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DOES COMMITMENT LEAD TO ACTIONS?

The Impact of Feminist Foreign Policy on Aid Allocation and Female Ambassadorship

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Abstract

Since 2014, ten states have declared their intent to pursue a Feminist Foreign Policy, and by doing so, made a commitment to bettering women's rights around the world. The aim of this Master Thesis is to evaluate if the adoption of Feminist Foreign Policy is followed up with tangible impact on women at home as well as abroad. The impact of Feminist Foreign Policy is examined by analysing two measurable domains of foreign policy: gender equality aid allocation and female diplomatic representation. To achieve this aim, I review the previous academic literature, formulate theoretical expectations and conduct a time series analysis covering 29 countries between the years 2013 to 2021. The literature review shows that there is no consensus as to why states adopt FFP, and that studies on FFP implementation are missing. The theory section concludes that states are expected to follow their commitments with actions due to democratic scrutiny, cosmopolitanism and post-colonialism, but not if the adoption is being used as disingenuous nation branding, in cases of low domestic accountability, and as a result of implementation difficulties. The empirical analysis shows that adopting a Feminist Foreign Policy may result in higher aid allocation towards gender equality projects. On the other hand, the declaration of a Feminist Foreign Policy has no discernible effect on the share of women in ambassadorial positions.

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Abbreviations

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

FFP - Feminist Foreign Policy

GenDip - Gender in Diplomacy

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

ODA - Official Development Assistance

QoG - Quality of Government

WPS - Women, Peace and Security

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1. Introduction

Foreign Policy has been viewed as a field where masculine norms dominate (Aggestam et al, 2019) and as of 2014, just 15 percent of the world's ambassadors were female (Niklasson & Towns, 2016). In 2014, Sweden became the first ever country to adopt an outspokenly “Feminist Foreign Policy” (FFP). In October 2022, with the change of government, Sweden also became the first country to denounce the label. This was due to the new government’s perception of the word “feminist” as concealing (Juhlin, 2022). At the time of writing, nine countries have adopted a Feminist Foreign Policy: Canada, France, Mexico, Spain, Luxembourg, Germany, Chile, Colombia and Libya, with more countries, such as Belgium and the Netherlands, being in the process of policy adoption. The currently adopted FFPs share certain common themes. These include but are not exclusive to: integrating a gender perspective into all foreign policy actions and the operation of agencies, advocating for advancements in gender equality within bilateral relations, striving to attain substantial equality within foreign services, as well as incorporating gender equality as a component to development aid (United Nations Women, 2022). In addition to these countries, various countries have pursued strong gender equality components in different areas within the scope of Foreign Policy such as Norway, the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. Preceding this, many countries have also sought to include other gender-specific commitments, such as the *Women, Peace and Security* -agenda of the United Nations Security Council, in their Foreign Policy aims and actions (Aggestam et al., 2019).

The aim of this thesis is therefore to make an empirical contribution to the existing literature on Feminist Foreign Policy by examining whether the recent trend of adopting FFP resulted in discernible change in FFP countries’ external and internal actions. Previous literature suggests

that there is a research gap regarding both examining the implementation of FFP (Jeziarska, 2022), as well as exploring whether states' FFPs align with their commitment to gender equality domestically (Aggestam et al., 2019). This thesis partially aims to examine this statement by researching whether the adoption of FFP led to changes in a country's domestic setting by the gender composition of ambassadorship. In addition to this, this thesis will also examine the external implementation of FFP by examining aid allocation, which in turn affects women abroad. This thesis is the first empirical study of the effects of the adoption of FFP on diplomatic representation and aid allocation, the thesis is also the first large N study in the literature on FFP.

The research question of this study can therefore be formulated as:

To what extent does declaration of Feminist Foreign Policy have an impact on internal and external actions of FFP states?-

The subsequent sections will consist of a literature review, followed by a theoretical section as well as a methodological section. This will consequently be followed up with the empirical result and conclusion of the thesis. The subsequent literature review will explore existing literature surrounding FFP as well as broader literature on states' Foreign Policy actions. Furthermore, the theoretical section that follows shows that the actions of the states can be influenced by the underlying reason why a country adopts an FFP. This thesis argues that internal and external actions of states would vary depending on whether states' motivation for pursuing FFP can be explained from a cosmopolitan perspective or a post-colonial perspective. Actions will also differ depending on other domestic factors such as strength of democracy and

nation branding. In the methodological section, the research design is presented and argued for. Lastly, the empirical part of the study is based on a time-series analysis to examine the evolution of gender equality in the field of Foreign Policy, and the change in dynamics over time with regards to aid allocation and female representation in ambassadorship. The scope for this research will consist of the 29 developed, donor countries present in the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), during the time period of 2013 to 2021.

2. Background

In this section, I will discuss the emergence of the concept of FFP in foreign policies around the world and the debate it has stirred. In 2014, Sweden with its social-green government in power became the first country in the world to adopt an explicit Feminist Foreign Policy (Government Offices of Sweden, 2018). The idea of the adoption of the first FFP by Sweden was to include a gender perspective into all areas of foreign policy and to do so, the country adopted three R's: Rights, Representation and Resources. These three Rs entailed a focus on equal rights for women and girls, making sure women are represented throughout levels of government, and that adequate amounts of resources are put forward to achieve gender equality (Government Offices of Sweden, 2018).

At the point of writing nine other countries have followed suit: Canada (2017), France (2019), Mexico (2020), Spain (2021), Luxembourg (2021), Germany (2022), Chile (2022), Colombia (2022) and Libya (2022), with more countries such as Belgium and the Netherlands in the process of adoption (United Nations Women, 2022). Mexico's adoption of Feminist Foreign Policy in 2020 thus marks the first country of the Global South to adopt FFP, with Chile,

Colombia and Libya following shortly after in 2022. In October 2022, Sweden, with the change of government, became the first country to scrap the label in October 2022 (Juhlin, 2022).

Regardless of the growing trend of FFP, the concept and foundation of Feminist Foreign Policy is not new, and rests on existing norms previously expressed in international conventions such as the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) and the *Women Peace and Security* (WPS) framework in the United Nations (Zhukova, Sundström & Elgström, 2022). Regardless of its more widely accepted foundation, FFP has been regarded both as an ethical approach but also a radical one as it seeks to apply a gender equality perspective to all aspects of foreign policy, including diplomacy, development, trade, and defence (Zhukova et al, 2022). There is, however, no universal consensus on what actions and commitments a FFP needs to take, and thus there may be a great variation in interpretations of the concept between countries, even if they often share common themes (United Nations Women, 2022).

It is argued that the use of the term "feminist" indicates a stronger political commitment to gender equality that differs from the more consensus-driven approach to gender mainstreaming that is commonly seen in international policy discourses of international institutions, such as for example the United Nations (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016). Criticism it has faced is often due to the policy being inconsistent with actions, such as exporting weapons to countries with poor women's rights records in the case of Sweden and Canada. Another point of critique is inconsistency between Feminist Foreign Policy branding and domestic women's rights record. For instance, FFP countries such as Mexico and France have been criticised as

they have adopted a Feminist Foreign Policy yet, the femicides within their own countries are on the rise (Elgström, Sundström & Zhukova, 2022).

3. Literature Review

Not only has Feminist Foreign Policy gained importance on the political agenda, it has also recently gained much focus in academic literature. Traditionally, feminist scholars have been sceptical towards states' ability to steer global politics in a feminist direction (Bergman Rosamond, 2020), and foreign policy has been viewed as a field where masculine norms are still dominating (Aggestam et al., 2019). The next section provides an overview of the existing literature on Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP). In the first section of the literature review, giving an overview of previous literature explicitly surrounding the concept of FFP, it shows that scholars do not agree on the reasons why states adopt such foreign policy narratives. FFP studies have also yet to cover major logics of why states implement or do not implement their commitments, which is the core concern of this study. The second section of the literature review therefore engages with the broader body of literature on state actions and discrepancies between states' commitments and actions in order to attempt to answer the research question. Moreover, the literature review concludes that there exists a gap in the literature regarding the implementation of Feminist Foreign Policy.

3.1 Feminist Foreign Policy

To start off, gender equality policies are not a new concept, but it was not until recently that the term "feminist" has made its way into the policy agenda, a trend that is gaining popularity (Thomson, 2020). Declaring an explicit Feminist Foreign Policy is argued to lead to a policy

framework that is guided by normative and ethical principles rather than traditional and elite oriented practices. Furthermore, incorporating a Feminist Foreign Policy allows states to expand and intensify their global strategies through a wider range of interactions that consider the perspectives, and the specific requirements, of women and other marginalised groups. In other words, what makes Feminist Foreign Policy unique is the way it challenges existing power hierarchies and gendered institutions. Through this explicit commitment to reform political practices, favoured groups may in turn have their power and privileges reduced (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016). As some scholars argue that foreign policy may be a continuation of domestic politics (Bergman Rosamond, 2020), this means that in practice, FFP may be an expansion of the states' domestic commitments and context. This is, however, a relationship that has been pointed out by scholars as insufficiently explored (Aggestam et al., 2019). Furthermore, some scholars argue that FFP is an ethical approach. The key argument for this is due to the fact that FFP puts gender inequality questions such as gender discrimination, lack of inclusion and representation of women, as well as violence against women, at the centre of attention (Aggestam et. al., 2019).

The concept of FFP may be seen from two standpoints: cosmopolitanism and post-colonialism. Cosmopolitanism as a core concept has the ethical assumption that all humans, regardless of state borders, should be able to enjoy the same freedoms and rights (Bergman Rosamond, 2020). Cosmopolitanism further entails that state obligations and morality should not differentiate between those within and outside of the state (Aggestam et. al., 2019). In relation to feminism, cosmopolitanism or “gender cosmopolitanism”, therefore implies the same rights and protection for all women within nation borders and around the world (Berman Rosamond, 2013). Bergman Rosamond (2020) further argues in favour of a cosmopolitan approach of FFP,

claiming that Feminist Foreign Policy primarily is constructed for the needs of women all around the world. With this in mind, it can be claimed to be reasonable to believe that adopting a Feminist Foreign Policy on the grounds of feminist cosmopolitanism would lead to actions and commitments to empower women at home, as well as in the developing world. These commitments could, for instance, include empowering women within diplomacy domestically as well as having gender focused aid, thus empowering women internationally.

Regardless of the argument of it being an ethical approach towards foreign policy, plus the arguments regarding gender cosmopolitanism, it is not seen as entirely unproblematic to assume the needs and wants of women abroad. One reason being the possibility of ethically justifying foreign military interventions on gendered grounds. Nation borders and their juridical power can thus be put aside for foreign states' self-narrative. Sceptics of this gendered cosmopolitanism also argue that Western scholarships like these may have an insufficient understanding of the effect it may have on the developing countries (Bergman Rosamond, 2013), meaning that gendered cosmopolitanism may be used in an oppressive manner or as a form of post-colonialism where Western norms and ideas are forced upon other countries without taking their social context into consideration. From a post-colonial standpoint, FFP may thus entail more aid being allocated towards gender equality projects to promote states feminist narratives abroad. Domestic changes may however not be achieved as consequently from this standpoint.

The exact definition and content of a Feminist Foreign Policy is, however, also contested (Thomson, 2020; Zhukova et al. 2022). Even when comparing two Western states, such as Sweden and Canada, scholars find that the approach to FFP differs. For Sweden, scholars argue

that a Feminist Foreign Policy is a goal in itself, and that it merely relates to Sweden's previous domestic and international commitments to reduce the imbalance of power between genders. Canada's FFP, on the other hand, sees poverty as the key issue, focusing their FFP on the economic benefits of female empowerment (Thomson, 2020). Zhukova et al. (2022) further suggest that states will articulate their feminist policies in a manner that is closely linked to their strategic objectives. Each state will therefore highlight the aspects of feminism that fits their own domestic and international image, as well as their individual agenda. The variations of FFPs between Sweden, Canada, Mexico and France, which are the states studied by the authors, indicate that the translation of international norms, such as gender equality, into strategic narratives is about more than just the norms themselves. It is also about national identity, perceptions of self and others, as well as the states' position in the global community (Zhukova et al., 2022).

Previous research within the field has often been theoretical, conceptualising FFP and leaving the actual implementation understudied. However, an empirical study by Jezierska (2022), examines the implementation of FFP in the context of Sweden's digital diplomacy in Poland and Hungary. The scholar concludes that in terms of gender activities on the two Swedish Embassies' Twitter accounts, FFP does not seem to have had a significant impact on digital diplomacy between 2014 and 2021. On the contrary, the launch of Sweden's FFP went by unnoticed and since 2014 posts linked to gender equality have decreased (Jezierska, 2022). To my knowledge, and in line with the claims made by Jezierska (2022), this is the only current academic article both exploring the implementation of FFP and also doing so in an empirical matter. Thus, there is a need for more research like this, such as research on the implementation of FFPs effect on resource allocation and institutional changes.

To conclude, Feminist Foreign Policy challenges existing power hierarchies as well as historically gendered institutions (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016). Some scholars argue that the adoption of such policy is guided by cosmopolitanism and normative and ethical principles (ibid), whilst others claim gender cosmopolitanism could be seen as post-colonialism (Bergman Rosamond, 2013). The former implies the same rights and protection for all women within and outside national borders, while the latter entails a possibly problematic approach, pushing Western narratives in other states without an understanding of the social context. In connection to the research question of this thesis, Female Foreign Policy, when interpreted from a post-colonial perspective, may lead to a difference in resource allocation as more funds would be put towards strategic narratives abroad such as feminism and gender equality. Theoretically, a cosmopolitanism approach would also entail more resources allocated to women across borders through aid as countries aspire to protect women internationally as well as domestically. It would further entail an improvement within a country's diplomatic gender composition due to this cross-country focus. The findings for gender equality aid would thus be the same, whilst diplomatic representation may vary. This is however highly theoretical as scholars have yet to sufficiently examine the implementation of Feminist Foreign Policy, which is a gap in literature that this thesis aims to explore.

3.2 States Foreign Policy Actions

The academic literature regarding what drives states to take on and to follow through with their commitments is vast and conflicting. The following section will give an overview of the part of the academic literature on states' behaviour vis-à-vis their commitments relevant for

explaining FFP and its implementation. For this thesis, this section will thus provide an explanation as to why states may fail to live up to their outspoken commitments to gender equality through FFP.

The theory that states use foreign policy to accomplish more than their national interests and own security is a claim that is contested in academic literature (Aggestam & Bergman Rosamond, 2019). Thomson (2020) further argues that both Canada and Sweden use their feminist policies to create an image for themselves and to elevate themselves in the international hierarchies, and there may be a great self-interest in adoption of FFP. In a paper by Jezierska and Towns (2018) on gender equality in Sweden's nation branding, the scholars claim that the purpose of nation branding is to establish and cultivate the image of a country: a process where gender equality may act as an important element. The narratives chosen by a country to be included in their nation's branding will inevitably be done in a selective way, and some of the goals driven from this are improving the country's global reputation, promoting tourism and investments, and making the country more attractive to include in multilateral projects (Jezierska & Towns, 2018).

In addition to nation branding, a state's foreign policy is frequently shaped and changed through various policy options and compromises, some of which may not be in line with the ethical ideas and principles of FFP. For instance, the discrepancy between Sweden's nation branding as a “humanitarian superpower” and its former arms export to countries with poor human rights records such as Saudi Arabia, perfectly illustrates this dilemma (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016). A narrative can thus be chosen in a selective way to improve a country's reputation but does not necessarily need to be followed up by substantial, or even compatible,

actions. Furthermore, scholars argue that becoming more “modern” may come with rewards and thus, states may use the adoption of new behaviours towards women and girls to climb the social hierarchy between states (Towns, 2010).

Scholars also argue that commitments made by democratic states are more often deemed to be credible as the domestic accountability and the cost of foreign policy failures is higher. Therefore, commitments tend to be more credible than in autocratic states where the domestic accountability tends to be lower (Leeds, 1999). As critics are less likely to be punished in democracies, NGOs also tend to be more active in democratic countries (Hathaway, 2003). Hathaway (2003) therefore further argues that the internal pressure to uphold commitments is much higher for democracies, and thus democracies will tend to stick to their obligations. On the contrary, less democratic states will face less internal pressure and NGOs will be more restricted (Hathaway, 2003).

If a commitment is made by a democratic state and is later not followed up with adequate actions, the general public can also show their discontent through general elections. If citizens care about their country's reputation and credibility, they are less likely to vote for a leader who breaks international commitments. This gives democratic leaders a further reason to keep their promises, and studies have shown that democratic leaders are indeed less likely to break international commitments (Chiba et al., 2015). Thus, democratic states are less likely to make commitments they will not follow through as the cost of non-compliance is high. While Feminist Foreign Policy is not necessarily a formal international commitment in its own right, it can be accompanied by international commitments that promote gender equality and women's empowerment, which can be reflected in foreign relations, aid programs and diplomatic engagements.

Lastly, on an individual level, scholars argue that politicians may avoid being held accountable for the outcomes of policy initiatives. If their policies fail, they are likely to have moved on or out of their position, which results in a tendency to prioritise short-term results. The issue of prioritising such short-term results is that policymakers are more likely to receive recognition for successful legislation, rather than for evading implementation difficulties. Scholars also suggest that implementation difficulties are often perceived as someone else's responsibility (Hudson, Hunter & Peckham., 2019). Therefore, there may be an accountability and implementation problem on an individual level, and thus risk of actions not following commitments.

To conclude, this section provides an overview of the literature on what drives state actions and what may cause them to diverge from their outspoken commitments. Nation branding as well as the possible reputational rewards of becoming more progressive may drive states to adopt and promote policies with gender equality perspective in mind. The strength of the state's democracy, in which it enables NGOs and the population to hold their leaders accountable for policy failures, may also be an important aspect of why actions would diverge from commitment. There may also be implementation issues on an individual level where politicians may focus on adoption rather than implementation.

3.3 Research Gap

As FFPs has only been around for less than a decade, it remains understudied (Aggestam & Towns, 2019), particularly when it comes to the implementation of FFP (Jeziarska, 2022). This study aims to fill this research gap of FFP implementation by drawing from FFP and broader literature on states' Foreign Policy actions. The outcome from this literature review suggests

divergent reasons why states adopt and follow through, or fail to follow through, with their commitments to FFP. On one hand, declarations of FFP may be followed by action due to cosmopolitanism, genuine nation branding and accountability from civil society. On the other hand, reasons were given for why declarations may not be followed by action, including lack of accountability, lack of democracy and implementation difficulties on an individual level.

4. Theoretical Framework

In the following section, drawing from previous academic literature, a theoretical framework will be presented to help answer the research question of this thesis. This theoretical framework aims to explicate the underlying reasoning for, and the impact of, adopting Feminist Foreign Policy, both domestically and internationally. The current FFPs have shared certain common commitments, such as striving to attain gender equality within their foreign services as well as incorporating gender equality through development aid (United Nations Women, 2022). Therefore, when examining the effects of FFP, this thesis will focus on the female representation in diplomacy, measured through the share of female ambassadors, as well as the percentage of aid allocated to projects with focus on female empowerment.

4.1 Feminist Foreign Policy: A Key Focus on Gender Equality

As FFP has been argued to lead to a policy framework which puts the needs of women in the front row (Aggestam & Bermond-Rosamond, 2016) and using the word feminist is claimed to signal a stronger commitment to gender equality (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016), one would hope to see material changes after states outspokenly adopt such commitment. As most states which adopted FFP are democratic (V-Dem Institute, 2023) one could assume that we

will see a positive effect from adapting an explicit policy as the cost of non-implementation domestically is high in democratic countries (Leeds, 1999). This, partially due to NGOs having a greater voice to scrutinise non-compliance to commitments (Hathaway, 2003), but also the strength of the democracies which leads the public being able to show their discontent through for example elections (Chiba et al., 2015). This domestic scrutiny for the countries presented in this study would therefore lead to the FFP countries having a higher share of female ambassadors, as well as allocating more aid towards gender equality to live up to their foreign policy commitments of FFP.

As foreign policy may be a continuation of domestic commitments (Bergman Rosamond, 2020), countries with greater commitment and achievements to domestic gender equality may be more likely to follow through with these commitments abroad. Furthermore, gender cosmopolitanism implies caring about women and their rights both domestically and across borders, and as FFP is argued to be constructed to achieve just this (Bergman Rosamond, 2020), adopting a Feminist Foreign Policy may therefore theoretically be followed up by both empowerment of women domestically in diplomacy as well as empowerment internationally through aid. If the country commits to FFP from a post-colonial perspective, we can expect that the aid will also be increased as a tool of promotion of a hegemonic narrative of the donor onto the recipient country. The commitment to women domestically may however not happen as consequently from this perspective.

To conclude, the countries examined in this thesis are all democracies to varying degrees. Therefore, we expect these countries to comply once they make explicit commitments as the commitments and narratives would be chosen carefully and in a way that would be easy to comply with. If countries were to not comply, the domestic setting would lead to scrutiny from

NGOs and the public and put the leaders in a fragile situation against its voters. It may also risk damaging the country's nation branding and credibility which would make the cost of no compliance too high. Lastly, no matter if the drive is cosmopolitan or post-colonial, we may still expect the outcome to be higher aid allocations towards female empowerment.

Consequently, theories of democratic scrutiny, cosmopolitanism, and post-colonialism lead to the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The adoption Feminist Foreign Policy is followed by material changes in favour of gender equality.

4.2 Feminist Foreign Policy: Shortcomings to Gender Equality

Granted, using the word “feminist” has been argued for as implying a stronger commitment to women and gender equality (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016), but this does not automatically mean that countries will make material changes. As previously argued, states may portray themselves as gender progressive to elevate themselves in the social hierarchy of states (Towns, 2010), and therefore we may see FFPs being adopted with implementation falling short as countries simply use the declaration for their own profit without putting in the resources to result in actual changes.

Furthermore, if the strength of the democracy in the country that has adopted FFP is weak then the country faces less domestic risk and lower cost of non-compliance from not following through with material changes (Leeds, 1999). NGOs and the public alike may also have less

opportunity to scrutinise and show their discontent (Hathaway, 2003). In addition to this, in a scenario where FFP is adopted but lacks domestic support, there would be even lower costs of non-compliance. This, as the population lacks the desire to see the policy being properly implemented. In such a scenario, the country could again increase its place in the international hierarchy for adopting something “progressive” (Towns, 2010). However actual material changes do not need to follow as the population does not condemn non-compliance.

Lastly, there may also be an issue within states on an individual level which leads to commitments falling short, due to the prioritisation of short-term results of politicians and the implementation issues that may follow (Hudson et.al., 2019). As such, even if leaders adopt FFP, they still fall short when it comes to material changes.

To conclude, adopting a Feminist Foreign Policies risk not leading to actions when the domestic setting does not enable NGOs and the population to hold leaders accountable when policy commitments are broken. Furthermore, if a state adopts FFP purely to elevate themselves in the social hierarchy between states, and the nation branding is not genuine, material changes may also remain undone. Lastly, the individual perspective of the politicians meant to implement falling short is also an issue that can lead to shortcomings in implementation.

Consequently, theories of nation branding to elevate your state in the social hierarchies, domestic accountability and implementation issues lead to the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The adoption of Feminist Foreign Policy is not followed by material changes in favour of gender equality.

5. Method and Data

The upcoming section discusses operationalization and measurement of the key concepts and the data. Firstly, foreign policy as a whole can be understood as a state's strategy on how to multilaterally and bilaterally interact with other states. It is also a way for states to fulfil their own economic and ideological goals (Apodaca, 2017). Within this, changes in foreign policy can entail external and internal actions. External through its interactions with other countries and internal in a country's own structure of state bureaucracy. To examine the internal effects of committing to FFP, the gender composition of a country's top layer of the diplomatic services will be examined. With regards to the external actions, gendered aid will be at focus. As there is no specific definition or measurement of FFP, thus these actions are used as proxies for measuring efficiency of FFP.

To evaluate the testable propositions formulated above, a time-series analysis is conducted to examine the effects of the adoption of FFP. The regression models are conducted with fixed effects to be able to account for characteristics specific to the individual states. This approach has also been chosen to be able to analyse the countries before and after adopting FFP. In addition, to examine both possible correlation and causation, both regressions with and without lagged variables are conducted. Furthermore, scope of this thesis will as previously mentioned consist of countries that are a part of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). DAC is a committee within the OECD that consists of some of the world's largest donors (OECD, n.d.a). As of now (Spring 2023), DAC consists of 30 countries as Lithuania joined the committee in November 2022 (OECD, 2022). Due to a lack of data for 2022 the scope of the study is 29 countries, excluding Lithuania, observed between 2013, the year before first adoption of the

FFP, and 2021. The DAC countries have been selected due to its detailed and publicly available data on ODA.

5.1 Dependent Variables

Because of the reasons mentioned earlier, this thesis conducts regressions on two dependent variables. The first dependent variable, *Share of Female Ambassadors*, measures the share of female ambassadors sent from DAC-countries of all main ambassador postings around the world. The reason for narrowing the scope down to just DAC-countries, even if the available data would allow for a wider scope, is to be able to have the same pool of countries for both dependent variables. This will make it possible to compare the two main models with each other. Looking at main postings, rather than main posting and side accreditations, also means that no individual will be measured multiple times and thus, the variable will examine the share of individual females in diplomacy rather than share of overall positions that women have been assigned to.

The data was collected from the Quality of Governments standard dataset from 2023 (Teorell et al, 2023), and the variable was originally retrieved from the GenDip database on Gender and Diplomatic Representation. The variable is continuous and ranges from 0 to 100, 0 representing no female ambassadors, and 100 indicating that all ambassadors are female (Niklasson & Towns, 2022). As appointments are slow-moving and do not change every year, the data set only provides data taken in the years of 2013, 2014, 2019, 2021 within the scope of this research.

The second dependent variable, *Gender Equality Aid*, captures the share of development aid targeting gender equality and women's empowerment in the ODA recipient countries. The data was originally retrieved from the OECDs website. The dataset provided variables for screened, gender targeted aid and screened non-targeted aid, which were measured in constant prices in US Dollars (millions) with the base year of 2020 (OECD, 2023). For this thesis, the gender-targeted and non-targeted variables were then merged into one variable to represent the total amount of aid given. From this, the variable of gender-targeted aid was divided by the total amount of aid in order to get the percentage of screened aid that is gendered. This, to better capture the differences in aid focus over time.

5.2 Independent Variable

For the independent variable, a binary variable has been created indicating whether a DAC donor country has adopted a Feminist Foreign Policy or not. The variable, *FFP*, takes on “0” when a country has no FFP and ”1”, indicating that the country has adopted FFP. At the point of writing, this includes 10 countries, of which six are members of DAC. These being: Sweden, Canada, France, Spain, Luxembourg and Germany (United Nations Women, 2022). For this thesis, the year of 2013 has been chosen as the starting year, as this is the year before any country adopted an explicit Feminist Foreign Policy. 2021 marks the final year of this thesis, as this is the final year where data is available for the dependent variables and control variables alike.

The independent variable will both be used in its original form, but also lagged to examine if a commitment to FFP in year $t-1$ leads to action in t . The reason for this is to examine both possible correlation as well as causation. Correlation, to see whether the current state of aid or female

ambassadorship correlates with the adoption of Feminist Foreign Policy. Causation instead examines the possible future impact the adoption of Feminist Foreign Policy might have on aid allocation and female ambassadorship. In the first version, six countries (Sweden, Canada, France, Spain, Germany and Luxembourg) will at some point have the value of 1. In the second version, with the lagged variables, only three countries (Sweden, Canada, France), will at some point have a value of 1.

5.3 Control Variables

To further examine the relationship between the key variables, and to mitigate the omitted variable bias, several control variables are added to the analysis. The three control variables chosen for this thesis are: *Economic Development*, *Democracy* and *Domestic Gender Equality*.

Economic Development

The first control variable, *GDP per Capita*, is added as a proxy for the level of economic development due to the impact such development may have on all the key variables. Previous research has suggested that there is a positive relationship between economic development and domestic gender equality (Duflo, 2012). Thus, economic development may influence both the decision to adopt policies that may promote gender equality, as well as the domestic setting that may enable more women to pursue careers within diplomacy. The original variable for GDP per Capita was retrieved from the OECDs website (OECD, n.d.b), and logged in line with common practices, to create a more normally distributed variable for Economic Development (see appendix). With this, the variable now has a greater chance to be linearly linked to the independent and dependent variables.

Democracy

The second control variable is *Democracy*. The original variable, The Electoral Democracy Index, is from the V-Dem Institute, but retrieved from in the QoG-dataset. The Electoral Democracy Index, ranging from 0 = the least democratic to 1 = the most democratic, assesses the degree to which the concept of electoral democracy is fully realised in a state. Or in other words, the index captures the extent to which political leaders are chosen through inclusive elections that are free and fair, and where freedoms of association and expression are protected (Teorell et. al., 2023). This variable has been chosen to check for the influences of having a stronger or weaker democracy may have on the implementation of commitments. As previously discussed, this may be of importance due to domestic accountability (Leeds, 1999), and the capabilities of critics and NGOs (Hathaway, 2003). Furthermore, it is reasonable to believe that an inclusive, political system such as democracies, would be more likely to adopt policies promoting gender equality, such as FFP, to accommodate the concerns of women domestically as well as abroad.

Domestic Gender Inequality

Furthermore, as foreign policy actions may be a continuation of the commitments already made domestically to promote gender equality (Bergman Rosamond, 2020), *Gender Inequality* is added as control variables. The variable used is also taken from the Quality of Government Dataset (Teorell et al., 2023), and captures domestic inequalities between men and women in three aspects of human development: empowerment, reproductive health and economic status. Empowerment is a joint measurement of the proportion of 25+ year old females with some form of secondary education or higher compared to men the same age, as well as the female to male proportion in the state's national parliament. Furthermore, reproductive health is assessed by examining maternal mortality ratio as well as adolescent birth rates. Lastly, the economic status

aspect is measured through the labour force participation rate of both male and female populations aged 15 years and above. While “0” means no disparity between the genders, “1” stands for the largest disparity possible (United Nations Development Programme, 2022).

Previous research has specifically argued for the importance of female representation in national government as female representation may consequently lead to more resources and focus on issues women put extra importance to. Wägnerud (2009) even goes as far as arguing that there's a critical mass for the number of women which would result in female friendly policies (Wägnerud, 2009). Thus, a higher level of domestic gender equality may influence the decisions to adopt FFP, as well as the level of gender equality aid and share of female ambassadors.

5.4 Discussion and Limitations

This thesis builds its research design and model structure around the assumptions that policy goals, instruments and outcomes have a direct relationship (Hudson et al, 2018), as well as the assumption that the current state of a country affects policy implementation. By using lagged variables, unfortunately, due to the policy being so newly adopted by most countries, several countries fall outside of the scope of the lagged regressions due to lack of data from 2022. Therefore, there are two versions of the analysis: one with lags and one without.

Consequently, by employing lagged independent variables and control variables, the models move away from examining correlation to possible causality. However, a truly causal relationship is difficult to ascertain using observational data. Therefore, the models can only

suggest, and not determine, a possible causation between adoption of FFP and its implementation. When including lags, the number of observations drop substantially. Therefore, making the model weaker as a lower number of observations may increase the risk of biases. Not including lags would however not capture the possible causal effects of FFP and thus both versions will be examined even though they both have their own strengths as well as weaknesses.

6. Result

In the following section the results derived from the two models: internal and external effects of adopting FFP, without lags (Table 1 and 3) and with lags (Table 2 and 4) are reported and analysed. The threshold chosen for statistical significance is five percent, as commonly used.

6.1 Regression: FFP and Gender Equality Aid

Table 1. FFP and Gender Equality Aid (no lags)

VARIABLES	1 Gender Equality Aid	2 Gender Equality Aid	3 Gender Equality Aid	4 Gender Equality Aid
FFP	0.10 (0.06)	0.06 (0.06)	0.05 (0.06)	0.05 (0.06)
Ln_GDP_per_Capita		0.32*** (0.10)	0.39*** (0.09)	0.35** (0.17)
Democracy			0.65**	0.63**

			(0.25)	(0.23)
Gender_Inequality				-0.39
				(1.35)
Constant	0.44***	-3.03***	-4.30***	-3.86*
	(0.00)	(1.03)	(1.08)	(1.89)
Observations	253	253	253	253
R-squared	0.02	0.10	0.13	0.13
Number of donor	29	29	29	29

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 1. Table one shows all four models of the relationship between Gender Equality Aid and FFP in the same year. Table one includes control variables: Logged GDP per Capita, Democracy and Gender Inequality.

In Table 1 the coefficient for FFP is not statistically significant, which means that it is not possible to conclude that adopting FFP has a correlation with the share of gender equality ODA, in the same year. At the same time, logged GDP per capita has a statistically significant effect on gender equality aid. The coefficient is positive, meaning that a country's economic development has a positive correlation to the percentage of ODA that goes towards gender equality development projects. Democracy also has a positive, and statistically significant, correlation with the percentage of aid going towards female empowerment. Gender inequality in the donor countries does however not have a statistically significant correlation with gendered aid. The results derived from the data used in this thesis therefore concludes that FFP

does not seem to have a correlation with the amount of gender equality aid distributed in the same year when FFP is adopted. By using this data, this thesis instead suggests that there is a correlation with logged GDP per capita and level of democracy.

Table 2. FFP and Gender Equality Aid (lags)

VARIABLES	1 Gender Equality Aid	2 Gender Equality Aid	3 Gender Equality Aid	4 Gender Equality Aid
FFP_lag1	0.16*** (0.04)	0.13** (0.05)	0.12*** (0.04)	0.12*** (0.04)
lagged_Ln_GDP_per_Capita		0.30*** (0.09)	0.36*** (0.10)	0.39** (0.17)
lagged_Democracy			0.60*** (0.21)	0.60*** (0.22)
lagged_Gender_Inequality				0.35 (1.30)
Constant	0.44*** (0.00)	-2.82*** (0.96)	-3.92*** (1.13)	-4.30** (1.93)
Observations	225	225	225	225
R-squared	0.04	0.11	0.13	0.13
Number of donor	29	29	29	29

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2. Table two shows all four models of the relationship between Gender Equality Aid and FFP with a one-year lag. Table two includes control variables: Logged GDP per Capita, Democracy and Gender Inequality.

When running the same regression but with lagged independent and control variables, having a Feminist Foreign Policy in place the year before, becomes statistically significant. Meaning that it is possible that there may be a positive impact, a 12 percentage points increase, from lagged FFP on the percentage of ODA that is devoted to gender equality the next year.

The lagged economic development and the lagged strength of a country's democracy also holds statistical significance throughout models. The coefficients are positive, meaning that both may have a positive impact on the allocation of ODA to gender equality focused projects. The lagged domestic gender inequality does however not hold statistical significance, and this thesis can therefore not suggest that it has an impact on gender equality aid based.

To summarise, from the data used in this thesis one can conclude that FFP is not correlated with higher levels of allocation of ODA towards development projects that aim to empower women. The results however suggest a possible relationship between adopting FFP and aid allocation the following year. In both scenarios of normal and lagged variables, economic development and democracy, may also have a positive effect on gender equality aid allocation, whilst domestic gender equality does not.

6.2 Regression: FFP and Female Ambassadorship

Table 3. FFP and Female Ambassadorship (no lags)

VARIABLES	1 Female Ambassadors	2 Female Ambassadors	3 Female Ambassadors	4 Female Ambassadors
FFP	9.25*** (2.42)	5.32* (2.85)	5.20* (2.82)	3.78* (2.14)
Ln_GDP_per_Capita		22.89*** (4.87)	23.68*** (5.01)	1.04 (7.77)
Democracy			5.26 (11.67)	-4.51 (8.90)
Gender_Inequality				-237.94*** (62.77)
Constant	22.56*** (0.22)	-223.15*** (52.22)	-236.09*** (56.97)	37.03 (91.47)
Observations	112	112	112	112
R-squared	0.13	0.42	0.42	0.56
Number of donor	29	29	29	29

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3. Table three shows all four models of the relationship between Female Ambassadors and FFP in the same year. Table three includes control variables: Logged GDP per Capita, Democracy and Gender Inequality.

When examining the internal effects of FFP on female ambassadorship, measured in the same year, FFP does not seem to be correlated with the new dependent variable in the full model. Neither does economic development, nor strength of democracy, as all of these variables lack statistical significance. The only statistically significant variable, and thus the only variable that may have a correlation with the share of female ambassadors based on the data available in this thesis, is gender inequality. The relationship is negative, meaning that higher gender inequality may correlate with a decrease in female ambassadors. With these results, the impacts of the independent variable and control variables are therefore in complete opposite to the previous regressions where external effects of FFP were examined.

Table 4. FFP and Female Ambassadorship (lags)

VARIABLES	1 Female Ambassadors	2 Female Ambassadors	3 Female Ambassadors	4 Female Ambassadors
FFP_lag1	10.83** (4.04)	7.68* (4.47)	7.64* (4.45)	5.12* (2.70)
lagged_Ln_GDP_per_Capita		25.41*** (5.08)	25.70*** (5.14)	4.85 (6.83)
lagged_Democracy			2.18 (12.48)	-6.85 (10.06)

lagged_Gender_Inequality				-212.61***
				(57.87)
Constant	24.13***	-248.61***	-253.64***	-3.09
	(0.23)	(54.48)	(57.97)	(79.13)
Observations	86	86	86	86
R-squared	0.10	0.38	0.38	0.52
Number of donor	29	29	29	29

Robust standard errors in parentheses

***** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1**

Table 4. Table four shows all four models of the relationship between Female Ambassadors and FFP in the same year. Table four includes control variables: Logged GDP per Capita, Democracy and Gender Inequality.

When including lags in the regression over internal commitments, the overall result does not change significantly from the regression without lags. As in table 3, FFP does not have a statistically significant relationship with female ambassadorship. Instead, domestic gender equality may have an impact as this is the only variable that holds statistical significance. The coefficient is negative, meaning that as domestic gender equality worsens, the share of female ambassadors decreases.

To conclude, unlike in the previous models with gender equality aid (table 1 and 2), the data in this thesis does not suggest that FFP has any correlation, nor causation, with the share of female ambassadors. For these models the complete opposite is true with regards to the control

variables as well: the economic development and the democracy levels are not statistically significant, but domestic gender inequality is.

6.3 Discussion

Inevitably, this research does contain limitations, many being added due to the unavailability of data due to the concept of FFP being new, without clear definition and by it so far not being broadly adopted. Furthermore, in this thesis, only DAC countries are examined even if there is a wider set of countries that have adopted FFP. The result of this thesis is therefore not generalisable to other countries that may have adopted FFP. As previously mentioned, this thesis is also based on observational data and the result can thus not determine causality. Even when using lags, the result presented can only suggest possible causality. With the inclusion of lags, the models however become weaker as a result of the reduction in the number of observations.

This thesis examines changes within countries over the time period of 2013 to 2021, rather than comparing countries to each other. Even if the regressions are conducted using fixed effects, the result remains substantially the same when using random effects estimators (not reported, available upon request). The OLS estimators for the models are also statistically significant, however inflated (not reported, available upon request).

7. Conclusion

The result of this thesis suggests that there may be a potentially causal effect of adopting a FFP on the following year's allocation of aid, but no correlation between the two variables measured in the same year. As adoption of FFP, with the data used for this thesis, seems to result in higher

shares of ODA towards gender equality, this thesis thus supports the arguments made in previous academic literature that FFP adoption may stem from either a cosmopolitan or post-colonial perspective. This, as the increase in ODA can both be seen as a commitment to women across borders, and to push your own narrative in other developing states.

With regards to female ambassadorship, the FFP declaration does not appear to have neither correlation nor possible causation. Because of this, the perception that FFP comes from a place of post-colonialism may be argued as the impact is made externally through aid, whilst lacking at home through improvements of female representation in diplomacy. In other words, the improvements are not made at home as well as abroad, as from cosmopolitanism. The reason for the lack of internal action may also be due to ambassadorship being more slow-moving than gender equality aid, and the results from FFP may therefore take longer to be visible than the time scope of the thesis. This lack of change also aligns with the theory of implementation issues on an individual level. If politicians value short-term outcomes rather than long-term commitments, then it is a lot easier to show commitment through gender equality aid than through female ambassadorship.

From examining the control variables, economic development and democracy seem to have a relation to the external actions, gender equality aid. On the contrary, domestic gender equality may impact the internal actions, share of female ambassadors. The control variables therefore give inconclusive support to the presented theories. In the scenario of external actions, the theory of stronger democracy leading to greater domestic accountability holds as democracy, in combination with FFP, seems to have a positive impact on gender equality aid. On the

contrary, neither FFP nor democracy have a statistical significance when examining internal actions through share of female ambassadorship.

In addition to this, the theoretical argument of FFP being a continuation of commitments made at home is also inconclusive in the two different models. This as domestic gender inequality does not appear to be correlated to external actions of foreign policy such as gender equality aid, but its relation to share of female ambassadorship on the other hand is statistically significant. From the data used in this thesis, gender equality therefore seems to be of importance for internal actions, but not for external actions.

To conclude, from the results of this paper, adopting a Feminist Foreign Policy may result in external commitments through higher levels of Official Development Assistance allocated towards projects aiming to empower women abroad. Adopting FFP does however not seem to influence the internal commitments through female representation in diplomacy. Instead, the underlying domestic gender equality of the country has a more distinguished impact in this scenario. Worth noting is that the results of this thesis may however be distorted due to the lack of consensus of FFP. Even though most FFPs have shared many common themes, the internal and external commitments examined in this thesis may not be those of importance for the countries that have adopted FFPs, within the scope of this thesis. Instead, these countries may show greater commitment through other foreign policy changes not covered.

8. Future Research

This thesis does not study non-Western states who have adopted FFP. This, due to the scope being restricted to DAC countries where the only countries that have adopted FFP within the

committee are Western. As previously mentioned, this is to be able to have the same pool of countries for both dependent variables. As scholars have previously pointed out, research is often done from a Eurocentric perspective, and since most countries within the scope of this thesis are European this thesis does not provide insight from this understudied perspective. Therefore, future research could expand the scope to all countries. With such an approach, the gender equality aid variable would have to be studied differently to include other forms of aid that are not ODA from DAC countries. A study like that would thus broaden the perspective and include non-Western countries which currently have FFP, but are not in DAC (Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Libya). Unfortunately, as most of the non-Western countries adopted FFP in 2022, the impact may not be observed nor studied just yet. Future research could also expand to include other areas of foreign policy not covered in this thesis such as defence and trade.

Another possible area of research that has yet to be studied is the impact female ambassadors may have on share of gender equality aid. As mentioned in this thesis, previous research has suggested a positive impact from women in the national government on female friendly policies (Wängnerud, 2009). Thus, one could argue that the same could be true for the impact from women within diplomacy as ambassadors to some degree have influence on decisions regarding aid in many DAC countries (OECD, 2009). When running the same model as previously but adding the share of female ambassadorship as an explanatory variable to gender equality aid, the regression does however not provide evidence of a correlation between female ambassadorship and gender equality aid (see appendix). It may nevertheless be a relevant area to research within FFP literature.

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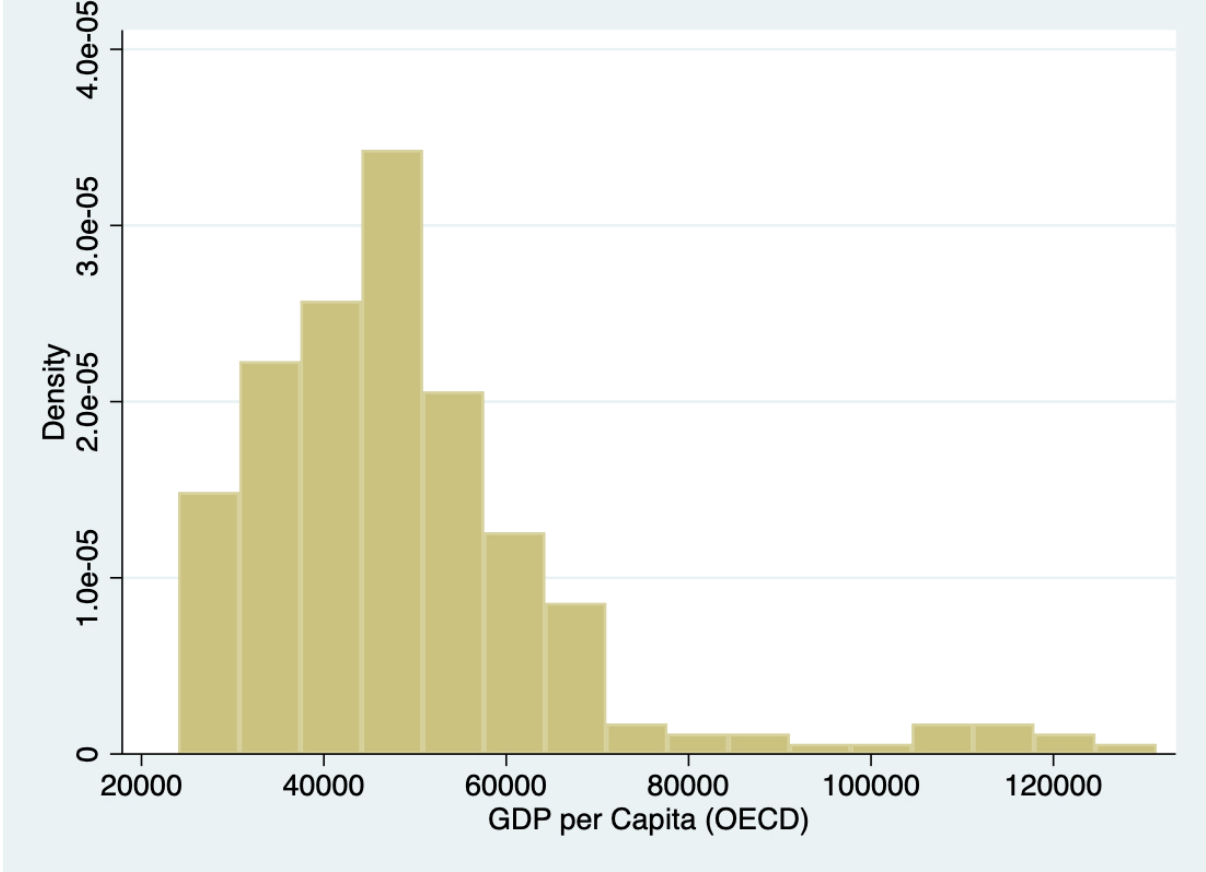
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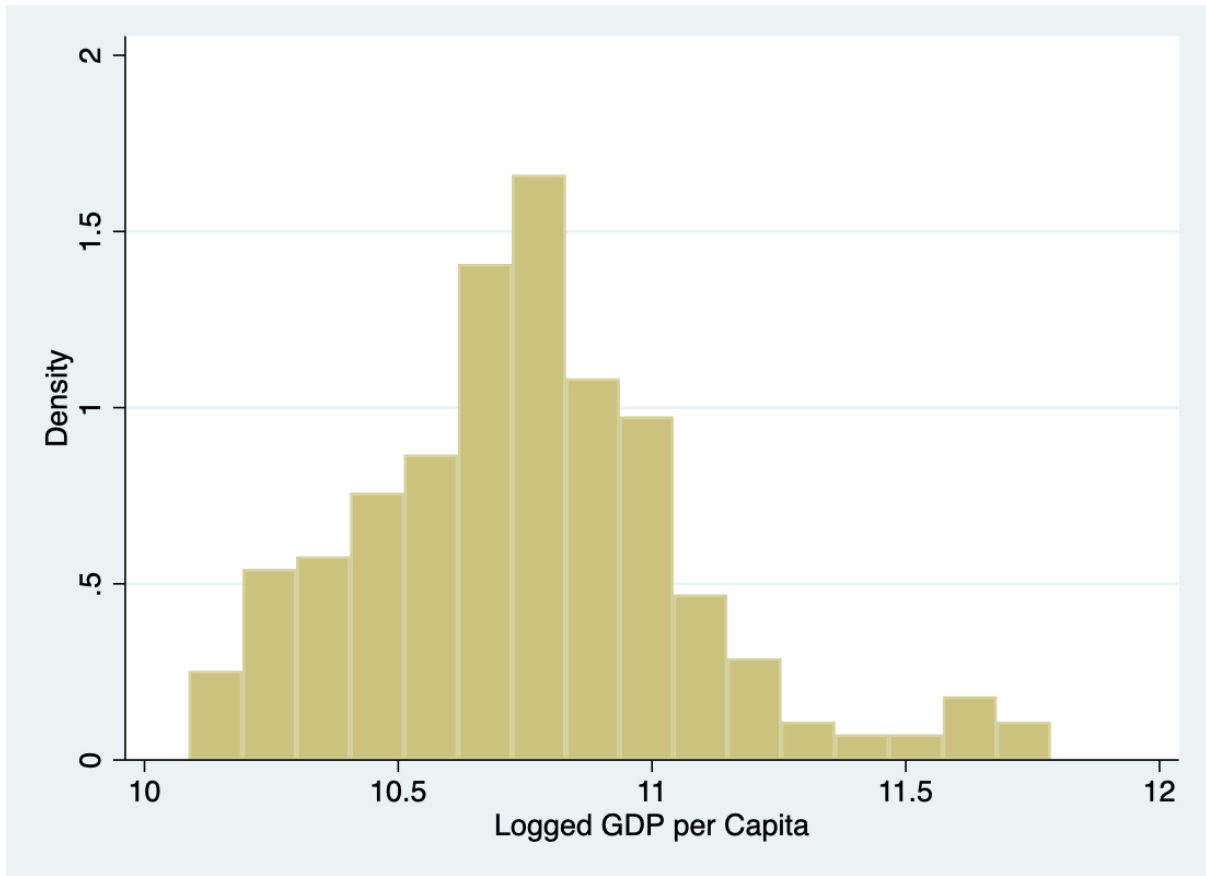
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10. Appendix



Graph 1. Graph one shows the distribution of the variable GDP per Capita.



Graph 2. Graph two shows the distribution of the variable Logged GDP per Capita.

