



GÖTEBORGS
UNIVERSITET

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE PERSPECTIVE

A Quantitative Large-N Study of ODA Recipient
Countries

Ana Japaridze

Master's Thesis:	30 credits
Programme:	Master's Programme in International Administration and Global Governance
Date:	2021-09-12
Supervisor:	Marina Nistotskaya
Words:	12.898

Abstract

Promoting gender equality and closing the persisting gender gap is critical for achieving wide-ranging global objectives and sustainable development for all. One of the key domains in achieving gender equality is women's political empowerment, which shows the least and slowest progress among all domains, even within the European Union. Regardless that women represent nearly half of the global workforce, they still have limited access to leadership and decision-making roles, as the political arena manifests unequal power relations and male domination across all levels.

Due to a fundamental shift in the philosophy of development cooperation over the last decades, gender equality and women empowerment have been placed at the heart of donor programming. As a result, the international donor community has increasingly invested in closing the gender gap both through multilateral and bilateral aid. Despite existing theories and empirical evidence on pathways for increasing female participation in political life, no previous research has been conducted to explicitly explore the impact of the development assistance on women's political empowerment. This thesis aims to address this gap both theoretically and empirically. Theoretically, it combines influential feminist theories with the development literature to build a theoretical framework to explain how gendered international assistance affects women's political empowerment. Empirically, it tests testable propositions derived from the theoretical framework in a cross-section of developing countries.

Keywords: international assistance, bilateral aid, DAC donors, women's political empowerment.

Acknowledgment

To my husband, Ako, without whom it would be impossible to go through challenges in these difficult times. Thank you for being always supportive of my endeavors.

To my supervisor, Marina Nistotskaya, who caught my intention right after the beginning of our Master's program with her devotion towards students and passion for teaching. Thank you for your support and encouragement, as well as for very insightful discussions and recommendations during the thesis writing process.

I also extend my gratitude to the Swedish Institute for granting me such a highly prestigious scholarship for Global leaders. This thesis has been produced during my scholarship period at the University of Gothenburg.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Literature review	8
2.1. International Development Assistance	8
2.2. The concept of empowerment	10
2.3. Women's political empowerment.....	12
2.3.1. Factors affecting women's political empowerment.....	14
3. Theoretical Framework	21
3.1. The link between ODA and women's political empowerment	28
4. Data and Method	31
4.1. Data	31
4.2. Operationalization of the variables.....	31
4.2.1. Dependent variable.....	31
4.2.2. Independent variable	32
4.2.3. The electoral system as a moderator	34
4.2.4. Control variables	35
4.3. Method.....	36
5. Results	37
5.1. Descriptive statistics.....	37
5.2. Regression analysis	38
6. Discussion	40
7. Conclusion.....	42
Bibliography	43
Appendix.....	49

1. Introduction

Gender equality has long been a priority of international development cooperation, however, empowerment has only been recognized as a significant framework for achieving it over the past decades. The concept became the central part of international development cooperation and the global political agenda, especially in recent years. Even the term “empowerment” itself became a “buzzword” in the modern policy-making world, which at the same time increased the attention of scholars and researchers and raised questions about the notion and mechanisms behind it.

Early in 2002, the World bank announced empowerment as the core pillar of its development assistance’s strategic framework and interpreted it as “the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives” (Narayan 2002, p.14). Since then, empowerment has been widely incorporated into strategies of the international development cooperation. The main rationale for making empowerment the centerpiece of development assistance stems from its essence, which is indeed directed towards granting people access to rights and freedoms, and empowering those, who are deprived of them. These aims are increasingly interconnected and interlinked with the overall objectives of international assistance and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this light, empowerment is recognized as a powerful tool aiming at enhancing people’s capabilities through various means, be it civil rights and political freedoms, access to healthcare, education, resources, etc.

Empowerment is a multidimensional process that can occur in various domains and also can acquire different meanings based on socio-economic context. In the context of international cooperation, empowerment is a process driven by donors to achieve a social change and transformation of people’s consciousness, which might yield desired outcomes over a long period of time and not overnight. The main aim of donor-funded programmes and projects is to empower and motivate people to become active in societies, and increase their participation. Active citizen participation, in turn, fosters government accountability and responsiveness, paves the way to strengthening the government institutions thus creating momentum for socio-political change and economic development. Hence, well-defined intervention and properly targeted development assistance is capable of achieving significant outcomes in terms of transformation of societies and decreasing gender inequality.

Women's empowerment is acknowledged as one of the most effective strategies to achieve gender equality and inclusive development, considering the central role of women in our societies and contribution stemming from their active participation in the socio-economic and political sphere. An increasing gender gap and the recognition of existing unequal power relations at the global level led to the incorporation of a gender perspective into international development cooperation strategies. Nowadays, gender mainstreaming forms an integral part of bilateral and multilateral donors' strategic programming, governments and NGOs. The main objective of the approach is to achieve societal transformation and alter power relations by eliminating discriminatory laws and practices, as well as institutional and structural barriers hindering women's meaningful participation in all forms of social life.

Political empowerment represents one of the most sensitive, urgent and central aspects that need to be addressed at the global level. Women are significantly underrepresented in politics almost in every corner of the earth and political domain scores the lowest among all social domains. Regardless of considerable progress achieved over the last years, there is still more to do, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has further deepened the gender gap and exposed vulnerabilities of modern socio-economic and political systems (European Commission 2021, UN Women 2020). Women and men still have different levels of access to power, resources and possibilities and only a handful of countries progressed in closing at least 50% of their gender political representation gaps. This fact alone speaks of a grim reality in which women's political participation is still extremely limited globally. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020, it will take 95 years to close the gender gap in political representation (World Economic Forum 2021). Hence, supporting women and enhancing their agency to participate in the decision-making process plays an even increasing role in ensuring the societal, economic and political transformation in the post-pandemic world. In this sense, the women's empowerment approach serves a dual purpose, which on the one hand reduces the inequality gap and on the other hand contributes to good governance, poverty reduction and development of societies.

Considering the overall global declining trend of women's participation in the labor force (ILOSTAT 2021, ILO 2020), and their scarce presence in political leadership positions, it is interesting to investigate to what extent international assistance contributes to bridging the gender gap and encourages women's political empowerment. In this regard, one of the biggest contributors to the global objectives is the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which

is the oldest and largest development assistance group consisting of the world's largest donors established under the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Through the Official Development Assistance (ODA), which is bilateral government aid, these largest donor countries provide extensive financial assistance to over 150 developing and underdeveloped aid recipient countries to support them in implementing their own national agendas and to comply with international obligations.

Besides more traditional forms of assistance, DAC donors are increasingly investing in gender-targeted programming in line with the gender mainstreaming approach. As an integral part of their strategic framework, donors adopt a twin-track approach and combine every targeted intervention with a gender perspective. The main aim of such programmes is to create an inclusive and participatory society, where empowered women enjoy equal rights and freedoms, have an access to the resources and freely reflect their voices, also through active political participation. In this process, DAC donors with intervention strategies make a major contribution to gender equality and women empowerment agenda at the global level.

Among myriad of barriers hindering women's political empowerment, the transformation of gender-biased political institutions is the most central aspect, which at the same time falls within the scope of ODA. Financial assistance provided by the DAC donors, including the technical assistance and capacity building and institutional development components, is important for such transformation to take place. Any ODA disbursement requires the aid recipient countries to incorporate gender perspective as a cross-cutting issue in all their public policies, due to the gender mainstreaming approach. As removing deeply-rooted institutional barriers is an extremely challenging process for aid recipient countries, they rely extensively on international donors to assist them in carrying the burden of costly reforms for complying on the one hand with global commitments, and on other hand with the policy benchmarks set by the donors. Considering the abovementioned, ODA represents a crucial mechanism through which the DAC donors strengthen the capacities of national institutions, support gender machineries and initiatives in aid recipient countries.

The thesis aims to investigate whether extensive financial assistance provided by the DAC donors is an efficient instrument in addressing existing gender-biases in the political domain. Therefore, the research question of the thesis is:

To what extent does the gender focused Official Development Assistance contribute to women's political empowerment at the global level?

In an attempt to answer this research question, I look at the link theoretically, trying to establish a plausible logical explanation how the gender-focused projects of Official Development Assistance may affect the level of women's political representation in the aid recipient country. I consider not only a direct link between the extent of the gendered aid and women's political representation, but also whether the aid's effect is moderated by the type of the electoral system. Having formulated testable propositions, I conducted a cross-sectional multivariate OLS analysis in a large sample of countries-recipients of official aid (N=134).

The thesis is organized as follows: section 2 discusses the key concepts of the thesis – international development assistance and empowerment, including women political empowerment – and reviews existing literature on the determinants of women's political empowerment. Section 3 develops a theoretical framework linking international development assistance and women's political empowerment. Section 4 describes data and methodology of empirical investigation, while Section 5 presents the results of the analysis. The final sections provide discussion of the main findings and conclusion.

2. Literature review

2.1. International Development Assistance

The history of development assistance dates back to 1947 when the U.S through the Marshall Plan provided massive foreign aid for the recovery and reconstruction of Western Europe in the aftermath of the World War II. The Marshall Plan included the conditionality on receiving aid in terms of accepting investments and import goods from the U.S which in the end resulted in the increased influence of the U.S over the economic policies of European states (Crafts 2011). Since that period, other industrial countries, mostly former colonial powers established their own aid programmes on the grounds of moral and humanitarian obligations and started disbursing financial assistance mainly to their own former colonies.

International assistance is disbursed from the international donors to the recipient countries through bilateral or multilateral aid programmes and can be allocated based on strategic,

economic and political grounds (Alesina and Dollar 2000). It is important to distinguish between different actors/donors in development cooperation, namely, nation-states, international organizations and NGOs. Bilateral aid refers to the one donor/government providing aid to the particular aid recipient country, while the multilateral aid is provided by donor countries through multilateral organizations, such as the UN agencies, the World Bank, the EU, etc.

The development cooperation is a complex process, in which a variety of donors join their efforts and resources to support reforms in developing countries to eradicate poverty, promote growth and achieve safer and peaceful societies. The commitment to provide financial assistance stems from the international obligations, defined by the international agreements and declarations, which call on individual states to provide aid.¹ As challenges of the contemporary world are increasingly interlinked, so are the objectives of development cooperation and proposed solutions. For instance, the elimination of poverty is an extremely broad global goal, which is also closely linked to crime, violence, terrorism, migration as well as gender inequality. In the pursuit of these broad development goals and in line with objectives of development cooperation,² donors nowadays target a wide range of areas, such as economy, good governance, health and education, security, infrastructure, climate, etc.

The rationale of providing financial assistance and aid effectiveness remains a highly contested topic up to now. The prevalent criticism considers foreign aid as a form of modern “imperialism” which at the same time increases the dependency of aid recipient countries. One of the main arguments indeed relates to former colonial powers, which in “exchange” for their financial assistance excessively continue to benefit from raw materials and natural resources in former colonies (Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Peders 2003). Due to these reasons, it is often argued that international donors use foreign aid as a foreign policy tool to justify their interventions in recipient countries' domestic policies with the aim to promote their political

¹ United Nations Charter (1945), available at: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976), available at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>

Declaration on the Right to Development (1986), available at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/righttodevelopment.aspx>

² The main legal framework includes the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action – available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm>.

The UN Sustainable Goals, Agenda 2030 – available at: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

Paris Climate Agreement – available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

Addis Ababa Action Agenda – available at:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=2051&menu=35>

and strategic interests (Todaro and Smith 2011). However, such rhetoric is very rare in the case of Nordic countries³ because of their altruistic approach and generous aid (Selbervik and Nygaard 2006).

One of the most controversial and frequently discussed notions in development literature is aid conditionality, which puts a burden on a recipient country to undertake certain policy reforms, with the aim to introduce political and/or socio-economic changes, through “the use of pressure, in terms of threatening to terminate aid ... or reducing it, if conditions are not met by the recipient” (Stokke 2013, p.11, Shah 2017). In this regard, conditionality is more like a “carrot and stick” approach, as countries might have an additional motivation to embark on reforms with the purpose to receive more aid. However, fulfillment of obligations and achievement of agreed policy benchmarks requires a strong political will and a country’s ownership.

The heated theoretical debates between proponents and opponents of aid, mainly with regards to expectations and overall effectiveness of aid still continues, especially in light of the rapidly increasing worldwide gap between rich and poor on the daily basis (Todaro and Smith 2011, UN 2020). Hence, the question whether or not foreign assistance promotes the development remains to be answered. In this regard, in his influential book, Collier discusses the challenges facing poor and failing countries and contends that “aid alone is really unlikely, to be able to address the problems of the bottom billion, and it has become so highly politicized that its design is often pretty dysfunctional” (Collier 2008, p. 99). After all, it should be stressed that foreign aid, in general, is by no means a necessary prerequisite and precondition for development. Moreover, there is no guarantee that foreign aid will work and contribute to the achievement of desired outcomes, as its effectiveness is conditional to the numerous external and internal factors, existing barriers and conditions.

2.2. The concept of empowerment

There had been numerous attempts by scholars and policy-makers to conceptualize empowerment and identify its key components, which resulted in having various definitions in the literature. Nonetheless, when defining women’s empowerment, most conceptualizations

³ Nordic countries usually go beyond the target set by the UN and DAC on foreign aid, which is 0.7% ODA/GNI. Source: <https://www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/the07odagnitarget-ahistory.htm> and https://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/ODA_OECD-FfDO_IATF-Issue-Brief.pdf

still share several core elements, such as: agency, self-determination, access to resources, control and decision-making. Based on the earlier influential definition, empowerment has to be understood as a process, in which women who had been previously deprived of the right to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability (Kabeer 1999). The process itself involves the change in one's life, i.e. evidenced transition of women from being disempowered to empowered. Besides, this approach stresses the ability of women to make strategic life choices for which several core attributes have to be met: having an access to resources (material, human and social), agency (decision-making capacity towards own life choices) and achievements (through the realization of capabilities) (Kabeer 1999). From this point of view, empowerment represents a complex multifaceted phenomenon, that has to be understood and treated as a whole process, without isolating certain components and also in conjunction with diverse external factors. This is well demonstrated by Kabeer's (1999) framework, according to which providing women with certain resources or granting access to resources, will not automatically lead to the acquisition of an agency, or the achievement of desired outcomes, due to fact that such ability is dependent on numerous context-specific factors and represents a sensitive issue across various cultures and countries.

Another influential framework of women's empowerment was conceptualized by Sara Longwe and adopted by UNICEF. Based on it, empowerment involves five stages: welfare, access, consciousness, participation and control and moves from the bottom (welfare) to the top (control), whereas each stage also varies according to the strength of agency involvement (March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay 1999). Control as the final stage is achieved by ensuring a perfect balance between men and women. This framework represents a convenient approach especially for development partners, as it allows them to target a specific stage through their intervention strategies right from the inception of the programme. It is also a helpful tool for the monitoring and evaluation phase, allowing assessment of programme/project efficiency based on advancement on the "ladder of empowerment" framework.

The concept of empowerment has to be separated from other closely related concepts, which are being frequently used interchangeably in the policy world, namely gender equality and gender equity. In fact, empowerment encompasses two main distinguishable characteristics: it is a process (empowering disempowered) and it focuses on agency, which "cannot be given and must be self-generated" (March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay 1999, p. 25). Based on these key criteria, it becomes imperative for women to act as agents in this process and make a change

by themselves, through gaining authority and control over their resources and decisions (Malhotra, Schuler and Boender 2002).

Empowerment as a multidimensional process that takes a place in a social, economic, or political dimension might involve relations among individuals, groups of people, or institutions. Consequently, there are several types of empowerment that occur in various domains and can be broadly categorized into five groups: psychological, social, educational, economic and political (Mandal 2013). The existence of various conceptualizations of empowerment provided by the scholars is indeed justified on the grounds of its multifaceted nature, which is hardly surprising when taking into account the fact that the term itself is widely debated as it might acquire different meanings in a various socio-economic context.

2.3. Women's political empowerment

The debate on the importance of female inclusion in political life is built on justice and equity arguments provided by the literature. First of all, women should have equal access to political decision-making since they make up half of the world population and that women's experiences, values and interests are distinct to men that need to be represented at the political level; scholars also highlight the effects of women's political presence on policy outcomes, as well as the significance of women's representation for the legitimacy of political institutions (Sawer 2000, Lovenduski 2000). In this regard, a number of studies have documented a positive association between women's participation in social, economic and political life and economic growth, development, good governance and poverty reduction (Klasen and Lamanna 2009, Coleman 2004, Swamy, et al. 2001, Wängnerud 2009).

Gender equality represents a prerequisite for the effective functioning of every society, where governments and national institutions are accountable and responsive to the needs of their citizens. However, women's equal political representation and participation remains a long-term global challenge, as the lack of gender equality in political leadership is one of the most evident and pressing issues in many countries. Regardless of remarkable gains achieved, women are still substantially underrepresented in every part of the world, except for few countries. Out of the total nations in the world, currently, only 10 countries have female presidents and 13 countries – the head of government (UN Woman 2021). Nonetheless, in 2021 the global average of women in legislature reached an all-time high of 25.4%, which clearly

demonstrates that there is still a long way towards achieving gender parity in politics globally (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2021).

Political empowerment as one of the most important domains of the empowerment framework enables women to challenge male dominance in the political sphere through engaging in the decision-making process. Despite that empirical trend points to a growing number of women in politics and the normative centrality of the issue, the literature on women's political empowerment is still scarce. Moreover, the absence of clear definitions and measurement indicators speaks of the challenges and limited progress on the empirical front (Hanmer and Klugman 2016).

Over the last years, researchers have attempted to shed more light on women's participation in political life through conceptualizing and developing empirical measures to grasp the multifaceted nature of women's agency across various domains. The Varieties of Democracy Institute (V-Dem) at the University of Gothenburg, has elaborated a three-dimensional approach built on choice, agency and participation, and defined women's political empowerment as "a process of increasing capacity for women, leading to greater choice, agency, and participation in societal decision-making" (Sundström, et al. 2015, p.4). Similar to the definitions provided earlier by prominent scholars, the choice again forms one of the central components in this framework. The freedom of choice encompasses all crucial freedoms, including the freedom of expression, association and assembly, right to vote, being elected in public bodies, holding the public office, join the NGOs and associations (OHCHR 2014, Sundström, et al. 2015). The second component is the agency, an indivisible component of the concept, which in addition to Kabeer's (1999) definition is further elaborated and is closely intertwined with the ability to have a voice. It implies women's ability to speak freely and express political opinions, through civic activism, participation in political groups, or civil society organizations (CSOs). The third component is participation with the meaning of entering the political arena and holding a public office, which includes the descriptive representation of women in national legislatures.

Another group of scholars suggest a broader vision of women's political empowerment and define it as "the enhancement of assets, capabilities, and achievements of women to gain equality to men in influencing and exercising political authority worldwide" (Alexander, Bolzendahl and Jalalzai 2016, p.432). This definition is in line with Kabeer's (1999) theoretical understanding as it takes women's agency and transformative process as the starting point, and

further builds a critical framework distinguishing three categories of politically empowered actors: women holding political positions - elite actors; critical opponents to elite actors - civil society actors and citizens who engage in the political system through voting and campaigning. However, one of the important detail here is not only presence of women's own motivations towards political engagement but also enhanced self-confidence in their own capabilities to make a change, that also contributes to an overall enhancement of women's belief in their ability to govern (Alexander 2012, Alexander, Bolzendahl and Jalalzai 2016).

To sum up, women's empowerment is a multifaceted concept, in which the political dimension plays an increasingly important role. Supporting women's political participation and strengthening their agency is fundamental for ensuring societal, economic and political transformation and achieving global development goals. However, attainment of this objective is further impeded by the rapidly changing environment and a myriad of factors, that further widen the gender gap in terms of equal access to opportunities and resources. Despite international and domestic efforts, there is an overall global declining trend of women's participation in the labor force (ILOSTAT 2021), as well as the scarce presence of women in the political arena. Considering the ongoing Covid-19 pandemics and the post-pandemic world, this declining trend is even more worrying due to the expected widening of the gender gap (UN Women 2020).

2.3.1. Factors affecting women's political empowerment

Despite extensive international legislative framework aiming at the protection of women's rights and freedoms⁴ and an increasing number of signatory states that pledged to adhere to the principles of gender equality, there still exist major barriers that restrict women to actively

⁴ Charter of the United Nations, 1945. Reaffirming equal rights for men and women is highlighted both in preamble and in Article 8, and the prohibition of discrimination based on sex Art. 13; Art. 55.

UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1949. Art. 2.

UN General Assembly, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966. Guaranteeing equal civil and political rights for men and women Art. 2; Art. 3.

UN General Assembly, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966. Art. 2; Art. 3.

UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979.

UN, Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, 1995, setting an agenda for women's empowerment.

UN, Sustainable Development Goal 5, Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls. 2015

participate in public life. The root cause of the problem is complex and multifaceted, including existing structural and institutional barriers.

The structural barriers include socio-economic factors, such as social and economic background, health and education, which represent one of the most important determinants and often obstacles for women's empowerment (Inglehart and Norris 2003). Scholars have demonstrated the correlation between women's economic status and financial resources on the one hand, and their participation in political and electoral processes on the other hand (Ballington 2003, WeDo 2007). This is explained by the fact that countries with lower economic development have unfavorable conditions for women's participation in political life, including poverty that leads to their economic dependence on family members, often together with poor child care, inefficient health services and lower literacy rate. Surrounded by all these obstacles, women have neither motivation and enthusiasm nor enough resources to enter the political arena, simply by the reason that they cannot "afford" it either due to mental, physical, or financial considerations. Even, in case of willingness to enter politics, it becomes extremely difficult for them to stand for the elected office and get the voters' support.

However, women's participation in political life cannot only be explained by socio-economic variations across countries. For instance, female participation is quite high in some developing countries, which suggests that improving socio-economic conditions although might considerably contribute to women's empowerment, but are not the only features explaining differences in terms of their political participation. In this regard, institutional explanations, such as the electoral system and the level of democratization are amongst the most common predictors, that explain the observed variation in women's inclusion in politics. In fact, there is a considerable agreement in the literature that the institutional structure of the political system greatly matters for gender representation in national parliaments. For example, the proportional representation (PR) through the proportional party lists is considered to facilitate women's participation, compared to the majoritarian or mixed electoral system (Reynolds 1999, Rule 1987, Inglehart and Norris 2003).⁵ The argument on democratization as an predictor for women's participation follows a simple logic, which contends that countries with democratic values and aspirations are more inclined towards equality, promoting political and civil

⁵ This pattern is, however, not universal (Tremblay 2012).

liberties, which encourages more women to stand for a political office (Inglehart and Norris 2003).

Gender quotas are considered to be an important mechanism to ensure greater political representation of women (IPU 2018, O'Brien and Rickne 2016). A growing number of countries are introducing various types of gender quotas to ensure a gender-balanced representation in national legislatures (Krook and Zetterberg 2017). At present, 130 countries have implemented either constitutional, electoral, or political party quotas (IDEA, Global Database 2021). The political party quotes constitute the most common type of quotas across the world and are voluntarily implemented by individual parties. In contrast, constitutional and electoral quotas require amendments to the constitutions and electoral laws with the intention to impose an obligation on all political parties about the inclusion of a certain share of women candidates (Krook and Zetterberg 2017).

The discussion on women's political participation and the impact of quotas often takes into account both women's descriptive as well as substantive representation. While descriptive representation focuses on the number of women in elected bodies, substantive representation is concerned with "the extent to which the number of women elected affects women's interests" (Wängnerud 2009, p.59). Hence, the research on quota involves the exploration of the relationship between both the number of female legislators and the articulation of women's interests in politics (Clayton, Josefsson and Wang 2017).

The literature provides empirical evidence that quotas affect positively on women's descriptive and substantive representation, reflected both in the increase of the proportion of women in legislative bodies, as well in policy outcomes (O'Brien and Rickne 2016, Thames and Williams 2013, Krook 2010, Norris and Dahlerup 2015). However, assessing the impact of quotas on substantial representation is a challenging issue for several reasons. First, it is a "critical mass" theory (Dahlerup 1988, Kanter 1977a, Kanter 1977b) that posits that a certain threshold of female policy-makers is needed in legislature to allow them to shift the focus to gender-sensitive reforms and transform politics. This approach had been widely criticized for various grounds, especially in terms of the absence of the agreement in the literature on the "critical" percentage of women (Childs and Krook 2008, Childs and Krook 2009). Secondly, measuring meaningful effects of quotas requires observing the process over a long period of time, in order to reveal the longitudinal trend and effects of quotas on policy transformation.

Researchers tend to cautiously generalize their conclusions by contending that the effectiveness of gender quotas significantly depends on a number of factors, such as local context, political will, type, size and design of quota, as well as sanctions for non-compliance (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005). Moreover, even if quota laws proved to be highly efficient, their effect would still be limited simply due to fact that such measures do not target the norms of the legislative process and cannot elevate existing institutional barriers. It goes without saying that quotas are not a “magic stick” for solving a plethora of issues accounting for female underrepresentation in politics in general, and even not all quotas are equally effective. In fact, the most common criticism relates to the risk of abandoning meritocratic principles in the selection process of politicians (Franceschet, Krook and Piscopo 2012). However, there is still a considerable agreement that well-designed quotas can lead to greater gender parity and even have positive spillover effects (IPU 2018, Wängnerud 2009). All these suggest that the adoption of gender quotas represents one of the possible scenarios for encouraging more women in political leadership positions and filling the persisting gender gap in national parliaments.

Electoral System is another important determining factor for women’s political participation as well as for quota effectiveness, as quotas work differently and mostly are easily introduced only in proportional representation (PR) systems. A solid body of literature provides evidence that the electoral system greatly impacts chances of being elected (Reynolds 1999, Inglehart and Norris 2003, Norris 2006). For instance, countries with proportional representation (PR) systems are considered to be favorable for women enabling them to access the elected office, thus are having more women in national legislatures, than in majoritarian or mixed electoral systems. With the regard to proportional representation system, oftentimes the parties use the closed party lists and give rank ordering to their candidates, which largely increases opportunities for female candidates to be elected. However, parties might also use open lists, which allows voters to choose individual candidates rather than voting for pre-selected individuals. Consequently, using the open lists might be less beneficial for female candidates, which are not given a preference over their male counterparts due to voters’ deeply rooted traditional views on women’s role in politics (Fox and Smith 1988, Sanbonmatsu 2002). These arguments suggest that countries with PR systems allow greater women inclusion in national legislatures and it is also easier for political parties to achieve the equilibrium by nominating and promoting female candidates among their ranks.

The formal political institutions and decision-making bodies, such as parliaments and political parties are the ones that can grant women access to the political arena and directly influence the policy-making process. Political parties can play a key role in facilitating political recruitment, motivating the future female leaders through party nominations, provision of campaign financing and creating national platforms for advancing women in politics. However, it is extremely difficult for women to access the elected office, which is a highly male-dominated arena and where the political parties indeed play the role of “gatekeepers” hindering such participation (Kittilson 2006). Several decisive factors and various steps taken by the political parties can prominently shape the outcomes and determine the effectiveness of women’s empowerment agenda, namely through women’s supportive party strategies during the pre-election, election and post-election periods. Political parties committed to the cause of greater women’s political representation have a gender equality framework defined in their legal base, adopt internal gender quotas and implement relevant legislative initiatives. The literature suggests that stable and value-based political parties attract more women and are likely to voice their demands, which at the same time benefits them to maintain stronger links with an electorate and strengthen their position (IDEA 2016, Sacchet 2005).

Besides the socio-economic and institutional barriers, political culture and public attitudes play an important role with regards to how society perceives female leaders and politicians. Cultural barriers are “closely linked with a broader ideological dimension on a wide range of ethnical and moral issues” (Inglehart and Norris 2003, p.136) and thus have a potential to hinder women’s political participation. Specifically, the distinction between more traditional or egalitarian gender role attitudes within a given society is important (Norris and Inglehart 2001, Inglehart and Norris 2003). There are some countries with traditional attitudes and stereotypes that consider women to belong to the household, which demotivates women to participate in political life.⁶ And even if women run for the office, they often lack public support due to traditionalist cultural attitudes and even receive aggression and hostility. For example, 85.2% of female MPs experienced psychological violence in the course of their term of office and one in four reported suffered sexual harassment (IPU, Women in parliament in 2018). In contrast,

⁶ Pew Research Center - conservative views, on gender issues in many Orthodox Christian countries available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/16/on-gender-issues-many-in-orthodox-christian-countries-have-conservative-views/>; Gender roles around the World, ESRI, available at: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=ed1166ccb05a4d84a7bda92f17c02322>

countries where more egalitarian values prevail, which are founded on the values of socio-economic and gender equality, women's inclusion in public life constitutes a smaller problem. Although cultural attitudes can significantly affect women's empowerment, these obstacles might fade over time due to systematic policy efforts – for example, through introducing of gender quotas, as well as relevant institutional reforms that can boost female participation. To summarize, women's political underrepresentation is caused by multiple barriers which can be broadly categorized into socio-economic, cultural, political and institutional factors.

Party ideology had long been pinpointed as an important variable in analyzing the impact of political parties on women's political representation, suggesting that left-wing or center-left parties recruit more women candidates than the right-wing parties with traditional views (Kittilson 2006, Murray 2013, Rule 1987). This notion rests upon the argument that political parties committed to egalitarian values generally promote social justice and equality while being supportive towards the disadvantaged groups and to those excluded from the power. However, approaching this issue from the unidimensional perspective - left and right political spectrum might pose a limitation to the analysis (Caul 1999). In fact, throughout the recent decades, country-level studies demonstrated that the centre and right-wing parties have been increasingly devoted themselves to the “feminization” of their parties (Erzeel and Celis 2016, Childs and Webb 2011). There might be several explanations for this, including pressure from the internal and external actors, changing party strategy ahead of elections, or possible spill-over effects from other parties. However, internal party strategies can play an important role in encouraging and supporting female candidates throughout electoral cycles. Such supportive strategies can be divided into pre-election, election and post-election periods, through which activities of political parties can make a huge difference (UNDP and NDI 2012). Furthermore, parties need to ensure that elected female members get the proper training through capacity building and enhance their legislative and public speaking skills. As an established good practice in several European countries, parties can initiate the establishment of support groups with the aim to provide mentoring to newly elected MPs by more experienced professional women (Ballington and Karam 2005). However, it is equally vital to provide training for male members of a political party, raise their awareness and sensitize them on existing gender issues.

National agencies often referred to as “gender machineries” are the formal government structures that reflect the government's commitment to attaining global objectives on gender equality and women's empowerment (McBride and Mazur 2012). Their formation in many

countries over the last decades is the result of international agreements, conventions and women's movements. Although there is a high cross-country variation in the degree, type and form of such national mechanisms, the most common established practice include: the creation of separate ministries on women's rights, an extension of ministerial portfolio and appointment of gender focal points within the executive branch of the government, establishment of specific divisions working on women's rights across line ministries, as well as the creation of specific task forces, directorates, councils and committees (ESCAP 2003).⁷ These structures play a key role in assisting governments in integrating gender mainstreaming perspectives in public policies and reforms. Moreover, they oversee the enforcement of gender policy benchmarks, as a part of the medium or long-term national development plans.

Gender machineries have an equally important task, which is a provision of capacity building trainings, technical assistance and awareness-raising campaigns on gender issues to alter organizational "rules of the game" and changing status-quo power relations, attitudes and behaviors within the governmental agencies that trickle down to the whole society in a long run. The rationale behind this approach is that training and related activities enhance individual's understanding of existing unequal power relations and increase their knowledge of the benefits of gender equality. As a result, an individual becomes more supportive of gender-inclusive policies and might even become an agent of change.

Despite having extensive functions, these mechanisms often have limited resources allocated from the national budget or are even underfunded and are mostly relying on external assistance provided by international donors. Hence, to contribute to national initiatives and support institutions in performing their tasks, government budgets have been increasingly supplemented by international development assistance, in the form of bilateral loans or grants (ESCAP 2003). In general, international donors step in aiding national efforts through Donor Coordination Units (usually under key decision-maker bodies, such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PM's Office, etc.) within a governmental structures, which is a common practice to guarantee overall aid effectiveness, as well as to effectively coordinate and communicate government's needs with international donors (OECD 2009).

⁷ Some examples include: The Office of the Coordinator Status of Women Canada (SWC); Ministry for Equal Opportunities in Italy, Institute for Women in Spain, Ministry of Women and Child Development in India, Ministry for Women in New Zealand, the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (transferred to Ministry of Social Development and Human Security) in Thailand, etc.

This section reviewed extant literature on socio-economic, cultural and institutional determinants of women's political participation, discussing their constraining and enabling effects. While a number of enabling factors have been identified, such as "gender machineries" and gender quotas, the literature remains silent on the international assistance as a possible enabling factor for female inclusion in national politics. This gap motivates the research question of the thesis: What is the effect of gender targeted Official Development Assistance on women's political empowerment? The next section gives a more detailed explanation of the theoretical reasoning, as to why I expect ODA to positively affect women's parliamentary representation.

3. Theoretical Framework

Gender equality and women's empowerment had long been at the heart of the international development agenda, starting from the UN declaration of the Decade for Women (1976-1985) and followed by the number of international treaties and conventions.⁸ In parallel with the increase of aid over the last decades, these topics acquired more significance and became one of the top foreign aid priorities. Gender perspective was gradually incorporated into the development cooperation strategies and hence conceptualization of women's issues underwent several discursive shifts across the development context. Earlier approaches, namely "Women in Development" (WID) and later an alternative development approach "Gender and Development" (GAD) were widely criticized for failing to properly address women's needs and root causes of power relations (Miller and Razavi 1995, Goetz 1994, Rathgeber 1990).

The most comprehensive and currently operational approach in development cooperation is gender mainstreaming, which has been widely adopted by the majority of bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, as well as by the European Union, governments and NGOs. Endorsed by the UN in 1995, the initiative called on all governments and actors to "promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and

⁸ Charter of the United Nations (1945); UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949); UN General Assembly, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966); UN General Assembly, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1976); UN, Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995); United Nations, Sustainable Development Goal 5, Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls (2015).

programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively” (Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, 1995).

The core aim of gender mainstreaming is to eliminate discriminatory laws, norms and practices, and alter power relations hindering women’s empowerment to achieve transformation of societies. Gender mainstreaming represents a mandatory strategy not only for the international donors, but also often forms a part of the official strategy of many governments worldwide. This approach requires implementing actors to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue in all their programmes in the case of donors and alternatively in public policies for national governments. Among donor-led project evaluations, there is a considerable amount of evidence about positive outcomes generated by wide-ranging gender mainstreaming projects, which indeed contributed to women’s empowerment (Porter and Sweetman 2005, Bjarnegård and Ugglå 2017). Regardless of existing criticism on its ineffectiveness and complexity (Brouwers 2013), gender mainstreaming can be understood as a global mechanism for societal transformation in aid recipient countries, which can significantly contribute to women’s empowerment that is a process itself based on Kabeer’s (1999) conceptualization.

The expansion of bilateral and multilateral donors programmes at the same time increased the commitments of aid recipient states to promote and strengthen women’s rights and freedoms in their societies. Based on international obligations and upon the recommendations of development partners, government and state institutions are advised to adopt gender-sensitive policies, which includes mainstreaming gender in their internal processes and practices; adopting gendered perspective in the design, implementation and monitoring of public policies, as well as ensuring equal representation of women and men at all levels (OECD 2015). In line with policy recommendations and obligations taken in the frame of international assistance, many governments have implemented a number of policies and activities at the national level. These steps include adoption of gender-sensitive policies and embedment of gendered perspective in public policy design and planning; appointment of gender focal points in ministries; awareness-raising, training and capacity building activities; a collection of gender-disaggregated data; gender budgeting, etc.

In this process of women’s political empowerment, both formal and informal institutions greatly matter as they can either hinder or promote their participation in political life. Hence, it is fundamental to transform gender-biased institutions and remove institutional barriers, which means improving the institutional capacity of these institutions and agencies to address and

accommodate women's needs. Such large scale change is a long process which calls on bold commitments and affirmative actions from the political leadership and governmental agencies to apply gender mainstreaming in their action plans and provide more opportunities and incentives to women in terms of access to information, awareness-raising, enhance their agency, participation and strengthen their voice. However, it is vital to ensure that gender mainstreaming is actually translated into the practice to avoid "window dressing" from governmental structures. Therefore, ensuring that the organizational structures are also changing and moving in a positive direction is of a great significance, as they "tend to reinforce the power of a few, who, for the most part, are unwilling to give up the privileges of power" (Rao and Kelleher 2005, p. 58).

As highlighted earlier, women's political participation refers to both descriptive and substantive representation, where increasing descriptive representation can be considered as the first step towards an institutionalized transformation that in turn can be reflected into substantive representation. In this light, formal institutions, especially parliaments and political parties are the first entry point for women into politics that play a key role in shaping incentives and attracting more women. Moreover, they are the core institutions representing the interests of the society as a whole and have to respond to citizen's demands through pursuing gender equality reforms and promoting empowerment agenda. The Inter-Parliamentary Union, which is a nearly universal organization consisting of 179 member parliaments has adopted an action plan to guide parliaments in their efforts to become more gender-sensitive (IPU 2017). The strategy lists several pathways for parliaments and political parties to increase women's political representation. Besides core principles to nominate more women, ensure their access to leadership roles and amend electoral laws, the strategy stresses the importance of mainstreaming gender equality throughout all parliamentary work, including ensuring mentorship programmes, trainings, as well as capacity development to all parliament members and administrative staff (IPU 2017).

Introducing gender sensitizing reforms within the internal structures, removing existing barriers as a part of institutional transformation is a long and challenging task that requires affirmative actions and bold strategies. However, governments are not left alone to implement costly reforms addressing the pitfalls of their national institutions and complying with the global commitments of international organizations. Hence, reflected in democracy assistance, bilateral and multilateral donors assist aid recipient countries in implementing political reforms and

building effective institutions thus affecting “political developments in almost every corner of the globe” (Carothers 2015, p. 59).

Considering that women’s empowerment is one of the top priorities of international development cooperation, and that gender mainstreaming has been the donor-led approach, this paper hypothesizes that international aid has a positive impact on women’s descriptive representation in national parliaments. For this reason, I primarily focus on the Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided by the largest donor group of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) that extensively contributed to the promotion, guidance and realization of global development objectives, and among them gender equality.

Defined by DAC, ODA is a government aid aimed at promoting economic development and welfare for developing countries, which has been operating since 1969 as the main source of financing for development. The DAC is the first, oldest and largest development assistance group established under the auspices of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1961, which is the leading multilateral platform for donors and governments. Throughout the decades, DAC has significantly contributed to the theory and the practice of development aid and “has not been the only international forum for the discussion of aid problems, but it has been the only one where bilateral aid programmes have been scrutinized in detail” (Ohlin 1968, p. 239). DAC has been instrumental in defining standards of overall development cooperation through setting the financial terms and conditions of aid, defining the list of recipient countries, as well as in contributing to global development agenda, later evolved into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

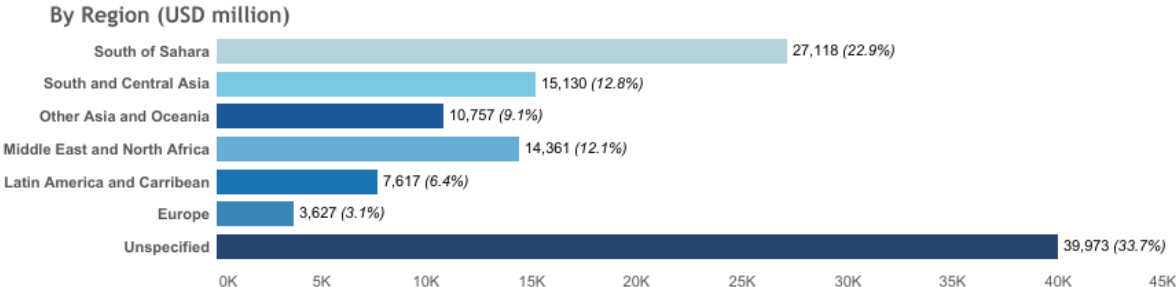
The “watchdog” of development cooperation, DAC is the leading international forum of the world’s largest donors, comprising of 30 members,⁹ providing assistance to over 150 countries and territories with low and middle income (DAC/ODA List 2021). As for now, G7 members (world’s largest and advanced economies, namely the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy and Japan)¹⁰, the Russian Federation, Member States of the

⁹ Current DAC members are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and the European Union.

¹⁰ The Russian Federation was excluded from G8 in 2014, in the event of annexation of Crimea, available at: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/where-g7-headed>

EU are excluded from the ODA recipient list. As shown below, the most part of the ODA still goes to the African continent.

Figure 1. Gross Bilateral ODA 2018-2019 (average)



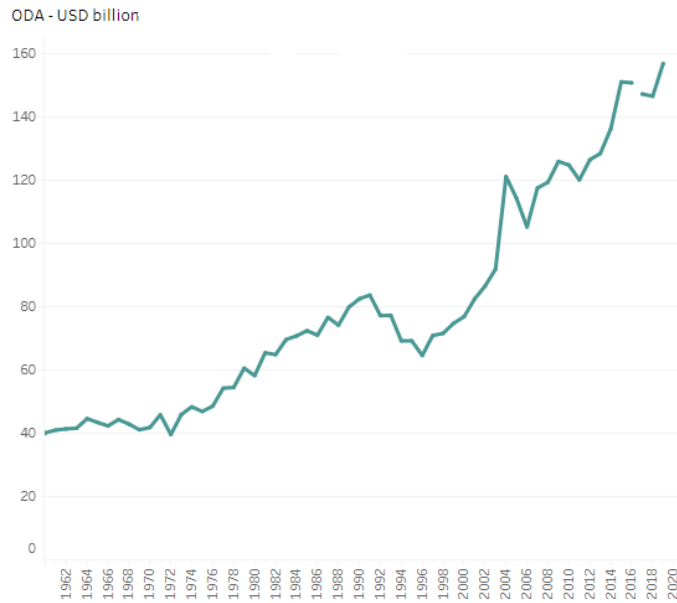
source: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/aid-at-a-glance.htm>

The ODA includes grants, “soft” loans and technical assistance provided either by local or national governments or from their official agencies with the primary objective to support economic development and welfare for aid recipient countries. Aid modalities include projects, programme or budget support. The process of programming begins with one or several donors targeting the sector, which falls under the recipient country’s own agenda. In contrast, budget support is “a transfer of resources from an external financing agency to the partner government’s national treasury” which is divided into several tranches and its disbursement depends on the government’s performance (OECD/DAC 2006). The technical cooperation, as a part of DAC programmes plays an important role in ODA flows, which refers to the know-how transfer and provision of knowledge-based expertise, aimed at supporting institutions of recipient countries in the implementation of policy reforms through capacity-building activities (provision of personnel, training and research) (Action Aid 2005, Cox and Norrington-Davies 2019, Pearson 2011).

As illustrated below, due to Covid-19 pandemics and the need for global recovery, total ODA rose by 3.5% in 2020, compared to the previous year, and reached an all-time high amounting to about USD 161.2 billion in total.¹¹ Among the top five DAC donors were the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan and France, followed by Sweden and other EU member states.

¹¹ ODA 2020 Preliminary Data, available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/official-development-assistance.htm>

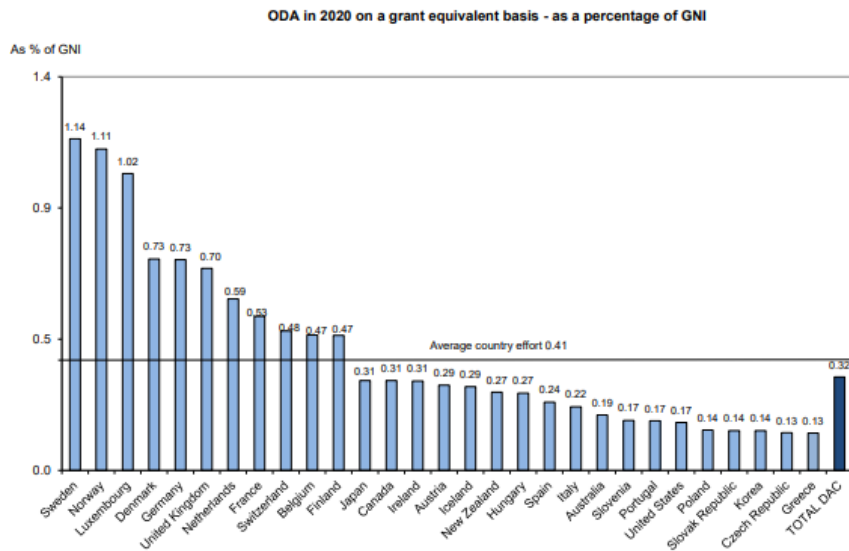
Figure 2. Total ODA (1962-2020)



Source: <https://stats.oecd.org>

However, in terms of the internationally agreed target for ODA, which is 0.7% of the country's Gross National Income (GNI), Sweden and Norway are the frontrunners.

Figure 3.



source: <https://stats.oecd.org>

Ensuring gender equality and equal participation of women and men in political decision-making processes represents a top objective of the OECD/DAC as well. Besides providing extensive financial assistance to wider sectors with the long-term focus, such as health,

education, access to justice, etc, DAC donors have been increasingly investing in gender targeted programming and gender mainstreaming to contribute to the creation of more inclusive and participatory society, where women enjoy equal rights and freely reflect their voices, also through active participation in decision-making processes. The gender-related topics within the OECD/DAC are dealt with by the Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET), which ensures that global and national commitments in gender equality and women’s empowerment are effectively implemented in practice (OECD 2009).

GENDERNET introduced the DAC gender equality policy marker to measure the gendered dimension of donor programmes in 2016. Since then, all DAC members have an obligation to annually report to what extent their programmes contribute to gender equality as an explicit policy goal.¹² In parallel, donors have to adopt a twin-track approach which means including gender mainstreaming in every programme, regardless of the sector (GENDERNET 2016). Besides the fact that the gender marker proved to be an effective tool to ensure accountability, it also contributed to the increase of bilateral aid for gender equality through allowing donors to analyze their contributions and supplement the gaps with own resources (GENDERNET 2020).

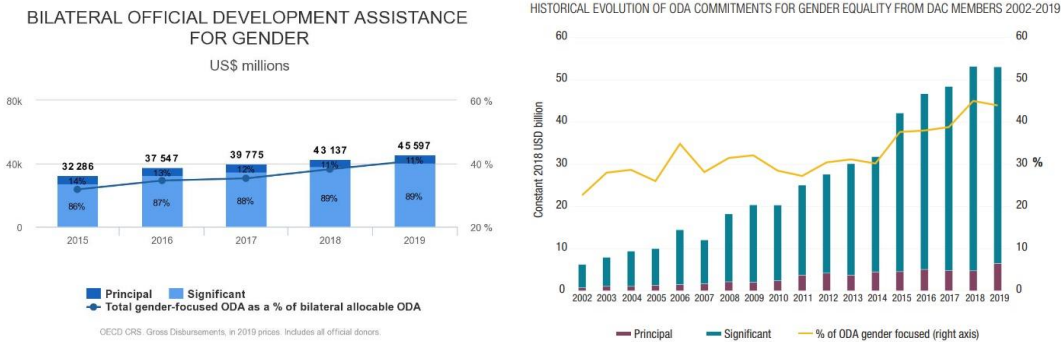


Figure 4. Donor tracker, ODA funding trends. Available at: <https://donortracker.org/sector/gender-equality>

Figure 5. OECD/DAC GENDERNET 2021, Development finance for gender equality and women’s empowerment: 2021 Snapshot. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/development/gender-development/Development-finance-for-gender-equality-2021.pdf>

¹² OECD/DAC Scoring system: score 0 - not targeted; score 1 - significant (targets gender equality, however not the key goal); score 2 - principal (gender equality is the main objective of programme). Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Handbook-OECD-DAC-Gender-Equality-Policy-Marker.pdf>

Among numerous programmes and projects funded by bilateral donors targeting women’s empowerment and gender equality worldwide, the highest amount of aid is allocated to the Government and Civil Society sector.

Figure 6. Allocation of ODA

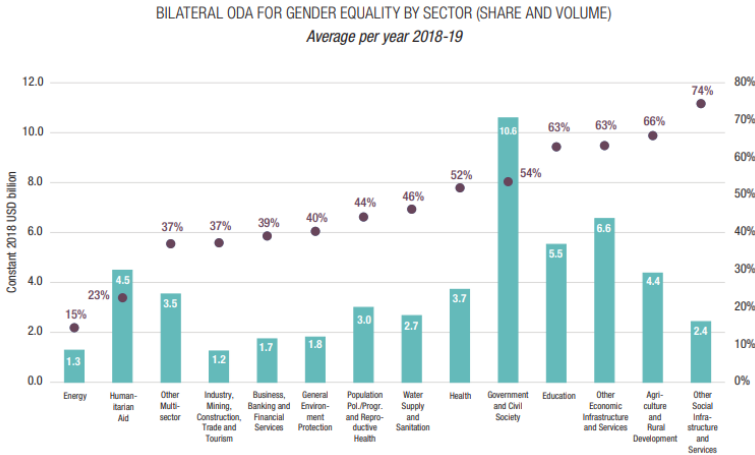


Figure 6. OECD/DAC GENDERNET 2021, Development finance for gender equality and women’s empowerment: 2021 Snapshot. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/development/gender-development/Development-finance-for-gender-equality-2021.pdf>

3.1. The link between ODA and women’s political empowerment

Since the relationship between the international development assistance and the political dimension of women’s empowerment has not been explicitly explored before, the main aim of this thesis is to analyze the relationship between these two concepts. Considering the priorities of DAC donors and the increasing volume of aid flows in gender equality, it is logical to assume that ODA might positively affect women’s political participation in aid recipient countries. As discussed in the literature review, the gender-biased institutions are one of the key barriers that significantly hinder women’s inclusion in the political arena. Hence, transforming these institutions, as well as building their institutional capacities in the aid recipient countries can be considered as one of the vital role played by the international donors towards making a systemic change across the societies. With this view, financial and technical assistance in the frame of ODA represents the core instrument, through which donors back up domestic reforms and policy incentives in developing and underdeveloped countries to transform and strengthen national institutions, including parliaments and political parties.

First of all, the allocation of ODA demonstrates that DAC donors target wide-ranging areas in aid recipient countries, including wider sectors such as education, health, agriculture, social infrastructure, etc. These areas are closely connected to women's needs and represent crucial domains for women's access to resources, exercising their agency, self-determination, and acquiring overall control over their own lives. Relying on the empowerment framework discussed earlier, donor interventions through ODA should significantly contribute to women's overall empowerment, which at the same time could be manifested in women's political empowerment, through their increased participation in the political decision-making process.

Secondly, besides contributing to overall development goals, ODA solely targets gender equality and women's empowerment through addressing specific issues according to various needs and objectives based on the local context of a country. In contrast to general areas of support where the aid is allocated to the wider public, gender equality targeted programmes are solely dedicated to empowering women and girls (female farmers, entrepreneurs, etc). Such interventions also include encouraging women's active participation not only in socio-economic but also in political processes both at a local and national level.

Thirdly, ODA programmes extensively support national governments in implementing the principles of good governance, which requires strengthening national institutions and ensuring transparency, accountability and responsiveness for their effective functioning. In this process, financial assistance in the frame of ODA, which is supplemented by technical assistance and institutional development components plays a key role. In this light, ODA directed to national governments ensures that the assistance is distributed for supporting governmental agencies, gender machineries, policies and initiatives with the sole purpose to improve their institutional setup. Addressing organization and institutional constraints at the same time implies removing existing systemic barriers that hinder women's participation in every sphere. Moreover, capacity building of institutions consisting of learning, training, experience-sharing aspects as a central part of ODA¹³, are not only targeting women but also men with the aim to induce overall societal transformation.

These arguments clearly demonstrate that ODA plays an important role in closing gender gap and women's empowerment in aid recipient countries. These objectives are further ensured by

¹³ Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and Accra Agenda for Action (2008). Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34428351.pdf>

gender mainstreaming approach, which as discussed above, remains a core part of DAC strategic programming, i.e. integrating gender as a cross-cutting issue throughout all assistance programmes. This also suggests that donor assistance has a great potential to create enabling environment for women to participate in political decision-making process, thus should positively impact on their representation in national parliaments. Based on these theoretical assumptions, I expect ODA to positively affect women's descriptive representation in national parliaments, which leads me to the first hypothesis:

H1: Higher amount of gender targeted Official Development Assistance leads to a higher proportion of women in national parliaments.

As discussed earlier, gender quotas are an important mechanism to encourage women's inclusion in the political arena due to evidenced positive impact of quotas on women's descriptive and substantive representation. The majority of countries worldwide are already having constitutional, electoral, or political party quotas in place, while political party quotes are the most common type of quotas introduced voluntarily by parties. The studies demonstrated that the global spread of gender quotas is the result of growing national and international pressure to increase women's role in political decision-making processes (Krook 2010, Bush 2015, Dahlerup 2007). Accordingly, there are several explanations as to why parliaments and political parties might be increasingly motivated to adopt gender quotas. First, quota adoption might be a beneficial strategy for political elites to represent themselves as being progressive, secondly, the real intention could be to improve the country's international reputation, thirdly and most importantly to comply with demands and requirements of international organizations/donors. These arguments further strengthen our assumptions that international assistance contributes to women's political empowerment, taking into consideration donors role in the diffusion of global norms in gender equality. Hence, countries extensively relying on foreign aid are more likely to introduce some type of quotas.

However, the literature suggests that quota effectiveness depends on various factors, among which the electoral system is of significance that greatly determines the effectiveness of quotas for ensuring women's political representation. In this regard, compared to majoritarian and mixed systems, proportional representation (PR) is considered to be most beneficial for women, in terms of increasing their chances of being elected (Reynolds 1999, Inglehart and Norris 2003, Norris 2006). For this reason, the paper takes electoral system design into account and aims to

investigate whether the electoral system mediates the relationship between international assistance and women's empowerment. This leads us to the second hypothesis:

H2: Proportional electoral system increases the effects of Official Development Assistance on women's political empowerment.

4. Data and Method

4.1. Data

To empirically evaluate hypotheses, I collected data from various reliable sources and merged them into a single dataset. The data for the analysis is drawn from multiple sources, namely from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) database, the World Bank's databank, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) database, V-Dem country-year dataset and the QoG Standard Time-Series dataset. All of these are official sources from credible and well-known institutions that provide reliable and comprehensive data on the variables of our interest.

4.2. Operationalization of the variables

4.2.1. Dependent variable

As the thesis aims to explore the relationship between international assistance and women's political empowerment, namely its impact on women's descriptive representation, the dependent variable (variable name *WPE*) is operationalized through the World Bank's indicator on the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (both in a single or lower chamber) expressed in percentages.¹⁴

It is important to note that women's political empowerment is a broader concept that cannot be sufficiently empirically captured by a share of women in national parliaments. However, the thesis argues that bilateral aid encourages female inclusion in politics, which could be mostly

¹⁴ Data is compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the basis of information provided by National Parliaments.

reflected in women's increased representation in national parliaments. This assumption is built on several arguments: first, DAC donors provide financial resources and technical assistance (ODA), as well as capacity building/development to national institutions, including parliaments, political parties and gender machineries to eradicate existing barriers and transform gender-biased institutions. Second, every donor intervention is embedded with a gender-mainstreaming approach, which requires incorporating gender issues as a cross-cutting issue in every intervention. Third, mainstreaming gender is a part of the obligation for aid recipient countries and is also often reflected in the government's medium or long-term development plans.

These arguments suggest that aid can generate positive outcomes for the overall empowerment of women, hence it is also reasonable to expect an increase in the proportion of women in the legislative branch as well, compared to the executive branch. In fact, the argument is that aid is targeting national institutions, including political parties, parliaments, gender machineries, etc. which might represent an "entry point" for women in political life. Accordingly, measuring the proportion of female ministers in executive cabinets is beyond the interest and scope of the thesis, as the ministerial office is rather a high-ranking and prestigious post within the executive branch which is closely connected to the higher echelons of political power and access to the network of political influence. Hence, cabinet posts can neither be constituted as an entry point for women into politics nor can be directly conditional to international assistance.

4.2.2. Independent variable

As regards the operationalization of the independent variable (Variable name *AID*), the thesis uses the data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) on bilateral aid - Official Development Assistance (ODA), which includes bilateral grants, loans and technical assistance. As discussed earlier, ODA is provided by the largest donor countries of the world, which are the members of DAC (Development Assistance Committee), consisting of 30 members.¹⁵ As the thesis focuses on the aid provided only by the DAC member countries, I exclude the aid data by the European Union reported as a separate donor, since

¹⁵ DAC members: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and the European Union.

DAC donors include only 19 countries of the EU and the EU consists of both non-DAC and non-OECD countries.¹⁶

OECD provides comprehensive data and statistics on the amount of aid disbursed by the DAC donor countries, both bilaterally and multilaterally. These datasets provide the foundation for the analysis in terms of exploring donor interventions in a particular sector, thematic areas, as well as aid flows/amount by particular provider and recipient. This paper employs the data on aid projects targeting explicitly gender equality and women's empowerment, which are reported according to the DAC gender equality policy marker – a statistical tool developed by GENDERNET for measuring a gendered dimension of a donor programmes, as discussed in detail earlier. The DAC donors apply the twin-track approach to every programme, which means combining specific/targeted interventions with gender mainstreaming, according to which each activity/programme receives a policy marker. In order to be qualified as “gender equality focused” an intervention must explicitly promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This means that the data that I am using, namely - Aid activities targeting gender equality and women's empowerment (CRS) has gender equality and women's empowerment, either as a “principal” (score 2) or “significant” (score 1) objective. The data includes both figures on these two categories separately, where the “principal” category means that gender equality and women's empowerment was an explicit objective of the programme, and “significant” refers to activities where gender equality was a secondary objective. Besides, the data provides figures for “screened, not targeted”, for aid that after screening through gender policy marker was not qualified to be targeting gender equality, as well as data for “not screened” aid.

Understanding the distinction between these categories and taking them into account is important for analyzing and interpretation of the aggregate data on aid flows by the donor. Based on the OECD/DAC guidelines¹⁷, instead of taking the raw number of total aid by a particular donor, I composed the coverage ratio which is the proportion of aid screened and which besides quantity determines the quality of intervention, as a high amount of aid does not mean that aid is well aligned with gender equality and women's empowerment policy

¹⁶ European Commission, Preliminary Figures on Official Development Assistance, 2020. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_21_1704

¹⁷ OECD, Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Donor Charts, Statistics based on DAC Members' reporting on the Gender Equality Policy Marker. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/Aid-to-gender-equality-donor-charts-2019.pdf>

objective.¹⁸ To do so, I have followed the guidelines to obtain the percentage of aid screened and calculated coverage ratio as follows:

Table 1. Calculating the share of gender-empowering aid in the total aid

Principal	Significant	Gender total	Not targeted	Total aid screened	Coverage ratio % of aid screened
a	b	a + b = c	d	c + d = e	c/e

The coverage ratio, i.e. the percentage of aid screened, which I am interested in, is calculated by taking the amount for gender total (sum of principal and significant intervention) divided by the amount of total aid screened (sum of gender total and not targeted aid). This is a novel measure, constructed especially for this thesis, which may be of use for further analysis into the effects of international aid.

Table 2. Calculating gender-empowering aid: Albania, 2019

Principal	Significant	Gender total	Not targeted	Total aid screened	Coverage ratio % of aid screened
a	b	a + b = c	d	c + d = e	c/e
6.412	164.898	164.898+6.412 =171.310	170.757	171.310+170.757 =342.067	171.310 / 342.067 ≈ 50 %

4.2.3. The electoral system as a moderator

As discussed in the literature, the electoral system represents a crucial factor in terms of women’s political engagement in the decision-making process. The main argument is that the type of electoral system determines the effectiveness of quota and its implementation process. Countries with proportional representation (PR) systems are having more women in their national parliaments due to the fact that quotas are easily introduced in PR systems, compared to the majoritarian or mixed electoral system (Reynolds 1999, Inglehart and Norris 2003, Norris 2006). Considering the abovementioned, I introduce the electoral system as a moderator

¹⁸ Coverage ratio measures the comprehensiveness of aid activity data. It indicates the extent to which the data can be exploited in analytical work. High coverage permits an in-depth analysis. Low coverage means that the data, though descriptive, may not present a balanced picture of DAC members’ aid. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/crsguide.htm>

(variable name *ELECTORAL*) to test whether it has a moderating effect on the relationship between aid and women's political empowerment. The measurement for this variable is taken from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), which provides one of the most comprehensive database on electoral system design at the global level (IDEA, Electoral System Design Database 2021). *ELECTORAL* is a dichotomous variable where the score "1" reflects the existence of proportional representation in a country and "0" stands both for majoritarian or mixed systems.

4.2.4. Control variables

As for the confounding factors, which could potentially influence our focal relationship, I add the following control variables: Electoral Democracy (*DEMOCRACY*), Female Labor Force Participation (*LABORFORCE*), GDP per capita, (GDPPP), and ICRG Indicator of Quality of Government (QOG).

Electoral Democracy – the argument on democratization as an indicator for women's participation contends that in general countries with democratic values are more inclined towards equality, promoting political and civil liberties whilst encouraging women to stand for a political office. In democratic systems people enjoy civil and political rights, thus governments tend to be more responsive and accountable towards their citizens. This suggests that democracies encourage and attract more women to exercise their voice and agency in both public and political life, hence we expect countries with democratic political culture to considerably increase women's political empowerment. With this aim, the analysis includes the measurement for democracy, developed by the Varieties of Democracy Institute (V-Dem) at the University of Gothenburg, namely the Electoral Democracy Index (variable name *DEMOCRACY*). The index ranges from low 0 to high 1 and captures the freedom of expression and association, clean elections, elected officials and suffrage (Teorel et. al 2021).

Female Labor Force Participation – a higher percentage of female labor force participation speaks that women have access to resources, which can empower them to exercise agency and voice, become interested in politics and participate in political life. Besides enhanced financial capability, employment also allows women to develop necessary skills that could be also highly relevant for the political office (Brady, Verba and Schlozman 1995). Greater labor force participation may also lead to increasing the demand for female representativeness, with regard

to the political parties that become inclined to recruit more women due to shifting voter preferences (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2008). The measurement of this control variable (variable name *LABORFORCE*), is taken from the QoG Standard Time-Series Dataset developed by the Quality of Government (QoG) Institute at the University of Gothenburg. It measures the proportion of the female population aged 15-64 that is economically active (Teorel et.al 2021).

GDP per capita (Current US dollar) – frequently used as a standard control variable, as it reflects a country’s overall level of economic development. As described earlier in the literature, economic status and financial resources are correlated with the participation of women in political processes. This suggests that women should more motivated and capable to stand for an elected office, i.e politically empowered in countries with higher GDP per capita. The measurement of this variable is also taken from the QoG Standard Time-Series Dataset, which indicates a country’s gross domestic product divided by its total population (Teorel et.al 2021). Due to fact that the variable’s distribution is highly skewed, I have transformed it to follow the normal distribution and generated a new log-transformed variable (variable name *Log_GDP*).

Quality of Government – as highlighted earlier, the quality of institutions is one of the most important determining factors for female political empowerment. Depending on their overall quality, transparency, accountability and responsiveness towards citizens, these institutions can hinder women’s participation or in contrast provide enabling environment for them to engage in the political decision-making process and acquire leadership positions. Controlling for the institutional quality is important, as they reflect functioning and overall effectiveness of institutions in a country, and play a critical role in shaping the environment conducive to political activity and transformational change. In order to operationalize institutional quality, I use the ICRG indicator of the quality of government from the QoG Standard Time-Series Dataset, which measures the mean of corruption, bureaucratic quality, law and order ranging from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate higher quality of government (Teorel et.al 2021).

4.3. Method

To determine the effect of the independent variable (international development assistance) on the dependent variable (women’s political empowerment), I will perform a cross-sectional analysis using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS), in which the data is collected at a single point in time (the year 2019). Due to a high number of observations of the sample, it is a large-N

study conducted using country-level data. Using my own dataset, this paper will apply multivariate regression of 134 countries globally (countries that receive a bilateral ODA) to test the relationship between variables of our interest and explore the strength of impact on the outcome. The software used is the statistical software Stata.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive statistics

This section reports empirical results from two OLS regression analyses. The first one is a multivariate analysis of the link between aid and share of women in national parliaments. In the second analysis I add an interaction term between aid and the type of electoral system. Before running the OLS regression to test hypotheses, it is important to inspect the data through descriptive statistics and to check the data meet the OLS assumptions. Of all variables, only GDP per capita was skewed, which was log-transformed it to follow the normal distribution (Appendix. figures 1-6). The table below shows the descriptive statistics of the variables that were included in the analysis.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the variables

Variables	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
AID	134	42.052	17.577	1	78
WPE	140	18.846	12.169	0	63.8
ELECTORAL	127	.394	.491	0	1
LABORFORCE	128	40.431	9.56	7.913	56.031
DEMOCRACY	124	.455	.209	.07	.899
QOG	90	.425	.113	.056	.718
log GDPPP	126	7.999	1.031	5.338	9.758

Before moving to the regression analysis, I check for Pearson’s r to examine the linear association between our independent and dependent variables. Pearson’s r ranges between -1 and 1, where -1 indicates a perfect negative relationship and 1 perfect positive relationship (Gerring and Christenson 2017).

As Table 1 of Appendix suggests, the correlation coefficient between AID and WPE ($r = 0.239$) is positively signed and weakly-moderate in strength, permitting further exploration of the relationship between the two. The moderating variable ELECTORAL ($r = 0.284$) is also weakly positively correlated with WPE.

5.2. Regression analysis

Table 4 reports the results of the regression analyses. Models 1-5 report the results of the H1 analysis, and Model 6 includes the interaction term between *AID* and *ELECTORAL*.

Table 4. Aid, Electoral System and Women's Political Empowerment

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
AID	0.16*** (0.06)	0.19** (0.07)	0.18** (0.08)	0.10 (0.08)	0.10 (0.09)	0.04 (0.10)
LABORFORCE		0.23* (0.12)	0.22* (0.13)	0.28** (0.13)	0.25* (0.14)	0.29** (0.13)
log_GDPPP		1.48 (1.25)	1.82 (1.34)	0.84 (1.45)	1.20 (1.82)	0.69 (1.45)
DEMOCRACY			-1.48 (6.25)	-2.38 (6.10)	-0.16 (7.89)	-2.25 (6.25)
ELECTORAL				6.97*** (2.46)	4.54 (3.06)	0.04 (6.95)
QOG					19.65 (15.96)	
0.ELECTORAL# c.AID						0.00 (0.00)
1.ELECTORAL# c.AID						0.15 (0.14)
Constant	11.99*** (2.64)	5.38 (5.28)	-10.78 (13.99)	-4.87 (14.76)	-14.68 (16.89)	-1.55 (15.07)
Observations	134	124	109	101	73	101
R-squared	0.06	0.07	0.08	0.15	0.14	0.16

Standard errors in parentheses
 ***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10

As one can see, *AID* enters statistically significant in three out of six models. Model 1, which tests the focal relationship between *AID* and *WPE* without any control variables, shows the positive association between variables with the coefficient 0.16, which is statistically significant at 99% confidence level. The size of the coefficient for *AID* suggests that a one-unit increase in Official Development Assistance (ODA) is associated with 0.16 percentage point increase in women's representation in national parliaments. In other words, although the coefficient is estimated with precision (at 99% confidence level), the substantive effect of *AID*

is small. The model's goodness of fit, which is determined by the R-squared statistics, is also low: *AID* accounts for about 6 percent of the variation in *WPE*.

In Model 2, I test the relationship between *AID* and *WPE*, controlling for economy variables: labor force participation and GDP per capita. In these models, *AID* enters statistically significant (at 95% confidence level) and positively signed. The magnitude of the coefficient remains at about the same level as in Model 1. For the control variables, only the coefficient of *LABORFORCE* is statistically significant at 90% confidence level. R^2 increased slightly from 6 to 7 percent of the explained variance in *WPE*. In Model 3 *DEMOCRACY* is added to the list of control variables, and this analysis produced the results substantively similar to those in Model 2. Specifically, *AID* and *LABORFORCE* remain statistically significant (at 95% and 90% confidence levels respectively). The size of the *AID*'s coefficient remains at about the same level. Democracy enters statistically not significant. The model's goodness of fit is only a marginal improvement, compared to Model 2. Model 4 adds *ELECTORAL* to the list of confounders, which enters statistically significant at the highest confidence level (99%), but the coefficient for *AID* fails below the accepted threshold for statistical significance, albeit remains positively signed. The size of *ELECTORAL* is substantively large: a change from either majoritarian or mixed system to the proportional system is associated on average with around 7 percentage points increase in the share of women in national parliaments. The inclusion of *ELECTORAL* improves the model's goodness of fit: from 8 to 15 percent of the explained variable of *WPE*.

Model 5 introduced *QOG* as a control variable, which enters statistically not significant. In this model only *LABORFORCE* is statistically significant, which could be due to the fact that the inclusion of QoG reduces the number of observations to 73, which is about half of all countries – recipients of Official Development Assistance. The results from Model 5 should be treated with caution. Taking the results of the regression analysis in totality, I conclude that the data provides some support for H1 that gender-focused aid has a positive effect on women's political representation, as measured by the share of women in national parliaments. I treat these results with caution and before I make a decision on acceptance/rejection of H1, I will run a robustness test. However, before that, I turn to the analysis of the interaction terms between *AID* and *ELECTORAL*.

Model 6 features the interaction term between *AID* and *ELECTORAL*, pertaining to the second hypothesis. In this model all, but *QOG*, control variables are included. The coefficient for the

interaction term is not statistically significant, which means that the impact of *AID* on *WPE* is not affected by a type of the electoral system. Among the control variables, only *LABORFORCE* is statistically significant, and the magnitude of the coefficient is about the same as in Models 2-5. Based on these results, I reject the second hypothesis that electoral system has a moderating effect on the relationship between the ODA and women's political representation.

In order to make a decision regarding H1, I re-run the analysis in Models 1-5 of Table 3, using the data for *AID* variable from the year 2010. The results of the analysis are reported in Table 2 of the Appendix. In none of the models *AID* enters statistically significant, providing no support for H1. Based on the results from the main analysis and robustness checks I reject H1.

In all analyses the assumption for OLS regression were met and post-regression diagnostics within the permitted range. Specifically, the assumption of linearity, which means that relationship between the independent and dependent variable in our model should be linear, is met. The scatter plot with a fitted line using the main variables (figure 7. in Appendix) shows a linear relationship between *AID and WPE*. In order to check that there is no perfect multicollinearity based on the OLS assumption, I calculate the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), which shows that our variables are not highly correlating with each other, hence model does not face the problem of multicollinearity, as calculated VIF ranges from 1.17 to 1.68 (figure 8. appendix). Similarly, RVF plot (figure 9. appendix) demonstrates that the distribution of residuals does not suffer from heteroscedasticity. However, I re-run the regression analyses using the robust standard errors (not reported, available upon request) to find the results to be substantively similar to the main analysis.

6. Discussion

The first hypothesis presented in the paper stated that higher amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocated primary for gender equality and women's empowerment will lead to higher proportion of female inclusion in the legislative branch of governments. The results of regression analysis, showed that an *AID* enters statistically significant in 3 out of 6 models, however, the results do not hold after controlling for Electoral system and QoG. I further tested whether the electoral system has a moderating effect on the relationship between aid and

women's political representation through the second hypothesis. However, the statistical analysis did not provide any support for the second hypothesis either.

Based on regression models, I can infer that there might be a weak positive association between ODA and increase of female representation in the national legislatures, though not statistically significant one. Although, statistical analysis did not support for my hypotheses, as expected, there might be several explanations to this. First of all, changing unequal power relations and ensuring gender equality requires transformation of societies which is a long process and might take several decades. Furthermore, it is fundamental that such transformation moves towards a positive direction and is accompanied with consistent reforms driven both internally and externally by national governments and international donors. Second, as Kabeer (1999) contends, empowerment is highly complex multifaceted phenomenon which has to be understood and treated as a whole process. This indeed could be the reason why isolating certain components from the overall empowerment framework and in this case political domain, might limit our understanding on the impact of international assistance on women's political empowerment. Third, besides targeting gender equality issues, international assistance directed towards wider sectors, such as health, education, social services, infrastructure etc, aims at granting access and more opportunities to women, thus contributes to their transition from being disempowered to empowered. This suggests that the impact of international aid on women's empowerment should not be overlooked at the global level. Moreover, in the absence of donor interventions one could expect even bigger gender gap and lesser opportunities for women to engage in all forms of social life.

In this light, enhancement of women's agency over a long period might lead to their encouragement to engage actively in political life, thus be translated into their increased participation in political decision-making processes. Based on the abovementioned, one can expect that international assistance will be able to deliver tangible outcomes only in the long-run rather than over several years, considering the complexity of the process and the scale of changes needed to undertake in aid recipient countries. However, the data which I had, did not allow to capture the time-trend of ODA impact, which suggests that more thorough research is needed to evaluate the link and reveal the longitudinal trend.

Lastly, it should be also noted that, although empowerment is a donor driven approach aiming at encouraging societal transformation in aid recipient countries, it is up to individual countries to implement these reforms and comply with donor commitments. In this regard, any kind of

donor efforts will be useless, unless the commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment is mutual and reflects the political will of the national government to induce gender equality related changes across the institutions.

7. Conclusion

The inclusion of women and their increased participation in both public and political arenas play a crucial role in every nation's development and advancement. However, this process is impeded by rapidly changing environment and myriad of barriers that constrain women's active engagement and further widen the gender gap. The empowerment agenda as a donor-driven approach and one of the top priorities of international assistance aims at ensuring women's meaningful participation in all forms of social life through removing institutional and structural barriers in aid recipient countries. This thesis aimed at investigating whether gender-targeted international assistance reflected in extensive financial and technical assistance represents an efficient instrument for increasing the proportion of women in national legislatures.

The thesis has expanded the research on gender equality and women's political empowerment from the international assistance perspective. First, it has identified the gap in literature, as international assistance has not yet explored as a possible enabling factor for female inclusion in national politics and provided the rationale for further research. Building on feminist theories and development literature, it tried to theorize on the link between the international aid and women's political empowerment and conducted empirical investigation to approach this topic in a systematic way. In terms of empirical contribution, the thesis constructed a novel measure for calculating gender-targeted bilateral aid, which together with quantitative data measures the qualitative nature of gendered dimension of every donor intervention.

Although conducted empirical analysis did not provide strong results for confirming proposed theoretical assumptions, it should be noted that this is the first attempt to explore the topic through a holistic approach. Hence, this research brings the novelty to the existing studies by expanding the theory on possible mechanisms and instruments for increasing women's participation in political decision-making processes.

Bibliography

- Action Aid. 2005. *Real Aid: An Agenda for Making Aid Work*. London: Action Aid International.
- Alesina, Alberto, and David Dollar. 2000. "Who Gives Foreign Aid to Whom and Why?." *Journal of Economic Growth (Boston, Mass.)* 5, no. 1 33-63.
- Alexander, Amy C. 2012. "Change in women's descriptive representation and the belief in women's ability to govern: A virtuous cycle." *Politics & Gender* 8, no. 04, 437-464.
- Alexander, Amy C., Catherine Bolzendahl, and Farida Jalalzai. 2016. "Defining women's global political empowerment: Theories and evidence." *Sociology Compass* 10, no.6 432-441.
- Ballington, Julie. 2003. "Gender equality in political party funding." *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns*, December 16: 157-168.
- Ballington, Julie, and Azza Karam. 2005. *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*. International IDEA.
- Beckwith, Karen. 2007. "Numbers and newness: The descriptive and substantive representation of women." *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 27-49.
- Bjarnegård, Elin, and Fredrik Ugglå. 2017. "On-going evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming at Sida-First report." EBA Working Paper April.
- Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A resource model of political participation." *American political science review* 89, no. 2, 271-294.
- Brouwers, Ria. 2013. "Revisiting gender mainstreaming in international development. Goodbye to an illusionary strategy." *ISS Working Paper Series/General Series* 556, no. 556 1-36.
- Bush, Sarah Sunn. 2015. *The taming of democracy assistance*. Cambridge University Press.
- Carothers, Thomas. 2015. "Democracy aid at 25: Time to choose." *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 1 59-73.
- Caul, Miki. 1999. "Women's representation in parliament: The role of political parties." *Party politics* 5, no. 1 79-98.
- Childs, Sarah, and Mona Lena Krook. 2009. "Analysing women's substantive representation: From critical mass to critical actors." *Government and opposition* 44, no. 2 125-145.
- Childs, Sarah, and Mona Lena Krook. 2008. "Critical mass theory and women's political representation." *Political studies* 56, no. 3 725-736.
- Childs, Sarah, and Paul Webb. 2011. *Sex, gender and the Conservative Party: From Iron Lady to kitten heels*. Springer.
- Clayton, Amanda, Cecilia Josefsson, and Vibeke Wang. 2017. "Quotas and women's substantive representation: Evidence from a content analysis of Ugandan plenary debates." *Politics & Gender (Politics & Gender)*.
- Coleman, Isobel. 2004. "The Payoff from Women's Rights." *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 3.
- Collier, Paul. 2008. *The bottom billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it*. Oxford University Press, USA.

- Cox , M. , and G. Norrington-Davies. 2019. *Technical assistance: New thinking on an old problem.*. Agulhas Applied Knowledge.
- Crafts, Nicholas. 2011. *The Marshall Plan: a reality check.* . University of Warwick CAGE Working Paper 49 .
- Crawford, Gordon. 2000. *Foreign aid and political reform: a comparative analysis of democracy assistance and political conditionality.* Springer.
- DAC/ODA List. 2021. "OECD." Accessed June 3, 2021. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2021-flows.pdf>.
- Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy: participation and opposition.*. New Haven.
- Dahlerup. 2007. ""Electoral gender quotas: Between equality of opportunity and equality of result."." *Representation* 43, no. 2 73-92.
- Dahlerup. 1988. ""From a small to a large minority: Women in Scandinavian politics."." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 11, no. 4 275-298.
- Dahlerup. 2006. ""The story of the theory of critical mass."." *Politics & Gender* 2, no. 4 511.
- Dahlerup, Drude, and Lenita Freidenvall. 2005. ""Quotas as a ‘fast track’to equal representation for women: Why Scandinavia is no longer the model."." *International feminist journal of politics* 7, no. 1 26-48.
- Degnbol-Martinussen , John, and Poul Engberg-Peders. 2003. *Aid: understanding international development cooperation.* Zed Books.
- Erzeel , Silvia, and Karen Celis. 2016. ""Political parties, ideology and the substantive representation of women."." *Party Politics* 22, no. 5 576-586.
- ESCAP. 2003. ""Putting Gender Mainstreaming into Practice”."
- European Commission. 2021. *COVID-19 pandemic is a major challenge for gender equality.* Brussels, March 5.
- European Parliament. 2020. "Women in parliaments - INFOGRAPHIC." February 22. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2020/646189/EPRS_ATA\(2020\)646189_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2020/646189/EPRS_ATA(2020)646189_EN.pdf).
- Fox , Richard L., and Eric Smith. 1988. ""The role of candidate sex in voter decision-making." ." *Political Psychology* 19, no. 2 405-419.
- Franceschet, Susan, Mona Lena Krook, and Jennifer M. Piscopo. 2012. ""Conceptualizing the impact of gender quotas."." In *The impact of gender quotas*, 3-26.
- GENDERNET. 2016. *Handbook on the OECD-DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker.* . OECD-DAC.
- GENDERNET. 2020. *Aid Focussed on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.* OECD-DAC.
- Gerring , John, and Dino Christenson. 2017. *Applied Social Science Methodology: An Introductory Guide.* Cambridge University Press.
- Goetz, Anne Marie. 1994. ""From feminist knowledge to data for development: the bureaucratic management of information on women and development." ." *IDS bulletin* 25, no. 2 27-36.

- Hanmer , Lucia, and Jeni Klugman. 2016. "Exploring Women's Agency and Empowerment in Developing Countries: Where Do We Stand? *Feminist Economics* 22, no. 1 (2016): 237-63." *Feminist Economics* 22, no. 1 237-63.
- IDEA. 2016. "A Framework for Developing Gender Policies for Political Parties." Stockholm.
- . 2021. *Electoral System Design Database*. Accessed August 11, 2021. <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/electoral-system-design>.
- IDEA, Global Database. 2021. *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Global Database on Gender Quotas*. 05 28. <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-overview>.
- ILO. 2020. "A gender-responsive employment recovery: Building back fairer." *International Labour Organization*. June. Accessed July 5, 2021. https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/pubs/WCMS_751785/lang--en/index.htm.
- ILOSTAT. 2021. Accessed August 12, 2021. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/women/>.
- Inglehart, Ronald, and Pippa Norris. 2003. *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2021. *IPU Parline* . Accessed May 7, 2021. <https://data.ipu.org/women-averages?month=4&year=2021>.
- IPU. 2017. *Plan of action for gender-sensitive parliaments*. Inter-Parliamentary Union.
- IPU. 2018. *Women in parliament in 2018*. Inter-Parliamentary Union.
- Iversen , Torben , and Frances Rosenbluth. 2008. ""Work and power: The connection between female labor force participation and female political representation."." *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 11, 479-495.
- Kabeer, Naila. 1999. "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment." *Development and Change* 30, no. 3, 435-64.
- Kanter, Rosabeth. 1977b. *Men and women of the corporation*. New York: Basic Books.
- Kanter, Rosabeth. 1977a. ""Some effects of proportions on group life: Skewed sex ratios and responses to token women."." *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 5 965-990.
- Kittilson, Caul. 2006. *Challenging parties, changing parliaments: women and elected office in contemporary Western Europe*. "
- Klasen, Stephan, and Francesca Lamanna. 2009. ""The impact of gender inequality in education and employment on economic growth: new evidence for a panel of countries."." *Feminist economics* 15, no. 3 91-132.
- Krook, Mona Lena. 2010. *Quotas for women in politics: Gender and candidate selection reform worldwide*. Oxford University Press.
- . 2010. *Quotas for women in politics: Gender and candidate selection reform worldwide*. Oxford University Press.
- Krook, Mona Lena, and Par Zetterberg. 2017. *Gender Quotas and Women's Representation: new directions in research*. Routledge.
- Lovenduski, Joni. 2000. *Feminism and politics*. . Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

- Malhotra, Anju, Sidney Ruth Schuler, and Carol Boender. 2002. "Measuring women's empowerment as a variable in international development." *background paper prepared for the World Bank Workshop on Poverty and Gender: New Perspectives, vol. 28.*
- Mandal, Keshab Chandra. 2013. "Concept and Types of Women Empowerment." *International Forum of Teaching & Studies, vol. 9, no. 2.* 17–30.
- March, Candida, Inés A. Smyth, and Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay. 1999. *A guide to gender-analysis frameworks.* Oxfam.
- McBride, Dorothy, and Amy Mazur. 2012. ""Gender machineries worldwide.""
- Miller , Carol, and Shahra Razavi. 1995. "From WID to GAD: Conceptual shifts in the women and development discourse." *No. 1. UNRISD Occasional Paper.*
- Murray, Rainbow. 2013. ""Towards parity democracy? Gender in the 2012 French legislative elections."" *Parliamentary Affairs 66, no. 1* 197-212.
- Narayan, Deepa. 2002. *Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A sourcebook.* Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Norris, Pippa. 2006. ""The impact of electoral reform on women's representation." ." *Acta política 41, no. 2* 197-213.
- Norris, Pippa, and Drude Dahlerup. 2015. ""On the Fast Track: The Spread of Gender Quota Policies for Elected Office." ." *HKS Working Paper No. 15-041.*
- Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. 2001. ""Women and democracy: Cultural obstacles to equal representation." ." *Journal of democracy 12, no. 3* 126-140.
- O'brien, D.Z., and J., Rickne. 2016. "Gender quotas and women's political leadership." *American Political Science Review, 110 (1)* 112-126.
- OECD. 2009. *Directory of Bodies of the OECD .* Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD. 2009. *Managing Aid: Practices of DAC Member Countries.* Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD. 2015. *OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality.* Paris: OECD.
- OECD/DAC. 2006. ""DAC Guidelines and Reference Series: Harmonising Donor Practices for Effective Aid Delivery." ."
- OHCHR. 2014. "Women's rights are human rights." *United Nations, 43-50.*
- Ohlin, Goran. 1968. ""The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development." ." *International Organization 22, no. 1* 231-243.
- Pearson, Jenny. 2011. *Training and beyond: Seeking better practices for capacity development." .* OECD Publishing.
- Porter , Fenella, and Caroline Sweetman. 2005. *Mainstreaming gender in development: A critical review." .*
- Rao, Aruna, and David Kelleher. 2005. ""Is There Life after Gender Mainstreaming?." ." *Gender & Development 13, no. 2 (Gender & Development 13, no. 2 (2005): 57-69.)* 57-69.
- Rathgeber, Eva M.,. 1990. ""WID, WAD, GAD: Trends in research and practice." ." *The journal of developing areas 24, no. 4* 489-502.

- Reynolds, Andrew. 1999. "Women in the legislatures and executives of the world: Knocking at the highest glass ceiling." *World Politics* 51, no. 4 547-572.
- Rule, Wilma. 1987. "Electoral systems, contextual factors and women's opportunity for election to parliament in twenty-three democracies." *Western Political Quarterly* 40, no. 3. 477-498.
- Sacchet, Teresa. 2005. "Political Parties: When do they work for Women?."
- Sanbonmatsu, Kira. 2002. "Gender stereotypes and vote choice." *American Journal of political Science* 20-34.
- Sawer, Marian. 2000. "Parliamentary representation of women: From discourses of justice to strategies of accountability." *International Political Science Review* 21, no. 4 361-380.
- Selbervik, Hilde, and Knut Nygaard. 2006. *Nordic Exeptionalism in Development Assistance? Aid Policies and the Major Donors: The Nordic Countries*. Chr. Michelsen Institute.
- Shah, Anwar. 2017. *Development assistance and conditionality: Challenges in design and options for more effective Assistance*. EC-OECD Seminar Series, Washington DC: Brookings Institution.
- Stokke, Olav,. 2013. *Aid and political conditionality*. . Routledge.
- . 1989. *Western middle powers and global poverty: the determinants of the aid policies of Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden*. . No. 64. Nordic Africa Institute.
- Sundström, Aksel, Pamela Paxton, Yi-ting Wang, and Staffan I. Lindber. 2015. "Women's political empowerment: A new global index, 1900–2012." *University of Gothenburg, Varieties of Democracy Institute, Working Paper (WP) 19*.
- Swamy, Anand, Stephen Knack, Lee Young, and Omar Azfar. 2001. "Gender and corruption". *Journal of development economics* 64, no. 1 25-55.
- Teorell, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, Agnes Cornell, M. Steven Fish, Lisa Gastaldi, Gjerløw, Glynn, Hicken, Anna Lührmann, Seraphine F. Maerz, Kyle L. Marquardt, Kelly McMann, Valeriya Mechkova, Pamela Paxton, Daniel Pemstein, Johannes von Römer, Brigitte Seim, Rachel Sigman, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jeffrey Staton, Aksel Sundtröm, Eitan Tzelgov, Luca Uberti, Yi-ting Wang, Tore Wig, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2021. "V-Dem Codebook v11.1" Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project.
- Teorell, Jan, Aksel Sundström, Sören Holmberg, Bo Rothstein, Natalia Alvarado Pachon & Cem Mert Dalli. 2021. The Quality of Government Standard Dataset, version Jan21. University of Gothenburg: The Quality of Government Institute.
- Thames, Frank C., and Margaret S. Williams. 2013. *Contagious representation: Women's political representation in democracies around the world*. NYU Press.
- Todaro , Michael P., and Stephen C. Smith. 2011. *Economic Development. ed*. Pearson Series in Economics.
- Tremblay, Manon. 2012. *Women and legislative representation: Electoral systems, political parties, and sex quotas*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- UN Woman. 2021. *UN Woman*. January 15. Accessed May 7, 2021. https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures#_edn1.
- UN Women. 2020. *Gender Equality in the Wake of Covid-19*. UN Women.

- UN Women. 2017. "Preventing Violence Against Women in Elections: A Programming Guide."
- UN. 2020. *World Social Report 2020 Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World*. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- UNDP, and NDI. 2012. "Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties - A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation."
- Wängnerud, Lena. 2009. "'Women in parliaments: Descriptive and substantive representation'." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 51-69.
- WeDo. 2007. "Women Candidates and Campaign Finance." *Women's Environment and Development Organization*, December: 1-31.
- World Bank. 2021. *World Bank, Labor force, female (% of total labor force)*. Accessed August 4, 2021. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS>.
- World Economic Forum. 2021. *Global Gender Gap Report*. World Economic Forum.

Appendix.

Table 1. Correlation coefficients Pearson's r

	WPE	AID	log_GD~P	ELECTO~L	LABORF~E	DEMOCR~Y	QOG
WPE	1.0000						
AID	0.2386	1.0000					
log_GDPPP	-0.0730	-0.4703	1.0000				
ELECTORAL	0.2836	0.2620	0.1201	1.0000			
LABORFORCE	0.1886	0.0790	-0.2490	-0.0250	1.0000		
DEMOCRACY	0.0233	0.0912	0.2469	0.2349	0.2144	1.0000	
QOG	0.1624	-0.0405	0.4886	0.1531	-0.0677	0.2665	1.0000

Figure 1. WPE

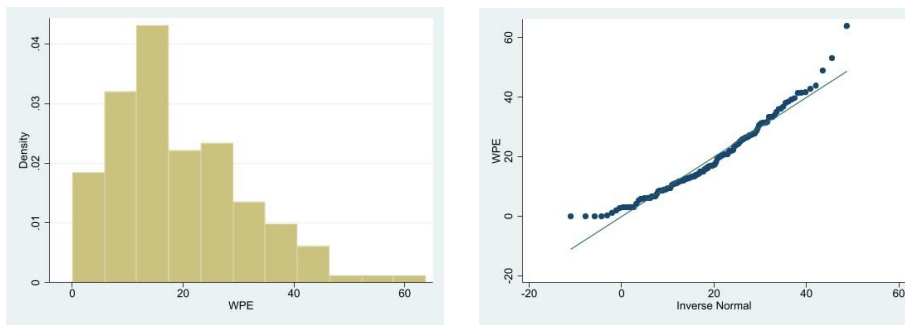


Figure 2. AID

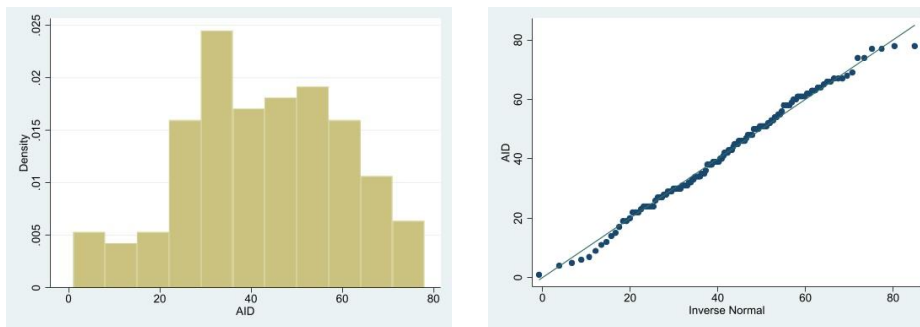


Figure 3. GDP per capita before log transformation and after

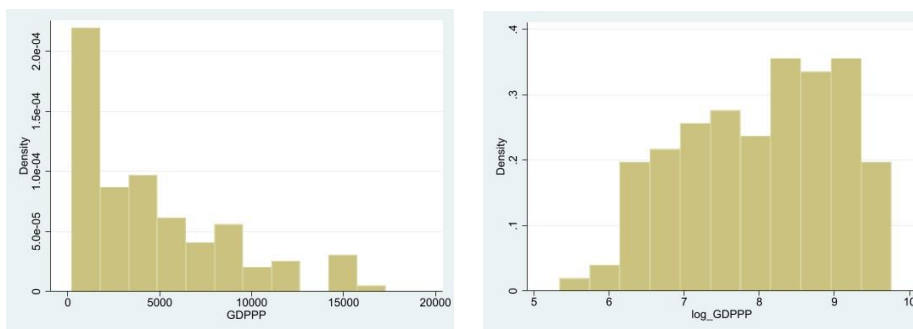


Figure 4. Labor force

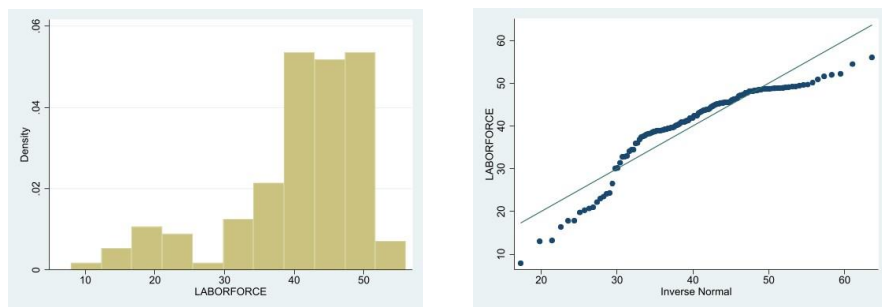


Figure 5. Democracy

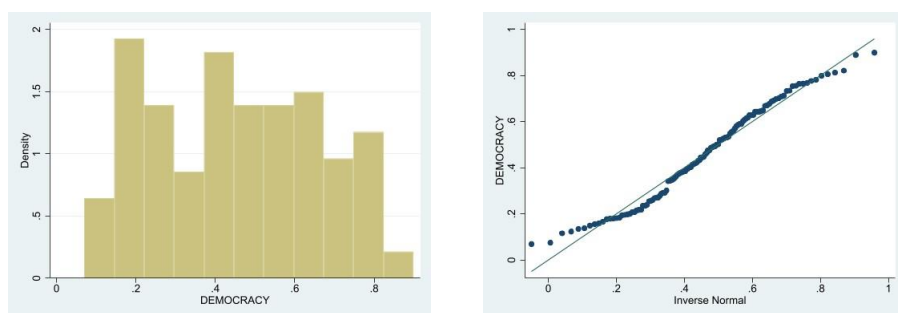


Figure 6. QOG

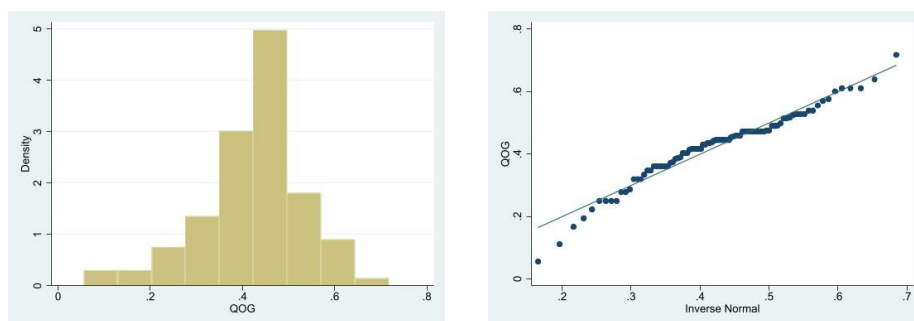


Table 2. AID, Electoral System and Women's Political Representation, Robustness Checks

VARIABLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
AIDLAGGED	0.06 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	0.02 (0.06)	0.03 (0.06)	0.02 (0.06)	0.04 (0.08)	0.03 (0.06)
LABORFORCE		0.23** (0.11)	0.23* (0.12)	0.22* (0.13)	0.28** (0.13)	0.27* (0.14)	0.28** (0.13)
log_GDPPP			0.10 (1.24)	0.41 (1.35)	-0.12 (1.36)	0.22 (1.78)	0.96 (1.58)

DEMOCRACY		0.35	-2.02	-0.62	-2.36		
		(6.08)	(6.13)	(7.87)	(6.28)		
ELECTORAL			7.92***	5.98**	0.13		
			(2.33)	(2.86)	(6.98)		
0.ELECTORAL#c.AID							0.04
							(0.10)
1.ELECTORAL#c.AID							0.19
							(0.12)
QOG					16.77		
					(15.94)		
Constant	16.75***	9.81**	7.95	6.25	5.64	-4.15	-4.22
	(1.96)	(4.68)	(12.53)	(13.15)	(13.16)	(16.21)	(16.33)
Observations	138	126	117	111	103	75	101
R-squared	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.15	0.13	0.16

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Figure 7. Scatter plot

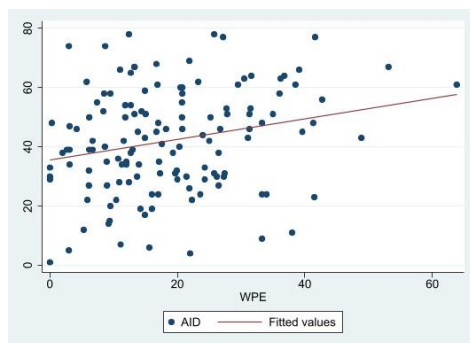


Figure 8. VIF

. vif

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
log_GDPPP	1.68	0.594063
AID	1.37	0.728251
ELECTORAL	1.31	0.764842
DEMOCRACY	1.22	0.819348
QOG	1.20	0.834131
LABORFORCE	1.17	0.852629
Mean VIF	1.33	

Figure 9. RVF plot

