

Policy In Focus

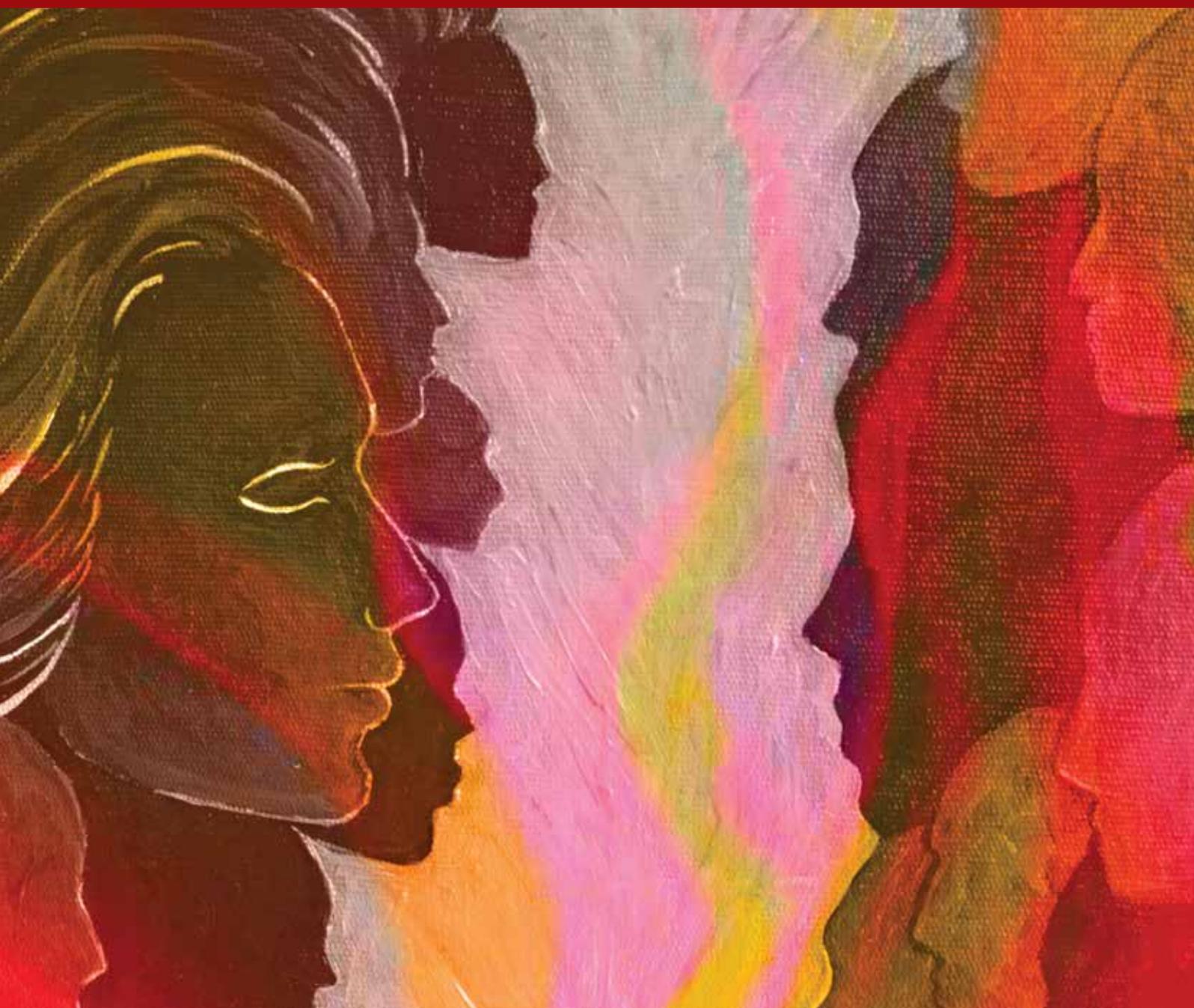


*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

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Protagonist Women



The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) is a joint project between the United Nations and Brazil to promote South-South learning on social policies. It specialises in research-based policy recommendations on how to reduce poverty and inequality as well as boost inclusive development. The IPC-IG is linked to the UNDP Brazil Country Office, the Secretariat of Strategic Affairs (SAE) and the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) of the Government of Brazil.

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Policy in Focus

Policy in Focus is a regular publication of the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG). This special edition, explores some of the challenges women are faced with around the world while simultaneously pointing to successful cases of change and women's empowerment progress, all the while highlighting the role of protagonist women. This special edition was made in partnership with UN Women Brazil.

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Protagonist Women highlights examples of women taking the lead in an antagonistic society. The protagonist woman exists on the fault lines of society, championing a now well-established social, cultural and economic revolution. This revolution is aimed primarily at not only garnering women equal rights to men and accounting for historical injustices but carving out a space in society dedicated to tackling the particular challenges faced by women today. In this vein, protagonist women recognise the pluralities of experiences and challenges that exist for women globally. These include biological challenges, those of physical integrity and reproductive health, as well as the challenges and restrictions inflicted by the values and norms of society. This plurality of experiences accounts for the diverse range of issues addressed in this issue of *Policy in Focus*.

Much progress has been achieved for women, demonstrated in the institutionalisation of women's rights in international and domestic law. Thus the issue commences with a look into the realisation of the Maria da Penha Law concerning domestic violence in Brazil (*Maria da Penha Institute, UN Women Brazil*). However, many obstacles to women realising their full rights still exist, as is then demonstrated in Africa in terms of land rights for women (*Mary Kimani, Africa Renewal*). The case of Alyne da Silva Pimentel illustrates the mismatch between services and individual reproductive rights, even in a country like Brazil, home to progressive social policies. (*Mónica Arango Olaya, Center for Reproductive Rights, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Valentina Montoya Robledo, University de Los Andes*).

This issue supplies insight into Egypt (*Anouk De Koning, Radboud University, Nijmegen*) and Afghanistan (*Rangina Kargar, Faryab Province Representative, National Assembly of Afghanistan*), where women are claiming their space in society and seeking to increase their bargaining power in everyday negotiations. We then provide evidence of progress being made in the livelihoods of women in terms of female happiness as an expression of their subjective well-being (*Marcelo Neri, Minister of the Secretariat of Strategic Affairs and President of IPEA, Brazil*).

The issue then explores the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (*Dr Rebecca Reichmann Tavares, Representative, UN Women India Multi-Country Office, and Subhalakshmi Nandi, UN Women India MCO*), which has made major strides in enhancing social protection for rural women workers in India. This is followed by a look into the dynamics at play for the more than 43.6 million female domestic workers globally (*Malte Luebker, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific*), then specific insight is provided into the case of Brazil (*Edson Domingues and Kênia de Souza, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil*). We expose the crucial role that gender-inclusive growth has to play in spurring socio-economic development at large.

A broad overview of global initiatives dedicated to women's empowerment via social transfers is then presented (*Maxine Molyneux, Director of the Institute of the Americas, and Nicola Jones, Overseas Development Institute*). Bolsa Família in Brazil (*Ana Maria Hermeto Camilo de Oliveira, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil*) and self-help groups in India (*Ashleigh Kate Slingsby, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, UNDP*) serve as detailed examples of social protection programmes that facilitate women leading their own empowerment.

Various international commitments derived from summits and international conferences recognise gender equality. Thus we conclude the publication with a look at the Beijing+20 negotiations and the potential impact it will have on women's rights and gendered politics (*Nadine Gasman, Resident Representative, UN Women, Brazil*).

Women are underrepresented and marginalised from leadership positions, rendering protagonist women key contributors to inclusive growth. Women face major structural challenges that demand change to garner greater access to resources for better livelihoods. It is hoped this issue exposes these challenges whilst demonstrating examples of progress; revealing the achievements and ambitions of Protagonist Women.

Subjective Well-being: Future Female Happiness

by **Marcelo Neri**, Secretariat of Strategic Affairs (SAE) and Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA)

In the last few years, women have brought about one of the greatest—if not the greatest—changes in recent human history. The cultural and economic revolution related to female empowerment has affected a sizeable share of the world's countries. Brazil, has witnessed the election of its first female President as well as a growing number of women occupying key positions in different areas of the federal government. Such achievements have established role models for younger generations of women.

The National Surveys of Household Sampling (PNAD, Pesquisas Nacionais de Amostras a Domicílios) conducted during the last decade have shown a marked reduction of per capita income inequality in Brazil. Poverty is less affected by a smaller gender wage gap, since poverty is measured by per capita family income. However, the narrowing of the gender wage gap signals significant progress made by women vis-à-vis the labour market and its effect on their earned income.

Trends and what they mean for the future of women

From the standpoint of individual income generation, income improvements have been observed in Brazil among traditionally excluded groups, such as the black and *pardo* populations, as well as people from the northeast, those living in slums, the countryside, and women. Women's individual income levels have risen 38 per cent, against a 16 per cent rise for men. Despite these auspicious results for women, a report on inequality over a decade in Brazil (2011) shows that the controlled gender income gap (controlled for education, regions and urban/rural areas of residence) was not reduced, despite having dropped for all the aforementioned excluded groups, in relation to their respective and more included reference groups.

Looking at Brazil's Monthly Employment Survey (PME) data for the 2009 to 2011

period, similar changes in individual labour income were not observed. Women's income increased by 18.2 per cent during this period, *pari passu*, with men's income (18.4 per cent). If we accumulate the changes observed between 2001 and 2011 through PNAD and PME, individual income gains of 63.1 per cent for women and 37.4 per cent for men can be concluded.

In short, how do we describe the changes in the world of women? First of all, women have led the way in the education revolution. In 1996, the average education level attained by women in Brazil overtook that attained by men, for those 25 years of age and above.

Brazil has focused its social policies overwhelmingly on women treating them preferentially as beneficiaries over men—in the case of Bolsa Família, in 91 per cent of cases, the money is transferred to women in an effort, to try to raise the likelihood that funds will reach their children.

Women's non-labour income—that is, income from Bolsa Família, retirement and pension schemes—essentially everything that does not encompass labour, overtook that of men in 2006.

Happiness

To what extent do these changes affect the prospects of improving women's lives? Literature on happiness has addressed this issue by using subjective indicators, through direct questions. Micro-data from the 2006 Gallup World Poll, which applied the same questionnaire in 132 countries, can be used as such.

One of the advantages of these indicators, unlike the concepts of income per capita, is the fact that individual changes experienced by and produced by women can be captured. Another interesting aspect of the data produced through such a poll is that women from different countries can be analyzed within the context of women worldwide.

More specifically, one is able to address questions such as: On a life satisfaction scale of 0 to 10, who expects to be happier, men or women? Which countries are the most optimistic about the future?

With regard to countries, a future happiness scale by gender and the differences between men and women are presented in Table 1. The Index of Future Happiness (IFH) by gender presents the extreme points of the future happiness scale. It also serves as a comparative platform to evaluate happiness across the BRICS member states (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and countries currently facing economic challenges within Europe, incorporated in a sample of countries that reached rankings positions multiples of five in the overall population happiness ranking.

Who are happier, Brazilian men or Brazilian women?

In Brazil, women seem to be happier than men in terms of future happiness (8.98 for women and 8.56 for men) and present happiness (6.73 for women and 6.54 for men), but not in regards to past happiness (5.43 for women and 5.86 for men). This suggests a reversal of relative positions, as we move forward in time. Note that Brazilian men and women boast the highest levels of future happiness in their respective categories, *vis-à-vis* all other 132 countries surveyed. One must, however, be careful to note the extent to which the differences are statistically different from zero.

Gender and geography

Age and demographic composition are seen to affect levels of life satisfaction, particularly future happiness. As such, geography or regional differences rather, are variables that should be controlled for, as well as city size (large, medium and small cities and rural areas).

To observe how the difference between men and women changes from country

TABLE 1

Index of Future Happiness (IFH) and Gender

Country	Women		Men		Difference	
	IFH	Rank	IFH	Rank	IFH	Rank
World	6.74	-	6.69	-	0.05	-
Americas	7.22	-	7.1	-	0.12	-
Brazil	8.98	1	8.56	1	0.42	0
Denmark	8.51	3	8.52	2	-0.01	1
Ireland	8.42	4	8.23	5	0.19	-1
Switzerland	7.96	18	7.67	24	0.29	-6
United Kingdom	7.89	22	7.68	23	0.21	-1
Argentina	7.82	23	7.5	29	0.32	-6
Costa Rica	7.78	24	7.86	17	-0.08	7
Austria	7.76	25	7.63	25	0.13	0
France	7.73	26	7.72	21	0.01	5
Netherlands	7.76	29	7.44	34	0.23	-5
Egypt	7.32	43	6.71	69	0.61	-26
Spain	7.28	45	7.43	36	-0.15	9
Italy	7.28	44	6.94	54	0.34	-10
Morocco	7.27	46	6.95	53	0.32	-7
Senegal	7.21	47	7.01	50	0.2	-3
Honduras	7.17	51	7.25	43	-0.08	8
Mali	7.13	52	7.46	31	-0.33	21
Uruguay	7.12	53	7.08	48	0.04	5
South Africa	6.87	61	6.8	63	0.07	-2
Greece	6.81	62	6.2	92	0.61	-30
India	6.76	64	6.87	57	-0.11	7
Germany	6.67	71	6.91	56	-0.24	15
Peru	6.62	75	6.68	71	-0.06	4
China	6.61	76	6.44	85	0.16	-9
Indonesia	6.57	79	6.23	91	0.34	-12

Source: Centre for Social Policies (CPS)/FGV, based on micro-data from the 2006 Gallup World Poll.

to country, a variant with the interactive variables of country and gender was used. This difference-in-difference model allowed for the measure of gender ratios by country.

In short, Brazilians can not only be considered to be the happiest people in the world in regards to future happiness for men and women, but also in regards to the gender differences that favour women. Furthermore, despite any controlling of observable characteristics, no country possesses higher female future happiness levels than Brazil.

The changes in the lives of Brazilian women have been the result of a focus on education and on work, as well as being the preferential focus of social policies.

Moreover, the relative distance, favouring women, grows as data is examined in a chronological order, which may suggest continued empowerment of women, and their status in Brazilian society in the years to come. ■

Neri, M.C. (2011). *A Nova Classe Média: O Lado Brilhante da Base da Pirâmide*. São Paulo, Editora Saraiva, 312 pp.

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Brazilian men and women boast the highest levels of future happiness.