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Aslı Ermiş-Mert  
*Koç University*

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## Happiness, Life Satisfaction, and Gender Equality at the Micro and Macro Levels

By Aslı Ermiş-Mert<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

This study uses the Gender Inequality Index (GII) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to examine the impacts of gender equality or inequality upon happiness and life satisfaction. It also explores the impact of selected demographic predictors (gender, educational level, and income) and individuals' attitudes toward gender egalitarian ideals on these two components of well-being in gender equal and unequal countries. Partial proportional odds models are implemented to investigate happiness and life satisfaction levels of respondents in the 7th wave of World Values Survey (Haerpfer et al., 2022). The main findings are paradoxical; they show that increasing gender inequality at the macro level improves the likelihood for any person to be both very unhappy and very happy, and the pattern is the same for life satisfaction. People with gender egalitarian ideals who live in gender-equal countries have an increased likelihood of being very unhappy and the tendency to report being at a higher level of happiness than unhappy. In gender unequal countries, it improves the likelihood to be at higher levels of happiness than very unhappy but also the tendency of being happy or at a lower level. Increasing gender egalitarianism improves the likelihood to be more satisfied with life, especially in unequal contexts. While the impact of demographic components on happiness and life satisfaction does not vary in gender equal and unequal countries, gender egalitarianism demonstrates diversified patterns of happiness. Further studies need to focus on the dynamics between micro- and macro-level gender egalitarianism, and their individual and combined impact on different markers of well-being.

*Keywords:* Happiness, Life satisfaction, Gender equality, Gender egalitarianism, Partial proportional odds model

### Background

Gender equality, including equal rights and access to resources, services, and different positions in society and the labor market, is expected to have an evident impact on well-being. In a context where there is gender equality, happiness and life satisfaction are anticipated to improve in society. This article investigates the impact of the level of gender equality on happiness and life satisfaction at the macro level. It also looks at the effect of education, income, and individual-level gender egalitarianism on these two means of well-being in gender equal and unequal countries determined based on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<sup>2</sup> using the 7th wave of the World Values Survey (Haerpfer et al., 2022). This article focuses separately on happiness and life satisfaction based on the argument that happiness is more of an emotional aspect while life satisfaction is a cognitive concept for how people evaluate their lives (Kahneman & Deaton, 2010; Maggino, 2016; San Martín et al., 2010). For the overall impact of a gender inequality score upon happiness and life satisfaction, it is expected that the cognitive side (life satisfaction) would be affected in a linear pattern, in other words, that increasing gender inequality at the macro level

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<sup>1</sup> Aslı Ermiş-Mert is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology, and the Vice Director of the Center for Gender Studies at Koç University. She received her MSc and DPhil degrees at the University of Oxford. Her research mainly focuses on gender, employment, quantitative social research methods, and happiness studies. She has been working on various national and international research projects that focus on gender inequalities in society and particularly academia.

<sup>2</sup> For further information, please see <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>

would decrease life satisfaction of individuals consistently. The impact on happiness (the emotional aspect of well-being) is anticipated to be more complex because components that affect it negatively and positively are likely to be more varied and relatively less objective. It is expected that people with stronger gender egalitarian ideologies will be happier and more satisfied with life in gender equal countries. In gender unequal countries, people with stronger gender egalitarian ideologies are expected to be less satisfied with life due to the conflict between the gender ideology they adopt and the contradictory patterns in their society at the macro level. As a more emotional component, happiness would likely be influenced in a non-linear way for these individuals in gender unequal countries.

There are many studies that refer to gender equality as a highly important indicator of well-being in terms of happiness or life satisfaction (Audette et al., 2019; OECD, 2012; Schyns, 1998; Yorulmaz, 2016; Veenhoven, 2018; Lim et al., 2020; Ye et al., 2015; Kabene et al., 2017). Ferrant et al. (2017) indicate that living in gender equal countries makes both women and men happier even when characteristics of the context and individuals are taken into consideration. They also note that discrimination based on gender in social institutions decreases individuals' well-being in addition to having a deteriorating influence on the economy at the macro level. Bracke et al. (2015) indicate that reinforcing policies for gender equality could improve individuals' well-being, as lower levels of gender inequality are associated with better mental health for men and especially for women. Similarly, Van de Velde et al. (2013) stress that higher levels of gender equality at the macro level have a positive effect on women's and men's mental health in terms of decreased levels of depression. Studies find a strong correlation between gender equality and happiness due to the fact that people have more choices in a gender equal society (Veenhoven, 2018). Having fewer opportunities is harmful for girls and women, as Trask (2016) underlines; discriminatory practices and unequal power relations diminish women's health and well-being due to being denied equal access to information and resources. In relation to creating a supportive social context alongside providing equal rights for girls and women, De Looze et al. (2018) highlight the benefit of reinforcing gender equality for all individuals in society. Indeed, gender equality is beneficial for all, as Ferrant et al. (2017) point out that gender-based discrimination observed in social institutions causes a 4.4% decrease in global average life satisfaction. The eradication of gender discrimination could drop the global percentage of unhappy individuals from 14% to 5% (Ferrant et al., 2017).

While gender equality has been highlighted as a significant determinant of well-being, there are contradictory arguments in scholarship as well. Kurzman et al. (2019) indicate that women in gender-unequal societies, as categorized by global measurements, have not been found to evaluate their lives as less satisfying than men do. It is notable that women's evaluation of gender equality is contextual and not always fitting to the global criteria. This contextuality could be related to the differences between countries in terms of their economies, as Graham and Chattopadhyay (2013) find no prominent disparities between women's and men's happiness levels in low-income countries, whereas women in higher-income countries are found to be happier than men. They associate this finding with the fact that gender equality is less likely to exist in these poorer countries, which in turn affects women's well-being (Graham & Chattopadhyay, 2013). While there is a connection between gender equality and women's happiness, Rustin (2018) highlights that both can exist without the other. In contrast to the arguments supporting a positive relationship between gender equality and happiness, Hori (2010) states that women and men in countries with lower scored GEM (gender equality measure) are happier than the ones in countries with higher scores. However, there are somewhat mixed results, as Hori also found that individuals in liberal countries are happier

than those in familialistic<sup>3</sup> countries. Equality in different dimensions could also affect happiness distinctively. Bjørnskov et al. (2007) report that advances in gender equality in politics between 1980 and 2000 had a positive impact on both women's and men's life satisfaction, as lower levels of economic discrimination measured in 1980 resulted in higher levels of life satisfaction for women.

Tesch-Römer et al. (2008) find a connection between gender inequality in society and a gap between women's and men's subjective well-being. They contend that this connection is significantly affected by macro-level structures related to the inequalities and discrimination women endure. From a different perspective, Stevenson and Wolfers (2009) refer to the diminished happiness levels of women relative to men in the United States, despite the positive changes in their lives in relation to improved gender equality. Among the possible explanations, they highlight social problems, expansion of domains in which women evaluate their well-being, women now feeling more confident to openly express their true level of happiness, and women comparing their lives to a wider group that includes men, which may cause them to feel less accomplished (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009). Graham and Chattopadhyay (2013) underline that while women have higher levels of well-being in countries where there is already established gender equality, their happiness levels appear to decrease in the case of changes or improvements in gender rights in the short run. They associate this with their overall findings concerning the diminishing subjective well-being levels observed in relation to the process of obtaining agency. Regarding this finding and that of the decrease in happiness levels after improved gender rights, Montgomery (2016) states that this could be a result of changes in how women view the scales of happiness due to shifting experiences (e.g. increased expectations). There could be separate possible reasons that caused lower levels of happiness, yet this should not be a reason to refrain from working towards achieving gender equality (Montgomery, 2016).

## Data and Methods

This study uses the World Values Survey (WVS) Wave 7 dataset for analysis (Haerpfer et al., 2022). While WVS 7th wave data collection was undertaken between 2017 and 2022 globally, this study is based on the first release of the data collected from 48 countries/territories between early 2017 and mid-2020. Random probability sampling is conducted in all contexts and the method for collecting data is mainly structured face-to-face interviews.<sup>4</sup>

The outcome indicators in the analyses are "happiness" and "life satisfaction." Happiness is derived from the statement "Taking all things together, would you say you are ..." answered on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very happy and 4 being not at all happy. Life satisfaction is associated with the question "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?" answered on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being completely dissatisfied and 10 being completely satisfied. The order of the categories in the happiness variable was reversed so that it has the same direction as life satisfaction, ranging from lowest to highest level. The categories of the life satisfaction scale were reduced to four to mirror the happiness variable. Four categories for both variables are labeled from very unhappy/very unsatisfied to very happy/very satisfied. Predictor variables include gender, education level, and income. The latter two are reorganized into three categories ranging from low to high. Analyses were undertaken without disaggregating the data based on gender, as gender is used as an independent variable to predict happiness and life satisfaction in gender equal and

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<sup>3</sup>In the context of types of welfare state regimes, Esping-Andersen's (1999) term familialism signifies that families are regarded as responsible for their own welfare and are the main provider of care.

<sup>4</sup> For further information, please see <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV7.jsp>

unequal countries. In other words, the likelihood of women relative to men to be in different levels of happiness and life satisfaction in both types of countries is examined. The final predictor variable “equality” as a sub-index within the WVS corresponds to an individual’s attitude towards gender egalitarianism as a continuous variable. It is a combination of three separate statements in the questionnaire representing gender equality in employment, politics, and education: “Men should have more right to a job than women,” “Men make better political leaders than women do,” and “University is more important for a boy than for a girl.”

The conceptualization of gender equal and unequal countries is derived from the GII (UNDP) that is integrated into the WVS. This is a measure of gender inequality at the macro level determined by three means, namely health (based on maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rate), empowerment (based on educational attainment and political representation), and labor market (based on labor force participation). The GII scores range between 0 and 1. Gender equal countries in the analyses refer to those with a GII value below the mean and gender unequal countries have a GII value equal ( $\bar{x} = .330809$ ) to or above the mean. As gender equality is defined by UN Women as “the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys,” defining gender equal and unequal countries based on this multidimensional approach is expected to create robust results when predicting the subjective well-being patterns in these contexts (UN Women).

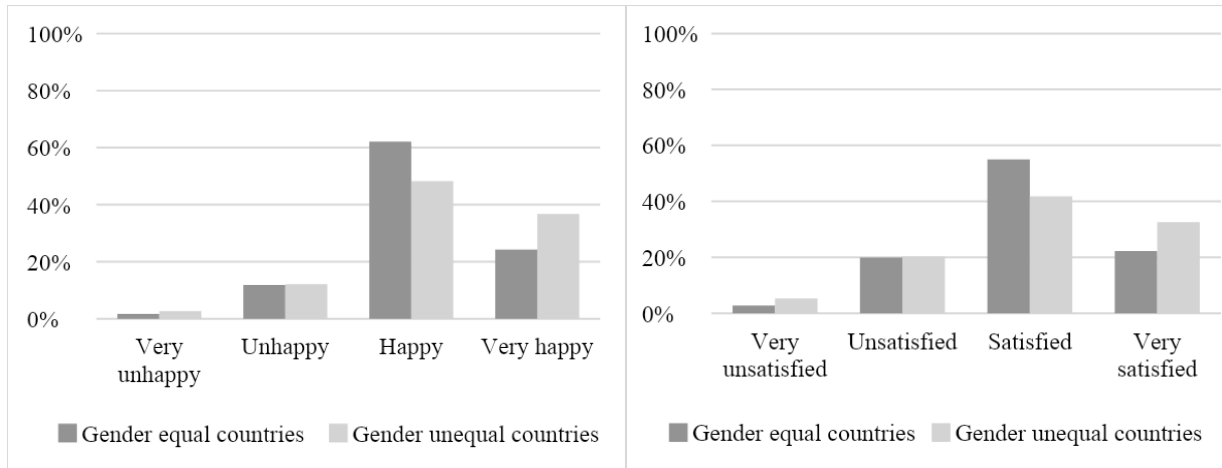
Partial proportional odds (generalized ordered logit) models are first implemented to predict happiness and life satisfaction levels based on GII values overall. Second, they are based on gender, educational level, income, and individual gender egalitarianism in gender equal and unequal countries. Generalized ordered logit models provide the same outcomes with ordered logit models (proportional odds models), yet they relax the parallel regression assumptions to differentiate between the degrees of the dependent variable (Fullerton & Dixon, 2010) — levels of happiness and life satisfaction in this study. Generalized ordered logit can fit less restrictive models than the parallel lines models ordered logit fits, in which assumptions (for parallel lines) are mostly violated (Williams, 2006). In the models presented in this study, parallel lines assumptions were tested using .01 level of significance, making it much simpler to spot partial proportional odds models that fit the data, where parallel lines constraint is relaxed just for the variables for which it is not justified (Williams, 2006). Considering that constraints for parallel lines were not imposed for the majority of variables as determined at the significance level of .01, partial proportional odds models are applied in this study for more precise and robust results.

## Results

Firstly, the distribution of reported life satisfaction and happiness levels demonstrates that the rate for being happy or very happy is similar in gender unequal (85.1%) and gender equal countries (86.4%). Also, 74.4% of respondents in gender unequal countries and 77.3% in gender equal countries report being satisfied or very satisfied with their life (See Figure 1). At the descriptive level, rates for reporting satisfaction with life and happiness are alike in more gender-egalitarian and less gender-egalitarian countries. A detailed view presents that the distributions of being very unhappy/very unsatisfied and unhappy/unsatisfied are highly similar as well. However, in gender equal countries there is a noticeably higher percentage of reports of being happy/satisfied, while in gender unequal countries there is a higher percentage of being very happy/very satisfied.

Table 1 presents the generalized ordered logit models for predicting the impact of GII value on happiness and life satisfaction overall. Constraints for parallel lines are not imposed for GII value in both models; hence this method is expected to provide more robust results relative to ordered logistic regressions.

**Figure 1: Distribution of Happiness (Left) and Life Satisfaction (Right) Levels in Gender Equal and Unequal Countries**



Data Source: World Values Survey (Haerpfer et al., 2022)

**Table 1: Generalized Ordered Logit Models to Predict the Impact of GII Value on Happiness and Life Satisfaction**

Levels of Happiness/Life Satisfaction	Happiness	Life satisfaction
<b>1 (Very unhappy/very unsatisfied)</b>		
<b>Gender Inequality Index value</b>	-3.02(.21)***	-3.53(.15)***
<i>Constant</i>	4.86(.08)***	4.37(.06)***
<b>2 (Unhappy/unsatisfied)</b>		
<b>Gender Inequality Index value</b>	-.98(.08)***	-1.65(.07)***
<i>Constant</i>	2.12(.03)***	1.69(.02)***
<b>3 (Happy/satisfied)</b>		
<b>Gender Inequality Index value</b>	1.59(.06)***	1.61(.06)***
<i>Constant</i>	-1.27(.02)***	-1.42(.02)***
<b>LR chi2 (3)</b>	1219.68	2208.12
<b>N</b>	61.509	61.660
<b>Prob &gt; chi2</b>	0.000	0.000
<b>Pseudo R2</b>	0.0095	0.0152

Data Source: World Values Survey (Haerpfer et al., 2022)

Table 1 shows that higher values on GII score increase the likelihood of being in the very unhappy as well as unhappy category, the latter with a lower magnitude. Yet at the same time, one unit increase in GII value, also living in a less gender egalitarian country, makes it more likely that one will report being very happy. In other words, an increase in gender inequality at the macro level has a negative effect on the logit to report being unhappy, happy, and very happy vs. very unhappy. It also has a negative effect on the logit to report being happy and very happy vs. very unhappy and unhappy, but a positive effect on the logit to report being very happy vs. happy, unhappy, and very unhappy. This means that increasing gender inequality improves the tendency to be in the extremes of the happiness scale, and the likelihood to be very unhappy and very happy (and unhappy to a relatively weaker extent). Results show a similar statistically significant non-linear pattern for life satisfaction. Both happiness and life satisfaction are influenced in the same direction by increasing gender inequality at the macro level. To predict happiness and life satisfaction patterns in gender equal and unequal countries separately, Table 2 presents the generalized ordered logit models by using gender, educational level, income, and individual gender egalitarianism as predictor components.

**Table 2: Generalized Ordered Logit Models to Predict the Impact of Different Components on Happiness and Life Satisfaction in Gender Equal (GEC) and Unequal Countries (GUC)**

Levels of Happiness/Life Satisfaction	GEC: Happiness	GUC: Happiness	GEC: Life Satisfaction	GUC: Life Satisfaction
<b>1 (Very unhappy/very unsatisfied)</b>				
<b>Gender (Ref. Cat.: Men)</b>				
Women	.12(.03)***	.10(.02)***	.02(.02)	.04(.02)*
<b>Educational level (Ref. Cat.): Low</b>				
Mid-level education	.98 (.13)***	.05(.03)	.72(.10)***	.12(.06)*
High education	1.08 (.17)***	.23(.10)**	.97(.13)***	.51(.09)***
<b>Income (Ref. Cat.: Low)</b>				
Mid-level income	1.05 (.11)***	.79(.07)***	1.40(.08)***	1.20(.05)***
High income	1.55 (.27)***	1.25(.17)***	1.55(.20)***	1.34(.11)***
<b>Gender egalitarianism</b>	-.46 (.22)*	.33(.14)**	.58(.05)***	.52(.10)***
<i>Constant</i>	2.73 (.17)***	2.81(.08)***	1.65(.10)***	1.75(.07)***
<b>2 (Unhappy/unsatisfied)</b>				
<b>Gender (Ref. Cat.: Men)</b>				
Women	.12(.03)***	.10(.02)***	.02(.02)	.04(.02)*
<b>Educational level (Ref. Cat.): Low</b>				
Mid-level education	.46(.06)***	.05(.03)	.35(.05)***	.07(.03)*
High education	.54(.07)***	.21(.05)***	.50(.06)***	.23(.04)***
<b>Income (Ref. Cat.: Low)</b>				
Mid-level income	.83(.04)***	.58(.03)***	.78(.03)***	.56(.03)***
High income	1.30(.09)***	1.10(.07)***	1.28(.07)***	1.48(.06)***
<b>Gender egalitarianism</b>	.26(.08)***	-.08(.06)	.58(.05)***	.79(.05)***
<i>Constant</i>	.59(.07)***	1.27(.04)***	-.07(.06)	.14(.04)***
<b>3 (Happy/Satisfied)</b>				
<b>Gender (Ref. Cat.: Men)</b>				
Women	.12(.03)***	.10 (.02)***	.02(.02)	.04(.02)*
<b>Educational level (Ref. Cat.): Low</b>				
Mid-level education	-.14(.06)*	.05(.03)	-.15(.06)*	-.12(.03)***
High education	-.14(.06)*	-.06(.03)	-.29(.07)***	-.35(.04)***
<b>Income (Ref. Cat.: Low)</b>				
Mid-level income	.38(.04)***	.10(.02)***	.32(.04)***	-.02(.03)
High income	.90(.06)***	.77(.04)***	1.05(.06)***	.88(.04)***
<b>Gender egalitarianism</b>	.05(.06)	-.27(.04)***	.58(.05)***	.00(.04)
<i>Constant</i>	-1.47(.07)***	-.60(.03)***	-1.77(.07)***	-.68(.04)***
<b>LR chi2 (16/14/14/16)</b>	870.61	908.30	1359.95	2381.13
<b>N</b>	24.604	36.965	24.696	37.040
<b>Pseudo R2</b>	0.0185	0.0115	0.0255	0.0267
<b>Prob&gt;chi2</b>	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000



Source: World Values Survey (Haerpfer et al., 2022).

For all models in Table 2, constraints for parallel lines are imposed for gender, hence the coefficients for this variable are the same throughout the models. Women are more likely to report higher levels of happiness compared to men in all countries regardless of GII value, and statistically significant results present a similar pattern for life satisfaction in gender unequal countries. Although there is evidence demonstrating that there has been a decline in women's happiness levels (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009) and men are happier than women in recent times (Blanchflower & Bryson, 2022), an extended number of studies support this paper's finding that women report being happier and more satisfied with life than men (Joshi & Jovanović, 2020). This could be due to various reasons including women holding a more optimistic outlook on life (Arrosa & Gandelman, 2016) or having lower aspirations derived from social norms and culture (Zweig, 2015).

In the first model, also in gender equal countries, higher educational levels—being mid-level or highly educated rather than low educated (the effect being slightly stronger for higher education)—increase the likelihood to be happier (up to the point of being very happy), but the effect gets weaker for higher levels of happiness. In terms of income, in gender equal countries it could be seen that increasing income level improves the likelihood of being happier, yet the magnitude of this effect also gets weaker for higher levels of happiness.

In gender equal countries, statistically significant results demonstrate that increasing gender egalitarianism makes it more likely that an individual is very unhappy as well as in a higher happiness level than unhappy. There is also a tendency for gender egalitarianism to increase the likelihood to report being in both the lowest and relatively higher levels of happiness. This pattern somewhat mimics the polarized impact of GII values on happiness overall (Table 1).<sup>5</sup> In the second model (which presents the results for gender unequal countries), alongside gender, parallel lines are imposed for mid-level education, yet the coefficients are not statistically significant. In these contexts, the impact of gender, education level, and income on happiness levels are similar to gender equal countries. However, statistically significant results refer to a distinct pattern concerning gender egalitarianism at the micro level. Increasing levels of gender egalitarianism improve the likelihood to be at a level above very unhappy but below very happy. Generalized ordered logit models provide a context for such asymmetrical effects (Fullerton & Dixon, 2010). Williams (2016) explains this pattern by stressing that there are no grounds for concluding that the predictor variables should necessarily have the same impact in every cumulative logit. In the case of this paper, an increase in individual-level gender egalitarianism improves the likelihood to be above the level of very unhappy in gender unequal countries but that does not signify that it will increase the likelihood to be happy or very happy at the same level of magnitude or even at all.

Statistically significant results for the variables of gender, educational level, and income are similar when predicting life satisfaction and happiness in both gender equal and unequal countries. In the third model that predicts life satisfaction in gender equal countries, testing parallel lines assumption using .01 level of significance, constraints for parallel lines are imposed for individual-level gender egalitarianism alongside gender. One unit increase in this variable improves the likelihood to be more satisfied with one's life with the log odds of .58. In gender unequal countries, statistically significant results present that higher levels of gender egalitarianism enhance the likelihood to be at a level above very unsatisfied and unsatisfied.

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<sup>5</sup> Looking into the relationship of these two variables —gender egalitarianism at the micro (individual) level and gender inequality at the macro (societal) level— there is a statistically significant, weak to moderate negative correlation (Spearman's rho=-0.2895, p=0.0000).

As seen in generalized ordered logit models, an individual's gender egalitarian ideology stands out in terms of its relatively diversified impact on happiness and life satisfaction in different contexts. Therefore, Table 3 presents the marginal effects after the models presented in Table 2 for this predictor variable, so that the patterns observed in generalized ordered logit models could be further discussed for this specific component.

**Table 3: Marginal Effects for Individual Gender Egalitarianism after Generalized Ordered Logit Models Predicting Happiness and Life Satisfaction Levels**

<b>GII Label</b>	<b>Very Unhappy</b>	<b>Unhappy</b>	<b>Happy</b>	<b>Very Happy</b>
Gender equal countries	0.007	-0.037	0.021	0.008
Gender unequal countries	-0.008	0.018	0.053	-0.062
	<b>Very Unsatisfied</b>	<b>Unsatisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Very Satisfied</b>
Gender equal countries	-0.015	-0.081	-0.002	0.098
Gender unequal countries	-0.025	-0.118	0.142	0.001

Data Source: World Values Survey (Haerpfer et al., 2022)

Results show that an increase in gender egalitarianism at the individual level makes it 2.1 percentage points more likely for a person to report being happy, but only 0.8 percentage points more likely to report being very happy on average, which is very similar to the effect of being very unhappy, in gender equal countries. Higher levels of gender egalitarianism reduce a person's likelihood for only reporting being unhappy with 3.7 percentage points in these contexts. In gender unequal countries, being more gender egalitarian decreases the likelihood to be very unhappy as well as very happy by 0.8% and 6.2% consecutively.

In gender equal countries, a higher level of gender egalitarianism increases the likelihood that a person will be very satisfied with life by 9.8 percentage points on average yet makes it less likely to have lower levels of life satisfaction. In gender unequal countries, it could be seen that those with a more gender-egalitarian attitude are more likely to report being satisfied or very satisfied with their lives by 14.2% for the former and only 0.1% for the latter on average, and less likely to be unsatisfied (by 11.8%) and very unsatisfied (by 2.5%).

In sum, increasing GII score has a somewhat asymmetrical effect on both happiness and life satisfaction overall, presumably considering that there are individuals who could be more prone to the consequences of inequalities and are affected more negatively by patriarchal structures which might benefit others. The impact of the predictor components used in this study on both happiness and life satisfaction are similar among relatively less and more gender equal countries, except for individual levels of gender egalitarianism, which particularly varies as a predictor of happiness. Marginal effects demonstrate that in gender equal countries, gender egalitarianism at the individual level increases the percentage points for the likelihood to be very unhappy and very happy almost at the same level. In more unequal contexts, it has a

diminishing effect for these two ends, that is stronger for being very happy than very unhappy. Regarding life satisfaction, enhanced gender egalitarianism reduces the likelihood of being anything other than “very satisfied” in gender equal countries and of being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied in gender unequal countries.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that levels of happiness and life satisfaction have a similar distribution in gender equal and unequal countries overall. Details show that there are larger proportions of people from gender equal countries being happy/satisfied, while larger proportions of people from gender unequal countries being very happy/very satisfied. Increasing gender inequality at the macro level was found to extend the tendency to be on the opposite extremes of the happiness scale as well as the life satisfaction scale. Although happiness and life satisfaction were considered to be separate well-being determinants,<sup>6</sup> happiness being more emotional and life satisfaction being more cognitive, both were similarly and asymmetrically affected by increasing gender inequality. The tendency to report being very unhappy or very unsatisfied in gender unequal contexts is rather intuitive. As previously underlined, gender inequality is detrimental to both women's and men's well-being and mental health, and inequality could even be more diminishing to the well-being of individuals who are aware of its consequences. The findings that many people are happier or more satisfied in a gender unequal society is a more complicated result. Yet it could be explained by other components enhancing happiness in these countries, or by an indifference toward or unawareness of gender inequalities, or by the benefits men derive from patriarchal structures that provide them more power and control especially in traditional contexts.

Further findings stressed that the impact of gender, educational level, and income on happiness and life satisfaction are similar in gender equal and unequal countries. In both contexts, women are happier/more satisfied with life than men, higher educational level improves well-being to a certain extent, and higher income has a positive effect with a decreasing magnitude. However, individual ideologies of gender egalitarianism exhibited a varying impact in gender equal and unequal countries on the two well-being indicators.

In gender equal countries, it was seen that increasing levels of gender egalitarianism tend to improve a person's likelihood to be either very unhappy or at higher levels of happiness than unhappy. The diminishing impact could be due to individuals with a higher level of gender awareness in equal countries being sensitive towards existing or persisting adversities concerning gender inequalities that would influence their happiness levels negatively. This is considering that it is rare to come across a context with perfect gender equality trends, as the lowest GII value among the countries included in this study is 0.058. At the same time, the harmony between the micro- and macro-level gender egalitarianism would be expected to enhance well-being as a result of fulfilled expectations regarding equality, which could explain the improving effect. In gender unequal countries, statistically significant results showed that gender egalitarianism at the individual level has an improving impact on happiness only up to the point of being happy but not very happy. This could be because happiness levels are expected to be bound to conditions shaped or affected by inequalities at the macro level to a certain extent. Regarding life satisfaction, in both gender equal and unequal countries, increasing levels of gender egalitarianism improve satisfaction with life (more so for being satisfied than very satisfied in gender unequal countries). All of these patterns were also confirmed by the marginal effects for gender egalitarianism. The findings reveal the

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<sup>6</sup> Overall, there is a statistically significant moderate (positive) correlation between happiness and life satisfaction ( $\rho=0.4103$ ), and the correlation coefficients are similar in gender equal ( $\rho=0.4544$ ) and gender unequal ( $\rho=0.3893$ ) countries.

importance of improving gender equality at the macro level to achieve a parallel between egalitarianism at the individual and societal levels, which could reinforce emotional well-being that is not restricted by the macro level inequalities. It is also important to raise awareness of gender equality at the individual level to enhance life satisfaction regardless of the level of equality at the macro level. Integrating gender equality as a priority into policy-making processes intentionally to enhance public well-being is expected to create positive outcomes. Further studies are needed to examine how different well-being indicators are affected by inequalities in different contexts.

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