

# Enacting Equality for Women



Mala Htun and Francesca R. Jensenius

June 7, 2023

# Global rights revolution for women

---

- Autonomous feminist movements and transnational feminist networks → VAW legislation (Htun and Weldon, 2012)
- Feminist street protests → abortion law in Latin America (Encarnación, 2022)
- Political institutionalization of religious authority thwarted reform of discriminatory family law (Htun and Weldon, 2015; Htun, 2003b)
- Fertility declines in Europe and East Asia → elite support for work-life balance policies (Rosenbluth, 2006)
- CEDAW created *process* to hold governments accountable for their commitments to equality (Baldez, 2014)
- Post- conflict context let feminist groups influence rights-related policy (Tripp, 2015)

# We can't assume that laws change society

---

- Weak and unstable institutions across the Global South (Brinks, Levitsky, and Murillo, 2020)
- Social behavior not aligned with the law even in advanced democracies, especially on civil rights (Edelman, 2016)
- Large law-practice gaps due to resistance from above and below

Laws that work use money, coercion, or norms to compel behavioral change by individual or collective actors

# Story 1 Daddy leave in Norway changed gender roles in parenting

---

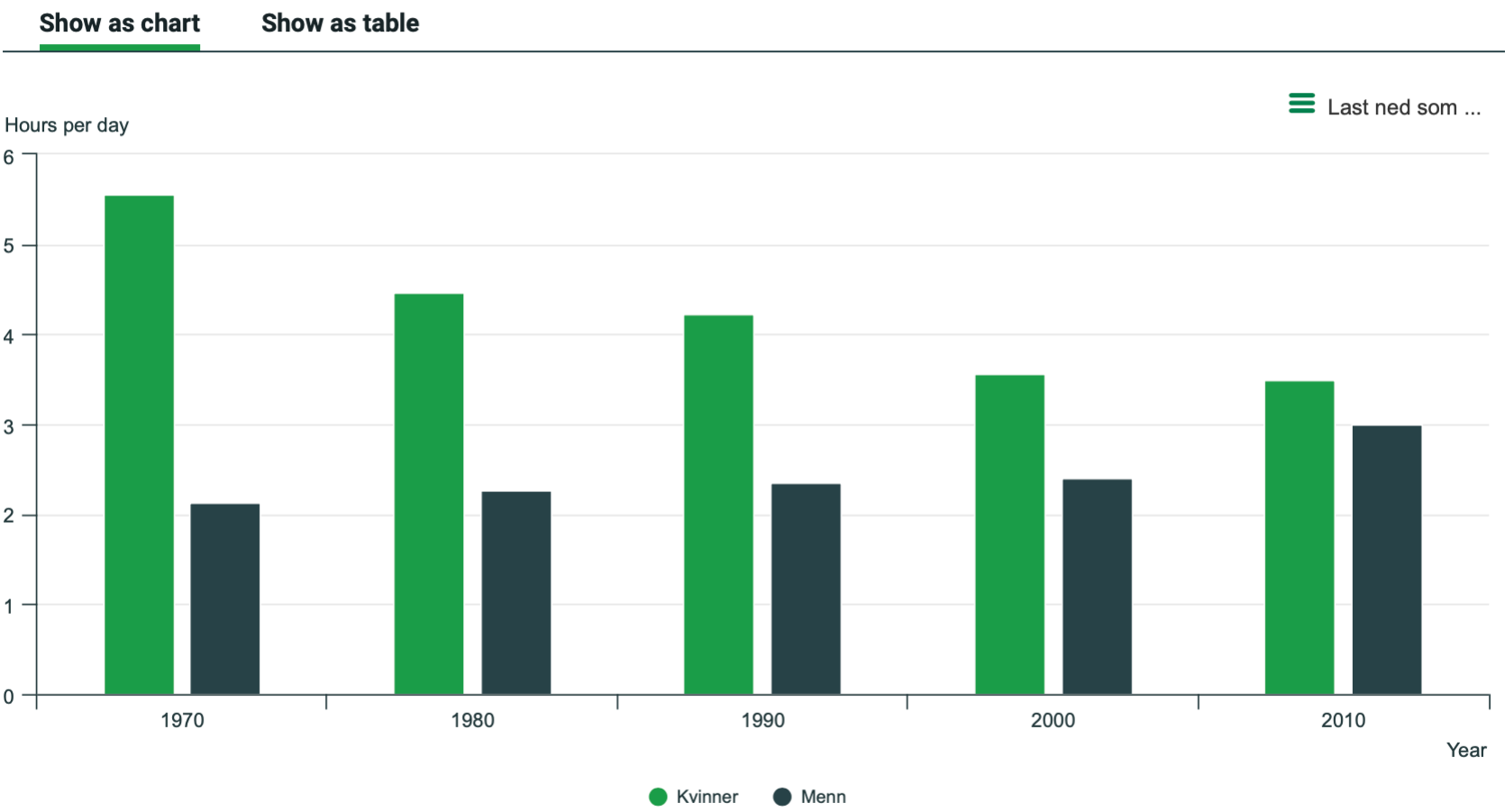
*Money—financial incentives can move individual behavior in supportive contexts*

# Norway

---

- 1986 masculinity commission endorsed gender role change
- 1993 = "daddy quota": use-it-or-lose-it parental leave
- Before daddy quota:
  - < 3% of men took leave
  - 25% in the month after the law was changed
  - 60% in 2006 (Cools et al. 2015)
  - 71% in 2018
- → more equal gender division of household labor and better child well being (Cools et al., 2015; Kotsadam and Finseraas, 2011; Kotsadam and Finseraas 2013)

Time spent on unpaid household and care work (5.4.1)



Source: Time use survey, Statistics Norway

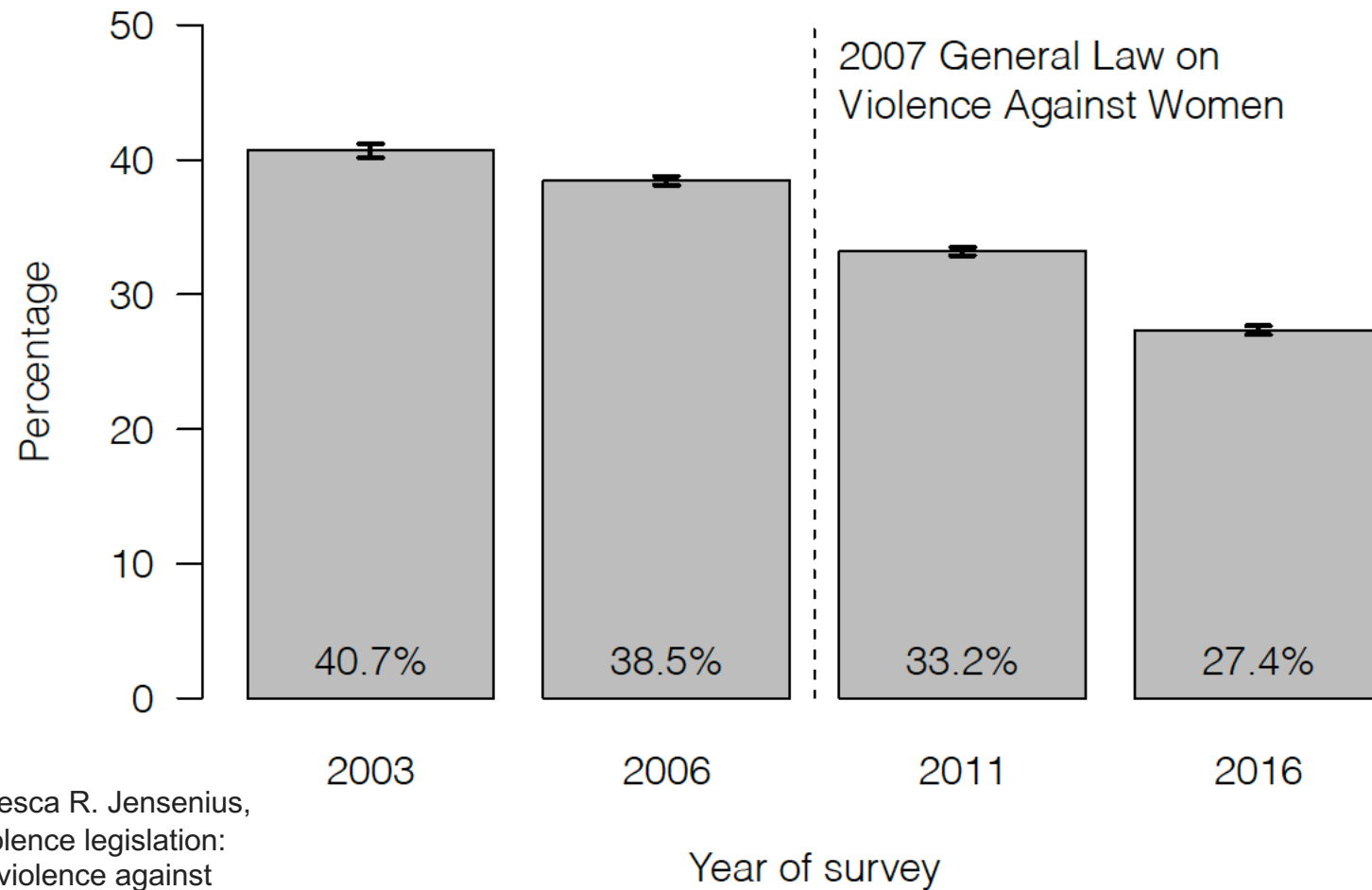
# Story 2 Expressive power of 2<sup>nd</sup> generation anti-violence laws changed abuse rates, attitudes, and reporting in Mexico

---

*Expressive laws can change norms with help from societal actors such as mobilized feminist movements*



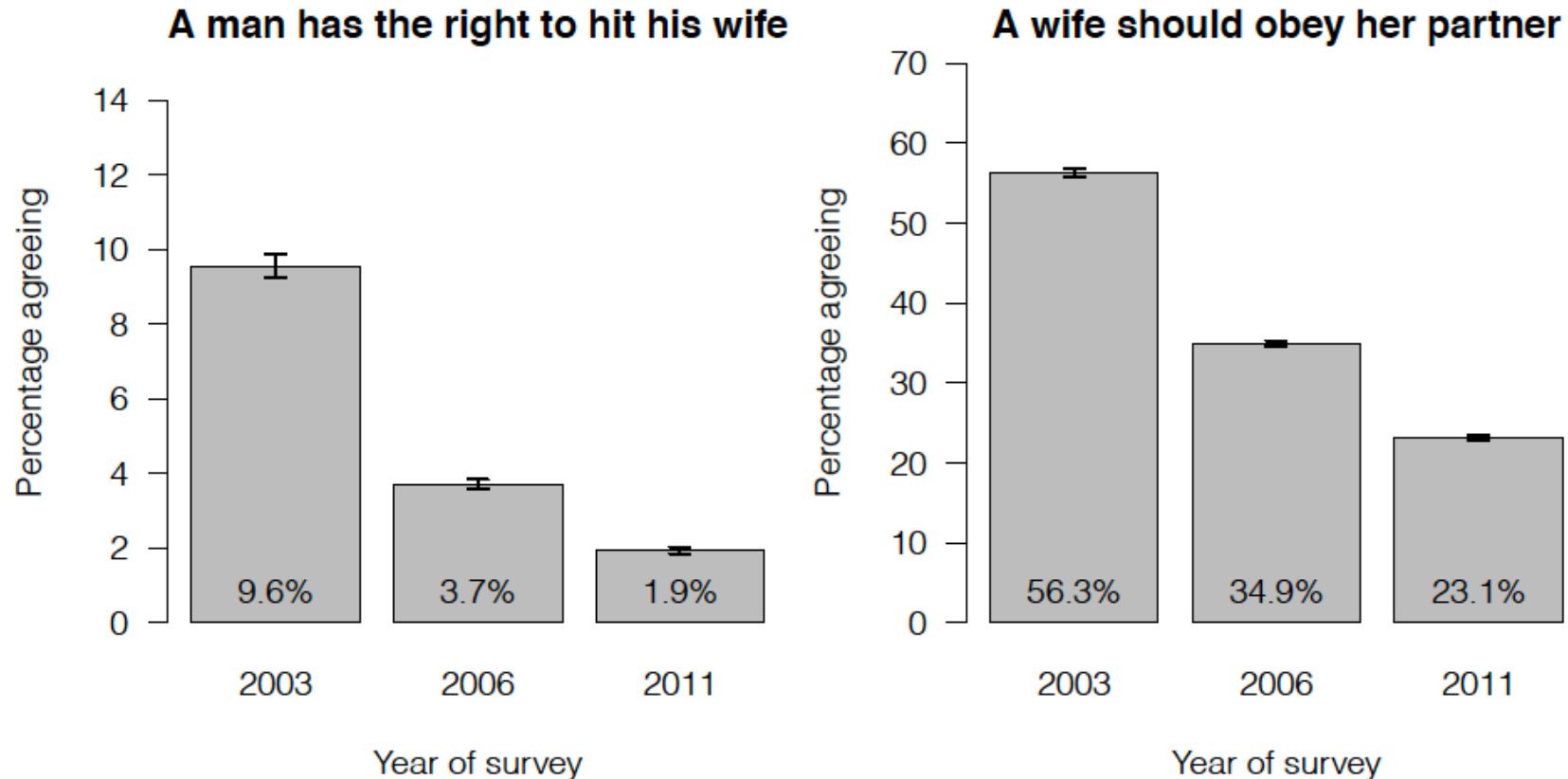
Figure 1: Percentage of women saying they experienced domestic abuse in the previous year (95% confidence intervals at the top of each bar)



Source: Mala Htun and Francesca R. Jensenius, "Expressive power of anti-violence legislation: Changes in social norms on violence against women in Mexico." *World Politics* 74, no. 1 (2022): 1-36.

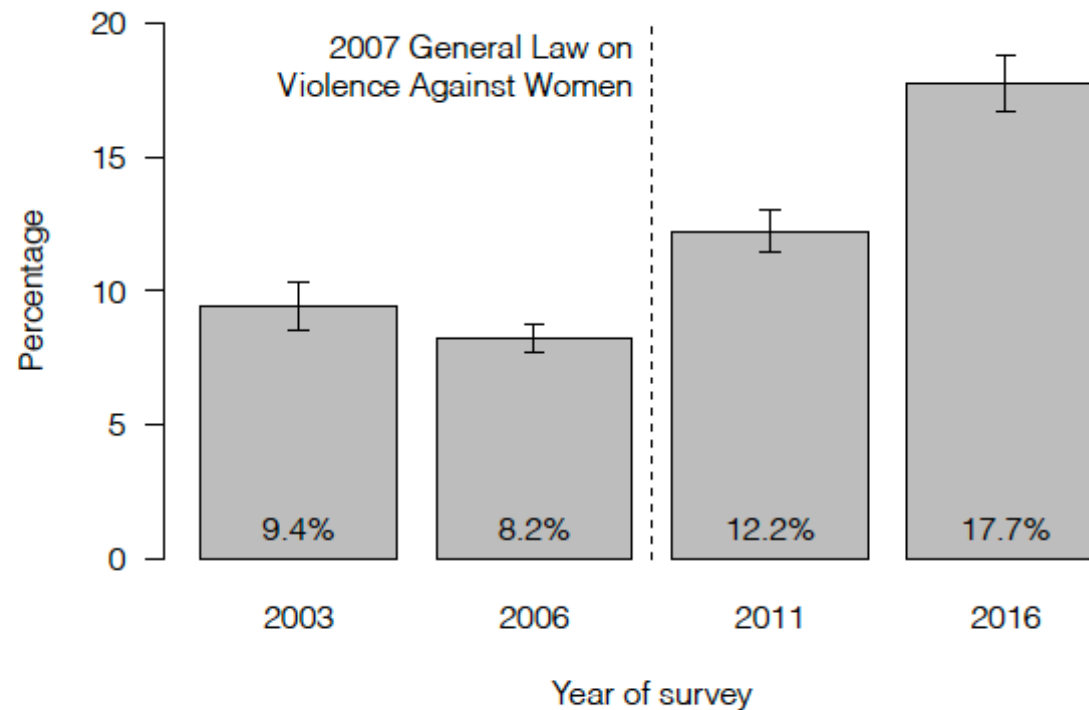
# Change in attitudes conducive to domestic abuse?

Figure 4: Attitudes towards male control changing over time, ENDIREH 2003, 2006, 2011(95% confidence intervals at the top of each bar)



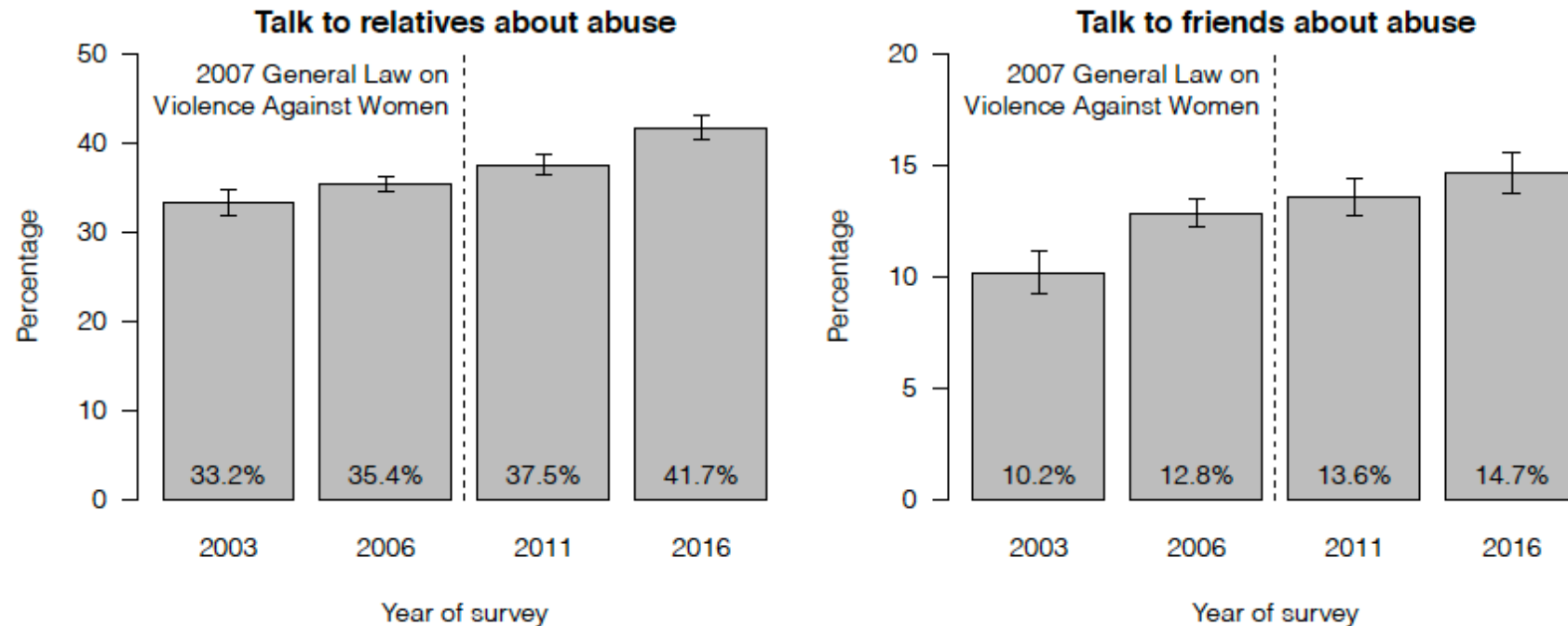
# More women reporting to authorities?

Figure 5: Percentage of women experiencing physical domestic abuse during the year preceding the survey saying they reported it to the authorities (95% confidence intervals at the top of each bar)



# More women telling family and friends?

Figure 7: Percentage of women experiencing physical domestic abuse during the year preceding the survey saying they told relatives (left panel) and friends (right panel)



# Findings summary

---

- Bundled effect of legal change, feminist mobilization, and legal coverage → decline in experiences of violence, decline in attitudes conducive to violence, rise in reporting rates, and widespread knowledge of the law
- These trends *are consistent with* emergence of new norms surrounding gender violence

***Framework and case selection for Htun-Jensenius book on effects of women's rights laws***

<b><i>Mechanism</i></b>	<b>Money</b>	<b>Coercion</b>	<b>Norms</b>
<b><i>Target</i></b>			
<b>General population</b>	<b>Story 1</b>  Parental leave: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cross-national patterns</li> <li>- Daddy leave in Norway</li> </ul>	<b>Story 2</b>  Abortion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cross-national patterns</li> <li>- Sex selective abortion in India</li> </ul>	<b>Story 3</b>  VAW legislation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cross-national patterns</li> <li>- Expressive power of anti-violence legislation in Mexico</li> </ul>
<b>Collective actors</b>	<b>Story 4</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ??</li> </ul>	<b>Story 5</b>  Sexual harassment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Crossnational patterns</li> <li>- Title IX and US universities</li> </ul>	<b>Story 6</b>  Work-life balance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Crossnational patterns</li> <li>- <i>Karoshi</i> in Japan</li> </ul>

# The role of feminist movements

---

- Civic activism helped get progressive laws and policies adopted.
  - Most crucial in areas of violence, harassment, workplace equality, and reproductive rights
  - Other factors—religion-state relations, party ideology, union strength, fertility decline—mattered for other issues
- Civic activism furthers enforcement
  - raises awareness and increases costs of non-enforcement
- Social mobilization furthers implementation
  - provides information on gaps (studies, media)
  - builds knowledge of rights (education, consciousness-raising)
  - supplies resources to claim rights (legal assistance, social support)

# Other sources

- Mala Htun, Francesca R. Jensenius, and Jami Nelson Nuñez, "[Gender Discriminatory Laws and Women's Economic Agency](#)," *Social Politics* 26, Issue 2 (Summer 2019): 193–222.
- Mala Htun, Francesca R. Jensenius, and Liv Tønnessen, "[Introduction to Special Issue of Social Politics: Legal Regimes, Women's Work, and Women's Empowerment](#)," *Social Politics* 26, Issue 2 (Summer 2019): 189–192. Special issue co-edited by Htun, Jensenius, and Tønnessen.
- Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon, *The Logics of Gender Justice: State Action on Women's Rights around the World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
- Mala Htun, "[Women's Equality and the Covid-19 Caregiving Crisis](#)," *Perspectives on Politics* 20:2 (2022): 635–645.
- Mala Htun and Francesca Jensenius, "[Fighting Violence Against Women: Laws, Norms, and Challenges Ahead](#)," *Daedalus* 149, 1 (2020): 144–159.
- Mala Htun, Francesca Jensenius, Justine Tinkler, Melanie Dominguez, and Carlos Contreras, "[Effects of Mandatory Sexual Misconduct Training at U.S. Universities](#)," *Socius*, 8 (2022).