overweighting and gender stereotyping is also interesting on a conceptual level. In

<sup>20</sup>Here, we have assumed that  $\mathbb{E}_c[Support_i] = x_c^g + x_c^{-g} - 1$ , which may be slightly inaccurate if sex ratios are skewed.

<sup>21</sup>If we allow false consensus to differ depending on the concordance between the gender of the respondent and the target gender, the equation will be augmented by a term:

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{x}_{ic}^g &= x_c^g + \gamma_1 Support_i \times (Gender\ of\ respondent\ is\ g)_i + \gamma_2 Support_i \times (Gender\ of\ respondent\ is\ -g)_i \\ &+ \lambda(50\% - x_c) + \theta(x_c^g - x_c^{-g}) + \alpha^g + u_{ic}^g \end{aligned}$$

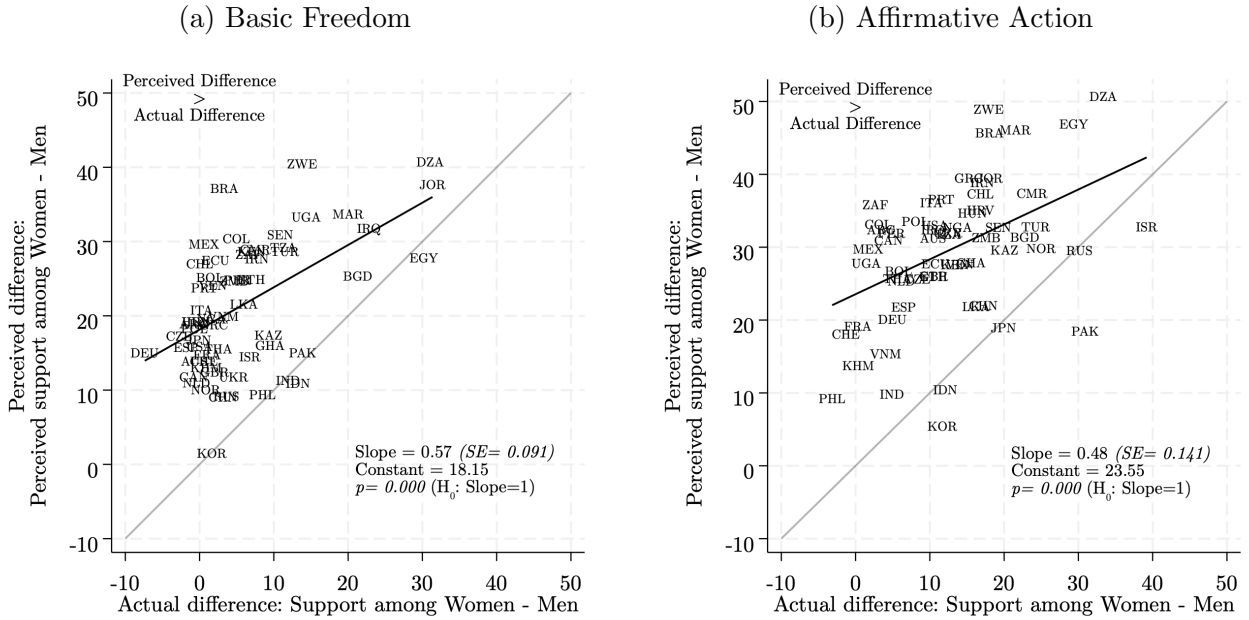
Aggregating across individual perceptions within countries and taking differences between women and men, we obtain

$$\mathbb{E}_c[\hat{x}_{ic}^f] - \mathbb{E}_c[\hat{x}_{ic}^m] = (1 + \gamma_1 - \gamma_2 - \lambda + 2 \cdot \theta) \cdot (x_c^f - x_c^m) + (\alpha^f - \alpha^m) + (\mathbb{E}_c[u_{ic}^f] - \mathbb{E}_c[u_{ic}^m]).$$

Hence, differences in the intensity of false consensus based on gender concordance between the gender of the respondent and that of the target ( $\gamma_1 > \gamma_2$  as we have documented in Table A.7) can reinforce stereotyping.

<sup>22</sup>On a similar but more extreme note, Exley et al. (2022) find that people believe women to be more generous and equality-oriented than men even when such perceived differences are largely inaccurate. Bandiera et al. (2022) show that experts can exhibit the same patterns in terms of their beliefs about gender and overconfidence.

**Figure 16:** Mapping of Gender Differences in Actual Norms to Gender Differences in Perceived Norms



**Notes:** Figure shows the difference in perceptions about support among women and men plotted against the actual gender difference in support. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

fact, [Bordalo et al. \(2023\)](#) argue that *both* stereotyping and minority overweighting can emerge from deeper forces related to memory and cues from personal experiences (which may include society-level factors such as mass media, vocal minorities or politics): they are not independent phenomena. Their framework captures the joint emergence of stereotyping and minority overweighting and has the interesting prediction that misperceptions can exist even when the frequency of two types in the two groups is the same – a form of illusory correlation – which is observed in our case when the x-axis value is zero in [Figure 16](#) and represented by the estimated constant (between 18 and 24 pp, depending on the policy). Respondents’ memory databases may be filled with instances from other domains where men are more gender conservative and women are more gender progressive, and the memory retrieval dominates the fact there is maybe no gender difference in this particular domain. Their paper, therefore, provides one way to understand, in a unifying manner, the potential micro-foundations behind our reduced-form results.

## 6.2 A Quantification Exercise

To quantify the relative importance of the three mechanisms, we now perform a simple horse race exercise, decomposing predicted misperceptions through the lenses of our conceptual framework.

We define an estimation equation that relates  $misperception_{ic}^g = \hat{x}_{ic}^g - x_c^g$  to false consensus,

minority overweighting, and gender stereotyping:

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{misperception}_{ic}^g &= \gamma_1 \text{Support}_i \times (\text{Gender of respondent is } g)_i & (5) \\
&+ \gamma_2 \text{Support}_i \times (\text{Gender of respondent is } -g)_i + \lambda (50\% - x_c^g) \\
&+ \theta (x_c^g - x_c^{-g}) + \alpha^f (\text{Target } g \text{ is female})_i + \alpha^m (\text{Target } g \text{ is male})_i \\
&+ \beta (\text{Gender of respondent is } g)_i + \epsilon_{ic}^g
\end{aligned}$$

To avoid overfitting, we first split our individual-level dataset in half, randomly drawing ten countries within each tercile of the GEI and estimate Equation 5 by OLS on respondents from 30 countries in total.<sup>23</sup> We use the resulting estimates to predict misperceptions in the held-out half of the sample (the other 30 countries). The idea here is that if the mechanisms driving misperceptions are truly common across countries (i.e., same parameter values) despite vast cultural, economic and institutional heterogeneity, this approach should lead to relatively similar predicted misconceptions as the data when using the estimated coefficients but exploiting only the variation from the held out countries.<sup>24</sup>

We first examine how closely we can reproduce the quantitative global patterns (the stylized facts), out-of-sample, by tercile of gender equality. In Figure 17 and Figure 18, we show that the out-of-sample prediction matches remarkably closely the data, as captured by the original 95 percent confidence intervals of the means in the data (see Appendix Table A.9 and Table A.10 for a complete set of estimates). The predictions are within the confidence intervals in all cases, except when predicting basic freedom in the highest tercile of gender equality (which is also when we have the least cross-country variation in actual gender norms.) Thus, quantitatively speaking, despite the heterogeneity in cultural, economic, and institutional factors across countries, our simple framework with assumed constant parameters can replicate the stylized facts observed in Figure 8 and Figure 10 well, albeit with some discrepancies. This lends further credibility to the framework.

Second, to quantify the contribution of each mechanism, we compute counterfactual misperceptions by removing each mechanism from the predictions and plotting the implied average misperceptions.<sup>25</sup> In line with our prior findings, false consensus plays a limited role in shaping

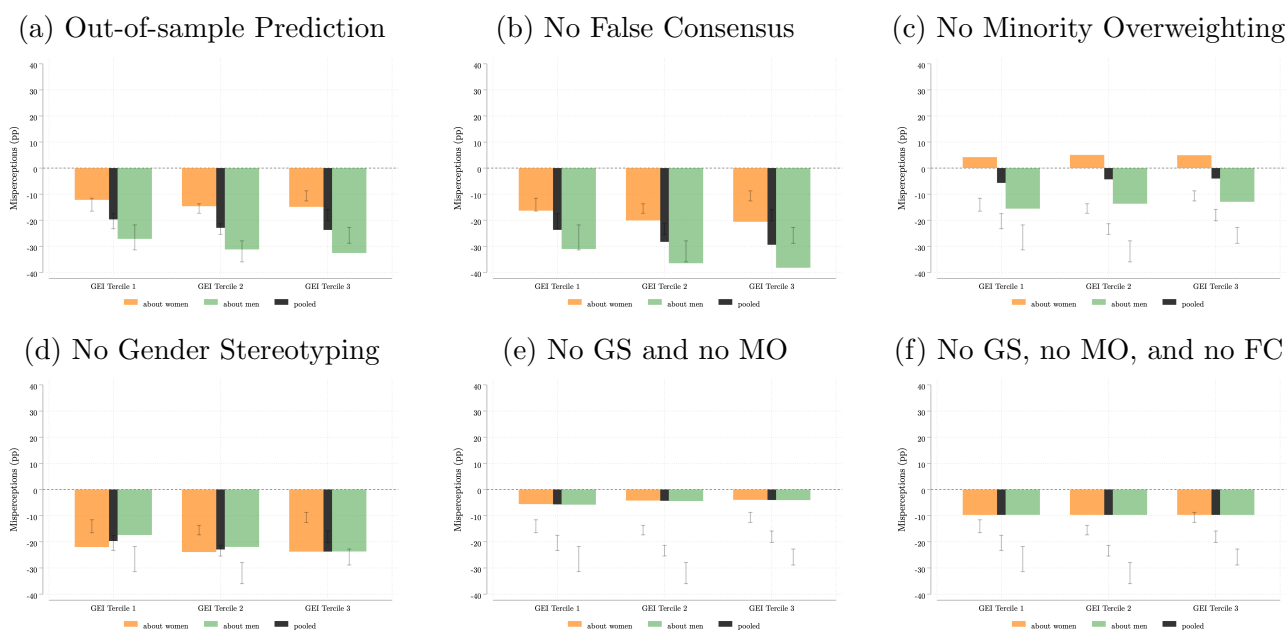
<sup>23</sup>The parameters that we obtain from estimating Equation 5 on the entire data are reported in Appendix Table A.8. As expected from the prior analysis, the estimates suggest a substantial degree of minority overweighting (0.43 for basic freedom and 0.83 for affirmative action), a systematic but relatively small degree of false consensus, with  $\gamma_1$  and  $\gamma_2$  between 7 and 2.5 percentage points, and differences in the constant term associated with each target gender between 17 and 22 percentage points. The  $\theta$  parameter is virtually zero for the basic freedom question and non-negligible, but also not large, for affirmative action. These results are consistent with the prior finding that stereotyping is primarily driven by systematic views about men and women rather than specific within-country differences. We verify that the estimates imply exactly the slopes computed in Figure 16 according to our framework.

<sup>24</sup>The results are not sensitive to a particular random split of estimation versus hold-out sample. To see this, in Appendix Figure A.14, we plot the standard deviations in estimates across 100 random draws and show that the values are very similar across draws.

<sup>25</sup>In particular, we remove minority overweighting by setting  $\lambda = 0$ , false consensus by setting  $\gamma_1$  and  $\gamma_2 = 0$ , and gender stereotyping both by setting  $\alpha^m = \alpha^f = \frac{\alpha^m + \alpha^f}{2}$  and by setting  $\theta = 0$ .

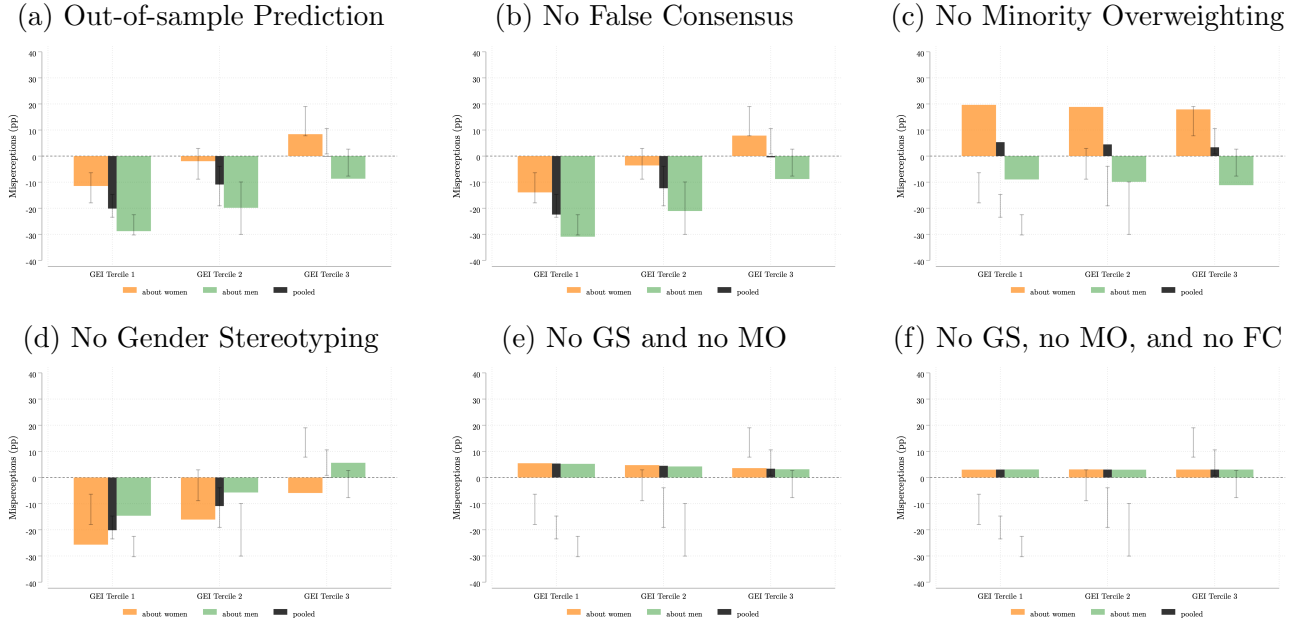
aggregate misperceptions and tends to exacerbate them rather than attenuate them, but it is not quantitatively important and does not contribute to the stylized facts. Minority overweighting and stereotyping separately contribute to aggregate misperceptions by gender, pooled, and across GEI terciles: on average, minority overweighting leads to underestimation of the support for basic freedom in all countries and of the support for affirmative action in low GEI countries and to overestimation of the support for affirmative action in high GEI countries. Stereotyping leads to a systematic overestimation of women’s support and an underestimation of men’s support for both issues. It is apparent, however, that each mechanism alone cannot quantitatively explain the global patterns in misperceptions of gender norms. In contrast, if *both* minority overweighting and gender stereotyping are jointly shut down, we see that misperceptions disappear almost completely: Average misperceptions in absolute value drop substantially and become single-digits across the board, for both policy dimensions. In sum, our simple framework, the cross-country analysis by actual levels of support, the out-of-sample prediction and the counterfactual exercise, together indicate that there are two forces that quantitatively drive misperceptions of gender norms around the world, for both policy dimensions: minority overweighting and gender stereotyping. False consensus, while widespread, has a limited impact in shaping the nature of aggregate misperceptions.

**Figure 17: Quantitative Assessment of Mechanisms – Basic Freedom**



**Notes:** The figures showcase the out-of-sample predictions regarding average misperceptions of support (pp) for *basic freedom* conditional on countries’ GEI index. The various panels omit one or more mechanisms from the prediction between the following: false consensus (FC), minority overweighting (MO), and gender stereotyping (GS). The 95% confidence intervals refer to the standard errors of the underlying survey data, clustered at the country level. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

**Figure 18: Quantitative Assessment of Mechanisms – Affirmative Action**



**Notes:** The figures showcase the out-of-sample predictions regarding average misperceptions of support (pp) for *affirmative action* conditional on countries’ GEI index. The various panels omit one or more mechanisms from the prediction between the following: false consensus (FC), minority overweighting (MO), and gender stereotyping (GS). The 95% confidence intervals refer to the standard errors of the underlying survey data, clustered at the country level. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on [UNDP \(2022\)](#).

## 7 Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Culture and social norms shape women’s economic outcomes around the world ([Fernández, 2007](#); [Alesina, Giuliano and Nunn, 2013](#)). For instance, in the case of female labor force participation, it is now well understood that these social considerations are a key driver of whether women participate in the labor market or not ([Fernández and Fogli, 2009](#); [Field et al., 2021](#)). Besides one’s own political position, the perception of others’ positions also matters. For example, [Bursztyn, González and Yanagizawa-Drott \(2020\)](#) documented that *perceptions* of peers’ opinions toward female employment outside the home influence behavior over and above own opinions. In cases when these perceived opinions are inconsistent with the actual views of society, a simple information intervention narrowed the gap between perceived and actual opinions, and shifted behavior. This contributed to labor supply behavior more closely aligning with equilibrium opinions.

Our study complements the existing literature on the relevance of gender norms and their perceptions. We provide unified, global evidence on gender norms by measuring support for two gender-related policies as well as the perception of said support in each country and among each gender. The relevance of these national-level misperceptions is corroborated by causal evidence that links them to misperceptions at the local level.



Our unique data allows us to study perceptions about basic freedom for women, in particular, whether women should be free to work outside the home. In virtually every country, we find an underestimation of support for basic freedom. This suggests that restricting female employment, which is perceived to have extensive support in many countries, is not necessarily in line with the actual views in society. In this case, aligning perceived and actual views is a promising policy intervention (Bursztyn and Yang, 2022): It may *raise* female labor force participation (in particular, outside the home) by shifting perceived social norms in a way that is actually consistent with the underlying views of a society.

Misperceptions about our second gender norms dimension of interest, support for gender-based affirmative action, have more nuanced policy implications. In particular, our findings indicate that, in more developed and gender-equal countries, the policy support of the potential *beneficiaries* of such policies may be the most misperceived. The relatively low support for affirmative action among women in these countries may occur for several reasons that are important for policy suggestions. For example, in what Coate and Loury (1993) call patronizing equilibria, affirmative action may exacerbate stereotypes by discouraging minorities from undertaking investments. Fryer and Loury (2005) call the notion that “affirmative action always helps its beneficiaries” a myth, as mismatch may ultimately hinder minorities’ chances to succeed.<sup>26</sup> Another possibility, as suggested by Bohren, Imas and Rosenberg (2019), is that affirmative action may undermine the perceived value of the achievements of a minority group, especially if affirmative action is believed to be more widespread than it truly is. Irrespective of the reasons why support for affirmative action among women in more gender-equal countries is relatively low, an implication of our findings is that stereotyping may drive decision-makers to propose relatively unpopular policies, rather than seeking solutions that are favored by the potential beneficiaries.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, the evidence on actual support for policies addressing gender imbalances in the labor market is interesting on its own. Gender imbalances are widespread, especially in leadership positions, and a vigorous policy debate is underway to try to address them. These policy proposals are met with different levels of support. Our paper only provides some suggestive evidence of what drives this support and does not address what would be an efficient policy in each country or which equity-efficiency trade-offs may be involved. Nonetheless, Ashraf et al. (2022) provide recent evidence of labor misallocation by gender, showing that countries with lower levels of female labor force participation could substantially benefit from expanding women’s access to the labor

---

<sup>26</sup>This mechanism has been primarily explored in educational affirmative action (Arcidiacono and Lovenheim, 2016).

<sup>27</sup>Misperceptions about how people weigh the benefits and the costs of affirmative action may explain why referenda about it have been called throughout the United States over the past fifteen years and have systematically failed, while referenda to ban affirmative action have passed (Proposition 16 in California in 2020, which lost by over 14pp; Referendum 88 in Washington in 2019; Oklahoma State Question 759 in 2012; Nebraska Measure 424 in 2008; Michigan Proposal 2 in 2006; with the exception of Colorado Initiative 46 in 2006). Source: [https://ballotpedia.org/Affirmative\\_action\\_on\\_the\\_ballot](https://ballotpedia.org/Affirmative_action_on_the_ballot), last accessed Oct 1, 2022.

market.<sup>28</sup> In our data, the support for affirmative action in the labor market is the strongest in less gender-equal countries. Moreover, not only is support for this policy high among women in these countries, but a large majority of men would be in favor of it. It may be that the widespread support is driven by a realization that structural barriers prevent efficient allocations in the labor market and that counteracting policies are necessary; there is a need for the policy.<sup>29</sup> This interpretation of the data, while speculative, suggests that the vast majority of men and women have not only realized the societal benefits of affirmative action to both genders but are also in actual agreement on the issue. Yet, perceived notions of support are distorted. People perceive there to be a conflict between genders, assuming most men to be against and most women to be in favor, when in fact such conflict is largely absent when we consider the actual support for the policy in our data.

To summarize, using newly collected data with representative samples from 60 countries, we find stark heterogeneity in how gender norms are perceived within and across countries. This heterogeneity also varies by policy issue. Still, these global patterns can be reconciled and matched by two general mechanisms. These mechanisms may also drive misperceptions of social norms in domains other than gender, or for other policies within the domain of gender. These are open external validity questions, but our framework provides a road map for how to systematically investigate such distortions in other domains. Finally, combining our novel stylized facts with existing studies of this topic suggests there may be room for interventions that align actual and perceived norms and thereby more closely align behavior with equilibrium views in society.

---

<sup>28</sup>The evidence on the causal impact of affirmative action for women, along the global spectrum of gender equality, is limited. It is not well understood how heterogeneous the impact is. Evidence points in certain directions, however. For example, the seminal paper by [Chattopadhyay and Duflo \(2004\)](#) examined the impacts among local village leaders in India. While this reform is outside the labor market context, they find that when women become village leaders due to randomly allocated reserved seats, they not only respond by providing public goods that women tend to favor, but they are also better at prioritization of public goods that the population as a whole desires. At least in that low-equality context, it appears that prioritizing women for leadership positions was beneficial for society as a whole. There is also various evidence from high-equality contexts, such as studies from Norway on the impacts of a gender quota within executive boards, where the evidence points to very modest or non-significant impacts on firm performance, as well as broader societal benefits ([Bertrand et al., 2018](#); [Johansen and Sandnes, 2008](#); [Nygaard, 2011](#); [Ahern and Dittmar, 2012](#); [Matsa and Miller, 2013](#); [Eckbo, Nygaard and Thorburn, 2016](#)). In this regard, the evidence is consistent with the findings by [Ashraf et al. \(2022\)](#) which suggest that the efficiency impacts of affirmative action may be highly heterogeneous across countries and depend on the level of gender equality to begin with. Similar implications can be derived for academia based on the findings of [Iaria, Schwarz and Waldinger \(2022\)](#) about the strongly positive selection of women in University STEM research over the course of the twentieth century.

<sup>29</sup>Evidence by [Besley et al. \(2017\)](#), studying a gender quota in Sweden, suggests that organizations find a way to replace the lowest performing men when exogenously induced to replace men with women. By this logic, a man of median productivity or even lower (i.e., the majority of males), may have nothing to lose from such policies and in fact could benefit from productivity gains within the organization, not to mention from the broader societal benefits.

## References

- Aboim, Sofia.** 2010. “Gender Cultures and the Division of Labour in Contemporary Europe: A Cross-National Perspective.” *The Sociological Review*, 58(2): 171–196.
- Ahern, Kenneth R., and Amy K. Dittmar.** 2012. “The Changing of the Boards: The Impact on Firm Valuation of Mandated Female Board Representation.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 127(1): 137–197.
- Alesina, Alberto, Paola Giuliano, and Nathan Nunn.** 2013. “On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women and the Plough.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 128(2): 469–530.
- Arcidiacono, Peter, and Michael Lovenheim.** 2016. “Affirmative action and the quality-fit trade-off.” *Journal of Economic Literature*, 54(1): 3–51.
- Asch, Solomon E.** 1951. “Effects of group pressure upon the modification and distortion of judgments.” In *Groups, Leadership and Men: Research in Human Relations*. 177–190. Oxford, England: Carnegie Press.
- Ash, Elliott, Ruben Durante, Maria Grebenschikova, and Carlo Schwarz.** 2022. “Visual Representation and Stereotypes in News Media.” CESifo Working Paper 9686.
- Ashraf, Nava, Natalie Bau, Nathan Nunn, and Alessandra Voena.** 2020. “Bride price and female education.” *Journal of Political Economy*, 128(2): 591–641.
- Ashraf, Nava, Oriana Bandiera, Virginia Minni, and Víctor Quintas-Martínez.** 2022. “Gender Roles and the Misallocation of Labour Across Countries.” Unpublished.
- Bandiera, Oriana, Nidhi Parekh, Barbara Petrongolo, and Michelle Rao.** 2022. “Men are from Mars, and Women Too: A Bayesian Meta-analysis of Overconfidence Experiments.” *Economica*, 89: S38–S70.
- Becker, Anke.** 2021. “On the Economic Origins of Restricting Women’s Promiscuity.” *The Review of Economic Studies*.
- Belgiu, Mariana.** 2015. “UIA World Countries Boundaries.” UNIGIS International Association.
- Bénabou, Roland, and Jean Tirole.** 2011. “Laws and Norms.” NBER Working Paper No. 17579.
- Bertrand, Marianne.** 2018. “Coase lecture—the glass ceiling.” *Economica*, 85(338): 205–231.
- Bertrand, Marianne, Sandra E Black, Sissel Jensen, and Adriana Lleras-Muney.** 2018. “Breaking the Glass Ceiling? The Effect of Board Quotas on Female Labour Market Outcomes in Norway.” *The Review of Economic Studies*, 86(1): 191–239.

- Bertrand, Marianne, Sandra E Black, Sissel Jensen, and Adriana Lleras-Muney.** 2019. “Breaking the glass ceiling? The effect of board quotas on female labour market outcomes in Norway.” *The Review of Economic Studies*, 86(1): 191–239.
- Besley, Timothy, Olle Folke, Torsten Persson, and Johanna Rickne.** 2017. “Gender Quotas and the Crisis of the Mediocre Man: Theory and Evidence from Sweden.” *American Economic Review*, 107(8): 2204–2242.
- Bicchieri, Cristina.** 2005. *The Grammar of Society: The Nature and Dynamics of Social Norms*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bohren, J Aislinn, Alex Imas, and Michael Rosenberg.** 2019. “The dynamics of discrimination: Theory and evidence.” *American Economic Review*, 109(10): 3395–3436.
- Bonomi, Giampaolo, Nicola Gennaioli, and Guido Tabellini.** 2021. “Identity, beliefs, and political conflict.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 136(4): 2371–2411.
- Bordalo, Pedro, John J Conlon, Nicola Gennaioli, Spencer Y Kwon, and Andrei Shleifer.** 2023. “Memory and probability.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 138(1): 265–311.
- Bordalo, Pedro, Katherine Baldiga Coffman, Nicola Gennaioli, and Andrei Shleifer.** 2019. “Beliefs About Gender.” *American Economic Review*, 109(3): 739–73.
- Bordalo, Pedro, Katherine Coffman, Nicola Gennaioli, and Andrei Shleifer.** 2016. “Stereotypes.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 131(4): 1753–1794.
- Breed, Warren, and Thomas Ktsanes.** 1961. “Pluralistic ignorance in the process of opinion formation.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 25(3): 382–392.
- Brooks, Clem, and Catherine Bolzendahl.** 2004. “The Transformation of US Gender Role Attitudes: Cohort Replacement, Social-Structural Change, and Ideological Learning.” *Social Science Research*, 33(1): 106–133.
- Bursztyn, Leonardo, Alessandra L González, and David Yanagizawa-Drott.** 2020. “Misperceived social norms: Women working outside the home in Saudi Arabia.” *American Economic Review*, 110(10): 2997–3029.
- Bursztyn, Leonardo, and David Y Yang.** 2022. “Misperceptions about others.” *Annual Review of Economics*, 14: 425–452.
- Bursztyn, Leonardo, and Robert Jensen.** 2017. “Social Image and Economic Behavior in the Field: Identifying, Understanding, and Shaping Social Pressure.” *Annual Review of Economics*, 9(1): 131–153.

- Carrer, Luisa, and Lorenzo De Masi.** 2023. “Municipal-level Gender Norms: Measurement and Effects on Women in Politics.”
- Charles, Kerwin Kofi, Jonathan Guryan, and Jessica Pan.** 2022. “The effects of sexism on American women: The role of norms vs. discrimination.” *Journal of Human Resources*, 0920–11209R3.
- Chattopadhyay, Raghavendra, and Esther Duflo.** 2004. “Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India.” *Econometrica*, 72(5): 1409–1443.
- Chung, Adrienne, and Rajiv N. Rimal.** 2016. “Social Norms: A Review.” *Review of Communication Research*, 4: 1–28.
- Cialdini, Robert B., Raymond R. Reno, and Carl A. Kallgren.** 1990. “A focus theory of normative conduct: Recycling the concept of norms to reduce littering in public places.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58(6): 1015–1026.
- Coate, Stephen, and Glenn C Loury.** 1993. “Will affirmative-action policies eliminate negative stereotypes?” *The American Economic Review*, 1220–1240.
- Conlon, John J, and Dev Patel.** 2022. “What jobs come to mind? stereotypes about fields of study.” Working Paper.
- Cortés, Patricia, Gizem Koşar, Jessica Pan, and Basit Zafar.** 2022. “Should Mothers Work? How Perceptions of the Social Norm Affect Individual Attitudes Toward Work in the US.” National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Cotter, David, Joan M Hermsen, and Reeve Vanneman.** 2011. “The End of the Gender Revolution? Gender Role attitudes from 1977 to 2008.” *American Journal of Sociology*, 117(1): 259–89.
- Deutsch, Morton, and Harold B. Gerard.** 1955. “A study of normative and informational social influences upon individual judgment.” *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 51(3): 629–636.
- Dhar, Diva, Tarun Jain, and Seema Jayachandran.** 2022. “Reshaping adolescents’ gender attitudes: Evidence from a school-based experiment in India.” *American Economic Review*, 112(3): 899–927.
- Eckbo, B. Espen, Knut M. Nygaard, and Karin S. Thorburn.** 2016. “How Costly Is Forced Gender-Balancing of Corporate Boards?” European Corporate Governance Institute (ECGI). Finance Working Paper No. 463/2016.

- Enke, Benjamin, and Thomas Graeber.** 2021. “Cognitive Uncertainty in Intertemporal Choice.” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 29577. (R&R at *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.).
- Exley, Christine L, Oliver P Hauser, Molly Moore, and John-Henry Pezzuto.** 2022. “Beliefs about Gender Differences in Social Preferences.” Harvard Business School Working Paper, No. 22-079.
- Fernández, Raquel.** 2007. “Women, work, and culture.” *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 5(2-3): 305–332.
- Fernández, Raquel.** 2013. “Cultural Change as Learning: The Evolution of Female Labor Force Participation Over a Century.” *American Economic Review*, 103(1): 472–500.
- Fernández, Raquel, and Alessandra Fogli.** 2009. “Culture: An Empirical Investigation of Beliefs, Work, and Fertility.” *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics*, 1(1): 146–77.
- Field, Erica, Rohini Pande, Natalia Rigol, Simone Schaner, and Charity Troyer Moore.** 2021. “On her own account: How Strengthening Women’s Financial Control Impacts Labor Supply and Gender Norms.” *American Economic Review*, 111(7): 2342–75.
- Fields, James M, and Howard Schuman.** 1976. “Public beliefs about the beliefs of the public.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 40(4): 427–448.
- Fortin, Nicole M.** 2015. “Gender Role Attitudes and Women’s Labor Market Participation: Opting-out, Aids, and the Persistent Appeal of Housewifery.” *Annals of Economics and Statistics/Annales d’Économie et de Statistique*, 117/118: 379–401.
- Fryer, Roland G, and Glenn C Loury.** 2005. “Affirmative action and its mythology.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 19(3): 147–162.
- Gabaix, Xavier.** 2019. “Chapter 4 - Behavioral inattention.” In *Handbook of Behavioral Economics: Applications and Foundations 1*. Vol. 2, , ed. B. Douglas Bernheim, Stefano DellaVigna and David Laibson, 261–343. North-Holland.
- Gelfand, Michele J., Jana L. Raver, Lisa Nishii, Lisa M. Leslie, Janetta Lun, Beng Chong Lim, Lili Duan, Assaf Almaliach, Soon Ang, Jakobina Arnadottir, Zeynep Aycan, Klaus Boehnke, Pawel Boski, Rosa Cabecinhas, Darius Chan, Jagdeep Chhokar, Alessia D’Amato, Montse Ferrer, Iris C. Fischlmayr, Ronald Fischer, Marta Fülöp, James Georgas, Emiko S. Kashima, Yoshishima Kashima, Kibum Kim, Alain Lempereur, Patricia Marquez, Rozhan Othman, Bert Overlaet, Penny Panagiotopoulou, Karl Peltzer, Lorena R. Perez-Florizno, Larisa Ponomarenko, Anu**

- Realo, Vidar Schei, Manfred Schmitt, Peter B. Smith, Nazar Soomro, Erna Szabo, Nalinee Taveesin, Midori Toyama, Evert Van de Vliert, Naharika Vohra, Colleen Ward, and Susumu Yamaguchi.** 2011. “Differences Between Tight and Loose Cultures: A 33-Nation Study.” *Science*, 332(6033): 1100–1104.
- Giuliano, Paola.** 2020. “Gender and culture.” *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 36(4): 944–961.
- Iaria, Alessandro, Carlo Schwarz, and Fabian Waldinger.** 2022. “Gender Gaps in Academia: Global Evidence Over the Twentieth Century.” *Available at SSRN 4150221*.
- Jalota, Suhani, and Lisa Ho.** 2023. “What Works for Her? How Work-from-Home Digital Jobs Affect Female Labor Force Participation in Urban India.”
- Jayachandran, Seema.** 2015. “The roots of gender inequality in developing countries.” *Annual Review of Economics*, 7(1): 63–88.
- Johansen, Marius Apland, and Marius Javier Sandnes.** 2008. “Gender Equality in the Boardroom: The Norwegian Case of Rosa Parks?” The Norwegian School of Economics. Master Thesis.
- Konrad, Alison M, and Linley Hartmann.** 2001. “Gender differences in attitudes toward affirmative action programs in Australia: Effects of beliefs, interests, and attitudes toward women.” *Sex Roles*, 45(5): 415–432.
- Lowe, Matt, and Madeline McKelway.** 2021. “Coupling labor supply decisions: An experiment in india.”
- Madarász, Kristóf.** 2012. “Information projection: Model and applications.” *The Review of Economic Studies*, 79(3): 961–985.
- Marks, Gary, and Norman Miller.** 1987. “Ten years of research on the false-consensus effect: An empirical and theoretical review.” *Psychological Bulletin*, 102(1): 72–90.
- Matsa, David A., and Amalia R. Miller.** 2013. “A Female Style in Corporate Leadership? Evidence from Quotas.” *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 5(3): 136–169.
- Miller, Dale T.** 2023. “A century of pluralistic ignorance: what we have learned about its origins, forms, and consequences.” *Frontiers in Social Psychology*, 1: 1260896.
- Miller, Dale T, and Deborah A Prentice.** 1994. “Collective errors and errors about the collective.” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20(5): 541–550.
- Nygaard, Knut.** 2011. “Forced Board Changes: Evidence from Norway.” The Norwegian School of Economics. Discussion Paper No. 5/2011 1793227.



- O’Gorman, Hubert J, and Stephen L Garry.** 1976. “Pluralistic ignorance—A replication and extension.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 40(4): 449–458.
- Paluck, Elizabeth Levy, and Hana Shepherd.** 2012. “The salience of social referents: a field experiment on collective norms and harassment behavior in a school social network.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 103(6): 899–915.
- Parker, Christopher P, Boris B Baltes, and Neil D Christiansen.** 1997. “Support for affirmative action, justice perceptions, and work attitudes: A study of gender and racial–ethnic group differences.” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82(3): 376.
- Prentice, Deborah A., and Dale T. Miller.** 1993. “Pluralistic ignorance and alcohol use on campus: Some consequences of misperceiving the social norm.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 64(2): 243–256.
- Ross, Lee, David Greene, and Pamela House.** 1977. “The “false consensus effect”: An egocentric bias in social perception and attribution processes.” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 13(3): 279–301.
- Sargent, Rikki H, and Leonard S Newman.** 2021. “Pluralistic ignorance research in psychology: A scoping review of topic and method variation and directions for future research.” *Review of General Psychology*, 25(2): 163–184.
- Scott, Jacqueline, Duane F Alwin, and Michael Braun.** 1996. “Generational Changes in Gender-Role Attitudes: Britain in a Cross-national Perspective.” *Sociology*, 30(3): 471–492.
- Shapiro, Jesse M.** 2016. “Special interests and the media: Theory and an application to climate change.” *Journal of Public Economics*, 144: 91–108.
- Steinbugler, Amy C, Julie E Press, and Janice Johnson Dias.** 2006. “Gender, race, and affirmative action: Operationalizing intersectionality in survey research.” *Gender & Society*, 20(6): 805–825.
- Tankard, Margaret E., and Elizabeth Levy Paluck.** 2016. “Norm perception as a vehicle for social change.” *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 10(1): 181–211.
- Treas, Judith, and Eric D Widmer.** 2000. “Married Women’s Employment over the Life Course: Attitudes in Cross-National Perspective.” *Social Forces*, 78(4): 1409–1436.
- Tversky, Amos, and Daniel Kahneman.** 1973. “Availability: A heuristic for judging frequency and probability.” *Cognitive Psychology*, 5(2): 207–232.

**UNDP.** 2022. “Human Development Report 2021-22.” *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*.

**Van Boven, Leaf.** 2000. “Pluralistic ignorance and political correctness: The case of affirmative action.” *Political Psychology*, 21(2): 267–276.

**World Bank.** 2021*a*. “GDP per capita (constant 2010 US\$).” The World Bank, Washington, DC.

**World Bank.** 2021*b*. “Total Population.” The World Bank, Washington, DC.

**World Bank.** 2022. “Women, Business and the Law 2022.” The World Bank, Washington, DC.

# “How Are Gender Norms Perceived?”

## Online Appendix

Leonardo Bursztyn  
Alexander W. Cappelen  
Bertil Tungodden  
Alessandra Voena  
David Yanagizawa-Drott

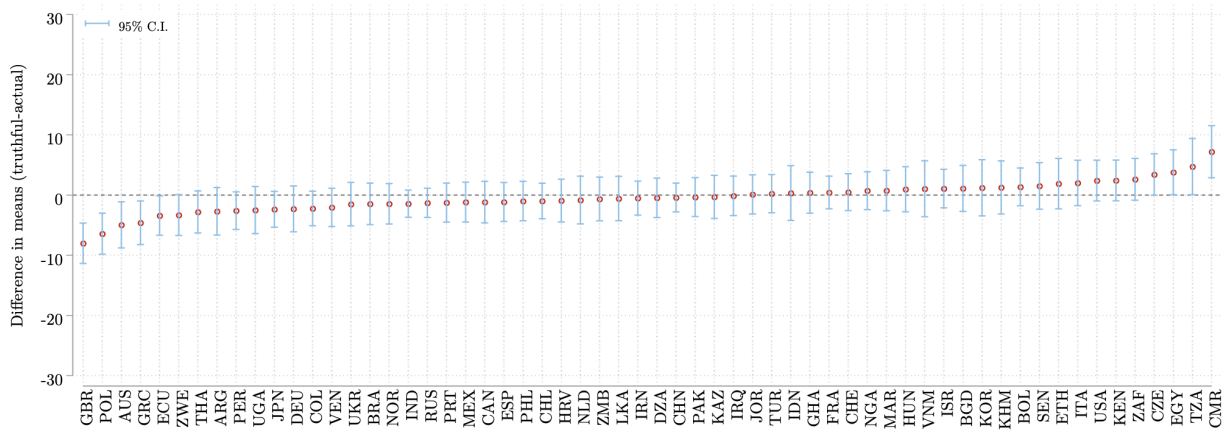
### Online Appendix A

#### A.1 Description of Supplementary Country-Level Datasets

In the analysis, we match the data from Gallup World Poll with other data sources. In particular, to study how actual and perceived gender norms relate to the level of gender equality in the country, we classify countries according to the UN’s Gender Inequality Index (UNDP, 2022). The index captures multiple dimensions of gender equality, including labor market outcomes and political empowerment. We reverse the index such that higher values indicate higher values of equality, and we define it as the Gender Equality Index (GEI). We also show that our findings are robust to an alternative measure of gender equality based on legal aspects (World Bank, 2022), see Figure A.15 and Figure A.16, where Table A.12 to Table A.23 contain the raw country-level data. Figure A.17 illustrates the extent to which our data represents the global spectrum of gender equality as measured by those indices. Finally, we use World Bank data to establish the percentage of the total world population and world GDP covered by our study (World Bank, 2021*a,b*), and geospatial data from Belgiu (2015) to plot the maps.

#### A.2 Appendix Tables and Figures

**Figure A.1:** Social desirability bias

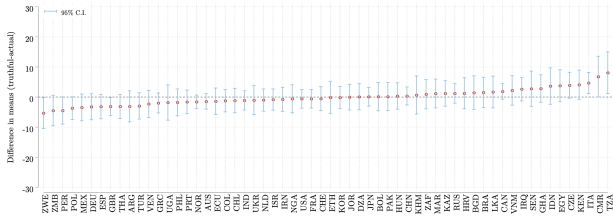


**Notes:** For each country the figure shows the differences in mean answers across the “truthful” and “actual” variant of the questions about perceived support for *basic freedom* and *affirmative action* in the country overall. It plots the difference (truthful relative to actual variant) and 95% confidence intervals. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

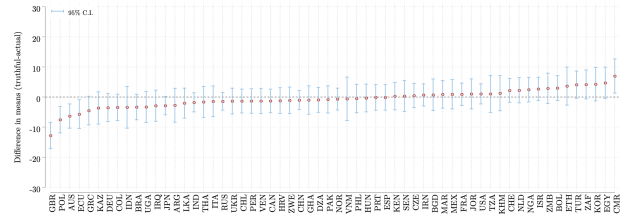
**Figure A.2: Social Desirability Bias (Robustness)**

(a) By question, pooled across gender

Basic freedom

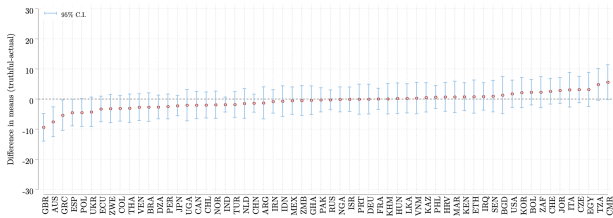


Affirmative action

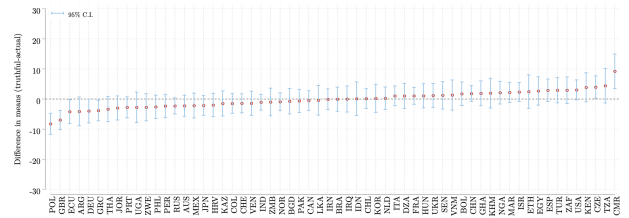


(b) By target gender, pooled across questions and gender of respondent

Perceptions of men's support

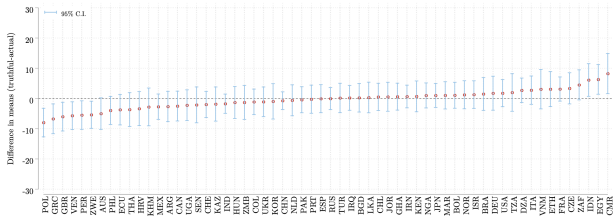


Perceptions of women's support

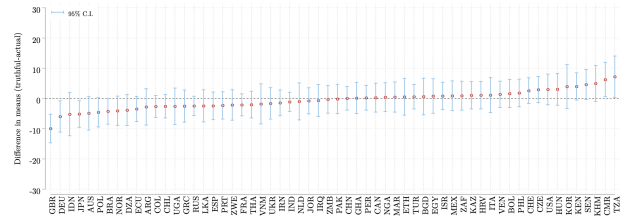


(c) By gender of respondent, pooled across target gender and questions

Male respondents

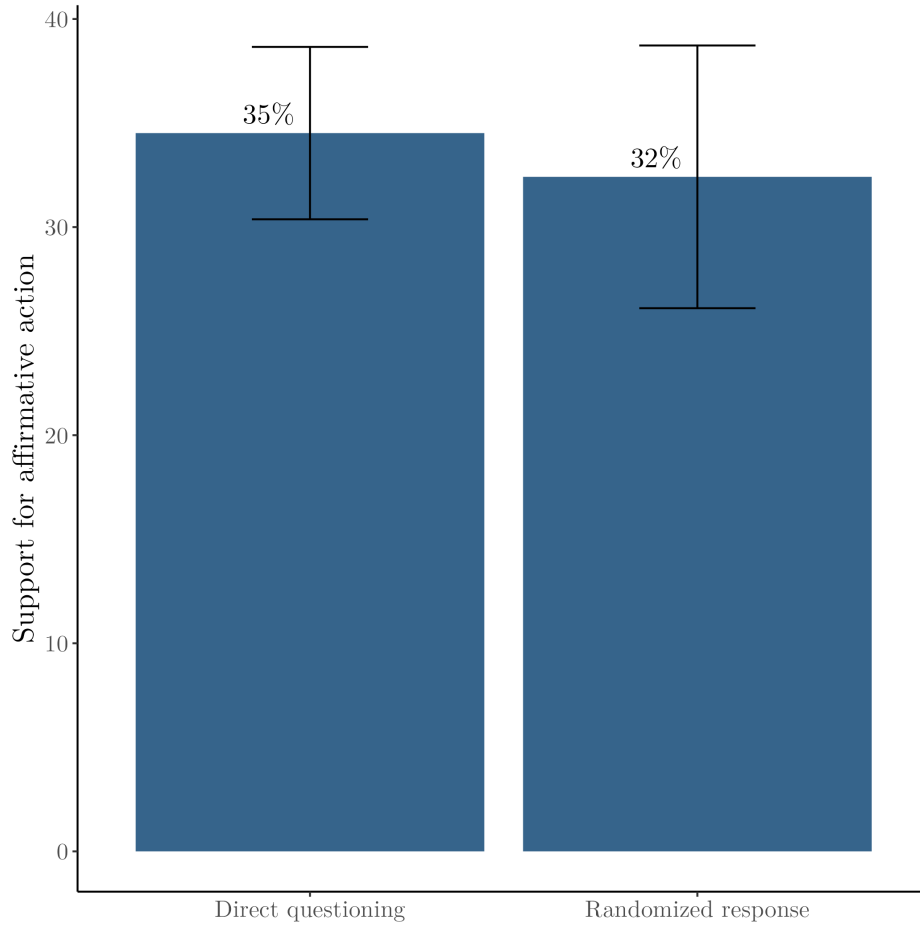


Female respondents



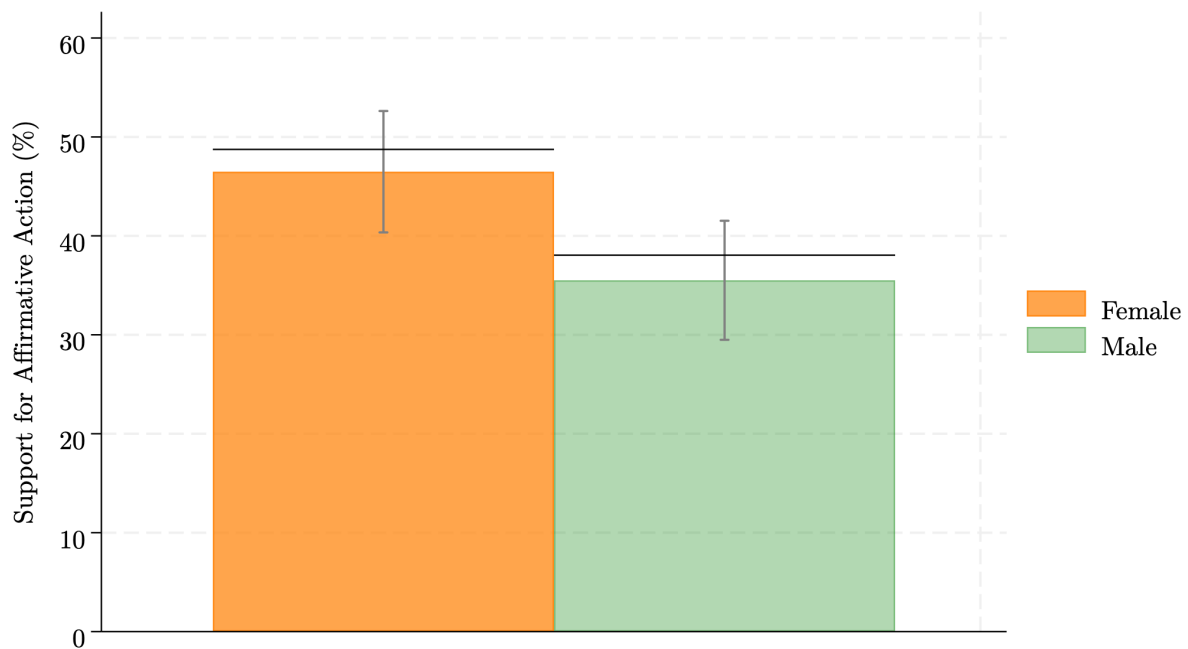
**Notes:** For each country the figure shows the differences in mean answers across the “truthful” and “actual” variant of the questions about perceived support for *basic freedom* and *affirmative action*, conditioning on different dimensions of our data. It plots the difference (truthful relative to actual variant) and 95% confidence intervals. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

**Figure A.3:** Stigmatization



**Notes:** We elicited support for affirmative action from N=1006 subjects from the US by randomly assigning them to either direct elicitation (N=507) or elicitation via a randomized response technique (N=499). In addition to estimated levels of support, we plot 95% confidence intervals. We cannot reject the hypothesis that both elicitation methods reveal to the same level of support and interpret this as the topic not being stigmatized. *Data:* Experimental data.

**Figure A.4:** Order Effects Experiment – Support for Affirmative Action

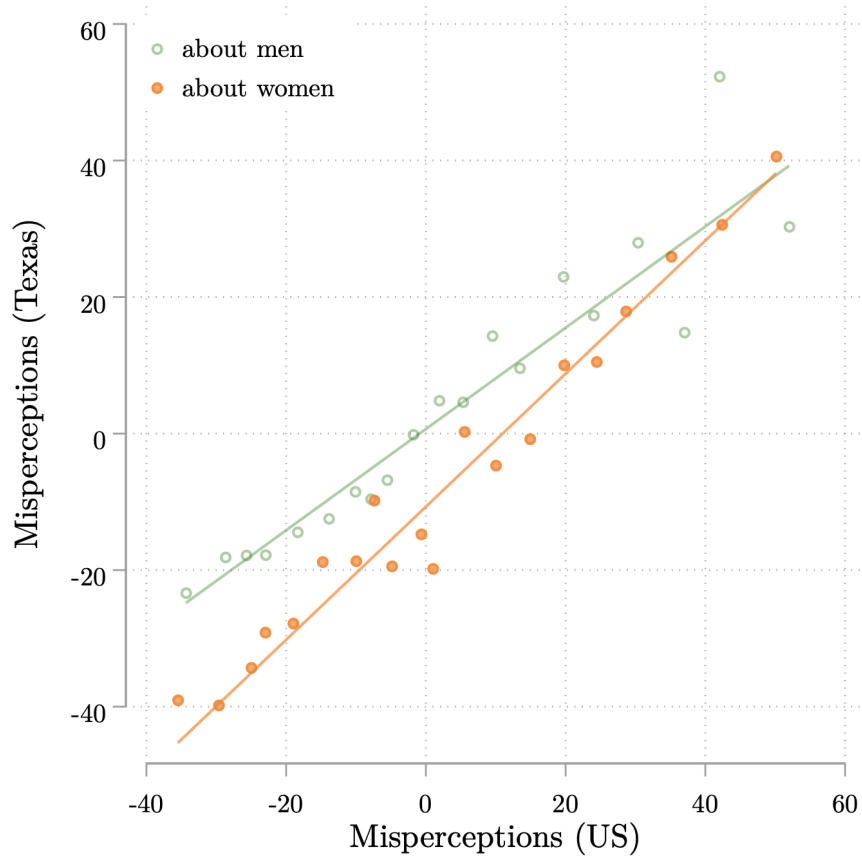


Gallup-levels: Support for Affirmative Action among Men 38.05%, and among Women 48.74%.

**Notes:** The figure shows data from the exact replication study fielded in November 2023. The percentage of women and men supporting gender-based affirmative action is shown in orange and green, respectively. The horizontal lines indicate the levels of support as measured in the Gallup World Poll 2020. *Data:* Experimental data and Gallup World Poll 2020.

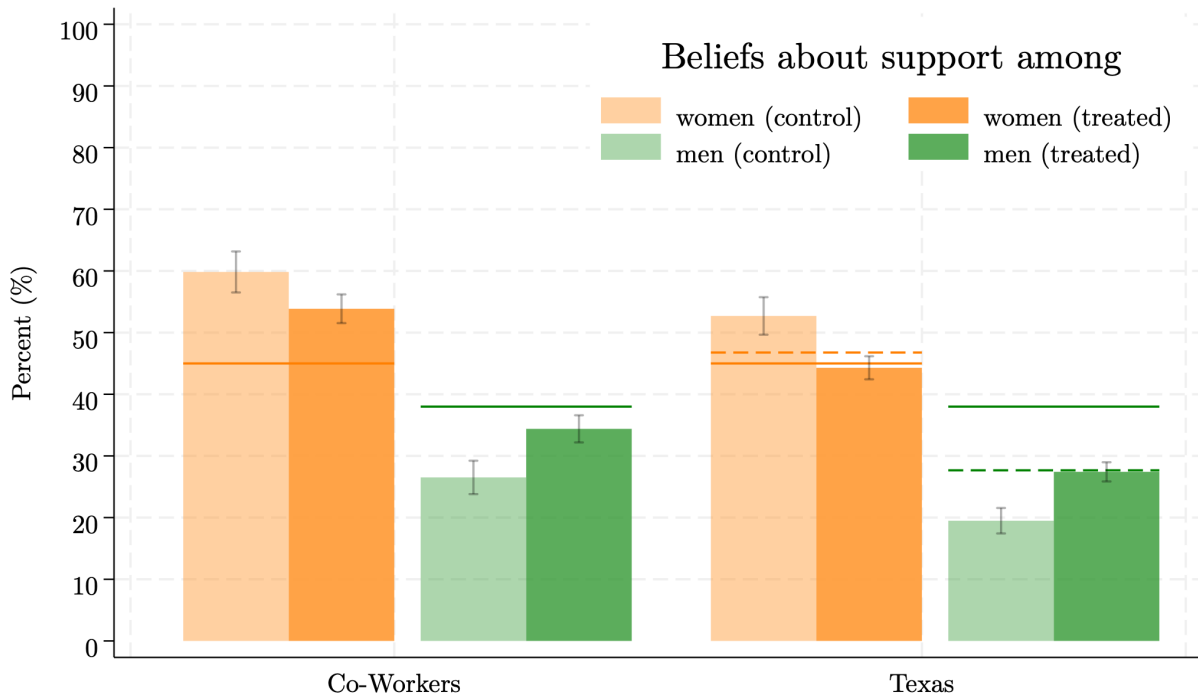


**Figure A.5:** Misperceptions about the Country Correlate with those about Local Groups



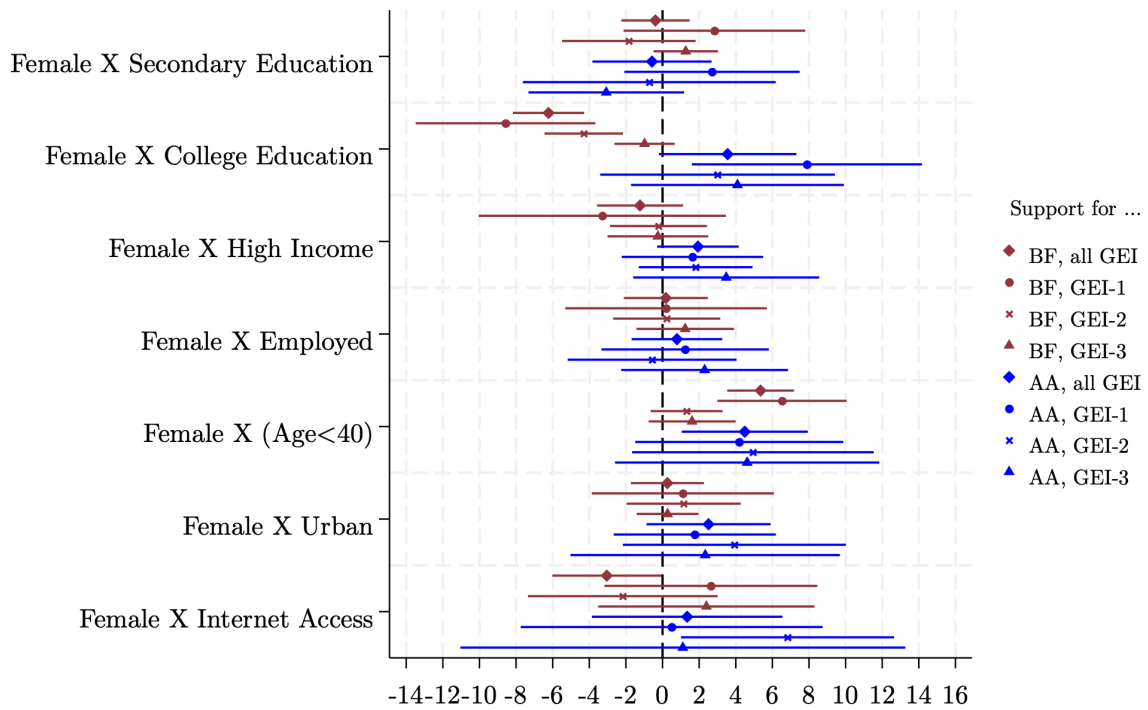
**Notes:** The graph plots misperceptions about support (pp) for *affirmative action* among men (green) and women (orange) in Texas against those about support in the US. We bin the data into quantiles containing 20 observations each. Using the unbinned data, we find Pearson's correlation coefficient to be equal to 0.78 (men) and 0.83 (women).  
*Data:* Experimental data, control group.

**Figure A.6:** Effect of Information about National Support on Perceptions of Local Support



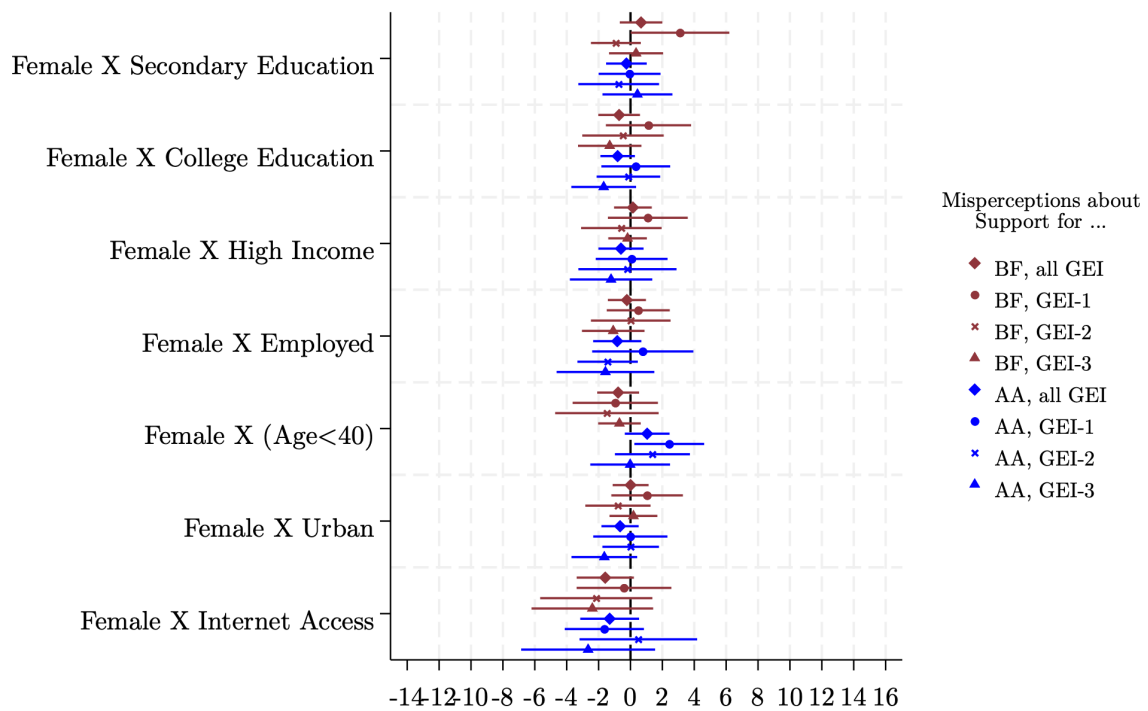
**Notes:** The bars indicate beliefs about support for affirmative action (%) among women (orange) and men (green). The solid orange (green) horizontal lines indicate actual support among men (women) in the US, 38% and 45%, respectively. The dashed orange (green) horizontal lines indicate actual support among men (women) in Texas, as measured in the experiment, around 28% and 47%, respectively. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Details on the effect information about the national level of support has on beliefs about local support can be found in [Table A.11](#). *Data:* Experimental data.

**Figure A.7:** Individual Attitudes – Interaction Effects with Gender of Respondent



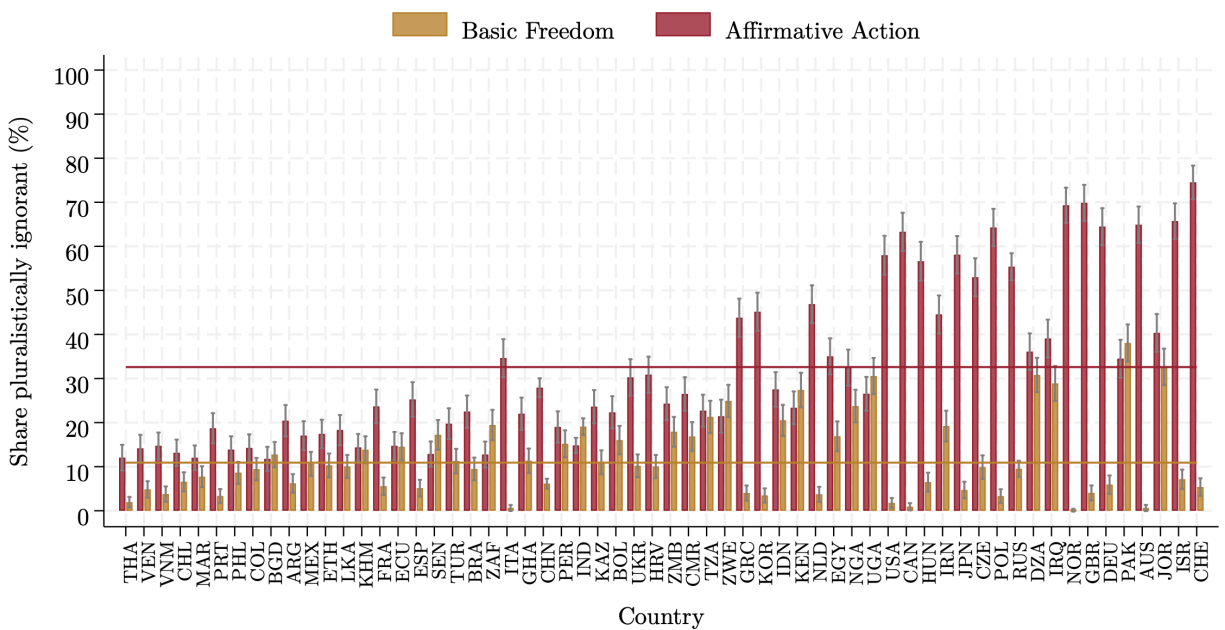
**Notes:** Each coefficient displayed is taken from a regression where support (for Basic Freedom – BF/Affirmative Action – AA) is regressed on indicators for secondary education, college education, being in the top two income quintiles of one’s country, being employed, being under the age of 40, living in an urban/suburban area, internet access, as well as one of the background characteristics interacted with an indicator variable for the respondent being female. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

**Figure A.8:** Misperceptions of Individual Attitudes – Interaction Effects with Gender of Respondent



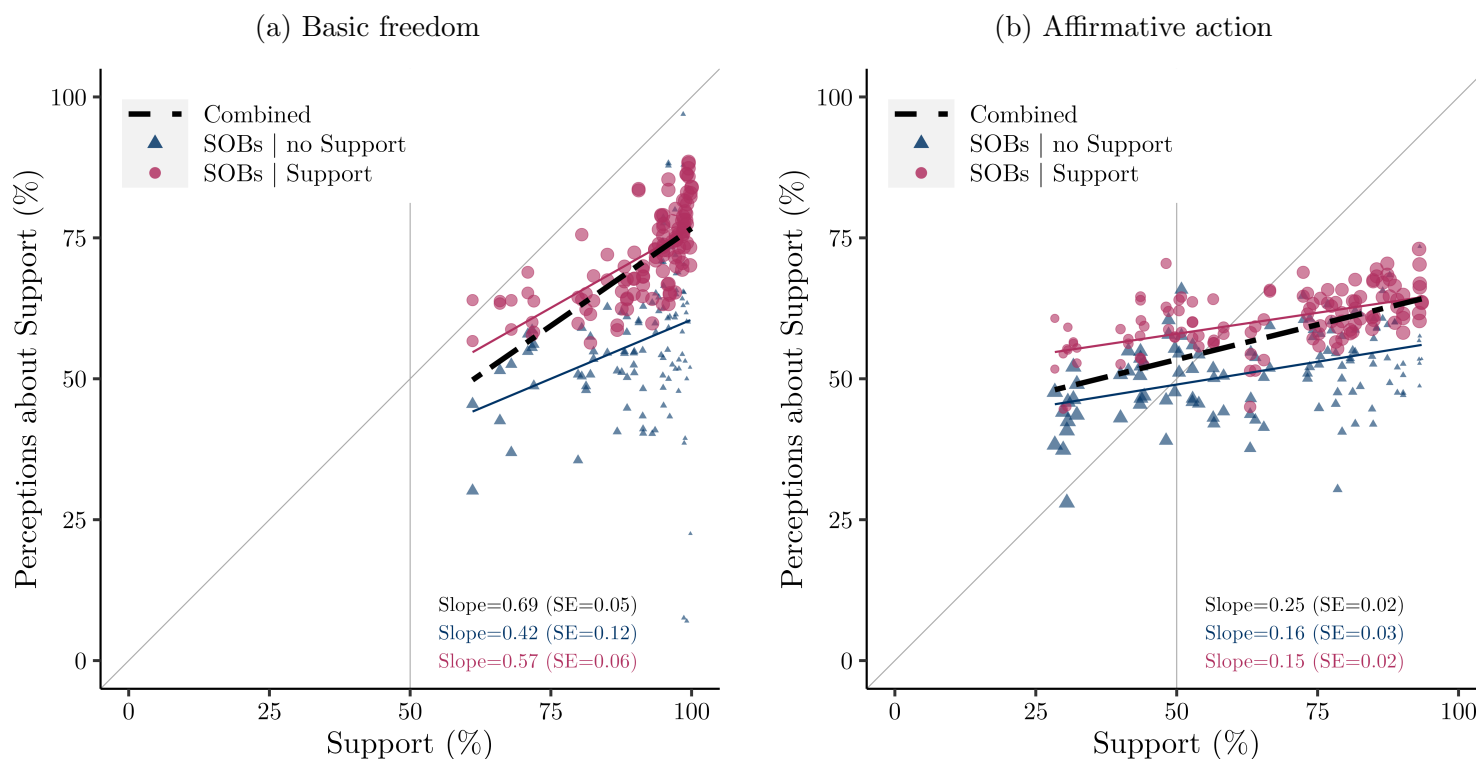
**Notes:** Each coefficient displayed is taken from a regression where misperceptions about support (for Basic Freedom – BF/Affirmative Action – AA) are regressed on indicators for secondary education, college education, being in the top two income quintiles of one’s country, being employed, being under the age of 40, and living in an urban/suburban area, internet access, as well as one of the background characteristics interacted with an indicator variable for the respondent being female. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

**Figure A.9:** Percentage of Respondents that Perceive the Minority Position as Being Held By the Majority in Sixty Countries



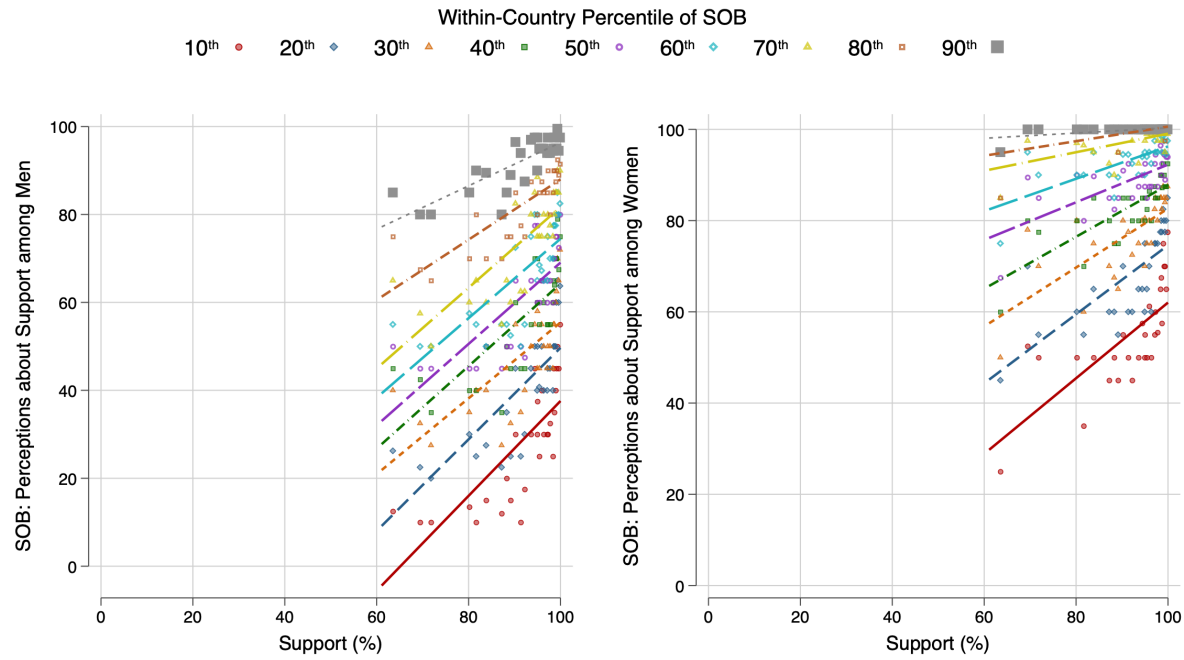
**Notes:** Pluralistic ignorance is defined as perceiving a minority (majority) of the country to be in support while a majority (minority) is. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

**Figure A.10:** Mapping between Actual Norms and Perceived Norms Conditional on Actual Support



**Notes:** For each country, the graph plots the average perceptions about support (second-order beliefs, SOB) for two groups against actual support. The two groups are those who are in support and those who are not. Linear regression lines are included for each group (red and blue) and for the data not conditioning on support (black line, data not shown). The size of the markers is proportional to the size of the group. For instance, while triangles and circles around 50% support are roughly the same size, circles are three times the size of triangles at 75% support. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

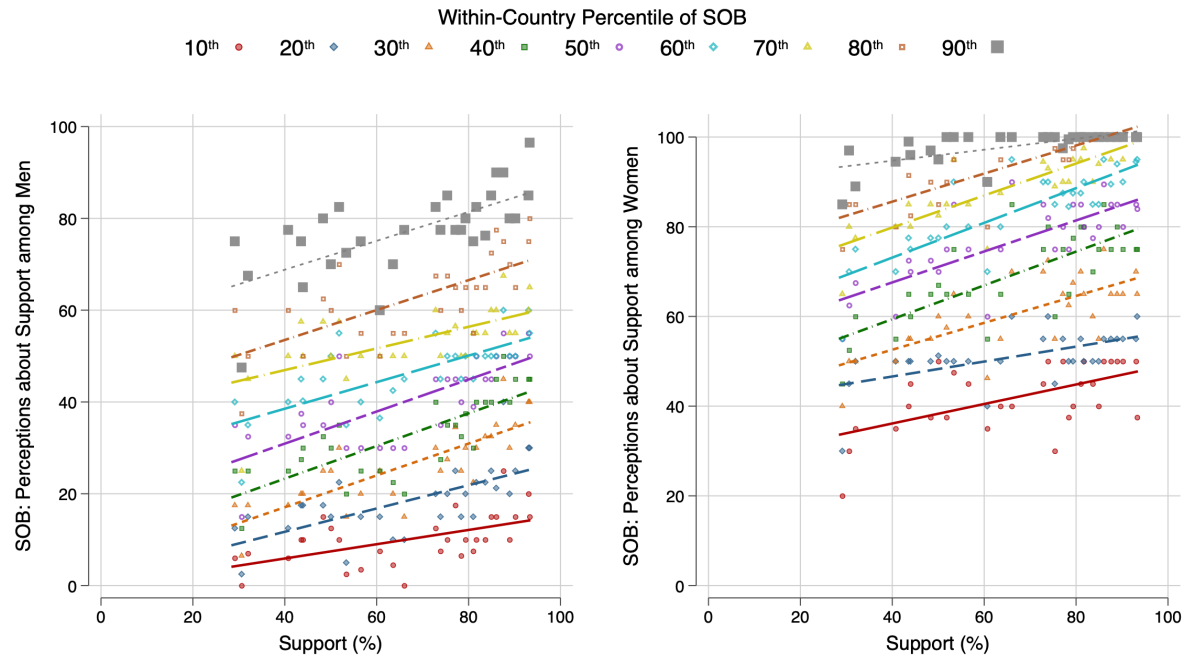
**Figure A.11:** Robust Cross-Country Patterns – Basic Freedom



**Notes:** Figure plots within-country deciles of perceptions about support for basic freedom, pooled across target genders, against actual country-level support. The figure bins observations (by dividing support into equally sized bins based on quantile cutoff points and plots mean values within these bins). *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.



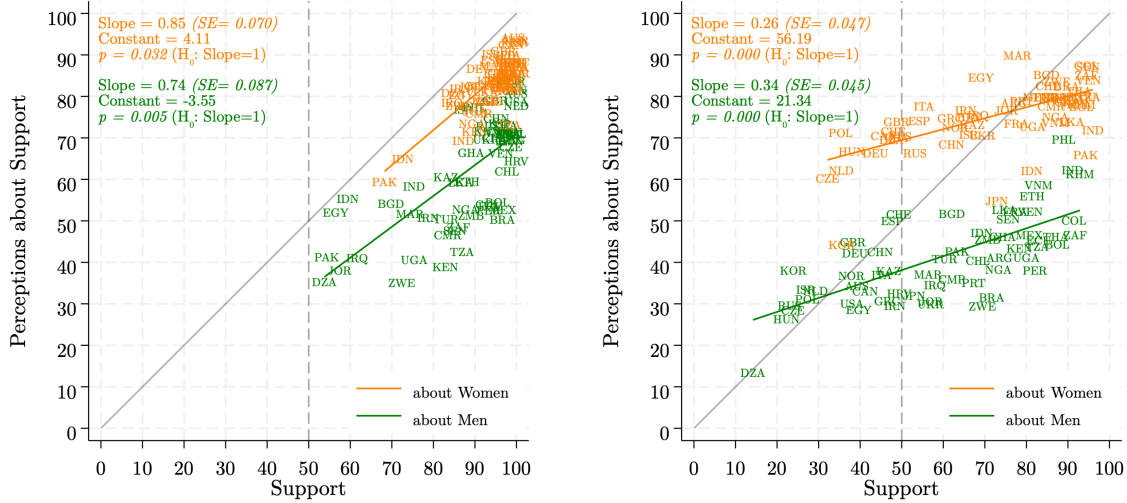
**Figure A.12:** Robust Cross-Country Patterns – Affirmative Action



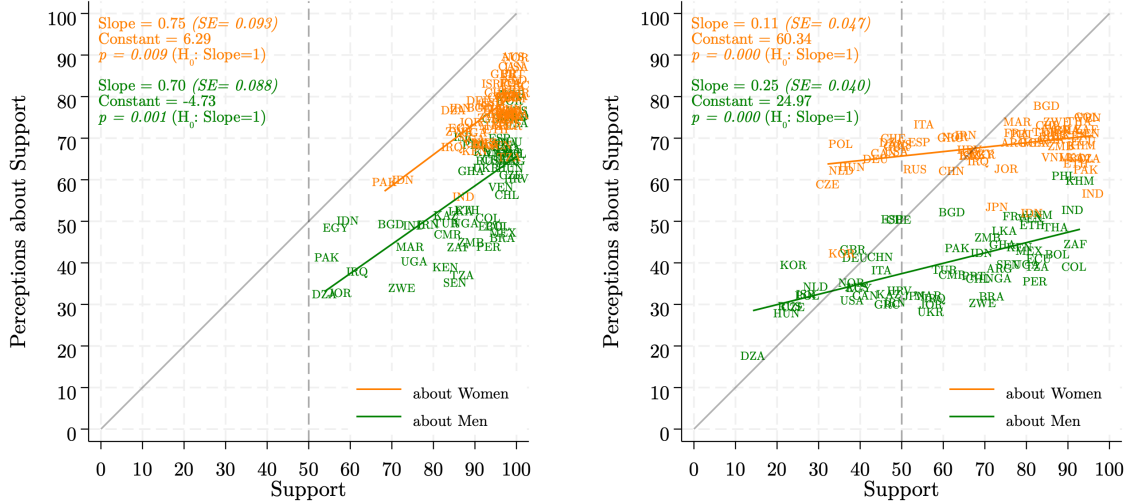
**Notes:** Figure plots within-country deciles of perceptions about support for affirmative action, pooled across target genders, against actual country-level support. The figure bins observations (by dividing support into equally sized bins based on quantile cutoff points and plots mean values within these bins). *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

**Figure A.13:** Robustness: Mapping of True Attitudes to Perceptions

1. Dropping Perceptions of Support = 50

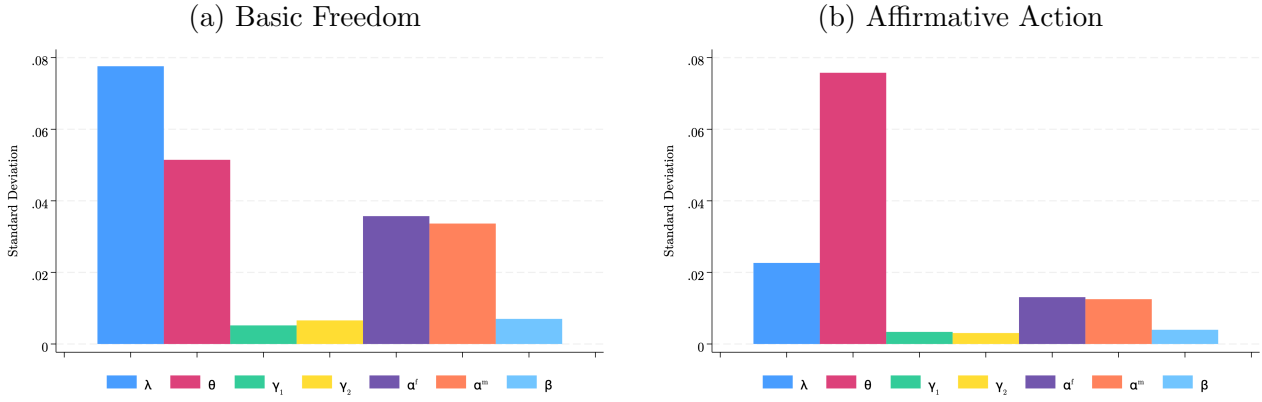


2. Dropping Perceptions of Support = 0, 50, 100



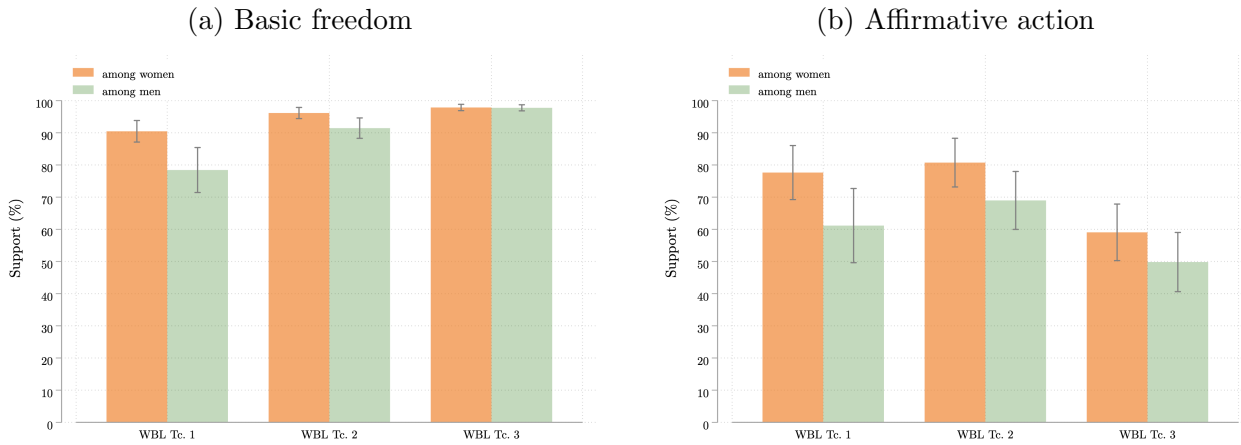
**Notes:** The Figure shows the robustness of the patterns observed in Figure 15, which illustrates how each gender group's support for basic freedom (Column a) and affirmative action (Column b) among women (orange) and men (green) relates to perceptions about support among women and men across countries. The first panel and second panels drop individuals reporting perceptions of exactly 50% and exactly 0%, 50%, or 100%, respectively. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

**Figure A.14:** Standard Deviations of Framework Coefficients Under Different Sampling Draws



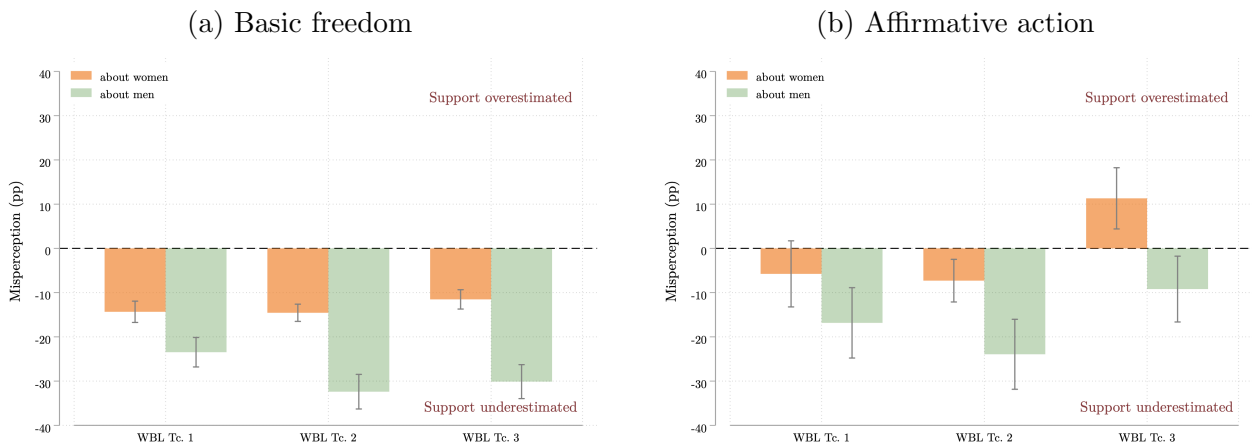
**Notes:** The figures illustrate the standard deviations of the coefficients for the different mechanisms across 100 samples of the data – for *basic freedom* (left panel) and *affirmative action* (right panel). These are different, random samples without replacement of thirty countries out of the 60 surveyed ones; ten per each GEI tercile. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

**Figure A.15:** Support by WBL Terciles and Gender



**Notes:** The graph shows average levels of support (%) for *basic freedom* (Panel a) and *affirmative action* (Panel b) among men (green) and women (orange) conditional on how gender-equal a given country is on a global spectrum, as measured by the “Women, Business and the Law”-index (WBL-index). That is, it shows average levels of support in each tercile of the WBL-index. The WBL-index increases with the equality between women and men. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality terciles based on WBL-index (World Bank, 2022).

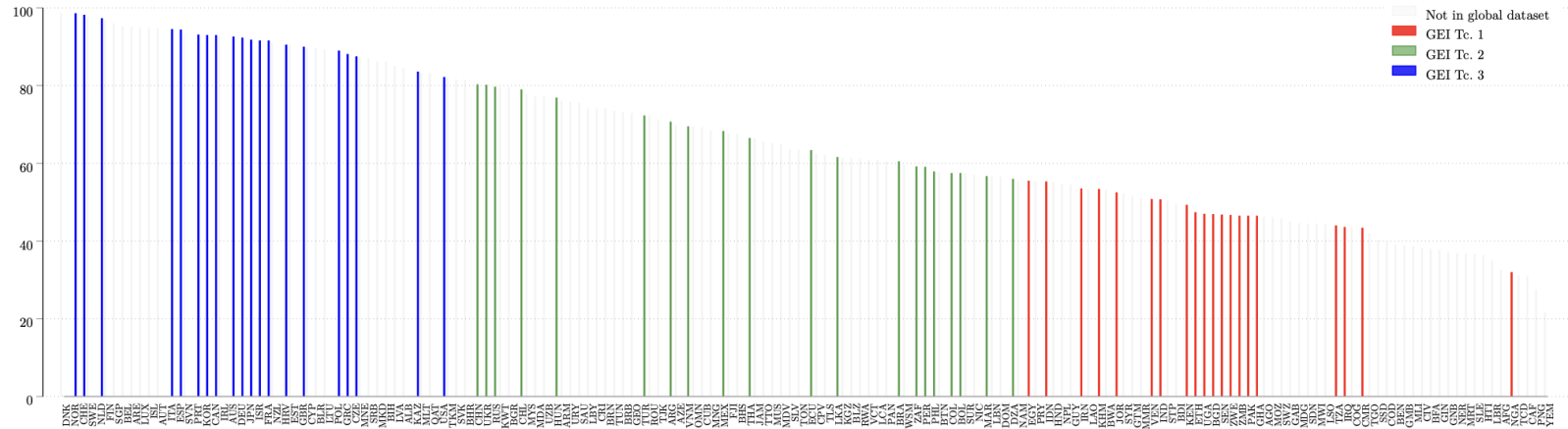
**Figure A.16:** Misperceptions by WBL Terciles and Gender



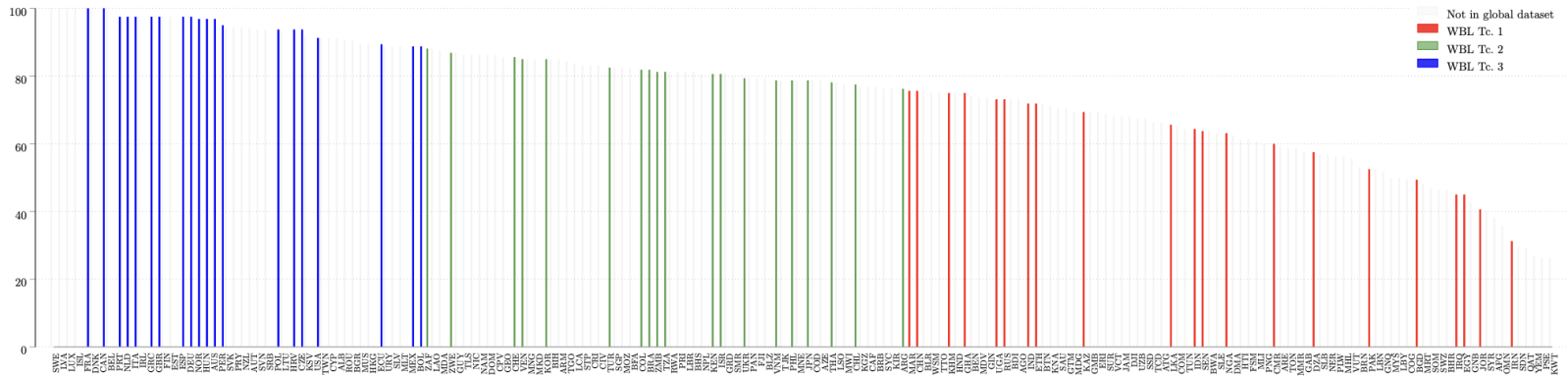
**Notes:** The graph shows average misperceptions about support (pp) for *basic freedom* (Panel a) and *affirmative action* (Panel b) among men (green) and women (orange) conditional on how gender-equal a given country is on a global spectrum, as measured by the “Women, Business and the Law”-index (WBL-index). That is, it shows average misperceptions in each tercile of the WBL-index. The WBL-index increases with the equality between women and men. Misperceptions are calculated as [actual support (among women/among men)] - [perceived support (among women/among men)]. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality terciles based on WBL-index ([World Bank, 2022](#)).

**Figure A.17:** Gallup World Poll and the Global Spectrum of Gender Equality

(a) Gender Equality Index



(b) “Women, Business and the Law” Index



**Notes:** Countries contained in our data are highlighted in color, while those not contained are displayed in gray. In Panel a, we use the Gender Equality Index (GEI), while we use the “Women, Business and the Law” Index (WBL-index) in Panel b. *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on [UNDP \(2022\)](#) and WBL-index on [World Bank \(2022\)](#).

**Table A.1:** Coverage Gallup World Poll 2020

ARG	Argentina	GHA	Ghana	NLD	Netherlands
AUS	Australia	GRC	Greece	NOR	Norway
BGD	Bangladesh	HRV	Croatia	PAK	Pakistan
BOL	Bolivia	HUN	Hungary	PER	Peru
BRA	Brazil	IDN	Indonesia	PHL	Philippines
CAN	Canada	IND	India	POL	Poland
CHE	Switzerland	IRN	Iran	PRT	Portugal
CHL	Chile	IRQ	Iraq	RUS	Russia
CHN	China	ISR	Israel	SEN	Senegal
CMR	Cameroon	ITA	Italy	THA	Thailand
COL	Colombia	JOR	Jordan	TUR	Turkey
CZE	Czech Republic	JPN	Japan	TZA	Tanzania
DEU	Germany	KAZ	Kazakhstan	UGA	Uganda
DZA	Algeria	KEN	Kenya	UKR	Ukraine
ECU	Ecuador	KHM	Cambodia	USA	United States
EGY	Egypt	KOR	South Korea	VEN	Venezuela
ESP	Spain	LKA	Sri Lanka	VNM	Vietnam
ETH	Ethiopia	MAR	Morocco	ZAF	South Africa
FRA	France	MEX	Mexico	ZMB	Zambia
GBR	United Kingdom	NGA	Nigeria	ZWE	Zimbabwe

**Table A.2:** Determinants of Individual Attitudes – All Controls

	Support for Basic Freedom				Support for Affirmative Action			
	(1) All	(2) GEI-1	(3) GEI-2	(4) GEI-3	(5) All	(6) GEI-1	(7) GEI-2	(8) GEI-3
Female	5.047*** (0.931)	12.33*** (1.475)	4.512*** (0.865)	0.721 (0.744)	10.53*** (1.193)	13.40*** (1.910)	9.564*** (2.598)	9.201*** (1.930)
Secondary Education	4.011*** (1.112)	8.109*** (2.173)	2.664* (1.376)	0.200 (1.155)	-3.401** (1.341)	-0.151 (1.458)	-4.244* (2.055)	-6.497* (3.705)
College Education	5.432*** (1.291)	15.54*** (2.848)	3.371** (1.268)	0.952 (1.209)	-9.008*** (2.016)	-7.216* (3.541)	-15.33*** (3.549)	-7.711* (3.821)
High Income	1.220** (0.556)	2.207 (1.286)	1.101 (0.858)	0.243 (0.557)	-3.567*** (1.040)	-2.234 (1.734)	-3.964** (1.844)	-4.158** (1.705)
Employed	-0.710 (0.699)	-0.516 (1.577)	-0.571 (1.103)	0.369 (0.621)	-1.364 (0.953)	0.729 (1.623)	-2.584* (1.233)	-0.635 (1.947)
Age < 40	-0.253 (0.569)	-3.238* (1.517)	0.449 (0.812)	0.781* (0.389)	-1.847 (1.230)	-0.383 (1.826)	-2.832 (1.681)	-1.708 (2.400)
Urban	-0.0835 (0.682)	-0.123 (1.611)	-0.133 (1.322)	-0.365 (0.555)	-0.700 (1.023)	-0.520 (1.699)	-3.099** (1.349)	0.868 (1.784)
Internet Access	3.356*** (0.868)	3.218* (1.572)	4.054*** (1.111)	1.693 (2.093)	0.0250 (1.502)	0.689 (2.002)	1.572 (2.247)	-5.703 (3.702)
Women Treated with Respect	-0.828 (0.751)	-0.459 (1.271)	-1.888 (1.816)	0.0769 (0.582)	-7.176*** (1.409)	-3.987* (1.959)	-6.080** (2.260)	-10.91*** (2.574)
Good Place for Immigrants	2.237*** (0.725)	2.565 (1.807)	2.225** (0.831)	1.864** (0.695)	-0.147 (1.043)	1.882 (2.030)	-0.896 (1.549)	-1.913 (1.461)
Confidence in Government	0.448 (0.657)	1.432 (1.787)	-0.447 (0.882)	0.875 (0.672)	5.533*** (1.175)	6.636*** (1.958)	4.909** (1.976)	4.340* (2.174)
Satisfied with Personal Freedom	0.584 (0.827)	-0.252 (1.943)	0.641 (1.098)	1.381 (1.119)	3.010** (1.208)	1.384 (1.693)	0.134 (1.323)	6.758** (2.820)
Subjective Well-Being	-0.0531 (0.120)	-0.112 (0.176)	-0.0675 (0.183)	-0.256 (0.226)	0.432* (0.223)	0.254 (0.343)	0.786* (0.430)	0.324 (0.446)
Satisfied with Standard of Living	0.755 (0.598)	1.701 (1.585)	-0.625 (0.859)	1.362* (0.669)	1.148 (0.991)	0.498 (1.521)	2.878 (1.693)	0.230 (2.105)
Satisfaction with Household Income	-0.285 (0.285)	0.214 (0.668)	-0.928** (0.377)	0.00182 (0.350)	2.505*** (0.542)	1.627 (0.930)	3.385*** (0.930)	2.547** (0.949)
Donated Money	0.0769 (0.580)	-0.112 (1.631)	0.461 (0.706)	1.178** (0.496)	-0.554 (1.083)	-0.775 (1.668)	2.486* (1.364)	-2.623 (1.949)
Volunteered Time	-0.115 (0.718)	-0.615 (1.891)	0.498 (0.754)	0.258 (0.708)	1.609 (0.993)	3.238* (1.521)	-0.491 (1.395)	1.505 (2.046)
Helped Stranger	-0.222 (0.434)	0.823 (0.984)	-1.720*** (0.427)	0.305 (0.633)	4.109*** (0.892)	5.266** (2.216)	2.285** (1.070)	4.359*** (1.407)
Has Children Under 15	0.718 (0.580)	0.727 (1.451)	0.696 (0.912)	-0.344 (0.685)	0.158 (1.452)	0.971 (2.845)	2.839 (2.101)	-2.585 (2.544)
Landline	0.623 (0.542)	6.478* (3.578)	-1.016 (0.674)	0.604 (0.497)	-1.156 (1.102)	1.493 (2.997)	-2.258 (1.961)	-1.293 (1.339)
Mobile Phone	2.043 (1.570)	4.066* (1.939)	-1.246 (2.878)	1.742 (2.136)	-1.638 (2.496)	2.766 (2.938)	-4.372 (4.431)	-3.358 (4.408)
Household Size	-0.143 (0.164)	-0.223 (0.281)	0.0449 (0.291)	-0.162 (0.237)	-0.180 (0.221)	-0.123 (0.279)	-0.156 (0.338)	-0.480 (0.677)
No Partner/Spouse	0.818* (0.483)	1.484 (1.241)	0.575 (0.774)	0.121 (0.365)	0.440 (0.760)	0.622 (0.956)	0.0387 (1.018)	0.0471 (1.544)
Mean of dep. var.	94.1	86.7	96.9	97.6	63.3	78.6	71.0	45.1
Observations	21,241	6,354	6,675	8,212	20,807	6,398	6,388	8,021
R <sup>2</sup>	0.104	0.086	0.055	0.052	0.224	0.109	0.261	0.098

**Notes:** The outcome is support for basic freedom (col. 1-4) and affirmative action (col. 5-8). Standard errors are clustered at the country level. All regressions include country fixed effects. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on [UNDP \(2022\)](#).

**Table A.3:** Misperceptions about Support – All Controls

	Misperceptions about Support for Basic Freedom				Misperceptions about Support for Affirmative Action			
	(1) All	(2) GEL-1	(3) GEL-2	(4) GEL-3	(5) All	(6) GEL-1	(7) GEL-2	(8) GEL-3
Female	-0.474 (0.425)	1.305 (0.944)	-1.894** (0.714)	-0.352 (0.503)	-2.619*** (0.516)	-1.527 (0.919)	-3.388*** (1.005)	-2.865*** (0.800)
Secondary Education	1.892*** (0.640)	2.909** (1.012)	2.763** (1.148)	-0.438 (0.589)	0.606 (0.591)	1.180 (1.017)	0.899 (1.105)	-0.767 (0.930)
College Education	3.874*** (0.788)	5.215*** (1.641)	5.566*** (1.313)	1.115 (0.782)	-1.788** (0.836)	-2.783* (1.367)	-1.950 (1.788)	-1.856 (1.156)
High Income	1.227** (0.513)	1.241 (1.121)	1.911** (0.840)	0.520 (0.729)	-1.097** (0.481)	1.389 (0.866)	-2.197** (0.886)	-1.910*** (0.523)
Employed	1.171** (0.450)	1.056 (1.017)	1.816** (0.850)	0.949* (0.492)	-0.437 (0.339)	0.342 (0.647)	-0.758 (0.619)	-0.111 (0.463)
Age < 40	0.340 (0.444)	-1.259 (0.894)	-0.313 (0.863)	1.992*** (0.540)	-0.963** (0.469)	0.699 (0.861)	-0.802 (0.700)	-1.702** (0.688)
Urban	0.869* (0.446)	2.134** (0.842)	0.867 (0.857)	-0.154 (0.521)	-0.242 (0.354)	0.531 (0.672)	-0.384 (0.719)	-0.595 (0.536)
Internet Access	2.094*** (0.689)	2.663** (1.003)	0.0251 (1.182)	3.413** (1.501)	1.713*** (0.567)	1.656* (0.788)	0.975 (0.860)	1.113 (1.237)
Women Treated with Respect	1.639*** (0.596)	0.839 (1.218)	1.831* (1.005)	2.422*** (0.840)	0.649 (0.425)	1.024 (0.753)	1.283 (0.808)	0.0102 (0.628)
Good Place for Immigrants	0.853** (0.422)	-0.653 (0.643)	2.268*** (0.770)	0.922 (0.618)	-0.0453 (0.408)	-1.004 (0.755)	1.680*** (0.557)	-0.768 (0.470)
Confidence in Government	-0.782 (0.482)	-1.133* (0.636)	-2.227** (0.959)	0.801 (0.621)	-0.0586 (0.502)	0.241 (0.740)	-1.137 (0.996)	0.562 (0.782)
Satisfied with Personal Freedom	0.907* (0.482)	1.596** (0.735)	1.031 (0.881)	0.170 (0.855)	1.571*** (0.556)	2.318** (0.890)	1.545 (1.010)	0.953 (1.012)
Subjective Well-Being	0.0952 (0.146)	0.139 (0.292)	0.00586 (0.171)	0.0160 (0.233)	0.398*** (0.141)	0.734*** (0.236)	0.429** (0.176)	-0.126 (0.191)
Satisfied with Standard of Living	-1.821*** (0.460)	-1.392 (0.807)	-3.115*** (0.885)	-0.898 (0.710)	-0.746* (0.438)	-0.702 (0.794)	-0.444 (0.755)	-0.835 (0.816)
Satisfaction with Household Income	-0.716** (0.293)	-0.123 (0.391)	-1.157** (0.433)	-0.859 (0.548)	0.444 (0.265)	0.129 (0.332)	0.850 (0.571)	0.237 (0.457)
Donated Money	0.226 (0.386)	0.842 (0.961)	-0.746 (0.611)	0.549 (0.436)	-0.200 (0.481)	0.487 (1.068)	-0.419 (0.818)	-0.481 (0.614)
Volunteered Time	-0.0365 (0.417)	0.179 (0.774)	0.154 (0.798)	-0.202 (0.590)	0.145 (0.425)	-1.011 (0.766)	1.290 (0.820)	0.0198 (0.632)
Helped Stranger	-0.427 (0.386)	-0.0510 (0.907)	-0.188 (0.642)	-0.775 (0.548)	0.705* (0.382)	1.665* (0.912)	0.539 (0.626)	0.142 (0.508)
Has Children Under 15	-0.877* (0.477)	-0.558 (1.132)	-0.276 (0.678)	-1.497** (0.591)	-0.632 (0.444)	-0.0222 (1.054)	-0.684 (0.729)	-1.016 (0.706)
Landline	0.360 (0.613)	0.465 (2.951)	-0.280 (1.242)	0.438 (0.682)	-0.653 (0.463)	-1.170 (1.889)	-0.877* (0.495)	-0.779 (0.666)
Mobile Phone	1.701* (0.906)	1.772 (1.560)	2.292 (2.072)	0.953 (1.376)	-0.0832 (1.077)	-0.718 (0.882)	1.941 (3.263)	-0.196 (1.624)
Household Size	0.0932 (0.124)	0.128 (0.203)	-0.0877 (0.180)	0.134 (0.193)	-0.0160 (0.123)	0.178 (0.183)	-0.238 (0.215)	0.0939 (0.226)
No Partner/Spouse	0.291 (0.381)	0.816 (0.796)	1.113* (0.577)	-0.775 (0.597)	0.537 (0.463)	0.216 (0.645)	0.480 (0.915)	0.805 (0.767)
Mean of dep. var.	-20.4	-21.0	-23.3	-17.5	-8.8	-19.9	-16.2	5.4
Observations	20,629	6,072	6,459	8,098	20,260	6,074	6,230	7,956
R <sup>2</sup>	0.112	0.099	0.081	0.107	0.429	0.147	0.390	0.254

**Notes:** The outcome is misperceptions about support for basic freedom (col. 1-4) and affirmative action (col. 5-8). Standard errors are clustered at the country level. All regressions include country fixed effects. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on [UNDP \(2022\)](#).



**Table A.4:** Misperceptions about Difference in Support among Women and Men

	Misperceptions about Difference in Support for Basic Freedom				Misperceptions about Difference in Support for Affirmative Action			
	(1) All	(2) GEI-1	(3) GEI-2	(4) GEI-3	(5) All	(6) GEI-1	(7) GEI-2	(8) GEI-3
Female	4.865*** (0.647)	7.034*** (1.266)	6.646*** (0.934)	1.064** (0.426)	6.038*** (0.748)	7.472*** (1.265)	6.396*** (1.545)	4.247*** (1.136)
Secondary Education	3.029*** (0.641)	3.465*** (1.061)	2.583* (1.260)	2.807*** (0.899)	1.533* (0.865)	2.194* (1.158)	1.613 (1.529)	-0.811 (1.752)
College Education	2.538*** (0.849)	4.111*** (1.148)	2.404 (1.723)	1.586 (1.401)	3.476*** (1.125)	6.158*** (1.877)	4.366** (2.040)	-0.272 (1.923)
High Income	-0.403 (0.564)	-0.999 (0.719)	0.934 (1.211)	-1.303* (0.683)	0.0723 (0.515)	-0.413 (1.003)	0.994 (0.814)	-0.543 (0.842)
Employed	-0.0626 (0.565)	1.181 (1.628)	-0.421 (0.744)	-0.163 (0.629)	1.582** (0.633)	1.794 (1.320)	0.675 (1.199)	2.779*** (0.750)
Age < 40	1.838*** (0.618)	1.098 (1.383)	3.218*** (1.035)	0.533 (0.547)	1.824*** (0.526)	1.333 (1.042)	1.658** (0.774)	1.959* (0.952)
Urban	-0.799 (0.536)	-0.405 (1.081)	-1.711* (0.981)	-0.340 (0.579)	0.503 (0.688)	0.622 (1.240)	0.886 (1.418)	-0.274 (0.762)
Internet Access	2.151*** (0.804)	1.103 (1.209)	3.977** (1.549)	1.882 (1.493)	2.847*** (1.042)	1.677 (1.611)	3.774** (1.624)	4.447** (2.000)
Mean of dep. var.	15.1	13.1	16.9	15.2	16.7	15.8	18.6	15.5
Observations	29,955	9,662	10,681	9,612	29,089	9,583	10,167	9,339
$R^2$	0.103	0.101	0.116	0.075	0.109	0.094	0.112	0.125

**Notes:** The outcome is the difference in perceptions about support among women and men minus the difference in actual support among women and men. Controls include indicator variables for gender, age below 40, rural living, secondary education, college education, low income, unemployment, and an interaction term between unemployment and male indicator. All regressions include country fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the country level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on [UNDP \(2022\)](#).

**Table A.5:** Misperceptions about Support for Basic Freedom among Men and Women

	Misperceptions about Men				Misperceptions about Women			
	(1) All	(2) GEI-1	(3) GEI-2	(4) GEI-3	(5) All	(6) GEI-1	(7) GEI-2	(8) GEI-3
Female	-3.025*** (0.485)	-3.053*** (1.000)	-4.574*** (0.886)	-1.301** (0.533)	1.847*** (0.548)	4.000*** (0.911)	2.021* (1.081)	-0.220 (0.395)
Secondary Education	0.561 (0.494)	0.649 (0.822)	1.838** (0.676)	-1.565* (0.828)	3.569*** (0.624)	4.139*** (0.900)	4.182*** (1.176)	1.468** (0.692)
College Education	3.075*** (0.699)	2.371 (1.369)	5.242*** (0.845)	0.807 (1.242)	5.637*** (0.811)	6.505*** (1.507)	7.463*** (1.388)	2.706*** (0.934)
High Income	1.447** (0.592)	1.478 (0.911)	0.717 (1.258)	2.110*** (0.730)	1.098*** (0.360)	0.585 (0.830)	1.710*** (0.414)	0.800 (0.589)
Employed	0.886* (0.463)	0.398 (0.992)	1.077 (0.861)	0.791 (0.555)	0.871** (0.415)	1.682* (0.937)	0.728 (0.732)	0.576 (0.582)
Age < 40	-1.154** (0.549)	-1.749 (1.017)	-2.801*** (0.803)	1.370* (0.785)	0.646 (0.464)	-0.812 (0.974)	0.517 (0.772)	1.865*** (0.587)
Urban	1.608*** (0.508)	2.207** (0.974)	2.135** (0.971)	0.297 (0.617)	0.751* (0.421)	2.052*** (0.579)	0.193 (0.847)	-0.177 (0.540)
Internet Access	1.702** (0.643)	2.308** (0.913)	0.0286 (1.250)	3.505* (1.710)	3.585*** (0.760)	3.248*** (1.037)	3.640** (1.606)	4.954*** (1.337)
Mean of dep. var.	-27.31	-25.41	-30.45	-25.69	-12.26	-12.39	-13.71	-10.49
Observations	30,378	9,806	10,904	9,668	30,592	9,857	11,023	9,712
$R^2$	0.139	0.154	0.122	0.107	0.066	0.056	0.056	0.085

**Notes:** The outcome is misperceptions about support among men and women, defined as perceptions about support minus actual support. All regressions include country fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the country level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on [UNDP \(2022\)](#).

**Table A.6:** Misperceptions about Support for Affirmative Action among Men and Women

	Misperceptions about Men				Misperceptions about Women			
	(1) All	(2) GEI-1	(3) GEI-2	(4) GEI-3	(5) All	(6) GEI-1	(7) GEI-2	(8) GEI-3
Female	-5.999*** (0.602)	-5.658*** (1.078)	-7.268*** (1.042)	-5.012*** (1.175)	0.146 (0.520)	1.814* (0.915)	-0.674 (0.917)	-0.713 (0.740)
Secondary Education	-0.960 (0.788)	0.131 (0.897)	-1.633 (1.521)	-1.379 (1.420)	0.766 (0.767)	2.550** (0.909)	0.0411 (1.331)	-1.892 (1.257)
College Education	-4.281*** (0.995)	-4.819*** (1.498)	-5.801*** (1.859)	-3.112* (1.708)	-0.613 (1.019)	1.508 (1.173)	-1.268 (2.181)	-3.130** (1.415)
High Income	-0.597 (0.505)	1.636* (0.882)	-1.871** (0.664)	-1.341* (0.762)	-0.520 (0.463)	1.315 (0.850)	-1.019 (0.685)	-1.862*** (0.522)
Employed	-1.122** (0.480)	-0.532 (0.895)	-0.903 (0.920)	-1.515** (0.642)	0.607 (0.413)	1.373 (0.798)	0.0259 (0.806)	1.363** (0.559)
Age < 40	-1.655*** (0.590)	0.378 (0.974)	-2.238** (0.829)	-2.328** (1.058)	0.201 (0.465)	1.647* (0.910)	-0.341 (0.678)	-0.450 (0.748)
Urban	-0.229 (0.493)	0.278 (0.900)	-0.874 (0.844)	0.222 (0.652)	0.257 (0.478)	0.876 (0.941)	0.116 (0.920)	-0.183 (0.653)
Internet Access	-0.514 (0.657)	0.117 (0.902)	-1.231 (1.220)	-2.101 (1.276)	2.115*** (0.723)	1.582 (1.086)	2.313* (1.216)	2.003 (1.369)
Mean of dep. var.	-17.39	-26.66	-21.73	-3.06	-0.92	-11.06	-3.38	12.37
Observations	29,586	9,724	10,425	9,437	29,787	9,837	10,496	9,454
$R^2$	0.319	0.108	0.372	0.195	0.316	0.177	0.226	0.255

**Notes:** The outcome is misperceptions about support among men and women, defined as perceptions about support minus actual support. All regressions include country fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the country level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020. Gender Equality Index based on [UNDP \(2022\)](#).

**Table A.7:** Correlation Between Own Views and Perceptions about Others' Views

Panel A: Basic Freedom								
	Overall Misperceptions		Misperceptions about Men			Misperceptions about Women		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Support	13.03*** (1.018)	12.64*** (1.046)	10.36*** (1.117)	10.67*** (1.172)	11.45*** (1.023)	15.69*** (1.233)	14.71*** (1.269)	12.39*** (1.385)
Support × Female=1					-2.426 (2.225)			7.010*** (2.082)
Constant	-32.64*** (0.937)	-36.17*** (1.174)	-37.73*** (1.026)	-38.70*** (1.337)	-39.44*** (1.234)	-27.86*** (1.132)	-34.01*** (1.368)	-31.80*** (1.573)
Mean of dep. var.	-19.6	-19.6	-27.4	-27.3	-27.3	-12.2	-12.2	-12.2
Demographic controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	30,777	29,804	31,212	30,218	30,218	31,425	30,417	30,417
R <sup>2</sup>	0.126	0.139	0.139	0.151	0.151	0.082	0.095	0.097
Panel B: Affirmative Action								
	Overall Misperceptions		Misperceptions about Men			Misperceptions about Women		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Support	7.693*** (0.595)	8.291*** (0.648)	7.841*** (0.748)	8.706*** (0.769)	10.31*** (0.939)	7.447*** (0.732)	7.770*** (0.781)	4.196*** (0.809)
Support × Female=1					-3.544*** (0.941)			7.890*** (1.027)
Constant	-13.60*** (0.393)	-11.88*** (0.878)	-21.73*** (0.493)	-15.68*** (1.028)	-16.62*** (1.086)	-5.795*** (0.485)	-8.282*** (1.068)	-6.212*** (1.074)
Mean of dep. var.	-9.2	-9.0	-17.6	-17.4	-17.4	-1.1	-0.9	-0.9
Demographic controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	29,390	28,483	29,855	28,932	28,932	30,053	29,116	29,116
R <sup>2</sup>	0.422	0.429	0.318	0.333	0.334	0.328	0.330	0.334

**Notes:** The outcome is misperceptions about support among men and women, defined as perceptions about support minus actual support. Controls include indicator variables for gender, secondary education, college education, high income, being employed, age below 40, urban living, and internet access. All regressions include country fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the country level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

**Table A.8:** Quantitative Assessment of Mechanisms

	Basic Freedom	Affirmative Action
	(1)	(2)
$\lambda$	0.426*** (0.0681)	0.833*** (0.0207)
$\theta$	-0.0124 (0.0533)	0.142** (0.0711)
$\gamma_1$	0.0729*** (0.00497)	0.0527*** (0.00383)
$\gamma_2$	0.0567*** (0.00628)	0.0237*** (0.00295)
$\alpha^f$	-0.00455 (0.0289)	0.138*** (0.0127)
$\alpha^m$	-0.178*** (0.0273)	-0.0893*** (0.0132)
$\beta$	0.0107* (0.00591)	0.0190*** (0.00377)
Observations	62,637	59,908
$R^2$	0.481	0.388
$\alpha_f - \alpha_m$	0.173*** (0.0398)	0.227*** (0.0184)

**Notes:** The outcome is misperception of support (data stacked).  
Standard errors clustered at country level.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

*Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

**Table A.9:** Quantitative Assessment of Mechanisms – Basic Freedom

	Target Men			Target Women			Target Pooled		
	GEI-1	GEI-2	GEI-3	GEI-1	GEI-2	GEI-3	GEI-1	GEI-2	GEI-3
Data	-0.27	-0.32	-0.26	-0.14	-0.16	-0.11	-0.20	-0.23	-0.18
Data, SD	0.29	0.26	0.22	0.26	0.22	0.17	0.22	0.19	0.16
Prediction	-0.27	-0.31	-0.33	-0.12	-0.15	-0.15	-0.20	-0.23	-0.24
w/o FC	-0.31	-0.37	-0.38	-0.16	-0.20	-0.21	-0.24	-0.28	-0.29
w/o MO	-0.16	-0.14	-0.13	0.04	0.05	0.05	-0.06	-0.04	-0.04
w/o GS	-0.17	-0.22	-0.24	-0.22	-0.24	-0.24	-0.20	-0.23	-0.24
w/o MO, FC	-0.19	-0.19	-0.19	0.00	-0.00	-0.01	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10
w/o FC, GS	-0.21	-0.27	-0.29	-0.26	-0.29	-0.29	-0.24	-0.28	-0.29
w/o GS, MO	-0.06	-0.04	-0.04	-0.06	-0.04	-0.04	-0.06	-0.04	-0.04
w/o GS, MO, FC	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10

**Notes:** Standard Deviation (SD), False Consensus (FC), Minority Overweighting (MO), Gender Stereotyping (GS). *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

**Table A.10:** Quantitative Assessment of Mechanisms – Affirmative Action

	Target Men			Target Women			Target Pooled		
	GEI-1	GEI-2	GEI-3	GEI-1	GEI-2	GEI-3	GEI-1	GEI-2	GEI-3
Data	-0.26	-0.20	-0.03	-0.12	-0.03	0.13	-0.19	-0.12	0.06
Data, SD	0.28	0.31	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.25	0.22	0.24	0.21
Prediction	-0.29	-0.20	-0.09	-0.11	-0.02	0.08	-0.20	-0.11	-0.00
w/o FC	-0.31	-0.21	-0.09	-0.14	-0.04	0.08	-0.22	-0.12	-0.00
w/o MO	-0.09	-0.10	-0.11	0.20	0.19	0.18	0.05	0.04	0.03
w/o GS	-0.15	-0.06	0.06	-0.26	-0.16	-0.06	-0.20	-0.11	-0.00
w/o MO, FC	-0.11	-0.11	-0.11	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.03	0.03	0.03
w/o FC, GS	-0.17	-0.07	0.06	-0.28	-0.18	-0.06	-0.22	-0.12	-0.00
w/o GS, MO	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.03
w/o GS, MO, FC	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03

**Notes:** Standard Deviation (SD), False Consensus (FC), Minority Overweighting (MO), Gender Stereotyping (GS). *Data:* Gallup World Poll 2020.

**Table A.11:** Effect of Information about National Support on Perceptions of Local Support

	Texas		Co-workers	
	(1) Male	(2) Female	(3) Male	(4) Female
Info treatment	7.927 (1.314)	-8.403 (1.814)	7.871 (1.772)	-5.970 (2.063)
Constant	19.49 (1.049)	52.70 (1.545)	26.52 (1.375)	59.83 (1.690)
<i>N</i>	499	499	499	500

**Notes:** Robust standard errors in parentheses. We regress perceptions of support (%) on a dummy variable indicating whether subjects received information about the levels of support for affirmative action in the US (38% among men and 45% among women). Columns (1) and (2) focus on perceptions of support among Texans, and columns (3) and (4) focus on perceptions about support among co-workers. *Data:* Experimental data.

**Table A.12:** Africa, Basic Freedom

Country	GEI Tercile	Support (%)			Belief about support (%)			Misperceptions (pp)	
		National	Men	Women	National	Men	Women	about Men	about Women
CMR	GEI Tc. 1	87.6	83.5	91.0	63.1	47.6	77.0	-35.9	-14.0
ETH	GEI Tc. 1	91.4	88.1	95.1	68.3	55.7	81.1	-32.4	-14.0
GHA	GEI Tc. 1	93.6	89.1	98.6	70.7	63.1	79.5	-26.0	-19.0
KEN	GEI Tc. 1	86.8	82.9	89.9	57.1	42.0	71.2	-40.9	-18.8
NGA	GEI Tc. 1	88.5	87.7	89.3	61.7	52.3	72.3	-35.4	-17.0
SEN	GEI Tc. 1	91.3	85.2	96.1	65.6	49.0	80.4	-36.2	-15.7
TZA	GEI Tc. 1	93.0	86.9	98.2	60.4	44.7	74.4	-42.2	-23.9
UGA	GEI Tc. 1	82.0	75.4	89.8	58.2	42.2	75.9	-33.2	-13.8
ZMB	GEI Tc. 1	91.4	89.1	93.7	65.5	53.0	78.1	-36.1	-15.6
ZWE	GEI Tc. 1	79.8	72.4	86.2	58.3	37.2	78.1	-35.1	-8.0
DZA	GEI Tc. 2	68.0	53.8	84.8	57.6	38.3	79.5	-15.5	-5.4
MAR	GEI Tc. 2	85.0	74.4	94.4	69.0	51.7	85.8	-22.7	-8.6
ZAF	GEI Tc. 2	89.7	86.1	92.7	64.5	49.8	78.5	-36.3	-14.2

**Table A.13: Africa, Affirmative Action**

Country	GEI Tercile	Support (%)			Belief about support (%)			Misperceptions (pp)	
		National	Men	Women	National	Men	Women	about Men	about Women
CMR	GEI Tc. 1	74.2	62.2	85.9	59.4	39.2	77.0	-23.0	-8.9
ETH	GEI Tc. 1	86.5	81.4	91.9	65.2	52.0	78.4	-29.4	-13.5
GHA	GEI Tc. 1	81.7	74.3	89.8	61.4	47.8	76.2	-26.5	-13.7
KEN	GEI Tc. 1	85.0	78.3	91.7	60.3	45.7	73.8	-32.6	-17.9
NGA	GEI Tc. 1	79.3	73.3	87.0	56.7	41.0	74.3	-32.3	-12.8
SEN	GEI Tc. 1	85.5	75.7	94.9	67.3	49.8	83.0	-25.8	-11.9
TZA	GEI Tc. 1	89.1	82.5	95.0	62.1	45.0	77.3	-37.5	-17.7
UGA	GEI Tc. 1	80.8	80.0	81.5	57.4	42.9	71.2	-37.1	-10.3
ZMB	GEI Tc. 1	79.3	70.7	88.3	62.0	46.4	78.2	-24.3	-10.1
ZWE	GEI Tc. 1	78.2	69.4	87.3	58.0	32.6	82.0	-36.8	-5.3
DZA	GEI Tc. 2	30.5	14.2	47.6	39.9	15.7	66.8	1.5	19.3
MAR	GEI Tc. 2	66.5	56.3	77.8	63.2	39.8	86.4	-16.5	8.5
ZAF	GEI Tc. 2	93.1	91.8	94.5	65.8	47.2	83.5	-44.6	-11.0

**Table A.14: Americas, Basic Freedom**

Country	GEI Tercile	Support (%)			Belief about support (%)			Misperceptions (pp)	
		National	Men	Women	National	Men	Women	about Men	about Women
VEN	GEI Tc. 1	97.2	96.2	98.0	75.1	62.3	86.9	-33.9	-11.1
ARG	GEI Tc. 2	98.6	99.0	98.2	74.4	64.6	84.0	-34.4	-14.2
BOL	GEI Tc. 2	96.1	95.4	96.8	64.5	52.0	77.6	-43.4	-19.2
BRA	GEI Tc. 2	98.3	96.6	100.0	69.9	50.4	88.0	-46.3	-12.0
CHL	GEI Tc. 2	97.7	97.7	97.7	73.6	59.3	86.8	-38.4	-10.9
COL	GEI Tc. 2	95.8	93.1	98.1	69.0	52.8	83.6	-40.3	-14.4
ECU	GEI Tc. 2	94.9	93.8	96.0	65.8	51.7	79.6	-42.1	-16.4
MEX	GEI Tc. 2	97.0	96.7	97.4	68.5	52.3	82.4	-44.5	-14.9
PER	GEI Tc. 2	95.9	93.3	98.4	64.3	51.6	76.9	-41.7	-21.5
CAN	GEI Tc. 3	99.1	99.5	98.7	86.1	79.9	92.2	-19.6	-6.5
USA	GEI Tc. 3	100.0	100.0	100.0	84.0	75.5	91.9	-24.5	-8.1

**Table A.15: Americas, Affirmative Action**

Country	GEI Tercile	Support (%)			Belief about support (%)			Misperceptions (pp)	
		National	Men	Women	National	Men	Women	about Men	about Women
VEN	GEI Tc. 1	87.8	80.9	95.0	65.9	51.2	79.4	-29.7	-15.6
ARG	GEI Tc. 2	75.5	73.5	77.0	60.4	43.0	75.8	-30.6	-1.2
BOL	GEI Tc. 2	90.2	87.4	93.2	58.7	45.6	72.8	-41.9	-20.5
BRA	GEI Tc. 2	81.2	71.7	89.7	59.1	35.4	81.5	-36.3	-8.2
CHL	GEI Tc. 2	76.8	68.3	85.1	63.6	43.8	81.6	-24.5	-3.5
COL	GEI Tc. 2	93.0	91.4	94.5	66.5	49.0	82.5	-42.5	-11.9
ECU	GEI Tc. 2	88.7	83.0	93.7	62.5	47.3	75.5	-35.7	-18.2
MEX	GEI Tc. 2	81.7	80.7	82.4	62.1	46.3	76.5	-34.4	-5.9
PER	GEI Tc. 2	84.7	82.1	86.9	58.3	41.8	74.1	-40.3	-12.8
CAN	GEI Tc. 3	43.7	41.2	45.7	52.4	36.6	68.1	-4.6	22.4
USA	GEI Tc. 3	43.5	38.1	48.7	51.3	34.1	67.6	-3.9	18.9



**Table A.16: Asia, Basic Freedom**

Country	GEI Tercile	Support (%)			Belief about support (%)			Misperceptions (pp)	
		National	Men	Women	National	Men	Women	about Men	about Women
BGD	GEI Tc. 1	80.5	69.8	91.1	67.3	54.7	80.5	-15.1	-10.6
IDN	GEI Tc. 1	65.9	59.4	72.7	58.7	53.4	64.8	-6.0	-7.9
IND	GEI Tc. 1	81.2	75.3	87.3	61.2	55.3	67.1	-20.0	-20.1
KHM	GEI Tc. 1	93.5	93.1	94.0	71.8	65.5	79.1	-27.5	-14.9
PAK	GEI Tc. 1	61.1	54.4	68.2	52.5	44.8	60.3	-9.5	-7.9
CHN	GEI Tc. 2	96.6	95.1	98.3	75.5	70.5	80.0	-24.7	-18.3
LKA	GEI Tc. 2	89.8	86.6	92.6	68.3	56.3	78.4	-30.3	-14.2
PHL	GEI Tc. 2	94.2	89.9	98.3	74.5	69.4	79.3	-20.4	-19.1
THA	GEI Tc. 2	98.5	97.2	99.7	76.1	67.3	83.3	-29.9	-16.4
VNM	GEI Tc. 2	97.2	95.7	98.9	76.8	65.9	86.3	-29.8	-12.6
JPN	GEI Tc. 3	97.8	97.8	97.7	74.0	65.3	82.5	-32.5	-15.2
KAZ	GEI Tc. 3	88.1	83.0	92.3	65.5	56.6	74.5	-26.4	-17.7
KOR	GEI Tc. 3	99.2	98.4	100.0	81.8	80.8	82.8	-17.6	-17.2

**Table A.17: Asia, Affirmative Action**

Country	GEI Tercile	Support (%)			Belief about support (%)			Misperceptions (pp)	
		National	Men	Women	National	Men	Women	about Men	about Women
BGD	GEI Tc. 1	72.4	62.1	84.9	66.1	51.3	83.2	-10.7	-1.7
IDN	GEI Tc. 1	75.2	69.2	81.3	54.7	49.2	60.2	-20.0	-21.1
IND	GEI Tc. 1	93.5	91.1	96.0	63.2	58.2	68.5	-32.9	-27.5
KHM	GEI Tc. 1	93.1	92.9	93.3	64.2	57.1	71.3	-35.9	-22.0
PAK	GEI Tc. 1	78.5	63.4	94.3	54.5	45.4	64.3	-18.0	-30.0
CHN	GEI Tc. 2	52.8	44.8	62.0	55.6	45.2	67.7	0.4	5.7
LKA	GEI Tc. 2	82.6	74.7	91.0	61.8	50.7	73.0	-24.0	-17.9
PHL	GEI Tc. 2	87.4	89.0	85.8	67.8	62.8	72.5	-26.1	-13.3
THA	GEI Tc. 2	90.2	87.0	92.6	61.7	47.6	73.7	-39.4	-18.9
VNM	GEI Tc. 2	84.9	82.9	87.0	63.3	56.1	71.9	-26.9	-15.1
JPN	GEI Tc. 3	63.0	53.0	72.9	45.3	35.7	55.1	-17.2	-17.7
KAZ	GEI Tc. 3	56.5	46.9	66.9	54.6	39.2	69.3	-7.7	2.4
KOR	GEI Tc. 3	29.9	23.9	35.6	43.0	39.9	45.8	16.0	10.3

**Table A.18: Europe, Basic Freedom**

Country	GEI Tercile	Support (%)			Belief about support (%)			Misperceptions (pp)	
		National	Men	Women	National	Men	Women	about Men	about Women
HUN	GEI Tc. 2	98.3	98.6	98.1	76.2	65.8	85.5	-32.7	-12.6
RUS	GEI Tc. 2	95.0	93.1	96.6	72.9	67.5	77.2	-25.5	-19.5
UKR	GEI Tc. 2	95.0	92.7	97.3	72.0	65.1	77.4	-27.6	-19.9
CHE	GEI Tc. 3	95.0	94.7	95.2	75.3	67.7	82.0	-27.0	-13.2
CZE	GEI Tc. 3	97.3	98.6	95.8	72.4	63.3	81.0	-35.3	-14.8
DEU	GEI Tc. 3	94.6	98.4	91.0	77.9	69.7	85.2	-28.7	-5.8
ESP	GEI Tc. 3	95.0	95.9	94.1	77.8	69.8	86.0	-26.1	-8.1
FRA	GEI Tc. 3	98.7	98.2	99.2	77.2	69.7	84.9	-28.5	-14.3
GBR	GEI Tc. 3	95.9	94.8	96.9	84.5	78.0	90.9	-16.8	-5.9
GRC	GEI Tc. 3	99.0	98.1	100.0	78.6	69.1	88.3	-29.0	-11.7
HRV	GEI Tc. 3	99.7	100.0	99.5	71.5	61.0	80.7	-39.0	-18.8
ITA	GEI Tc. 3	98.5	98.4	98.6	80.0	68.7	90.0	-29.7	-8.7
NLD	GEI Tc. 3	99.8	100.0	99.6	82.5	76.8	88.2	-23.2	-11.3
NOR	GEI Tc. 3	99.5	99.0	99.9	88.3	83.0	93.5	-16.0	-6.4
POL	GEI Tc. 3	99.1	99.5	98.8	75.5	66.0	84.8	-33.4	-14.0
PRT	GEI Tc. 3	98.9	98.5	99.2	80.2	67.5	91.7	-31.0	-7.4

**Table A.19: Europe, Affirmative Action**

Country	GEI Tercile	Support (%)			Belief about support (%)			Misperceptions (pp)	
		National	Men	Women	National	Men	Women	about Men	about Women
HUN	GEI Tc. 2	30.7	22.3	38.0	47.9	29.9	65.1	7.7	27.1
RUS	GEI Tc. 2	40.0	23.0	53.2	50.0	33.6	63.6	10.5	10.4
UKR	GEI Tc. 2	63.9	57.0	69.4	52.4	35.3	67.7	-21.7	-1.6
CHE	GEI Tc. 3	48.6	49.3	47.9	59.6	49.8	68.3	0.5	20.4
CZE	GEI Tc. 3	28.4	23.8	32.1	46.5	33.0	59.1	9.2	27.0
DEU	GEI Tc. 3	41.4	38.7	43.7	54.6	43.6	64.2	4.9	20.5
ESP	GEI Tc. 3	50.8	47.7	54.2	61.3	50.3	72.5	2.5	18.3
FRA	GEI Tc. 3	77.5	77.3	77.6	61.1	51.3	70.9	-26.0	-6.7
GBR	GEI Tc. 3	43.6	38.3	48.8	58.8	45.3	71.8	7.0	23.0
GRC	GEI Tc. 3	53.9	46.5	61.7	54.1	34.4	74.4	-12.0	12.6
HRV	GEI Tc. 3	58.3	49.5	66.3	54.3	35.7	71.3	-13.8	4.9
ITA	GEI Tc. 3	50.4	45.2	55.4	58.0	38.5	75.1	-6.7	19.7
NLD	GEI Tc. 3	32.3	29.3	35.5	49.1	36.1	62.0	6.8	26.5
NOR	GEI Tc. 3	49.7	37.9	62.9	55.0	39.8	70.1	1.9	7.2
POL	GEI Tc. 3	31.7	27.3	35.3	51.7	34.5	68.5	7.2	33.2
PRT	GEI Tc. 3	73.2	67.4	78.9	59.6	40.0	77.1	-27.3	-1.8

**Table A.20: Middle East, Basic Freedom**

Country	GEI Tercile	Support (%)			Belief about support (%)			Misperceptions (pp)	
		National	Men	Women	National	Men	Women	about Men	about Women
EGY	GEI Tc. 1	70.9	56.5	86.7	63.5	50.6	78.9	-5.9	-7.8
IRN	GEI Tc. 1	82.6	78.8	86.5	63.7	49.6	77.7	-29.2	-8.8
IRQ	GEI Tc. 1	71.7	61.7	84.5	58.2	43.1	75.4	-18.5	-9.1
JOR	GEI Tc. 1	72.0	57.5	88.8	59.1	41.4	79.5	-16.1	-9.3
TUR	GEI Tc. 2	88.5	83.0	94.5	65.3	50.5	79.7	-32.5	-14.8
ISR	GEI Tc. 3	90.6	87.2	94.0	80.9	73.1	88.0	-14.1	-5.9

**Table A.21: Middle East, Affirmative Action**

Country	GEI Tercile	Support (%)			Belief about support (%)			Misperceptions (pp)	
		National	Men	Women	National	Men	Women	about Men	about Women
EGY	GEI Tc. 1	52.8	39.7	69.1	55.5	33.0	80.4	-6.7	11.3
IRN	GEI Tc. 1	56.6	48.4	65.4	52.5	33.4	72.8	-15.0	7.3
IRQ	GEI Tc. 1	63.1	58.0	68.4	54.2	39.0	71.9	-19.0	3.5
JOR	GEI Tc. 1	65.5	57.1	75.1	53.4	34.7	74.7	-22.4	-0.4
TUR	GEI Tc. 2	73.6	60.3	84.5	60.0	43.3	76.5	-17.0	-8.0
ISR	GEI Tc. 3	48.1	26.9	66.1	53.1	36.0	69.2	9.0	3.1

**Table A.22: Oceania, Basic Freedom**

Country	GEI Tercile	Support (%)			Belief about support (%)			Misperceptions (pp)	
		National	Men	Women	National	Men	Women	about Men	about Women
AUS	GEI Tc. 3	99.5	99.8	99.1	86.6	79.3	93.7	-20.5	-5.5

**Table A.23: Oceania, Affirmative Action**

Country	GEI Tercile	Support (%)			Belief about support (%)			Misperceptions (pp)	
		National	Men	Women	National	Men	Women	about Men	about Women
AUS	GEI Tc. 3	44.2	39.2	49.6	52.6	36.7	68.5	-2.4	18.9



**Table B.1:** Survey Design: Global Gender Norms (Details)

<b>Block</b>	<b>Question</b>
Support: Basic Freedom	Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement. Women should have the freedom to work outside of the home.
Support: Affirmative Action	Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement. The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions.
Basic Freedom: Perceived "Actual" Support among Men	We will ask the previous question to 100 random MEN in [COUNTRY]. If you had to guess, how many of the men will say that they agree with the following statement? Women should have the freedom to work outside of the home.
Basic Freedom: Perceived "Truthful" Support among Men	We will ask the previous question to 100 random MEN in [COUNTRY]. If you had to guess, regardless of what they will say to us, how many of the men do you think will truly agree with the following statement? Women should have the freedom to work outside of the home.
Basic Freedom: Perceived "Actual" Support among Women	We will ask the previous question to 100 random WOMEN in [COUNTRY]. If you had to guess, how many of the women will say that they agree with the following statement? Women should have the freedom to work outside of the home.
Affirmative Action: Perceived "Actual" Support among Men	We will ask the previous question to 100 random MEN in [COUNTRY]. If you had to guess, how many of the men will say that they agree with the following statement? The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions.
Basic Freedom: Perceived "Truthful" Support among Women	We will ask the previous question to 100 random WOMEN in [COUNTRY]. If you had to guess, regardless of what they will say to us, how many of the women do you think will truly agree with the following statement? Women should have the freedom to work outside of the home.
Affirmative Action: Perceived "Truthful" Support among Men	We will ask the previous question to 100 random MEN in [COUNTRY]. If you had to guess, regardless of what they will say to us, how many of the men do you think will truly agree with the following statement? The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions.

Affirmative Action: We will ask the previous question to 100 random WOMEN in [COUN-  
Perceived "Actual" Support TRY]. If you had to guess, how many of the women will say that they  
among Women agree with the following statement? The government and companies  
should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions.

Affirmative Action: We will ask the previous question to 100 random WOMEN in [COUN-  
Perceived "Truthful" Support TRY]. If you had to guess, regardless of what they will say to us, how  
among Women many of the women do you think will truly agree with the following  
statement? The government and companies should give priority to  
women when hiring for leadership positions.

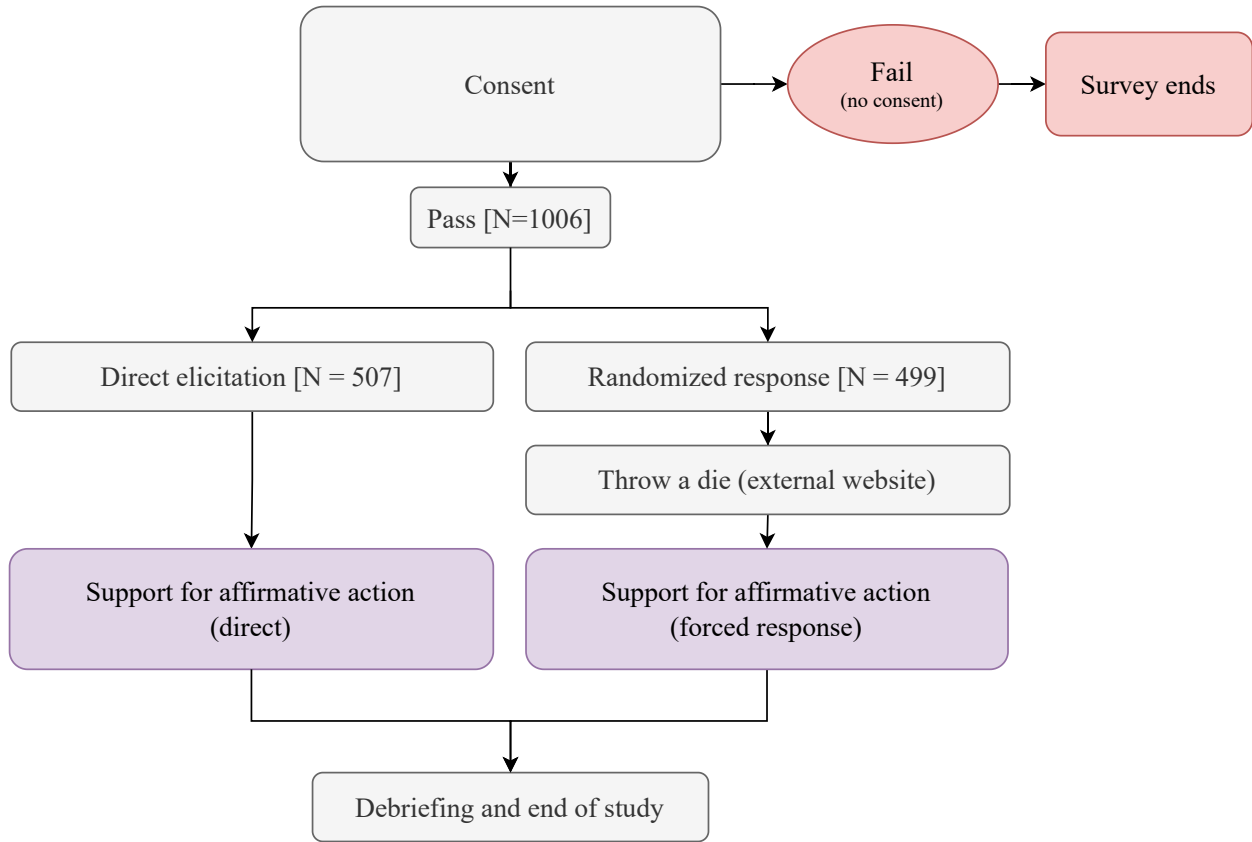
## Details: Gallup World Poll 2020

**Coding mistakes.** We encounter a total of 19 data points with coding errors, which we remove from the original data set of 66,233 observations.

**Sampling.** In countries where interviews were conducted by phone, the sampling was done either by random digit dialing (RDD) or with a nationally representative list of phone numbers. In most countries, a dual sampling frame based on landline and mobile phone numbers was used. However, in some countries, the sampling frame encompasses mobile phones only. One person was interviewed in each sampled household. When the respondent was contacted by landline telephone, the interviewee was selected among eligible respondents aged 15 and older either by identifying the household member with the next upcoming birthday or by using the interviewing program to select an eligible household member randomly. Mobile phone users were directly interviewed. If the selected household member was not available, the interviewers would make several attempts to contact them before moving on to another household.

In the two countries where interviews were conducted face-to-face, India and Pakistan, sampling units were constructed by either stratifying along population weights or by random sampling at the ward/village level. The local enumerators then used a "random route procedure" to select a candidate household. The respondent was finally selected from a list of household members by a computer program. If the selected household member was not available, the enumerators made several attempts to contact them before moving on to another household.

**Figure B.2:** Experimental Design: Stigmatization

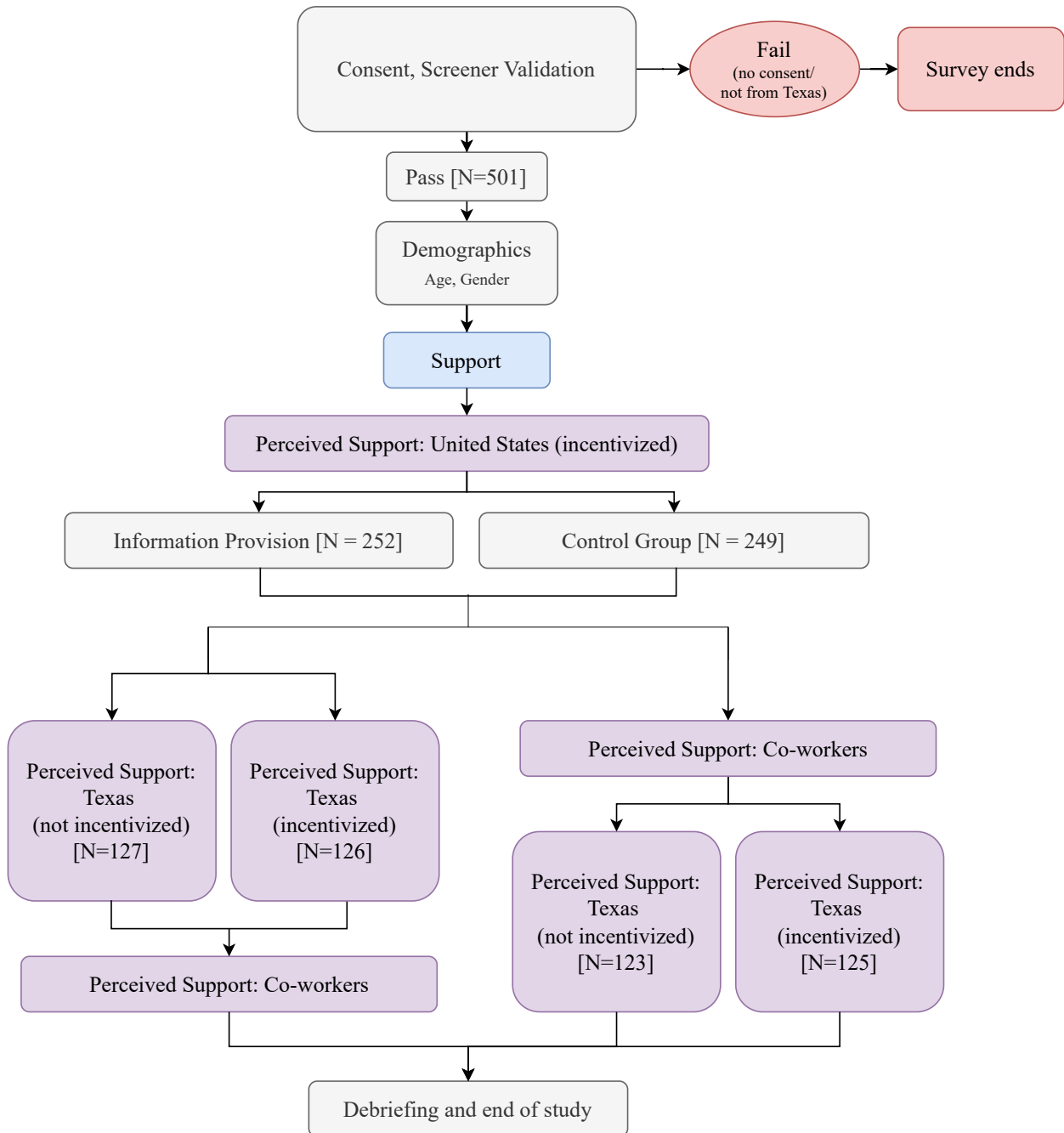


**Table B.2:** Experimental Design: Stigmatization (Details)

<b>Block</b>	<b>Question</b>
Direct elicitation	<p>Do you agree ("yes") or disagree ("no") with the statement below?</p> <p>In my opinion, the government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions.</p>
Randomized response (forced response design)	<p>For the following question, we want you to answer yes or no. But we want you to consider the number of a die throw. If 1 shows on the die, tell us no. If 6 shows, tell us yes. But if another number, like 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 shows, tell us your own opinion about the question that I will ask you after you throw a die.</p> <p>To ensure that we cannot see the outcome, please click on the link below and make sure to remember the number you rolled. Make sure to return to this survey afterwards.</p> <p>Click here to roll the die (<a href="http://www.random.org/dice/?num=1">www.random.org/dice/?num=1</a>)</p> <p>Please confirm that you clicked on the link, rolled a die, and remember the number.</p> <p>[NEXT PAGE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you rolled a 2, 3, 4, or 5, please tell us your opinion: Do you agree ("yes") or disagree ("no") with the statement below?</li><li>• If you rolled a 1, please tell us "No" (regardless of what you think).</li><li>• If you rolled a 6, please tell us "Yes" (regardless of what you think).</li></ul> <p>In my opinion, the government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions.</p>



**Figure B.3:** Experimental Design: Local Misperceptions



**Table B.3:** Experimental Design: Local Misperceptions (Details)

<b>Block</b>	<b>Question</b>
Support	Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions."
Perceived Support: United States (incentivized)	<p>We asked the same question you were just asked to a random sample in the US that is nationally representative. In the second part of this survey, we would like to know what you believe these people answered. If your guess is close to the truth (within 2 percentage points), you will earn an additional \$1 USD per question.</p> <p>Please guess: What percentage of MEN in the United States said that they agree with the following statement? "The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions."</p> <p>Please guess: What percentage of WOMEN in the United States said that they agree with the following statement? "The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions."</p>
Information Provision	<p>You guessed that [RESPONSE]% of MEN agree with the statement that government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions. According to the nationally representative survey, the actual share of men that agree with this statement is 38%.</p> <p>You guessed that [RESPONSE]% of WOMEN agree with the statement that government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions. According to the nationally representative survey, the actual share of women that agree with this statement is 45%.</p>
Control Group (No information Provision)	<p>You guessed that [RESPONSE]% of MEN agree with the statement that government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions.</p> <p>You guessed that [RESPONSE]% of WOMEN agree with the statement that government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions.</p>

Perceived Support:  
Texas (not incentivized)

In this part of the survey, we will ask you a few questions about your perceptions of what people living in Texas think.

Please guess: What percentage of MEN in Texas would say that they agree with the following statement? "The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions."

Please guess: What percentage of WOMEN in Texas would say that they agree with the following statement? "The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions."

Perceived Support:  
Texas (incentivized)

We asked the same question you were just asked to a random sample of men and women in Texas. In this part of the survey, we will ask you a few questions about your perceptions of what people living in Texas think. If your guess is close to the truth (within 2 percentage points), you will earn an additional \$1 USD per question.

Please guess: What percentage of MEN in Texas would say that they agree with the following statement? "The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions."

Please guess: What percentage of WOMEN in Texas would say that they agree with the following statement? "The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions."

Perceived Support:  
Co-workers

In this part of the survey, we will ask you a few questions about your perceptions of what your co-workers think.

Please guess: What percentage of the MEN you work with would say that they agree with the following statement? "The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions."

Please guess: What percentage of the WOMEN you work with would say that they agree with the following statement? "The government and companies should give priority to women when hiring for leadership positions."