

# WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND THE LAW: A REPORT CARD\*

## EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW BEGINS WITH THE CONSTITUTION

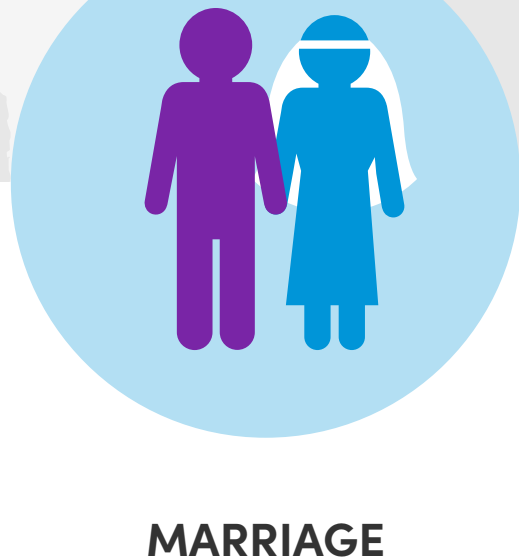
**192**

**countries guarantee equality and non-discrimination.**

However, **12 constitutions** do not apply this guarantee in matters of



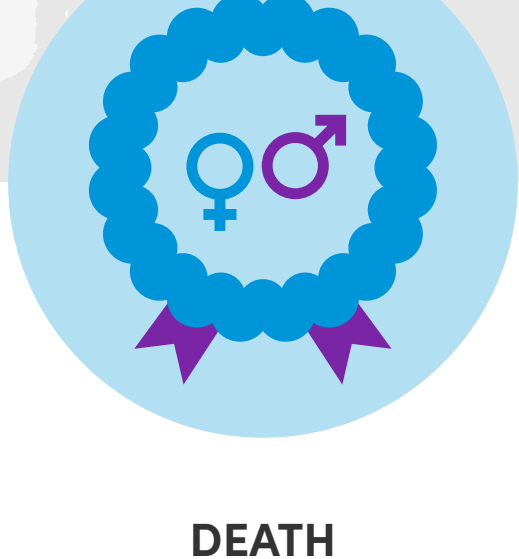
ADOPTION



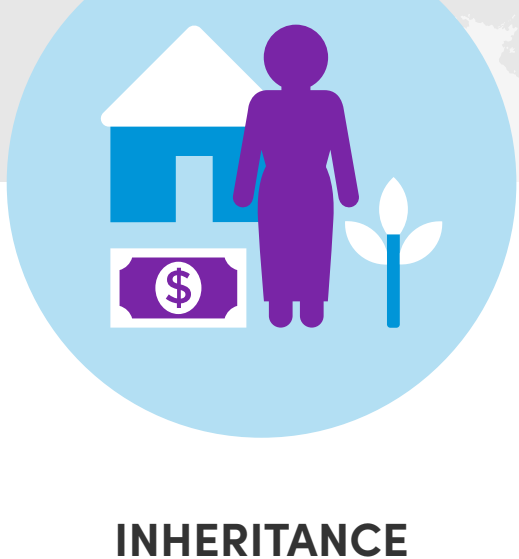
MARRIAGE



DIVORCE



DEATH

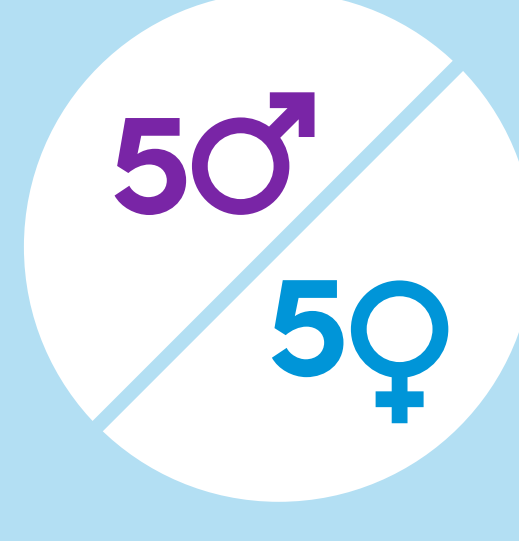


INHERITANCE OF PROPERTY

Of the **44 constitutional** monarchies in existence, **27** are strictly patrilineal.



While **192 countries** guarantee participation in the political affairs of the State, only **25** mandate quotas as a means to achieving gender equality in politics.



## MANY LAWS STILL DISCRIMINATE IN MATTERS OF MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

In **29 countries**, women cannot legally head their households



In **41 countries**, daughters cannot inherit in the same way as their brothers



In **43 countries**, widows cannot inherit in the same way as widowers



## IN TOO MANY COUNTRIES, THE LAW ALLOWS FOR EARLY AND CHILD MARRIAGE, WHICH ERODES THE FULL POTENTIAL OF ABOUT 12 MILLION GIRLS ANNUALLY

In **23**

**COUNTRIES**, the minimum age of marriage for girls is below 18 years

Only **40**

**COUNTRIES**, have a minimum age set at 18 years for both girls and boys, with no exceptions

In **116**

**COUNTRIES**, the minimum age of marriage is 18 years with exceptions

## WOMEN ARE NOT EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW IN THE WORLD OF WORK, RESTRICTING THEIR PRODUCTIVE AND EARNING CAPACITIES

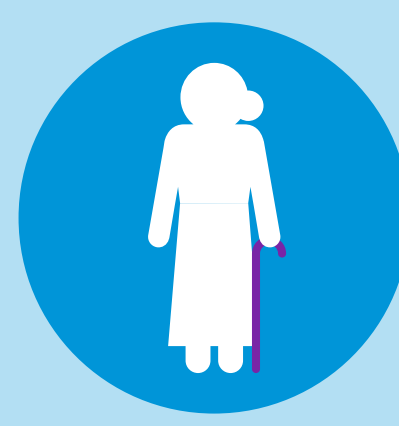
**98**

**COUNTRIES** do not legally provide for equal remuneration for work of equal value



In **66**

**COUNTRIES**, the age of mandatory retirement is lower for women



In **72**

**COUNTRIES**, women face industry restrictions when looking for jobs



## PARENTAL LEAVE



In **71** **COUNTRIES**, women are not entitled to paid maternity leave of at least 14 weeks (ILO standard)

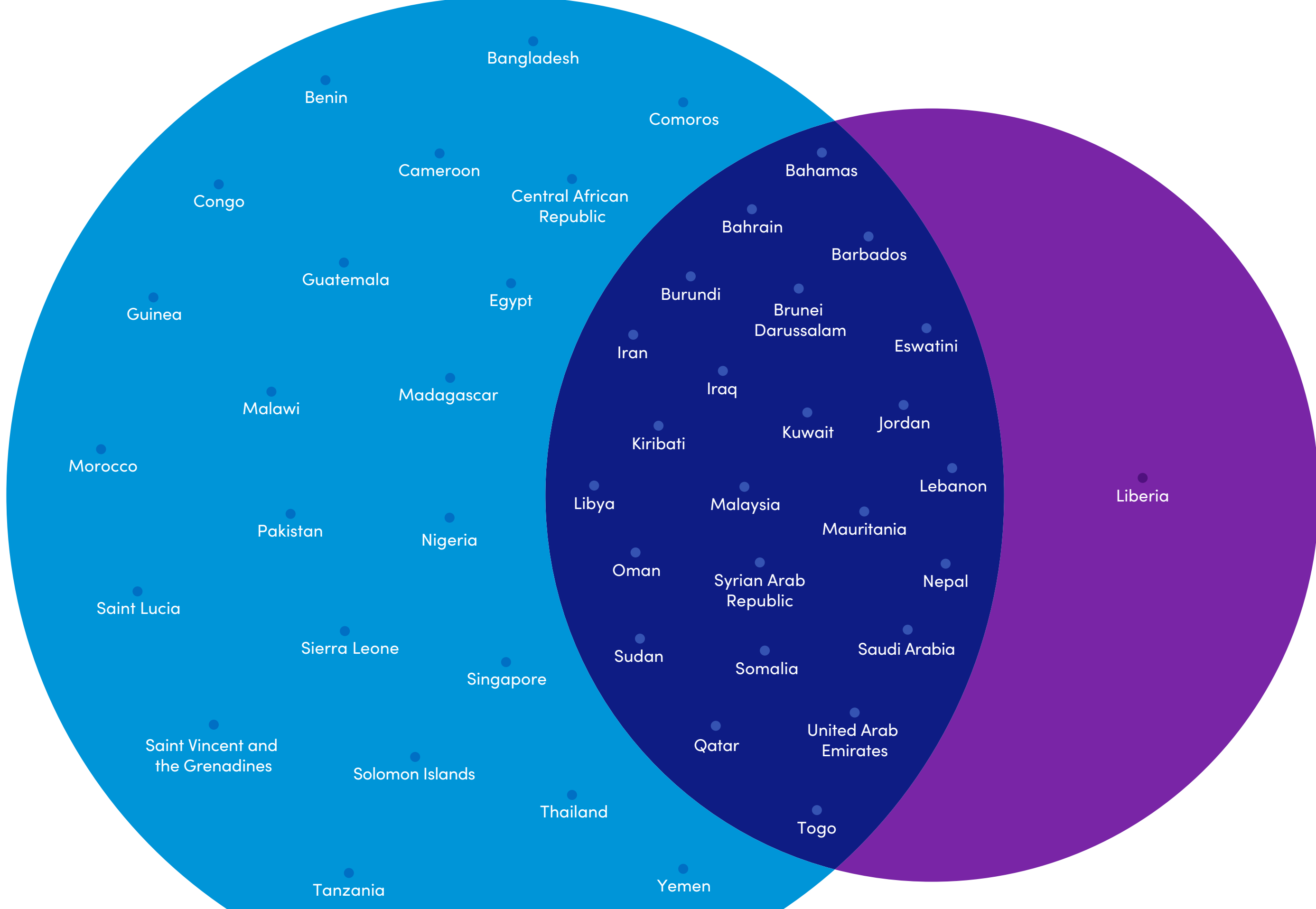


In **78** **COUNTRIES**, fathers do not have access to paid leave

## EQUAL NATIONALITY RIGHTS PROMOTE FAMILY COHESION AND ENSURE ACCESS TO BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES

However, in **47 countries** a married woman cannot confer nationality to her noncitizen spouse on the same basis as a married man.

In **25 countries**, women are unable to pass on their nationality to their children in the same way as men.

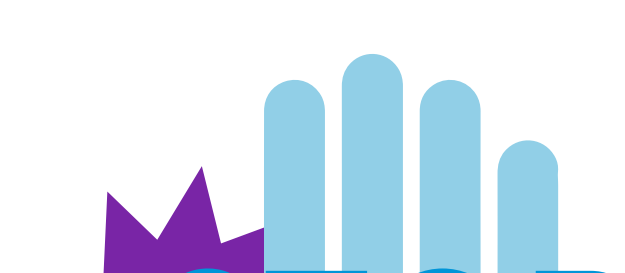


- A woman cannot pass on her nationality to her noncitizen spouse
- A woman cannot pass on her nationality to both her noncitizen spouse and child
- A woman cannot pass on her nationality to her children

## THE LAW OR ITS ABSENCE CAN PUT WOMEN AND GIRLS AT RISK OF VIOLENCE

In **20**

**countries**, the law exempts perpetrators from rape charges if they marry the survivor



**32**

**countries** have not enacted legislation to specifically address domestic violence

## UN WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN LAW REFORM (2015-2020)

UN Women, the World Bank Group and OECD Development Centre are co-custodians for Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 5.1.1. The indicator measures government efforts to put in place legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality, including repeal or reform of discriminatory laws.

**509**  
**LEGAL INTERVENTIONS**



Sources (as of June 2021)

\* This is a report card on selected areas of the law, that draws on the forthcoming report by UN Women, "Shaping the Law for Women and Girls" (2021).

CONSTITUTIONS: UN Women Gender Equality Constitutional Database (updated in 2021); MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND PROPERTY RIGHTS: The World Bank, Women, Business and the Law database (2021); EARLY AND CHILD MARRIAGE: UNICEF, Child marriage database (2020); Assessment based on The World Bank, Women, Business and the Law database (2020), crosschecked against Girls not Brides Atlas (2021), latest State reports submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and information under SDG indicator 5.3.1 (2021); WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: The World Bank, Women, Business and the Law database (2021); NATIONALITY RIGHTS: UNHCR, Background Note on Gender Equality, Nationality Laws and Statelessness 2021; Equally Now, The State We're In: Ending Sexism in Nationality Laws (2018); VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: The World Bank, Women, Business and the Law database (2021); UNFPA, State of World Population 2021 "My Body is My Own" - Claiming the right to autonomy and self-determination"; UN WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN LAW REFORM: UN Women's internal assessment of annual reports from 2015 to 2020, compiled in April 2021.



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