North America
Survey on Gender Equality at Home
Regional Brief
Introduction

The Survey on Gender Equality at Home offers a global snapshot of life at home, from the perspectives of Facebook users around the world. It was conducted in July 2020 to capture household gender dynamics during the COVID-19 pandemic, and reached a statistically representative sample of half a million people who use Facebook, spanning seven world regions and covering 208 countries, territories, and islands in 80 languages.

Over 460,000 people opted in to answer questions that focused on four areas in particular: attitudes and beliefs about gender equality; participation in unpaid care and domestic work; resource allocation and decision-making; and COVID-19’s impact on everyday lives. The survey results were disaggregated for men and women, allowing insights into gender differences.¹

This brief shares findings from North America,² describing aggregate patterns in survey responses from the region. The findings presented are based on responses from 6,002 individuals, including 3,489 who identified as female and 2,513 who identified as male. This brief does not seek to describe the region as a whole. Rather, results are calibrated to the online population in the region. Note that as of 2017, about 88 percent of the total North America population was using the internet.³ This population tends to be younger (62 percent between the age of 18 and 54), more urban (56 percent reside in cities), and better educated (71 percent have more than secondary education) than the general population. While this limits the generalizability of the findings, the picture that emerges provides important insights into gender differences for the region.

1. This report focuses on individuals who reported their gender as either female or male. This decision was taken in response to the very low share of respondents who selected the option ‘other.’
2. Countries allocated into regions based upon World Bank classifications.
FIGURE 1
Countries surveyed in North America
Key Findings

I. Gender norms

II. Unpaid care and domestic work

III. Resource allocation and decision-making

IV. Life during COVID-19
The majority of respondents (90 percent) in North America reported that they agree\(^4\) with the statement, “Men and women should have equal opportunities (e.g. in education, jobs, household decision-making).”

While the overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that men and women should have equal opportunities, respondents’ perceptions of their neighbors’ beliefs were somewhat different and also showed some gendered differences. Men expected an average of 7.9 (out of 10) of their neighbors to believe that men and women should have equal opportunities. Women expected 7.4 (out of 10) of their neighbors to do so.

\(^4\) We collapsed the proportion of respondents who indicated that they "agree" or "strongly agree" with this statement. This comment applies throughout the report.

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90 percent of respondents in North America agreed that men and women should have equal opportunities.
II. UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK

35 percent of respondents agreed that a woman's most important role is to take care of her home and children, while 15 percent of respondents agreed that household expenses are the responsibility of the man, even if his wife can help him.

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree with the statement, “A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and children.” Among survey respondents in North America, 35 percent of respondents said they agree with this statement. The pattern that emerges is somewhat different when we consider respondents’ perceptions of norms in society: both men and women in the region reported the expectation that an average of about half (5 out of 10) of their neighbors would agree.

Regarding men’s household roles, 15 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, “Household expenses are the responsibility of the man, even if his wife can help him,” but we find gender differences: while 21 percent of men agreed with this statement, just 10 percent of women did.

Notably, respondents on the whole think nearly half of their neighbors hold such beliefs: men reported that an average of 4.7 (out of 10) of their neighbors would also agree that “household expenses are the responsibility of the man, even if his wife can help him,” while women expected an average of 4.3 (out of 10) of their neighbors would do so.

FIGURE 2
Proportion of respondents who agreed with the statement, “Household expenses are the responsibility of the man, even if his wife can help him.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>MEN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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Women were significantly more likely than men to report spending time cooking, cleaning and on household management.

Survey responses indicated gender differences in responsibility for household chores. Women were significantly more likely to report taking care of cleaning (88 percent of women vs. 74 percent of men), cooking (78 percent of women vs. 61 percent of men), and on household management (70 percent of women vs. 63 percent of men). Meanwhile, men were significantly more likely to report collecting water or fuel (19 percent of men vs. 12 percent of women) and supporting the family business (17 percent of men vs. 10 percent of women).
III. RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND DECISION-MAKING

Women were less likely than men to report being engaged in income-generating activities and the main income earner, and were more likely than men to say that they “fully depend on someone else in [their] household”.

Women were significantly less likely than men to report being engaged in income-generating activities. While 64 percent of men reported being recently engaged in income-generating activities, just 50 percent of women did.

Furthermore, women were also less likely to report being the main income earner. Here, we see a 21 percentage point gender gap: 85 percent of men from the region reported being the main income earner, compared to just 64 percent of women.

Lastly, men were also significantly more likely to report fully covering their own expenses, while women were significantly more likely to report that they “fully depend” on another member of their household.

FIGURE 3
Proportion of respondents who report being the main income earner in their household, by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>MEN</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64%</td>
<td>85%</td>
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Men were more likely than women to report owning motorized vehicles, land, and smartphones.

The survey illustrated a number of gendered differences in asset ownership. Men were more likely than women to report owning motorized vehicles (75 percent of women vs. 80 percent of men), land (24 percent of women vs. 34 percent of men), and smartphones (84 percent of women vs. 89 percent of men).
Among respondents from North America, the most commonly reported impact from COVID-19 was being forced to isolate or follow quarantine orders.

When asked how their lives have been affected by COVID-19,5 the most common response from survey participants in North America was being forced to isolate or follow quarantine orders (45 percent).

Responses regarding other impacts from COVID-19 illustrated significant gender differences: women were more likely to report longer wait times to seek medical care (36 percent of women vs. 29 percent of men) and to report being impacted by having school canceled or reduced (36 percent of women vs. 26 percent of men). Other impacts were reported more equitably among men and women, such as 17 percent of respondents losing a job, and 19 percent being unable to seek medical care.

Lastly, in a separate question regarding care work, women were also more likely to report that their time spent on care work has increased during the pandemic (53 percent of women vs. 44 percent of men).

5. Respondents were provided with a series of options including: School was canceled or reduced; Migrated to different geographical area; Difficulty accessing medical or hygiene supplies; Longer wait times to visit doctors/seek medical care; Lost a job; Lost access to/ could not use public transport; Unable to perform usual personal care/health routines; Unable to seek medical care; Isolate or follow a quarantine order; None of the above; and Other.
The most commonly reported concern during COVID-19 was having access to accurate information.

When asked about their main concerns during the pandemic, the most common response among survey participants in North America was having access to accurate information (41 percent).

Other notable concerns included: access to health care (27 percent), being stuck at home (35 percent), and the future of work (34 percent). There were also some gendered patterns among responses: 35 percent of women reported concerns on having enough food and basic supplies, compared to 28 percent of men. Likewise, 39 percent of women reported concerns on having enough money to sustain their family, compared to 33 percent of men.

Lastly, respondents were also asked about food insecurity with the question, “During the last 30 days, was there a time when you were worried about not having enough food to eat because of lack of money or other resources?” In North America, women were significantly more likely to express this concern (30 percent of women vs. 23 percent of men).

FIGURE 4
Proportion of respondents who reported concern in the following categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HAVING ENOUGH MONEY TO SUSTAIN FAMILY</th>
<th>HAVING ENOUGH FOOD AND SUPPLIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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6. Respondents were provided with a series of options including: Having enough money to sustain my family; Having enough food and basic supplies for my family; Being stuck at home for a long time; Having access to accurate information on coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; The future of my work; Access to health care; Repaying outstanding loans; Staying home with limited things to do; My children education; I do not have any concerns at this time; and Other.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Visit www.dataforgood.fb.com/docs/gendersurveyreport for more information about Facebook’s Survey on Gender Equality at Home.