

**Backlash and Gender-Focused Aid:
A Quantitative Study of Gender-Based Violence in
Sub-Saharan Africa**

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Abstract

Women's empowerment and gender equality for all women and girls is one of the United Nations' seventeen Sustainable Development Goals to eradicate poverty and ensure a sustainable future for all. Global development projects targeting women seek to challenge existing discriminatory gender norms, power relationships and values. Based on the backlash hypothesis that suggests changes in existing power relations and gender roles can result in a violent backlash, I use quantitative analysis to identify whether there is a correlation between gender-focused aid and gender-based violence against women in Sub-Saharan African countries. The time-series analysis did not demonstrate a statistically significant positive or negative correlation between gender-focused aid and gender-based violence against women. The inconclusive results show that existing limited data and the lack of comprehensive indicators to measure the violence against women creates challenges in understanding the impact of development efforts on the well-being of women around the world.

Keywords: GBVAW, Gender-Focused Aid, Sub-Saharan Africa

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List of Acronyms

FIAP	Feminist International Assistance Policy
GAD	Gender and Development
GBVAW	Gender-based violence against women
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HSSI	Health and Survival sub-index
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
UN	United Nations
WID	Women in Development

Introduction

In 2000, the United Nations (UN) recognized women's empowerment and gender equality as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), mainstreaming them into international development aid practices to eradicate global poverty. Following the deadline of the MDGs in 2015, the UN developed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that continue to recognize the importance of women in development by making gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls one of the seventeen primary goals. In 2018, according to the Global Gender Gap indicators on gender-based differences in access to opportunities in politics, the economy, education and health, there is on average a 31% gender gap worldwide. The three regions with the largest gender gap are South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) where the gender gap rate is an estimated 33.7%. It is projected that it will require 135 years to reach gender equality in this region (World Economic Forum, 2018).

In 2017, Canada's Liberal government announced the development of a new feminist international assistance policy (FIAP) with the aim of eradicating global poverty and building a more inclusive world by addressing gender inequalities that women and girls face around the world (Government of Canada, n.d.). According to FIAP, Canada promised to direct no less than 95% of international assistance to gender equality by 2021-22. This promise would be implemented through two main streams: (1) the 'gender-integrated' stream aims to spend at least 80% of bilateral international development assistance on gender equality and empowerment initiatives, and (2) the 'gender-targeted' stream aims to increase overall gender aid up to 15% (Government of Canada, n.d.). In 2018, the new government budget committed an additional \$2 billion to FIAP over the next five years including \$200 million in 2019 and subsequent increases of \$100 million every year (S. Brown & Swiss, 2017). FIAP also included a strong commitment to delivering aid to the least developed countries, ensuring that 50% of bilateral development assistance aid goes to the Sub-Saharan Africa region (Government of Canada, n.d.) where half of the world's population living in the extreme poverty reside.

Canada's willingness to become one of the first countries to lead with international assistance policies framed as feminist has been met with both support and

criticism. Although women's empowerment and gender equality have been recognized as central elements in combating global poverty, framing assistance aid as “feminist” can have unintended negative consequences. This is especially true with the gender-focused aid efforts that encourage women to challenge the existing norms in countries that preserve patriarchal values and practices. The threat to existing power relationships can be perceived not only as a challenge to existing norms but also as an attempt to undermine the existing non-western cultures by spreading western liberal values on gender roles (Chishti, 2010; De Cordier, 2010), triggering resistance among aid recipients. The resistance can manifest in various forms, including a violent backlash against the very target group the international assistance aid is aiming to help (Whaley, Messner, & Veysey, 2013).

The backlash theory raises the question of whether there is a link between gender-focused aid and gender-based violence against women (GBVAW). In this project, I seek to answer this question with an analysis of how gender-focused aid and the levels of discriminatory practices against women relate to GBVAW. For the purpose of this research, I use data on gender-focused aid and GBVAW across countries in Sub Saharan Africa between 2009 to 2017, employing a time-series analysis. I argue that countries that score high on the discriminatory practices against women will have a higher probability of backlash to gender-focused aid, observed as increasing rates of GBVAW. I hypothesize that this backlash is an effort to reinforce the traditional patriarchal practices and existing gender relations in such societies.

I focus my study on Sub-Saharan Africa because this region has been one of the largest international aid recipients with a high prevalence of extreme poverty, gender inequality, and a history of violent intra- and inter-state conflicts. At the same time, this region encompasses a diversity of cultures, religions, colonial histories and economies, allowing me to control for such explanations and isolate the relationship between gender-focused aid and GBVAW, as mediated through each country's level of patriarchal practices.

Through this research, I aim to build on previous research and contribute to the understanding of the effectiveness and implications of global efforts to combat gender inequality and relieve extreme poverty in developing countries. In the current age of economic globalization and rising nationalistic sentiments in response to diminishing

borders, women's empowerment and gender-focused aid may be perceived as a threat, undermining existing development efforts by causing harm to those it aims to help. The first section of this paper will provide a brief overview of development discourse, the roots of patriarchal practices in the Sub-Saharan region, as well as the existing theory on women's empowerment and GBVAW. The second section of this paper consists of the methodology, description of the quantitative analysis, and discussion with concluding remarks.

Historical Overview

Gender and Development

Since the end of the Second World War, guided by reconstruction efforts and promises of modernization, wealthy countries delivered economic policies and aid to developing countries. By the early 1980s, after more than three decades, these efforts appeared to have made a significant difference, especially in parts of Asia and Latin America. However, this was not the case for Africa (Harriss, 2014). In 1981, the World Bank published “Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa,” also known as the Berg report, which argued that many policies and programs intended to accelerate economic development in the region had actually led to rent-seeking, widespread poverty, and mounting debt. The report called for major changes in aid policies (Harriss, 2014; Hulme, 2014).

The early development discourse during this period reflected the liberal and constructivist beliefs that global poverty is a mere result of underdeveloped economies. However, the pursuit of economic growth alone failed to make significant inroads toward eradicating poverty; indeed it seemed to cause notable social inequalities (Cremin & Nakabugo, 2012; Hulme, 2014; Potter & Vandana, 2014). Aid and development measures from this period did not concentrate on poverty reduction or target marginalized groups such as women. Instead, the expectation was that the benefits of economic development and modernization would eventually “trickle-down” to such groups (Konate & Mainah, 2018; Pettman, 1996; Visvanthan & Rai, 2011)

With the understanding that economic development and modernization efforts were not enough to address global poverty, the development discourse took a new path—one that emphasized development mechanisms beyond economic growth (Hulme, 2014). The unravelling of the complex relationship between economic growth, global poverty and inequality (Hulme, 2014) significantly changed how governments and development practitioners understand economic development. This is reflected in Amartya Sen’s (1999) argument that economic development is not the final goal for development, but one of several potential approaches to expand freedoms and improve the overall social and economic well-being and quality of life. Consequently, global measurements of poverty have shifted from purely economic measures, such as \$1 a

day, to the more comprehensive Human Development Index and Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index, placing development and poverty eradication at the heart of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals in 2000 (Hulme & Fukuda-Parr, 2009).

Similarly, the recognition of women in development underwent a significant transformation from virtually non-existent to becoming mainstreamed within the global development agenda. According to Moser (1993), approaches to women in mainstream development policy have undergone five distinct stages: welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment. The welfare approach dominated early development efforts and is based on the perception of women as passive recipients of aid without seeking to challenge existing inequalities. One of the first works that drew attention towards recognizing the importance of women as hidden economic actors in economic development was published by Boserup in the 1970s. In "Woman's role in economic development," Boserup unravelled that although agricultural policies in Africa primarily attract women as labour, the benefits of this labour are predominantly reaped by men, further deepening poverty.

Boserup's research gave momentum to the Women in Development (WID) approach that recognized women's labour, advocated for the economic participation of women, and encouraged research on women's issues in development projects (Razavi & Miller, 1995). The WID approach signified a shift in development policy towards Moser's equity, anti-poverty and efficiency models, which reflected predominantly western liberal feminist values of legal equity and labour market participation (Pettman, 1996). These development approaches have posed many challenges to the fact that the experiences of women in the developing world were hitherto excluded from development discourse (Brown, 2007). The WID approach is heavily criticized dominant and conventional development policy for being driven by the needs and interest of Western women instead of being led by the experiences of women in developing countries who remained unheard due to the lack of representation in international platforms (Brown, 2007; Datta, 2004; Pettman, 1996; Razavi & Miller, 1995).

In the 1970s, these criticisms and the rise of social constructivist theories of gender facilitated a shift towards the more inclusive Gender and Development (GAD) approach. GAD offered a new method of understanding the distribution of power between the genders and gender relationships. The main strength of the GAD approach

is in advocating to address the roots of gender inequality through empowerment, inclusiveness, and mainstreaming gender into the development discourse (Hira & Parfitt, 2004; Jaquette, 2017). However, the GAD has also been criticized for being highly depoliticized (Visvanthan & Rai, 2011) and according to Brown (2007) “less likely to make male-dominated state and planning institutions uncomfortable” (p. 77). Despite criticisms of both WID and GAD approaches have been institutionalized (Jaquette, 2017) and drive gender-based development practices.

Although the international agenda strives to address the needs of women, there is still a visible separation of policy and practice. The global development discourse recognizes the importance of gender inequality. However, in practice, the implementation of gender projects continue to utilize “add-women-and-stir” and excluding other actors by equating the inequality to exclusively women (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015b; Ellerby, 2017a). This leads to a visible struggle for inclusion of all actors in gender-focused development and the representation of all races, religions, and cultures, as well as to make significant advances towards improving the lives of all women.

Women in Sub-Saharan Africa

The experiences of women in Sub-Saharan Africa have been shaped by the history of the continent, that continues to face development challenges. Although Sub-Saharan Africa encompasses a wide variety of nations and cultures, gender inequality is a common theme throughout the history of the region. When analyzing the role of African women in society, there is a demarcation between their domestic and public roles (Dibie, 2018). This boundary underwent significant changes during the three major historical periods: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial (Machakanja, 2015).

During the pre-colonial period, societies in Sub Saharan Africa had both matrilineal and patrilineal kinship systems. Many practices within the pre-colonial African religions did not limit the role of women to domestic aspects of life (Machakanja, 2015; Mikell, 1997; Selebogo & Ojakorotu, 2013). One of the most significant influences on women’s role during the pre-colonial period was Muslim expansion. With Islamization, some societies retained traditional cultures, but others underwent significant changes, notably the exclusion of women in public roles and leaving them to “reproduction and

nurturing” (Njoh & Akiwumi, 2012) shifting the power relation between men and women towards more patriarchal practices.

Development during the colonial and post-colonial period further deepened the patriarchal structures of many African societies. Mikell (1997) distinguishes three “estates” of colonial rule: church, administration and trading establishments that each created condition to further isolate women in domestic roles. Following the pattern of Islamization, through mass conversion, the church dictated new social norms, including the belief that women are inferior and subordinate to men (Njoh & Akiwumi, 2012). The trade and economic expansion of the colonizers economically marginalized women, who had historically dominated the agricultural sector. The colonial emphasis on male education, employment and industrialization also created more vulnerabilities for women through economic disadvantage (Visvanthan & Rai, 2011), and this continued even after decolonization.

Colonial administrations also destabilized gender-based power relations in Sub-Saharan Africa. Culturally, African societies had both horizontal and vertical hierarchical structures: men over women, adult over children, wealthy over poor, one ethnic or religious identity over another and with colonization, a new dimension was added across both genders: white people over people of colour (Dibie, 2018). The addition of the new dimension to the hierarchy of power built on the existing hegemonic masculinity, which apart from the oppression of women has introduced oppression of one perception of masculinity over another (Morrell, Jewkes, & Lindegger, 2012).

Decolonization and the subsequent independence of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in many cases meant the perpetuation of institutions established by the colonizers. Many elites who began building newly independent countries prioritized economic exploitation and monopolization of political power instead of developing democratic institutions that would guarantee political and economic rights to the general population (Machakanja, 2015). This political and economic exploitation continued to marginalize women (Visvanthan & Rai, 2011). Although in recent decades, there were actions to enact constitutions, laws, and regulations to guarantee women’s rights by the government, the discriminatory religious laws often persist in the legal systems. Women continue to face the realities of patronage, corruption, and patriarchal practices in their communities (Machakanja, 2015; Rugege, 2016; Visvanthan & Rai, 2011).

As a result, African women, as well as women in other developing countries, are caught between opposing ideologies. On one side, there is an expectation for women to explore their individualism and freedom through education, employment, and political participation, encouraged through international empowerment and gender equality efforts. On the other side, patriarchal societal and cultural norms, deeply rooted in historical experiences, work to keep women in a subordinate role, leaving women themselves between a rock and a hard place.

Theory: Challenges of GBVAW

GBVAW and Patriarchy

According to the WHO, every third woman in the world experiences some form of violence in their lifetime (García-Moreno et al., 2015). Violence against women has been considered a human rights issue since the World Conference on Human Rights and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993. There are several commonly used terms to describe violence against women. Violence based on gender, sexuality, inequality, norms and beliefs towards women, girls, men and boys (Eerdewijk, Kamunyu, Nyirinkindi, Sow, Visser, et al., 2018) are defined as gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Terms that explicitly describe violence against women and girls include violence against women (VAW), and gender-based violence against women (GBVAW). In the framework of this research, the term GBVAW will be used to describe all forms of violence, specifically targeting women and girls as a result of power relations between the genders.

This definition of violence is not limited to sexual and physical violence but also includes psychological and economic abuse (Anouka van Eerdewijk, Mariam Kamunyu, Laura Nyirinkindi, Rainatou Sow, Marlies Visser, 2018). Violence can be experienced in both private and public settings including homes, workplaces, community, state institutions and in the context of civil conflicts (Eerdewijk, Kamunyu, Nyirinkindi, Sow, Visser, et al., 2018). It is estimated that approximately 36.6% of African women experience some form of physical and sexual violence by an intimate partner and 11.9% by a non-partner in their lifetime (Anouka van Eerdewijk, Mariam Kamunyu, Laura Nyirinkindi, Rainatou Sow, Marlies Visser, 2018). Of the many studies that identify factors that contribute to GBVAW, the majority focus on intimate partner violence (IPV) as it is the most common type of GBVAW (Devries et al., 2010). Research on violence by non-partner perpetrators is also limited because of the complexity of measurement and data collection in contexts such as civil conflict, war, and sex trafficking (Eerdewijk, Kamunyu, Nyirinkindi, Sow, & Lodenstein, 2018; Palermo, Bleck, & Peterman, 2014).

One widely used analysis tool to better understand the complex interactions of factors leading to GBVAW is the ecological model first proposed by Heise (1998). This ecological model is a holistic tool that allows us to combine various factors that

contribute to violence against women across different societies and rationalize these factors under one system (Akhter & Wilson, 2016; UN Women, 2019). This model details four overarching levels that influence the prevalence of violence against women: individual, interpersonal, community and society.

The individual-level describes how status, behaviour, experiences and intrinsic beliefs on the personal level make some women more vulnerable to violence (Heise, 1998). The interpersonal level in the ecological model describes the discriminating norms and practices of people close to the woman, such as her partner, family, and other close relationships. The community-level includes formal and informal social institutions that sustain and enforce gender-discriminatory beliefs that enable inequitable practices of benefiting men. The last overarching level is the discriminatory institutions and laws at the society level that enable the inequitable practices and normalize GBVAW (Akhter & Wilson, 2016; Eerdewijk, Kamunyu, Nyirinkindi, Sow, Visser, et al., 2018; Flood & Pease, 2009).

The four levels of the ecological model essentially describe societies that maintain the belief that men possess greater value in society (Michau, Horn, Bank, Dutt, & Zimmerman, 2015), thus directly linking GBVAW and patriarchal beliefs. This is especially true when the discriminating norms institutionalized beyond the individual and interpersonal levels confirming that the society maintaining women's subordination is bound to perpetuate the violence against women. These patriarchal societies strive to keep women within the boundaries of socially constructed roles and perceptions of femininity through violence (Akpinar, 2003; Ellerby, 2017b).

Backlash and Gender-Focused Aid

The exiting patriarchal norms when challenged through promotion women's equality (Cornwall, Harrison, & Whitehead, 2009; Cornwall & Rivas, 2015a; Sundström, Paxton, Wang, & Lindberg, 2017) is bound to resist the change. This resistance to preserve existing gender power relations has been defined in the relevant literature as the backlash (Amaral, Bandyopadhyay, & Sensarma, 2015; Datta, 2004; Guarnieri et al., 2018; Whaley et al., 2013). The backlash hypothesis states that men increase violence against women in response to threats to their power and to keep women within the boundaries of social gender expectations (Macmillan & Gartner, 1999). Although the

trigger of violent backlash can be initiated within the society, often such changes are initiated externally through development programs and international assistance.

There is a large body of literature dedicated to the backlash and the causal relationship between gender-focused aid and GBVAW. Commonly, the literature addresses direct and indirect causes of backlash as a response to aid. Majority of studies find that low income, low education, race, and social status are significant predictors of being a victim of GBVAW across many different countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America (Jaquette, 2017; Rahman, Hoque, & Makinoda, 2011; Thakur, 2001; USAID, 2015). However, other studies demonstrate that the improvement in socio-economic conditions does not necessarily decrease the risks of GBVAW (Cools & Kotsadam, 2017; Heath, 2014).

The indirect causes are related to changing household and community dynamics, such as the improvement of women's socio-economic and access to resources as a result of the empowerment and gender equality efforts facilitated through gender-focused aid. In these cases, the backlash is often explained as men's attempt to retaliate for changing of power dynamics, that is especially visible in GBVAW studies where women start earning more income. One study of IPV and women's empowerment in Bangladesh by Rahman et al. (2011) shows that, contrary to expectations, women's higher income and increased participation in household decision making increased the likelihood of being a victim of IPV. Another study has similar findings based on the experiences of women in Sub-Saharan Africa, showing that employed women are in a higher risk group to face abuse in the communities than women not in the labour force (Cools & Kotsadam, 2017). The study of IPV among women in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria, found that one of the major causes of IPV was women having more income than their partners (Balogun & John-Akinola, 2015).

These studies provide evidence for the general trend that women's economic and social success challenge existing power relations, and this, in turn, can trigger a violent backlash in an attempt to reclaim power. However, studies also have identified other factors that may increase GBVAW. For instance, Kiss et al., (2012) have made an important distinction that educated women with higher income can be more willing to report IPV due to the develop self-confidence and financial security, thus affecting the statistics. Similarly, Arestoff & Djemai (2016) in their study of women's empowerment

through the life cycle and across generations in Sub-Saharan Africa, demonstrate that over time there has been a change in social norms and more negative attitude towards marital violence among women. These works suggest that over time, gender-focused aid tends to bring positive change and development, while violent backlash is more of a short-term effect (Hunnicut, 2009; Kasturirangan, 2008; McIlwaine & Datta, 2003; Whaley et al., 2013).

The body of literature around violent backlash as a direct response to gender-focused aid most commonly focuses on Muslim societies. Angrist (2012) in “War, resisting the west, and women’s labour: Toward an understanding of Arab exceptionalism” argues the western influences promoting secularism and gender equality through economic and military measures created grievances in Muslim states. Control over women’s bodies and sexuality has long been conceptualized as matters of national interest (Pettman, 1996). In such contexts, challenging the subordinate role of women through gender-focused aid can become not only a matter of national interest but become a battleground for political interests.

Another commonly used example of a violent backlash against women as a result of international aid assistance comes from Afghanistan. Much of the post-2001 rhetoric about Afghanistan focused on the need to rescue and liberate Afghan women through aid and women’s role in rebuilding the nation. Consequently, in response to the United States urging women to lead the rebuilding of the nation, the Taliban has announced that Afghan women participating in development efforts are the nation betrayers leading to increased violence against women (Chishti, 2010).

In this context, the backlash reflects not only a response to attempts to change the gender-based power dynamic but also resistance to the expansion of Western values and political interests that often come attached to the aid (Abirafeh, 2009; De Cordier, 2010). Similarly, given the colonial history of the Sub-Saharan Africa region, gender-focused aid, as well as any other assistance in the region, is often recognized as an extension of colonial interests. Although the core principle of aid is that it should be neutral and ethically-driven, no aid can be considered truly free from the political and economic interest of the donors (Abirafeh, 2009; Goodhand, 2002; Langan, 2017).

Methodology:

Given the extensive literature on the violent backlash in response to the women's attempt to challenge the existing discriminatory norms, in this paper, I aim to conduct a quantitative analysis across countries located in Sub-Saharan region between 2009-2017 to answer the question: Does gender-focused aid directly or indirectly increase violence against women in countries with high levels of discriminatory patriarchal practices?

Hypothesis:

Based on the backlash theory, I hypothesize that the higher the country is on the patriarchal scale, the higher the probability of violent backlash against women in response to international aid focusing on women's empowerment and gender equality. While backlash may manifest in different forms such as political and social resistance; the literature demonstrates that it will often be expressed in the form of violence against women. To assess the above assumption, I test the following hypotheses:

H1- The higher the country on the scale of the patriarchal practices, the higher the probability of the backlash to gender-focused aid in the form of violence against women, especially in the short-term.

H2- There is an overall decrease in GBVAW over time due to the long-term development efforts in all countries.

Data:

Dependent variables

As described above, collecting data on GBVAW is a very challenging task. GBVAW includes both physical and nonphysical violence/abuse. However, given that there is no direct method of identifying the immediate effects of non-physical abuse, in this study, I focus on health outcomes of physical violence. To measure physical violence, I use the Health and Survival sub-index (HSSI) of the broader Global Gender Gap Index. The Global Gender Gap Index was developed in 2006 to capture gender disparities and global progress over time. Health and Survival sub-index measures the

difference between women's and men's average health and designed to capture gender gaps within each country for outcomes rather than inputs. The HSSI accounts for two indicators: the birth sex ratio as an indicator of preference for male infants and the gender gap in healthy life expectancy as an indicator of years lost to violence, disease, and malnutrition (World Economic Forum, 2018). Although this indicator captures different factors that affect the health outcomes of women apart from physical violence, as well as the gender preference it is expected that this indicator is comprehensive to capture the differences between women and men in health outcomes across time.

Independent variables

The second independent variable is the inflow of aid targeting women empowerment and gender equality projects. OECD maintains a comprehensive database of aid projects targeting gender equality and women's empowerment since 2002 that is part of the Creditor Reporting System (CRS). CRS requires thirty DAC donor countries to provide information on whether the aid targets gender equality. There are three main categorizations: (2) is for aid that has gender equality as an explicit objective – “principal”, (1) is assigned if gender equality was important but not the primary objective – “significant” and (0) if the aid does not include gender equality as a target. For the purpose of this study, both the “principal” and “significant” aid categories are considered gender-focused aid. The amounts for “significant” and “principal” are calculated as a percentage of each country's GDP in purchasing power parity (GDP PPP) to account for the impact across different countries.

Mediated variable

The first independent variable is measuring the level of patriarchal practices in Sub-Saharan Africa. Patriarchal practices are a complex concept to measure across countries. There are five major indicators that have been recognized to capture political, social, and economic aspects of gender inequality in a way that facilitates cross-country comparison: Gender Inequality Index (GII), Gender Development Index (GDI), Gender Gap Index, Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) and Gender Equality Index. Each of these indicators has been adopted by international organizations and have proven to be reliable indicators for the original purposes of measurement.

Although each of these indicators captures systematic discrimination and barriers, SIGI, in contrast to the other indicators, is designed to measure the country's discriminatory institutions such as formal and informal laws, practices and social norms. This indicator is closest to measuring patriarchal practices across countries used in the context of this research and covers five dimensions: discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted civil liberties, resources and assets (Branisa, Klasen, Ziegler, Drechsler, & Jütting, 2014; Sohm & Com, 2014). Moreover, the SIGI does not capture the country's statistics on health, population, and violence to calculate the indicator scores, which significantly decreases the risk of collinearity with the dependent and control variables of this study. The SIGI also offers categorizations of the measurements to demonstrate the level of discrimination: "very low," "low," "medium," "high" and "very high" which also is used to categorize patriarchal practices across countries (Social Institutions & Gender Index, 2014).

Controlled variables

Conflict is one of the major variables that have a direct effect on the dependent variable. As was mentioned previously, the majority of non-partner violence is attributed to the violence against women during civil conflicts. Similarly, when the government has limited abilities to enforce the law, protect and have the confidence of citizens. Countries with a weak rule of law and/or in the context of increased violence do not only affect the rates of the GBVAW but also attract substantial inflow of humanitarian and development aid assistance. To account for these factors, Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism and Rule of Law from the Worldwide Governance Indicators dataset are used as control variables (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2011; Undie, 2013).

Gross Domestic Product per capita is used to control for the economic development of the countries to ensure that any changes to the dependent variable are not the long-term effect of the overall countries' development successes and/or shortfalls. Together with the absence of violence, the rule of law and GDP comprise the controls for development factors.

Religion plays an important role in the socio-political aspects of some countries in SSA, and in some communities, sustain traditional beliefs on roles of both men and women with strong adherence to the different religions (Syed, 2010). The different religious beliefs and practices have been recognized to have an impact on the

development and ability of women to access education, economic activities, and political participation (De Cordier, 2010; Hajjar, 2004; Njoh & Akiwumi, 2012). To measure the adherence to religion, data is derived from the National Religion Dataset from the World Religion Project. The religion variable accounts for the nonreligious percentage of the total population.

Data analysis

Descriptive analysis

The table below provides descriptive statistics for the independent, mediating, and control variables used in this study. The number of observations refers to the number of unique country-year combinations with available data for each variable. The scale describes the measurement scale for each variable.

Table 1. Data Variables

Variables	Observations	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Scale
Patriarchal practices (SIGI)	378	0.01	0.68	0.24	0.13	SIGI < 0.04 - Very Low, 0.04 < SIGI < 0.12 – Low, 0.12 < SIGI < 0.22 – Medium, 0.22 < SIGI < 0.35 – High, SIGI > 0.35 – Very High
Total Gender-Focused Aid	369	0.003	91.32	11.82	17.04	Gender focused aid as % of GDP PPP.
GVAW (HSSI)	182	0.95	0.98	0.97	0.01	Scale 0 - 1
Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism	369	-3.31	1.1	-0.64	0.9	Scale ~-2.5 - ~2.5
Rule of Law	369	-2.45	0.97	-0.74	0.64	Scale ~-2.5 - ~2.5
GDP per capita	369	5.37	9.9	5.37	1.04	Calculated Log (GDP)
Non-religious	378	0	0.13	0.02	0.03	As % of total population 0 - 1

Log GDP per capita across the region reflects a wide range of variation across countries, with the average mean of 5.37 and the standard deviation of 1.04 (See Figure 1). The highest average for GDP capita is in Equatorial Guinea (9.9), Gabon (9.1), and Mauritius (9.08). Countries with the lowest GDP per capita average are Burundi (5.37), Niger (5.9), and Democratic Republic of Congo (5.9).

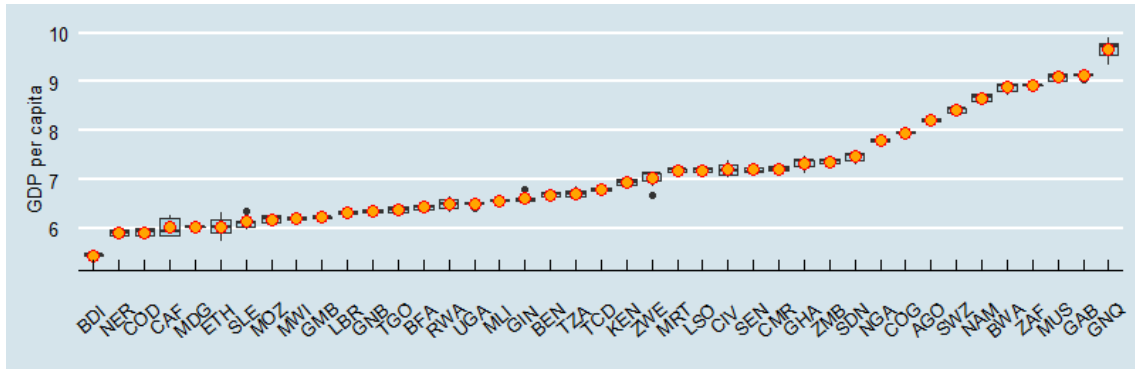


Figure 1. Sub-Saharan Africa: Average mean of log GDP per capita between 2009-2017

The percentage of the GDP growth between 2009-2017 demonstrates an overall positive trend in economic development (See Figure 2). The majority of countries have demonstrated growth, with Ethiopia and Zimbabwe accounting for the largest growth of 75.7% and 57.3%. Five countries including Equatorial Guinea (-42.9%), Central African Republic (-20.6%), Burundi (-6.97%), Angola (-3.9%) and Gambia (-2.36%). Interestingly, when comparing average GDP per capita and GDP growth, Equatorial Guinea scored highest on average GDP, while having the -49.9% decrease in GDP.

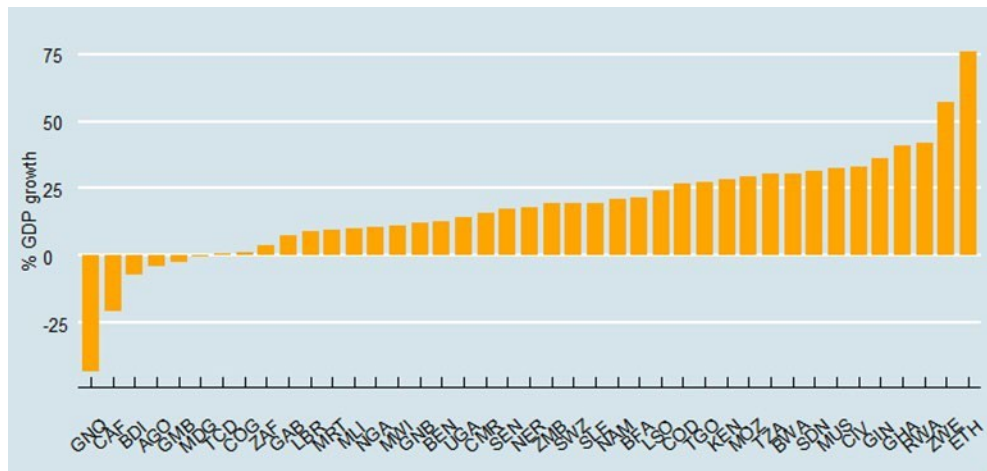


Figure 2. Sub-Saharan Africa: GDP per capita growth across countries between 2009-2017

Income distribution inequality measured in the mean Gini coefficient (See Figure 3) across the region between 2009-2017 shows South Africa, Namibia and Botswana as the countries with the highest inequality rates. Mauritania, Niger and Mali are the countries with the lowest inequality rates in the region. Interestingly, all three countries

that demonstrate the highest rates of equality among the population have both average GDP per capita and average growth over time.

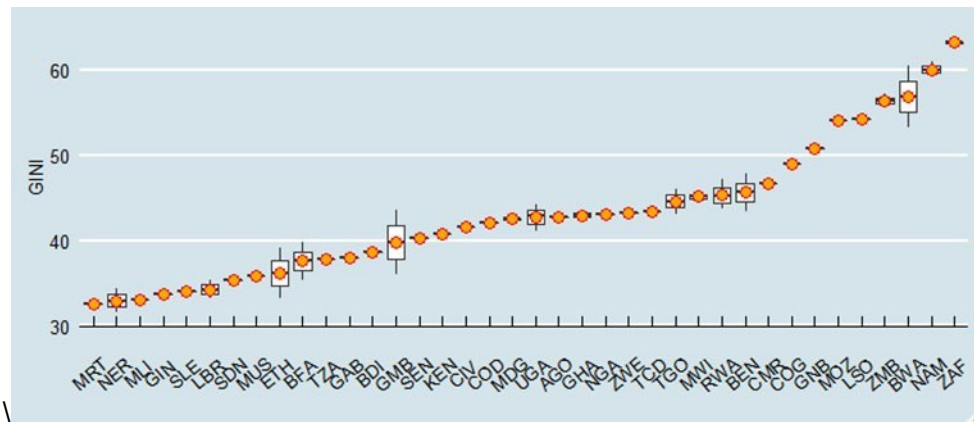


Figure 3. Sub-Saharan Africa: Average Gini scores across countries between 2009-2017

Out of thirty DAC member countries, US - \$18,315 million and UK- \$15, 286 million are the largest gender aid contributors, followed Germany - \$10.261 million, EU institutions - \$9,665 million, Sweden - \$6,116 million and Canada - \$6,078 million (See Figure 5 & 6). The US accounts for the highest total gender-focused aid and aid with gender being a primary objective - \$5,863 million.

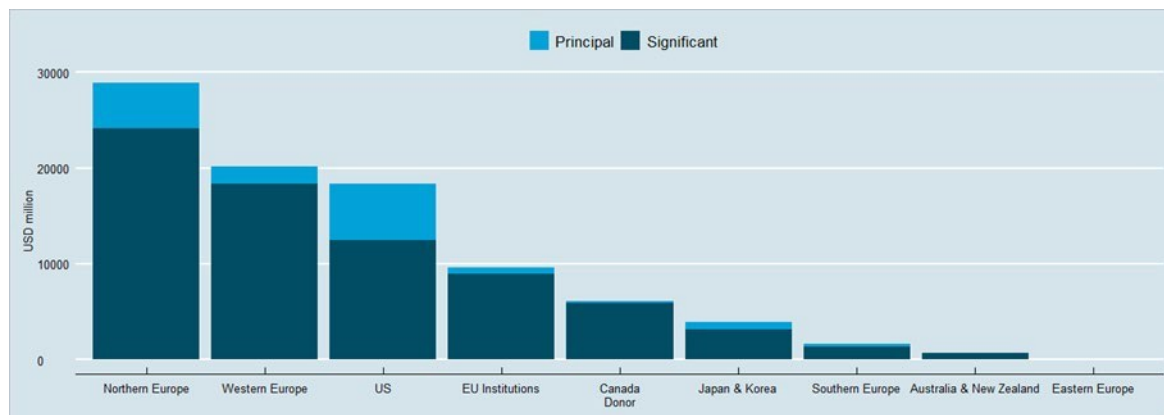


Figure 4. Sub-Saharan Africa: Total Gender-Focused Aid by Donors 2009-2017

Ethiopia is the largest recipient of gender-focused aid and received approximately \$7,959 million from DAC donors between 2009-2017. Kenya is the second-largest recipient with \$5,639 million aid followed by Tanzania and Democratic Republic of Congo (See Figures 6 & 7). Despite the development indicators such as

GDP, GDP growth and Gini coefficient, there is certainly different prioritization among donor countries in selecting recipients of gender-focused aid. For instance, Nigeria received a disproportionately large amount of aid from the UK, which can be traced back to the historical colonial relationships between these countries.

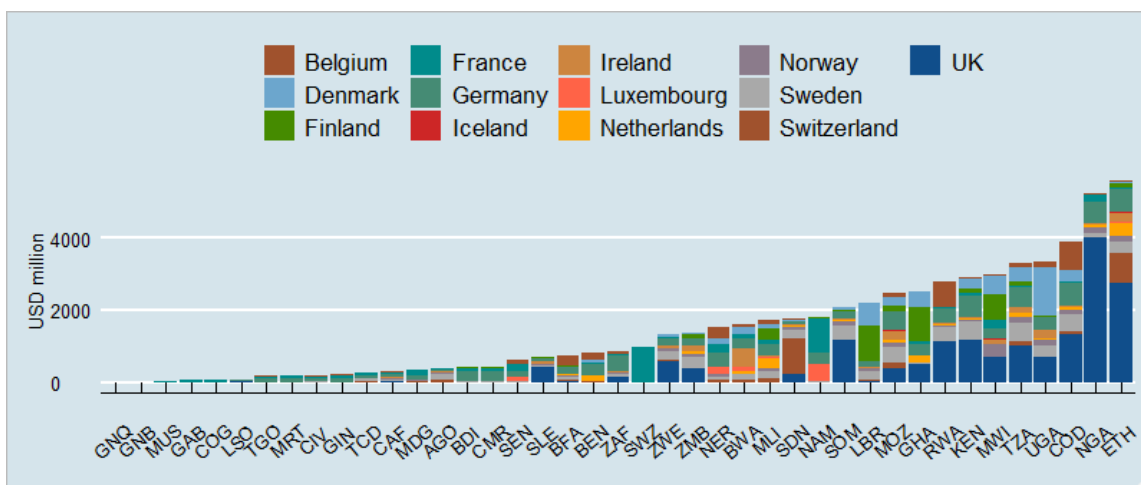


Figure 5. Sub-Saharan Africa: Gender-Focused Aid by donor and recipient countries between 2009-2017

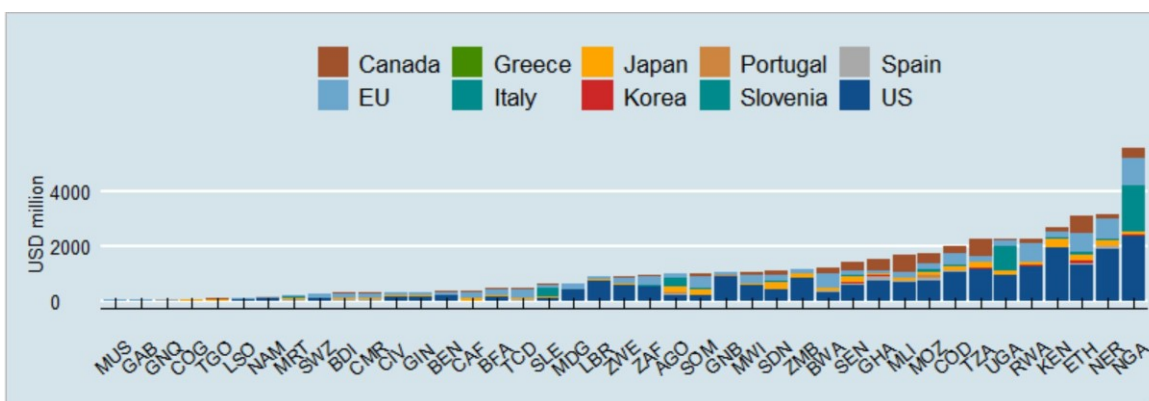


Figure 6. Sub Saharan Africa: Gender-Focused Aid by donor and recipient countries between 2009-2017

However, when looking at the average gender-focused aid received by SSA countries between 2009-2017, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Mozambique receive the highest amount of aid calculated as a percentage of GDP PPP. The mean of the total gender-focused aid by recipient countries in the data sample is 11.82% of GDP PPP, with a minimum of 0.003% and a maximum of 91.32%. The allocation of gender-focused aid between the countries does not significantly vary across the data sample. The amount of the principal aid (See Figure 7) to the region is relatively

low in comparison to the significant aid (See Figure 8). This can be explained by the fact that the principal aid comprises of the bilateral amount allocated when gender is explicit objective, while the significant aid consists of any other aid that includes gender equality as an important factor.

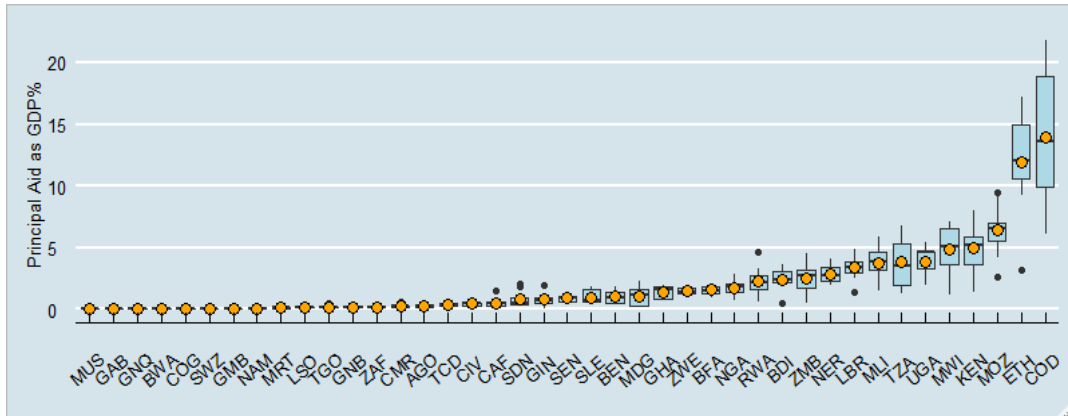


Figure 7. Sub-Saharan Africa: Mean Principal Aid as % of GDP PPP between 2009-2017

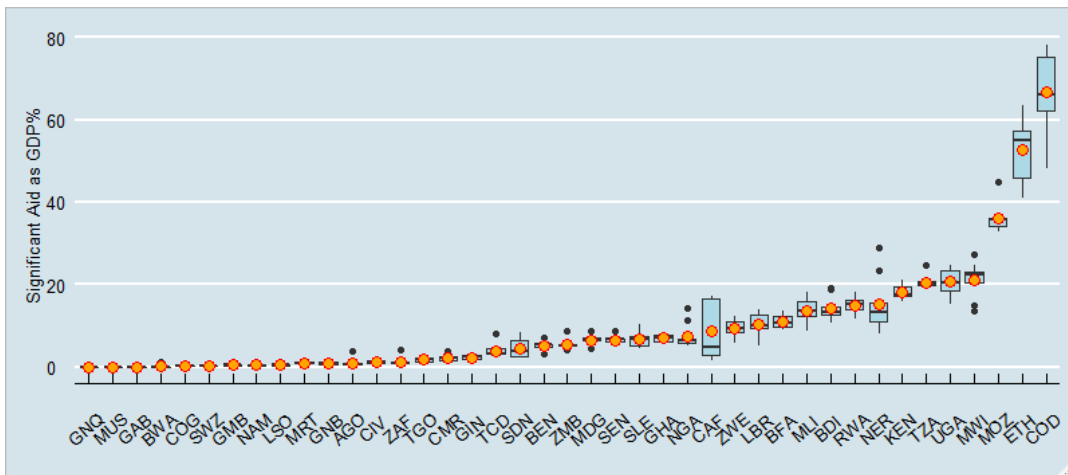


Figure 8. Sub-Saharan Africa: Significant Aid as % of GDP PPP between 2009-2017

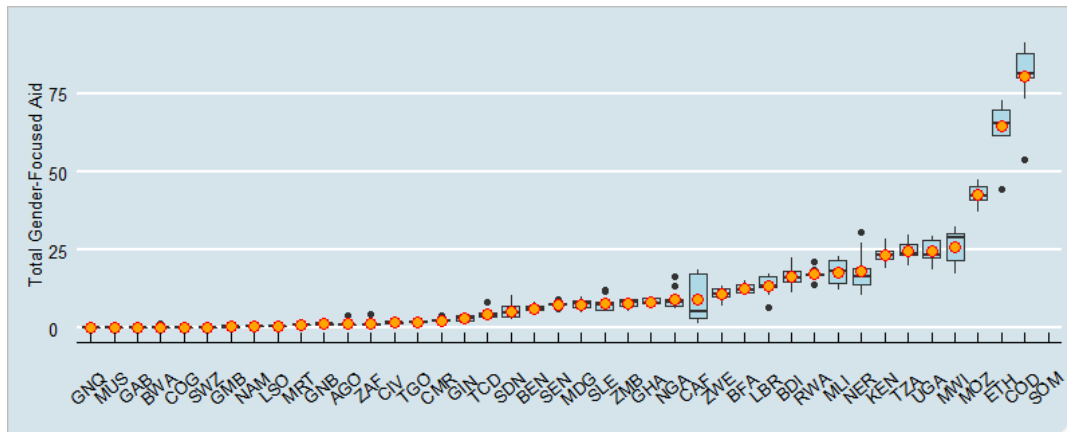


Figure 9. Sub-Saharan Africa: Total Aid as % of GDP PPP between 2009-2017

For the levels of patriarchal practices, the data show 378 observations across time and countries. Two hundred and one observations score “high” or “very high” on the SIGI scale, 122 are medium, and only 55 are low or very low on the scale (See Figure 10). The majority of country/year observations in the data sample are skewed with a mean of 0.24, which is considered high on the SIGI scale.

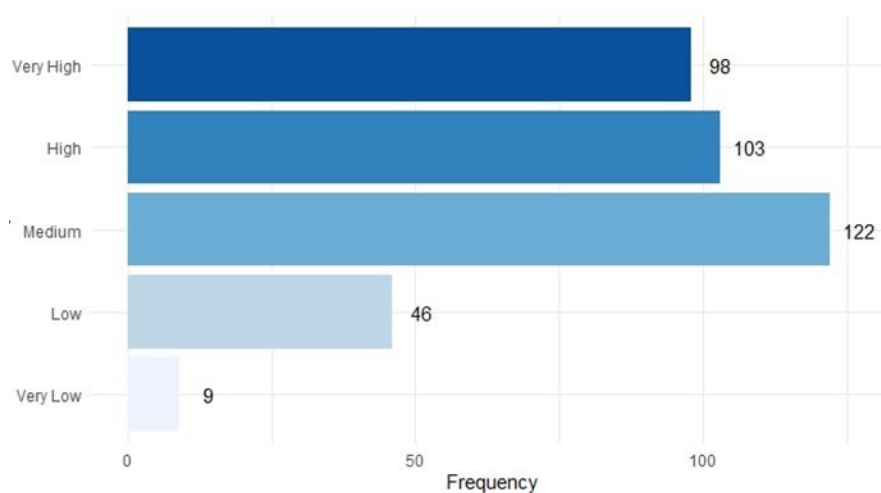


Figure 10. Sub-Saharan Africa: Sample Frequency by the Levels of Patriarchal practices between 2009-2017

The countries with the highest scores on the discriminatory social practices towards women are Sudan and Mali. The lowest scores are attained by Mauritius, South Africa and Botswana. Republic of the Congo, Gambia and Zambia demonstrated the highest variation within the levels of the patriarchal practices across time (See Figure 11). For the Republic of Congo, this variation across time is attributed to the decrease of SIGI scores from high to medium over time. Gambia and Zambia, by contrast, have higher

scores on the scale of the patriarchal practices over the years. Interestingly, countries with the highest levels of patriarchal practices are not the primary recipients of the gender aid and score above average on GDP per capita. Sudan and Mali are also to countries that have a relatively low Gini coefficient across the region.

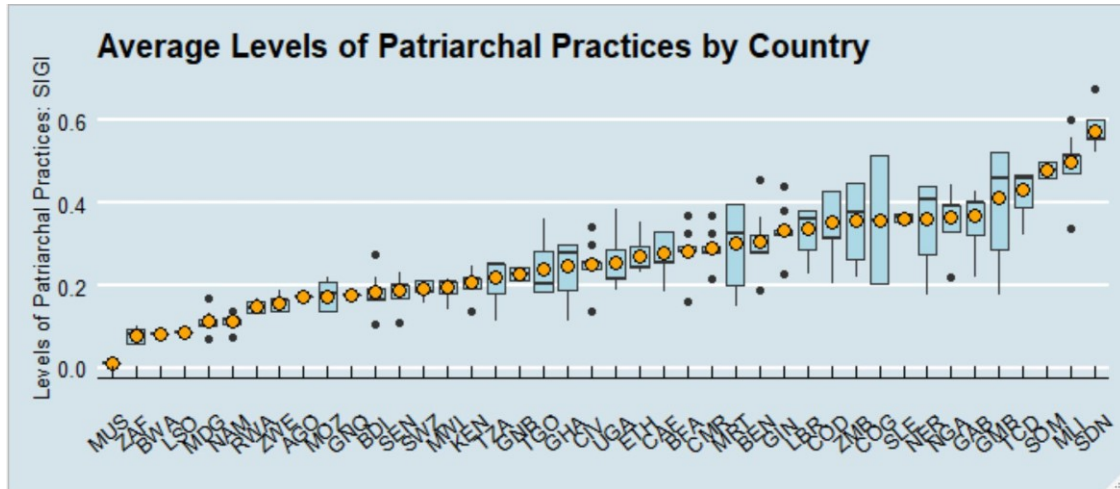


Figure 11. Sub-Saharan Africa: Patriarchal Practices (SIGI) Score by Country between 2009-2017

The political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, together with the rule of law, demonstrate similar tendencies across the countries. The mean for the absence of violence is -0.64, minimum of -3.31 and maximum -0.64. Similarly, the rule of law minimum of -2.45, maximum 0.97 with a mean score of -0.74. The Central African Republic, Liberia, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo had the lowest scores on the rule of law and absence of violence (See Figure 12 & 13).

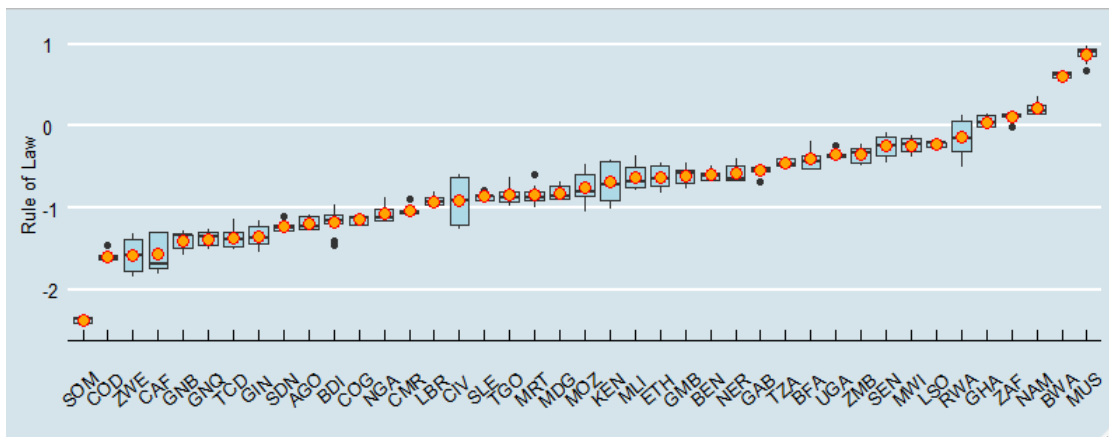


Figure 12. Sub-Saharan Africa: Rule of Law between 2009-2017

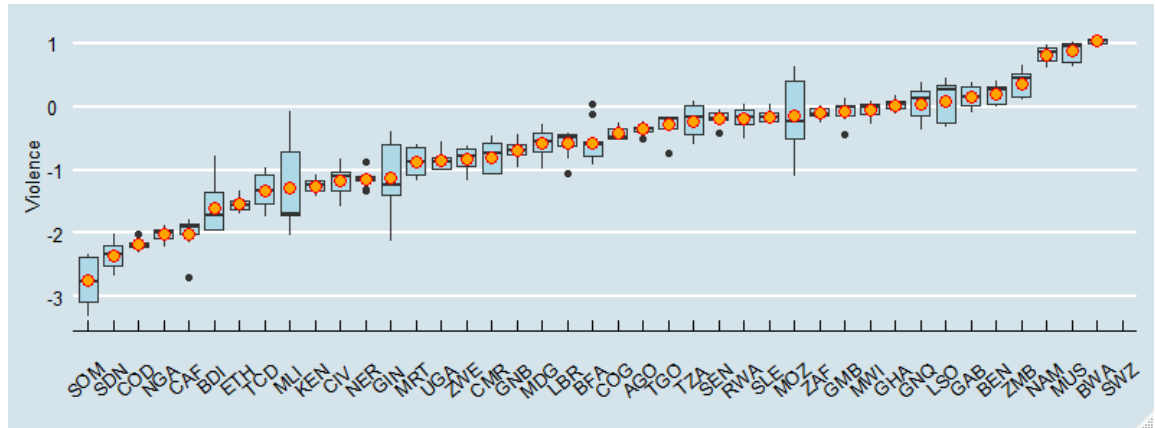


Figure 13. Sub-Saharan Africa: The absence of violence and political stability between 2009-2017

The SSA countries also represent good variation across different religions. The vast majority of the population in the region is divided between Christianity and Islam. There is a relatively large non-religious population in Congo - 0.07% and Eswatini - 0.13%. The other religions, which include traditional African religions, have a relatively small representation with Congo - 0.04% and Benin - 0.02% having the highest percentage of religious affiliation (See Figure 9).

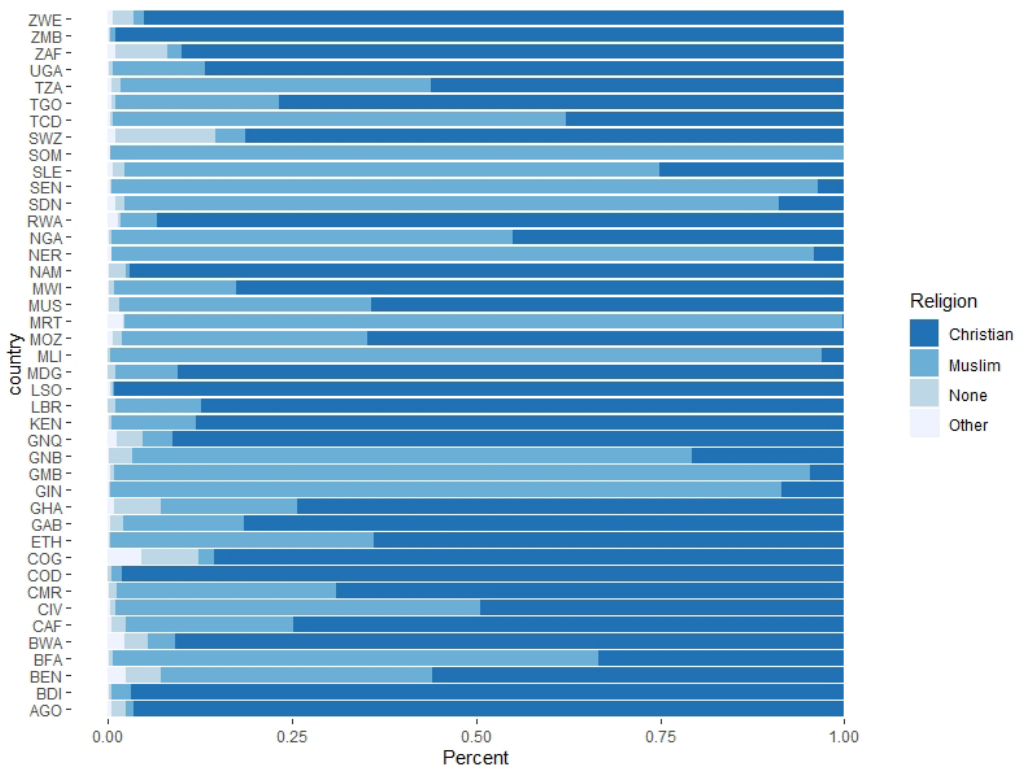


Figure 14. Sub-Saharan Africa: Religious diversity by country

The simple correlation analysis between controlled variables (See Table 2) shows that the rule of law and the absence of violence are positively correlated $r=0.72$ and none of the variables show multicollinearity.

Table 2. Correlation analysis between the independent variables

	Gender – focused aid	GDP	Rule of Law	Absence of Violence	Non-religious population
Gender- focused aid	1.00	-0.44	-0.27	-0.27	-0.24
GDP per capita	-0.44	1.00	0.15	-0.14	0.21
Rule of Law	-0.27	0.15	1.00	0.72	0.13
Absence of Violence	-0.27	-0.14	0.72	1.00	0.31
Non-religious population	-0.24	0.21	0.13	0.31	1.00

The data on the Health and Survival sub-index shows twenty-five countries (182 total observations) with an orange dot representing the minimum and a blue dot representing maximum scores by country (See Figure 4). The mean of total observations is 0.97, with a minimum of 0.95 and a maximum of 0.98. Mauritius, Angola, and Uganda have the highest score on HSSI. Botswana, Nigeria and Zimbabwe have the lowest mean score on HSSI. There are significant disparities between countries with the highest score belonging to Botswana and Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe also has the largest variation over time, jumping from 0.95 in 2009 to 0.98 in 2017.

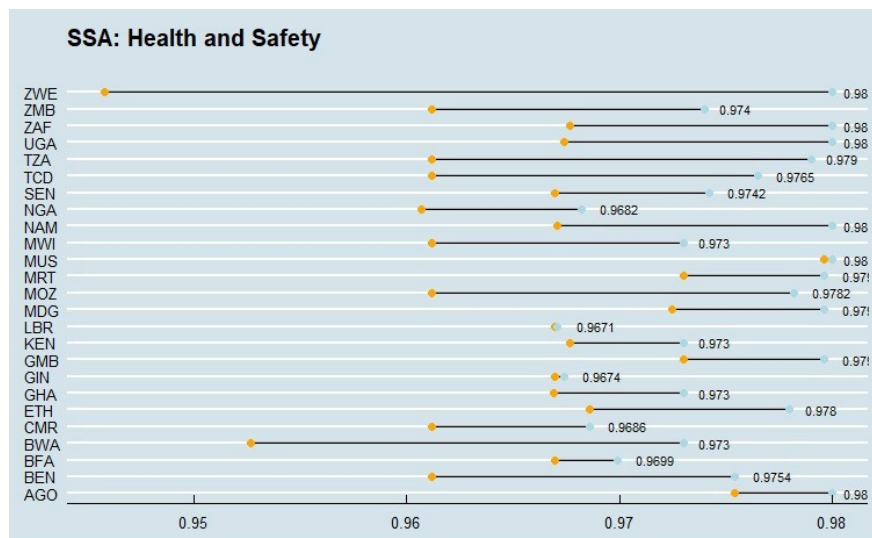


Figure 15. Sub-Saharan Africa: Health and Survival Sub Index between 2009-2017

To test some general relationships between gender-focused aid and HSSI, I run simple bivariate analyses without controls. The simple interaction effects model between HSSI and year shows, on average, there has been a steady improvement across countries the Health and Survival sub-index from 2009 to 2017 with $p = 0.001^{**}$. However, there is a statistically significant negative correlation when time is mediated by patriarchal practices $p = -0.00000^{***}$. When the HSSI trend between 2009 to 2017 controlled for Gini coefficient ($p = 0.00001$) and GDP per capita ($p = 0.001$), it does not demonstrate a statistically significant association

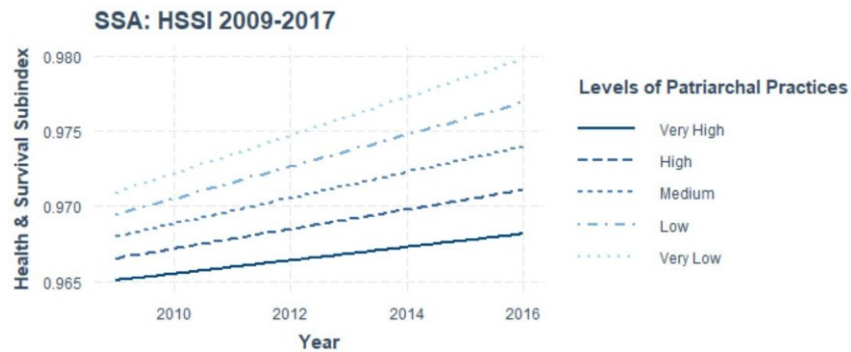


Figure 16. Simple Interaction Term: HSSI ~ Year mediated by the level of patriarchal practices 2009-2017

The second interaction term model between HSSI and types of gender-focused aid mediated by the level of patriarchal practices without control variables shows that both principals, significant and total aid have a statistically significant correlation with respective values of $p = 0.0001^{**}$, $p = 0.0005^{**}$ and $p = 0.0001^{**}$ (See Figure 16).

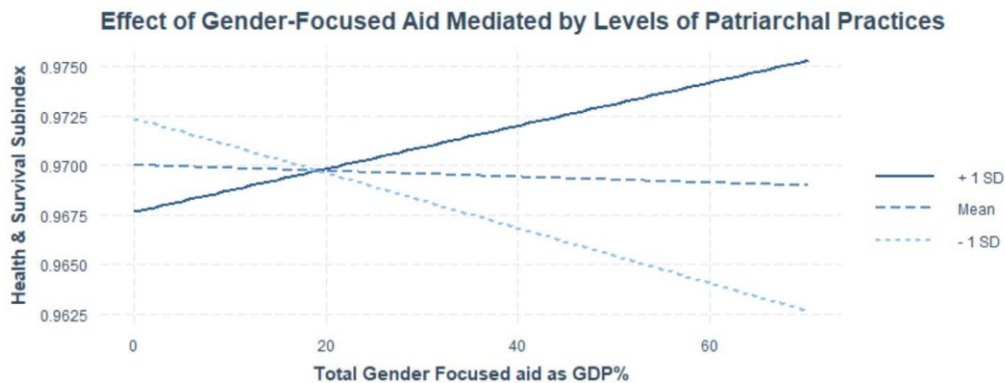


Figure 17. Simple Interaction Term: HSSI~Total Gender Focused aid mediated by patriarchal practices

In order to see if there are differences in outcomes by donor countries, I run a simple interaction term model (See Table 3). Among the aid donors, the Western ($p = 0.0004^{**}$) and Northern ($p = 0.0002^{***}$) Europe show a statistically significant positive association with the HSSI. Both Northern and Western Europe are the largest donors of the gender-focused aid to the SSA including the UK, Germany, Sweden, and Denmark. Although the US, EU, Canada, and Southern Europe also account for a large amount of the gender-focused aid, they do not demonstrate significant association between the amount of aid they provide and the HSSI. This difference in outcomes by donors may reflect the more effective methods of aid coordination and delivery by Northern and Western European countries.

Table 3. Interaction Term: HSSI and Aid by Donor countries mediated by the level of patriarchal practices 2009-2017

The interaction term between HSSI and Donors							
<i>Dependent variable:</i> Health and Survival Sub Index							
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	
US: Patriarchal practices	0.001 (0.0002)						
Western Europe: Patriarchal practices		0.0004* (0.0002)					
Northern Europe: Patriarchal practices			0.0002*** (0.0001)				
Southern Europe: Patriarchal practices				0.0002 (0.0003)			
European Institutions: Patriarchal practices					0.001 (0.001)		
Canada: Patriarchal practices						0.00000 (0.0000)	
Constant	0.973*** (0.002)	0.977*** (0.002)	0.976*** (0.002)	0.976*** (0.002)	0.975*** (0.002)	0.977*** (0.003)	
Observations	171	182	182	167	180	182	
R2	0.030	0.065	0.094	0.057	0.040	0.077	
Adjusted R2	0.013	0.049	0.079	0.040	0.023	0.062	
Residual Std. Error	0.007 (df = 167)	0.007 (df = 178)	0.007 (df = 178)	0.007 (df = 163)	0.007 (df = 176)	0.007 (df = 178)	
F Statistic	1.737 (df = 3; 167)	4.106*** (df = 3; 178)	6.177*** (df = 3; 178)	3.296** (df = 3; 163)	2.416* (df = 3; 176)	4.962*** (df = 3; 178)	
Note:						* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$	

Multivariate Analysis

In the multivariate analysis, I introduce control variables to run the fixed-effect and random-effects models and conclude with the time-series model to assess the influence of gender-focused aid on HSSI over time. To examine how other factors or control variables influence the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, I turn to a multiple regression with the random-effects model. Given that the data sample is not equally distributed among the different levels of patriarchal practices and skewed toward higher scores on SIGI, the random-effects model accounts for uneven sampling across five levels of discriminatory practices.

Table 4. Random-Effects Model

Random-Effects Models					
<i>Dependent variable:</i> Health and Survival Sub Index					
	Model 1 Simple Interaction terms	Model 2 Add control for Log (GDP per capita)	Model 3 Add control for Rule of Law	Model 4 Add control for Lack of Violence	Model 5 Control for Religiousness
Total Gender-Focused	-0.0003 (0.0002)	-0.0002 (0.0002)	-0.0001 (0.0002)	-0.0001 (0.0002)	-0.0001 (0.0002)
Patriarchal practices	-0.002*** (0.001)	-0.002** (0.001)	-0.002* (0.001)	-0.002* (0.001)	-0.002* (0.001)
Log (GDP)		0.002	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.002* (0.002)
Rule of Law			0.003* (0.002)	0.007*** (0.003)	0.008*** (0.003)
Violence				-0.004*** (0.002)	-0.004** (0.002)
Nonreligious					-0.107 (0.087)
Gender-Focused Aid: Patriarchal practices	0.0001* (0.0001)	0.0001 (0.0001)	0.0001 (0.0001)	0.0001 (0.0010)	0.0001 (0.0001)
Constant	0.977*** (0.003)	0.960*** (0.012)	0.968*** (0.014)	0.971*** (0.015)	0.967*** (0.015)
Observations	182	182	182	182	182
Log Likelihood	640.647	635.835	631.695	629.480	628.702
Akaike Inf. Crit.	-1,269.293	-1,257.670	-1,247.390	-1,240.961	-1,237.405
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	-1,20.069	-1,235.242	-1,221.785	-1,212.125	-1,205.365
Note:	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01				

Table 4 consists of five random – effects models with the first model is simple interaction terms with no control variables. The second model adds the development variables: log GDP per capita, followed by the third and fourth models with control for the absence of violence/political stability and the rule of law. Finally, the religiosity is added as a variable in the fifth model.

For the time-series analysis, only 157 observations were available from the data sample and control for religiosity was automatically dropped from the model due to the constant indicators over time. The first model in Table 5 is a simple interaction term without control variables, and the second model controls for the log GDP, absence of violence and the rule of law. Time-series models did not show statistically significant correlations with the HSSI and gender-focused aid mediated by the level of patriarchal practices. Similar to the fixed-effects model, there was a statistically significant positive association for the rule of law ($p=0.013^{***}$).

To account for the time-invariant variables that are omitted in the time series analysis, the additional fixed-effects model is added to the analysis, which provides 182 observations across the data sample. The fixed-effects model demonstrates a statistically significant positive association with an interaction term for the rule of law ($p=0.010^{***}$), log GDP (0.028^{***}), and gender-focused aid mediated by the levels of patriarchal practices ($p=0.0001^*$).

Table 5. Time Series and Fixed-Effects Models

Time Series and Fixed-Effects Models				
	<i>Dependent variable:</i> Health and Survival Sub Index			
	Model 1 Time-Series Simple Interaction terms	Model 2 Time-Series Controlled for Development Variables	Model 3 Fixed-Effects Simple Interaction terms	Model 4 Fixed-Effect Controlled for Development Variables
Total Gender-Focused	-0.0002 (0.0003)	-0.0002 (0.008)	-0.00003 (0.0003)	-0.0004 (0.0003)
Patriarchal practices	-0.003** (0.001)	-0.003** (0.001)	-0.002* (0.001)	-0.004*** (0.001)
Rule of Law		0.013*** (0.005)		0.010*** (0.004)
Violence		-0.003 (0.002)		-0.003 (0.002)
Log (GDP)		0.017 (0.012)		0.028*** (0.003)
Gender-Focused Aid: Patriarchal practices	0.0001 (0.00005)	0.0001 (0.00005)	0.00001 (0.0001)	0.0001* (0.0001)
Constant	0.001 (0.0004)	-0.00002 (0.0005)		
Observations	157	157	182	182
R2	0.044	0.117	0.060	0.284
Adjusted R2	0.025	0.082	-0.105	0.142
F Statistic	2.323 (df = 3; 153)	3.328*** (df = 6; 150)	3.276 (df = 3; 154)	9.989*** (df = 6; 151)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01			

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the simple interaction terms model and correlation analysis, there is evidence of growth in the region between 2009-2017, showing the advances in the health and safety of women. The overall increase in the HSSI indicators shows that there is long term improvement in the lives of women relative to the men in respective countries. Interestingly, even when controlled for development variables such as GDP per capita and Gini coefficient, it shows that the HSSI improvement over the years is not associated with improvements in economic development or inequality in these countries. The result supports the assumption that there is an overall decrease in GBVAW over time in countries with both high and low patriarchal practices. Similarly, across all the models, there was a statistically significant negative correlation between HSSI and levels of patriarchal practices (See Table 3 &4) further confirming a drastic impact patriarchal practices on the health and well-being of women.

Another interesting finding of this research is the sign of the strong effect of the rule of law on HSSI. Initially, I assumed that conflict and violence would be one of the main variables associated with the increase in GBVAW. However, the rule of law variable was more statistically significant across all models. It appears that, although conflicts and civil unrests can lead to an overall increase in violence, the ability of the government to enact laws and regulation are more significant in preventing violence and improving the health of women across all countries (World Bank, 2001).

The time-series, fixed, and random effects models do not demonstrate any correlation between GBVAW and the interaction term for gender-focused aid: patriarchal practices. However, given that there was no statistically significant association, it is not possible to say that there is a causal effect between these two variables. Although the SSA demonstrates an overall improvement in health and survival sub-index, the time-series analysis did not support the hypothesis that increases in gender-focused aid targeting women's empowerment and gender equality will result in a temporary increase in violence as a result of the violent backlash. The output of the project analysis is not sufficient to support or reject the hypothesis.

One of the main reasons of such inconclusive results for the time-series analysis is related to the significant challenge to locate comprehensive data and indicators that

reflect the actual scope of GBVAW in the region. Although a number of global gender indicators such as Gender Inequality Index, Gender Development Index, Gender Equality Index have been crafted to measure the status of women, there are no comprehensive measurements of the GBVAW available within these indicators. This issue is not specific only to the Sub-Saharan region, but it reflects global challenges around the world (Eerdewijk, Kamunyu, Nyirinkindi, Sow, Visser, et al., 2018; Merry, 2016; Palermo et al., 2014).

Deeply rooted social and legal patriarchal practices, together with a lack of resources among stakeholders, make it almost impossible to gather accurate and reliable statistics on GBVAW in developing countries. As an example, according to the United Nations Office on Crime and Drug report, the highest rate of family/intimate partner-related homicide in 2017 was in Africa (UNODC, 2018). The UNODC data on women homicides statistics has the potential to measure the rate of GBVAW. However, the UNODC data are available for a limited number of countries with large data gaps throughout the years. In addition, even with the availability of the data, it is not possible to ensure that the statistics capture deaths related to the domestic violence, honour killings and other deaths related to GBVAW can be often hidden or disguised as natural deaths (UNODC, 2018).

There are other opportunities to derive indirect indicators of GBVAW from public health statistics that are recognized to be associated as the consequences of physical and sexual violence against women such as maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, female genitalia mutilation, young brides (Claudia García Moreno, Henrica A.F.M. Jansen, Mary Ellsberg, Lori Heise, & Charlotte Watts, 2005; Vos et al., 2017; WHO, 2014). However, using these health data would result in heavy reliance on indirect indicators of GBVAW, leading to the outcomes that are open to many interpretations.

To further explore the correlation between gender-focused aid and GBVAW, there is a need for more in-depth study of each country individually. The broad quantitative analysis that was conducted within the framework of this project shows that certain factors such as the type of donor as well as the ability of the recipient countries to enforce the rule of law have a significant impact on health and well-being of women. More detailed research that encompasses these specifics together with more comprehensive indicators measuring the scope of GBVAW can provide a better

understanding about the effectiveness of women's empowerment and gender equality efforts globally.

It is also important to note this research does not intend to undermine the global efforts of women empowerment and gender equality to improve the lives and well-being of women around the world. However, given that the international assistance and development efforts have a significant impact on the lives of people, there is always an opportunity to contribute towards making global development efforts more inclusive and sensitive to the cultures and needs of women around the world.

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