



Global Majority E-Journal



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Global Majority E-Journal

About the *Global Majority E-Journal*

The *Global Majority E-Journal* is published twice a year and freely available online at: <http://www.american.edu/cas/economics/ejournal/>. The journal publishes articles that discuss critical issues for the lives of the global majority. The global majority is defined as the more than 80 percent of the world's population living in low- and middle-income countries. The topics discussed reflect issues that characterize, determine, or influence the lives of the global majority: poverty, population growth, youth bulge, urbanization, lack of access to safe water, climate change, agricultural development, etc. The articles are based on research papers written by American University (AU) undergraduate students (mostly freshmen) as one of the course requirements for Econ-110—The Global Majority, which is an elective within the New AU Core.

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How Children’s Well-Being Reflects Government Choices and National Circumstances in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda

Kayla Benjamin

Abstract

This article looks at children’s rights and protections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda. During the last few decades, Rwanda has made significant progress economically and in terms of human development, whereas the DRC has continued to struggle. Examining children’s rights in both countries reveals that national government choices as well as historical legacies of conflict and instability contribute to a nation’s ability to take care of its children.

I. Introduction

In many of the world’s least developed countries (LDCs), children face deprivation in many forms. Even more so than adults, children are subject to the fortunes of their families, communities, and countries. This article examines how children’s rights and protections can be a reflection of both a country’s overall developmental success and its priorities. It explores how legacies of colonialism shape – but do not determine – nations’ ability to care for their children even today. The article examines these issues by comparing the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with Rwanda, which, though neighbors, have had vastly differing experiences, particularly in the last two decades.

Following the Rwandan genocide of 1994, Rwanda has enjoyed political stability and a conflict free environment. The Rwandan government has used the opportunity to invest heavily in public services and poverty reduction. These choices made by the government have improved children’s lives and outcomes significantly. Meanwhile, the DRC continues to struggle with violent conflicts that have remained nearly continuous since the early 1990s. The lack of strong governance and slow economic growth has left many of the nation’s children in misery.

Following this introduction (Section I), the article provides a short literature review (Section II) as a way to understand what is currently known and studied about children’s rights in the DRC and Rwanda. Section III summarizes the trends in GDP per capita, life expectancy, and literacy rates in the two countries. Section IV presents the ethical origins and existing ethical structures related to the violation and protection of children’s rights in the DRC and Rwanda, while Section V

illustrates the situation of children in the DRC and Rwanda by examining fertility rates and dependency ratios, childhood multi-dimensional poverty and child mortality, child labor and education, and finally, the current efforts to protect children in the DRC and Rwanda. The last section provides some conclusions.

II. Brief Literature Review

This literature review focuses mostly on the most recent reports on child rights' issues faced by the DRC and Rwanda. Looking at these reports gives a substantial overview of where each country's child population stands currently. The review is organized by categories: two reports by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on multidimensional poverty (one for each country);¹ two reports by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs of the U.S. Department of Labor on the worst forms of child labor (one from each country);² and one chapter from a recent book about child soldiers (focused on the DRC).

In a report for the DRC's Ministry of Planning and UNICEF in the DRC, de Neubourg, Ramful, and Dangeot (2016) analyze multidimensional poverty of children in the DRC. They found that 95 percent of children under the age of 15 suffered from at least one form of deprivation, and 80 percent experienced at least two forms of deprivation. The report found that the number of children lacking access to clean drinking water is particularly high. The authors note that this form of deprivation is related to other dimensions of poverty, such as issues with sanitation, health services, and very high mortality rates. Difficulties with regard to food, health, and water access also contribute to high rates of stunted children, many of whom suffer from related health and development issues. The rates and types of deprivation differ markedly between urban and rural areas as well as among different regions of the DRC. Finally, the report points out that poverty and deprivation are tightly correlated, but even among children in non-poor households, deprivation remains somewhat high. They conclude that any strategy to address the issue of childhood deprivation must address both monetary assistance and deprivation relief.

UNICEF Rwanda and the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (2018) describes the multidimensional poverty experienced by Rwandan children. The report begins by noting that Rwanda has made great strides in poverty reduction, with extreme poverty dropping from 40 percent to 16 percent, and achieved many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Similarly, multidimensional poverty in Rwandan children has declined significantly in recent years, particularly related to basic health. However, nearly all children between the ages of 0 and 4 are still deprived in at least one dimension. The report's multidimensional analysis of childhood poverty revealed that most of Rwanda's children face multiple overlapping deprivations, and that younger children are particularly vulnerable. Geographic inequalities persist, with rural children experiencing higher rates of multidimensional poverty. Throughout

¹ UNICEF works to provide humanitarian aid to children around the world and has chapters in both the DRC and Rwanda. To assess the form and severity of childhood poverty, UNICEF utilizes Multiple Overlapping Deprivations Analysis (MODA). MODA looks at various forms of deprivation and how they impact children of different ages. This methodology allows researchers to measure multidimensional poverty, which can reveal more about children's experiences with poverty than measuring income alone.

² The U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs produces annual reports about the worst forms of child labor in various countries with which the United States does business. The reports present information on the prevalence of child labor in the country and assess the country's government efforts to address the problem.

the country, even children monetarily non-poor households sometimes still experience deprivations.

The Bureau of International Labor Affairs' (2018a) assessment of the worst forms of child labor in the DRC found that the country made minimal advancement in 2018. On one hand, 2018 saw two former militia leaders convicted of war crimes (including for the use of child soldiers) and the launch of a tracing and monitoring system by the Ministry of Mines to detect child labor in artisanal mines. However, for the third year in a row, there were no actual worksite inspections of mines. Additionally, children seen to be affiliated with rebel militant groups were targeted by the government-run military. Laws mandating free primary education are not enforced, and many children continue to work in dangerous conditions mining gold, tin ore (cassiterite), tantalum ore (coltan), and tungsten ore (wolframite). Some child labor is forced, and some is a result of widespread poverty and other push/pull factors that lead children to start working at very young ages.

The Bureau of International Labor Affairs' (2018b) assessment of the worst forms of child labor in Rwanda found that the country made significant advancement in 2018. Children in Rwanda do still participate in some of the worst forms of child labor, including dangerous tasks in agriculture, and human trafficking remains prevalent. However, the Rwandan government has put increasing emphasis on the protection of children, passing several laws seeking to combat child labor and human trafficking. Resource constraints and poor coordination sometimes get in the way of full enforcement of these policies, but there has been improvement. The country actively partners with U.S. and international organizations in human trafficking research, and in 2018 made a conviction in a child trafficking case. Finally, Rwanda also launched a 5-year advocacy campaign against child labor, called *It Takes Every Rwandan to End Child Exploitation*.

Though child soldiering has not impacted Rwanda in a major way for many years, it has been a widespread problem in the DRC for decades. Kiyala (2018) provides an overview of child soldiering, giving both a global perspective and specifically addressing the child soldier situation in the DRC. Kiyala cites estimates from another researcher that during the peak of the second Congolese war in the late 1990s, around 30,000 child soldiers were involved in the conflict. She mentions several initiatives both within the DRC and internationally to curb the use of child soldiers, but the practice still persists. Currently, around 7,000 children remain enlisted in government forces and other militant groups in the DRC. Children – some younger than 10 years old – have been used as fighters, guards, sexual slaves, and in other roles within the armed groups. Kiyala argues that the widespread use of child soldiers in the DRC can be traced back to the colonial and post-colonial periods, because colonization disrupted traditional family values surrounding the protection of children and left a legacy of conflict. Finally, Kiyala points out that the issue of child soldiers is much more complex than the picture painted by the global media and that global and local initiatives to reduce the use of child soldiers must go beyond simply criminalizing the practice.

III. Socioeconomic Background

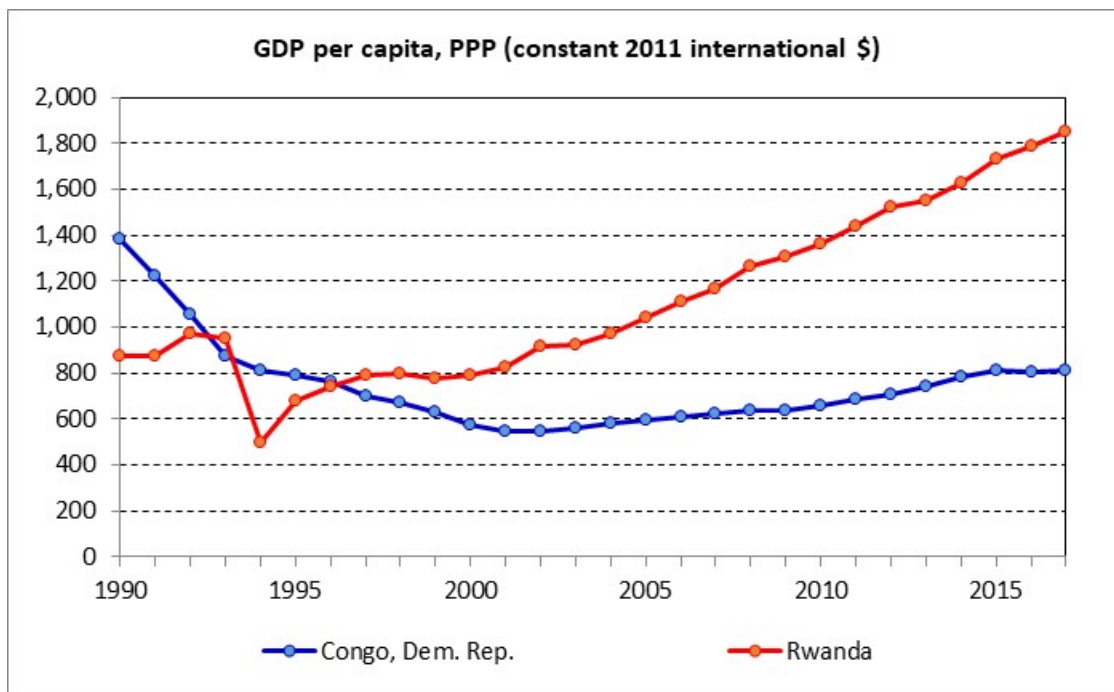
Following the South Sudan's secession from Sudan in 2011, the DRC became the largest country in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite many natural resources, its poverty rate has fallen only slightly over the past two decades, particularly in rural areas. In 2018, 72 percent of the DRC's population were living in extreme poverty on less than \$1.90 a day, and hence, the DRC remains one of the

poorest countries in the world.³ In 2017, 56.1 percent of the population lived in rural areas and 81.9 percent of all employed were working in agriculture.⁴ Progress on implementing substantive economic reforms remains slow because of political instability, bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, and patronage. Much economic activity still occurs in the informal sector and is not reflected in gross domestic product (GDP) data.⁵

Rwanda is one of the smallest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and has very few natural resources at its disposal. However, strong governance in the years since the end of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide have helped create high levels of political stability and economic growth. Measured by the national poverty line, poverty declined from 59 to percent in 2001 to 39 percent in 2014. However, progress with reducing poverty was almost stagnant between 2014 and 2017.⁶

Figure 1 displays GDP per capita in constant international dollars for the DRC and Rwanda from 1990 to 2017. The DRC's GDP per capita (in constant 2011 international dollars) has continuously declined from \$1,387 in 1990 to \$546 in 2002, after which it increased very slowly, reaching only \$808 in 2017, which is \$579 below the 1990 value. Clearly, in terms of GDP per capita, the DRC is worse off today than it was three decades ago. Rwanda's GDP per capita declined very sharply in 1994 due to the genocide, but has more than recovered since, reaching \$1,854 in 2017, which is \$982 higher than it was in 1990.

Figure 1: GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2011 international \$), 1990-2017



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

³ World Bank (2020a).

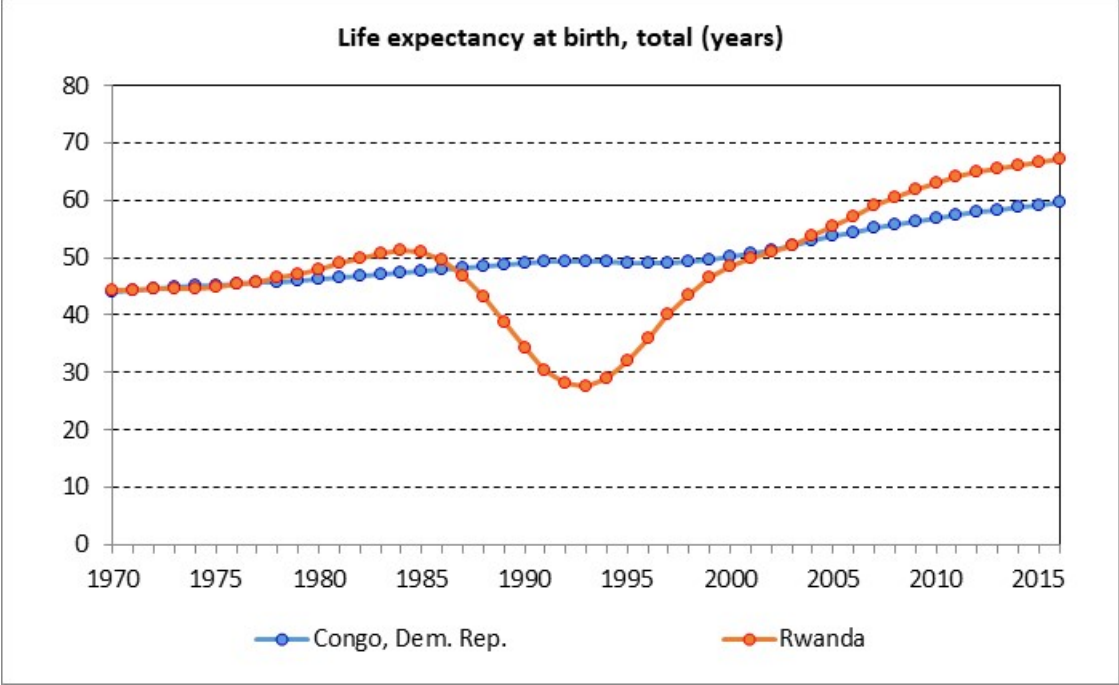
⁴ World Bank (2019).

⁵ CIA World Factbook (2019a).

⁶ World Bank (2020b).

As displayed in Figure 2, life expectancy has also evolved very differently across the two countries. In 1970, the DRC and Rwanda had nearly the same life expectancy, amounting to 43.9 years in the DRC and to 44.3 years in Rwanda. While the DRC's life expectancy increased very modestly, reaching 59.6 years in 2016, Rwanda's life expectancy increased relatively fast in the early 1980s, reaching a temporary high of 51.1 years in 1984. However, it then declined very sharply, reaching a minimum of 27.6 years in 1993, after which it rose very fast, reaching 67.1 years in 2016. Hence, in 2016, Rwanda's life expectancy was 7.5 years higher than that of the DRC.

Figure 2: Life Expectancy at Birth (years), 1970-2016

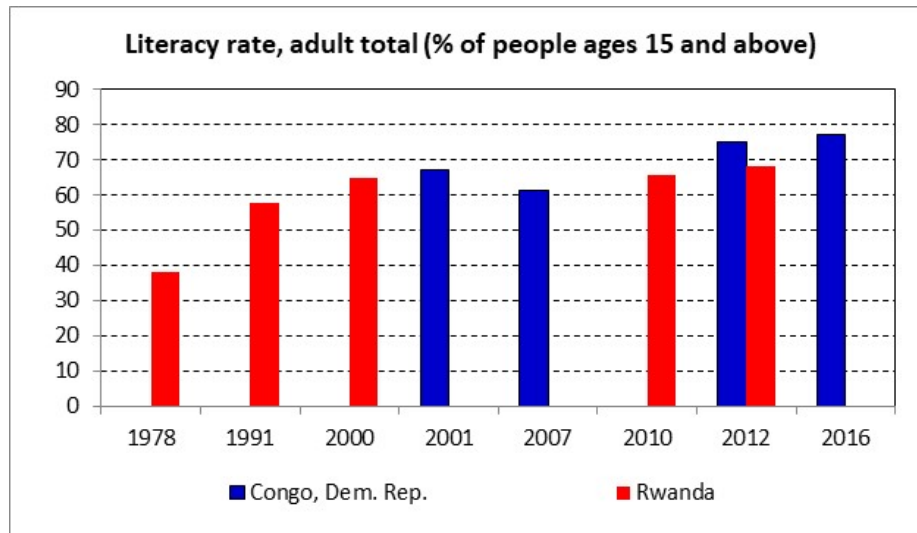


Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

As shown in Figure 3, the collection of reliable data for literacy rates has been spotty over the past decades in both countries. The available data shows that Rwanda has made steady progress, increasing total literacy rates from a very low 38.2 percent in 1978 to 68.3 percent in 2012, while the DRC's literacy has initially declined from 67.2 percent in 2001 to 61.2 percent in 2007, but then recovered very quickly to 75.0 percent in 2012 and 77.0 percent in 2016.

There are some interesting observations that emerge from comparing the last three figures with each other. First, though the DRC's GDP per capita was far lower in 2017 than it was in 1990, the DRC was able to increase its life expectancy during the same period. Second, despite Rwanda's progress in terms of increasing its GDP per capita and life expectancy, Rwanda's adult literacy rate has been nearly stagnant since 2000. Third, though the DRC is currently lagging behind Rwanda in both GDP per capita and life expectancy, the DRC had a considerably higher literacy rate than Rwanda in 2012.

Figure 3: Literacy Rates (% of total population over age 15), all available years



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

IV. Ethical Origins and Existing Ethical Structures

IV.1. Colonial Origins of Instability

A difficult legacy of colonialism lies at the heart of both countries' past and present difficulties in protecting their children from poverty and violence. The very different trajectories that the DRC and Rwanda find themselves on now illustrates that nations do have agency and their outcomes are certainly not determined solely by historical wrongs. However, an understanding of the colonial period lends insight into how the DRC and Rwanda came to be the way they are today.

IV.1.a. Colonial Origins of the DRC

In the 1880s, Belgian King Leopold II claimed ownership of the Congo region. His rule of the "Congo Free State" was marked by extraordinary cruelty in pursuit of profits from rubber, palm oil, and ivory.⁷ Leopold's army was responsible for millions of deaths, widespread forced labor, kidnapping and coercion, and even mutilations of Congolese people, including children. In 1908, after the world learned of the atrocities under Leopold II, the Belgian government took the region over as a colony. During this period, Congolese people were excluded from all legislative and decision-making roles.⁸ When colonial rule ended in 1960, only three Africans worked in managerial positions in Congo's administration, and there were fewer than 30 graduates in the whole country.⁹

Since then, the DRC has continued to struggle with poor governance and a lack of infrastructure. Joseph Mobutu became president of the country in a 1965 coup, which the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) helped to orchestrate.¹⁰ Mobutu nationalized many of the country's top industries, including copper and diamond extraction. His corruption, embezzlement, and

⁷ Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014).

⁸ Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014).

⁹ The Guardian (1999).

¹⁰ Weissman (2014).

mismanagement – as well as a steep drop in copper prices during the 1970s – crippled the country’s economy.¹¹ Since the First Congo War in 1996, during which Mobutu was deposed, nearly constant fighting over political power and control of resources have further limited economic growth.

IV.1.b. Rwanda’s Colonial Origins

European colonization left Rwanda vulnerable to instability as well, though for different reasons. The area encompassing today’s Rwanda and Burundi was colonized by the Germans during the 1880s, but after WWI, it was turned over to Belgian governance.¹² Both the Germans and the Belgians used the region’s ethnic groups to form a class system in which the minority Tutsis (representing only 14 percent of the population) were privileged over the majority Hutus (representing 85 percent of the population). The Belgians used Tutsis to enforce their rule and utilized ethnic identity cards. In the late 1950s, a massive Hutu rebellion against both the Belgians and the Tutsis forced 150,000 Tutsis to flee to neighboring Burundi.¹³

The Belgians withdrew in the early 1960s, but the ethnic tensions they set up did not disappear: political discrimination and severe violence against Tutsis continued throughout the following decades. Exiled Tutsis formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel group, to fight back against the oppression, starting a civil war in 1990.¹⁴ The situation reached its peak in April 1994, with a genocide that killed 800,000 people (about 75 percent of the remaining Tutsi population) and left millions displaced. According to Reid (2019), 75,000 survivors were children who had lost one or both parents.

The Tutsi-led RPF defeated the Hutu militia and national army in late 1994, ending the genocide. By 1999, the RPF had set up a national unity government. RPF’s leader, Paul Kagame, won Rwanda’s first election and has been president since 2000. Since then, economic growth and living standards have been improving rapidly in the country, largely driven by heavy government investment.¹⁵ However, there are concerns about political repression in the country: Kagame amended the constitution in order to run for a previously illegal third term and has suppressed political opponents and press freedoms.¹⁶ However, the prosperity that has accompanied his reign has made him popular with the Rwandan people.¹⁷

IV.2. Existing Ethical Structures

In 1989, the United Nations (UN) established the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Among the more than 50 specific rights outlined in the CRC are the right to health services, education, formal birth registration, freedom from poverty, freedom from sexual abuse and labor exploitation, and protection from violence. This Convention not only recognized that children have their own rights, but also tries to hold signee countries accountable for working to uphold those rights. Almost every country – including the DRC and Rwanda – has signed the CRC. However, the rights identified in the Convention are not always implemented. Rwanda’s

¹¹ Payanzo, Wiese, Cordell and the Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (2019).

¹² Encyclopaedia Britannica (2010).

¹³ Most of this paragraph is based on the Historical Chronology of Rwanda provided by Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) (1999).

¹⁴ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2018). World Factbook: Rwanda.

¹⁵ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2018). World Factbook: Rwanda.

¹⁶ Muhumuza (2019).

¹⁷ Muhumuza (2019).

recent decades of political stability have allowed it to make significant progress on children's rights, while the DRC's continuing conflicts and weak governance have left many children missing out on their rights.

The CRC utilizes the Rights Approach as the ethical basis for providing children with their needs and protecting them from certain forms of harm. The Rights Approach asserts that all human beings have a dignity that ought to be respected simply because of their human nature or ability to exercise free choice.¹⁸ Children's rights advocates seek to include children in the concept of human rights for all people.

Another relevant ethical framework is the Capabilities Approach, which claims that 1) the freedom to achieve well-being is the most important moral consideration, and 2) that freedom should be understood in terms of one's actual capabilities and real opportunities.¹⁹ Children, simply by virtue of being young, have limited options to increase their own capability to pursue well-being. As such, providing children with what they need for well-being currently (i.e. proper nutrition, physical safety, clean water) and what they will need for future well-being (i.e., education) are of paramount importance under the Capabilities Approach.

The Common Good Approach may also be useful in discussion of children's rights for two reasons. First, because the Common Good Approach places emphasis on communities' most vulnerable members, which inarguably includes children; and second, because the amount of support and investment offered to children is a key determinant of the entire society's future success.²⁰

Regardless of the ethical approach one uses, it is relevant that children are more vulnerable and less able to control their circumstances than adults. That said, recognizing that children deserve certain rights and protections raises a difficult question: who is responsible for making sure that children receive those rights and protections? Schweiger and Graf (2015) argue that many different "agents of justice" are responsible for alleviating child poverty. They go on to point out that families have the closest relationship with their children, which has historically caused families to be the default actor responsible for children's rights. However, most poor children come from poor families, which often lack the capability to provide for a child's wellbeing.²¹ As such, the state – which has a more distant but still highly relevant relationship to the child – also has a significant ethical responsibility to assure justice.²²

V. Situation of Children in the DRC and Rwanda

The first three sub-sections of this section lay out the facts on the situation of children in the DRC and Rwanda with regard to (1) fertility rates and dependency ratios, (2) childhood multi-dimensional poverty and child mortality, and (3) child labor and education. A fourth sub-section summarizes the current efforts to protect children in the DRC and Rwanda.

¹⁸ Velasquez et al. (2009).

¹⁹ Robeyns (2016).

²⁰ Velasquez et al. (2009).

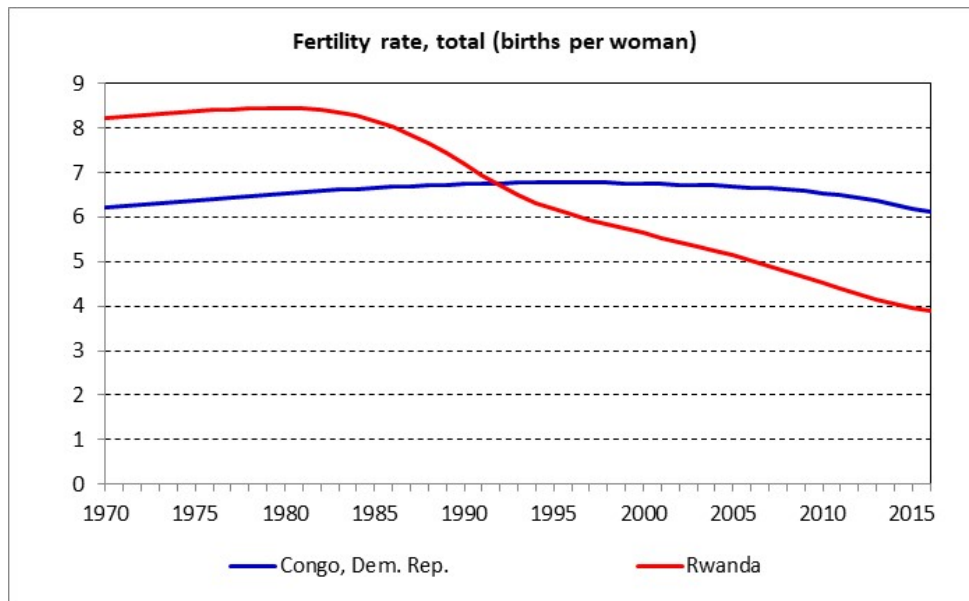
²¹ Schweiger and Graf (2015).

²² Schweiger and Graf (2015).

V.1. Fertility Rates and Dependency Ratios

The DRC's population is growing rapidly, with a current (2017) total of 81.3 million people. Of those 81.3 million people, 46.3 million (46.8 percent) are between the ages of 0 and 14 years. As Figure 4 shows, the DRC's fertility rates increased from 1970 to 1995 and have decreased only very moderately since. In 2016, the average fertility rate was still very high, at 6.1 births per woman. Rwanda's population also grew rapidly during the 1970 and 1980s, but population growth has been slowing down during the 1990s and especially in this Millennium due to the decreasing fertility rate shown in Figure 4. There are currently (2017) 12.1 million people living in Rwanda, of which 4.9 million (40.1 percent) are between the ages of 0 and 14.

Figure 4: Fertility Rates (births per woman) in the DRC and Rwanda, 1970-2017



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

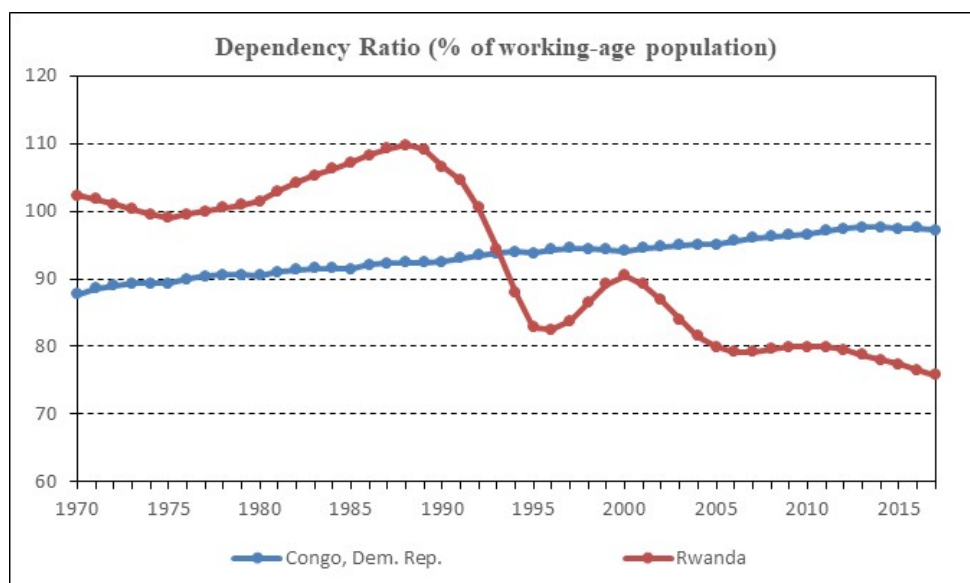
Many of the ethical aspects of protecting children from deprivation and violence revolve around children's rights. As discussed in section IV, this is because children deserve particular rights just because they are human and have a vulnerable status. However, there is also an economic reason, particularly for LDCs, to invest in their children. This is referred to as making use of the demographic window of opportunity. The demographic window of opportunity is defined as the period of time when a country's dependency ratio [i.e., the number of dependents (children and seniors) compared to the number of working age adults] is falling.²³ This time period of falling dependency ratios offers a chance for significant economic growth, as the workforce expands and the lower dependency ratios allow the workers and government to spend more money on other issues than taking care of children and the elderly.

As shown in Figure 5, Rwanda has been experiencing a demographic window of opportunity for most of the last two decades, which has likely contributed to its remarkable economic

²³ World Bank (2006).

achievements. Though Rwanda’s dependency ratio is falling, it is still relatively high at 75 percent. Hence, the country can expect the window of opportunity to last for some time, as long as fertility rates continue to decrease strongly. On the other hand, because the DRC’s fertility rates have not dropped much (see Figure 4) and life expectancy has been increasing (see Figure 2), the DRC’s demographic window of opportunity has not opened yet; see Figure 5. Assuming fertility rates will decrease, whether the DRC can take advantage of the forthcoming demographic window of opportunity depends on how ready today’s young people are to join the workforce in the future. Thus, the level of support for and investment in the DRC’s young people now may determine the country’s long-term economic success and human development going forward.

Figure 5: Dependency Ratio (% of working-age population), 1970-2016)



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

V.2. Childhood Multidimensional Poverty and Child Mortality

Both Rwanda and the DRC have high levels of both monetary and multidimensional poverty. Looking at childhood poverty multidimensionally allows for a more comprehensive look at whether children are deprived of what they need. In both Rwanda and the DRC, many children who are not monetarily poor are often still deprived in one or more aspects. Dimensions, often known as deprivations, can vary between studies and age groups, but often include things like health, development, protection, water, sanitation, education and housing.²⁴

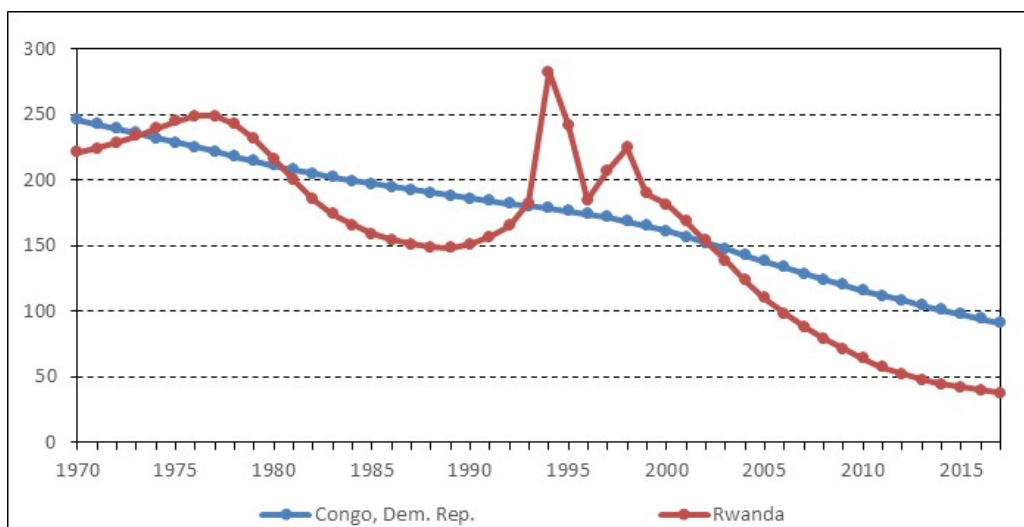
In the DRC, only 5 percent of children experience no form of deprivation, and about 80 percent experience two or more deprivations, which often overlap. The most common deprivation for the DRC’s children is a lack of clean water; in some regions, more than 90 percent of children below age 4 do not have access to clean water. This is particularly troubling because not having clean water can lead to sickness and death, especially for children. Another deprivation commonly experienced by the DRC’s children is growth stunting, which can result from issues with water as well as problems with nutrition and low caloric intake. The levels of deprivation

²⁴ De Neubourg et al. (2016).

are generally worse in rural areas, with the capital city Kinshasa having the lowest levels of childhood deprivation. In spite of the challenges, the DRC is making some progress in child health services, with immunization levels rising and child mortality rates slowly but steadily decreasing.²⁵

Rwanda has made significant gains in reducing child poverty in recent years, in large part due to government investment in health services. The probability of a child dying by five years old dropped 70 percent between 2000 and 2011.²⁶ Nevertheless, nearly all children in the country between the ages of 0 and 4 are still deprived in at least one dimension. However, progress is advancing rapidly in this respect as well. In 2010 the percentage of children between the ages of 2 and 5 facing zero deprivations was only 1 percent; by 2015, 11 percent of that age group faced no deprivations. For children ages 5 to 14, the percentage of children facing multidimensional poverty dropped by 10 percent in that timeframe.²⁷ Rwanda’s national government has made a huge commitment to equity in health services delivery and utilized external financing opportunities to invest in the health sector.²⁸ As shown in Figure 6, Rwanda’s child mortality has been decreasing in the last few decades, though far less steadily than in the DRC.

Figure 6: Mortality Rates for Children under 5 (per 1,000 live births), 1970-2017



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

V.3. Child Labor and Education

According to the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (2018a), more than 35 percent of all the DRC’s children aged 5-14 are estimated to be working. In particular, the use of children in often unsafe mines is common. However, it is difficult to estimate the number of child miners because the government does not perform any on-site inspections. Further, many of armed

²⁵ This paragraph is mostly based on De Neubourg et al. (2016).

²⁶ Farmer et al. (2013).

²⁷ United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Rwanda and National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (2018).

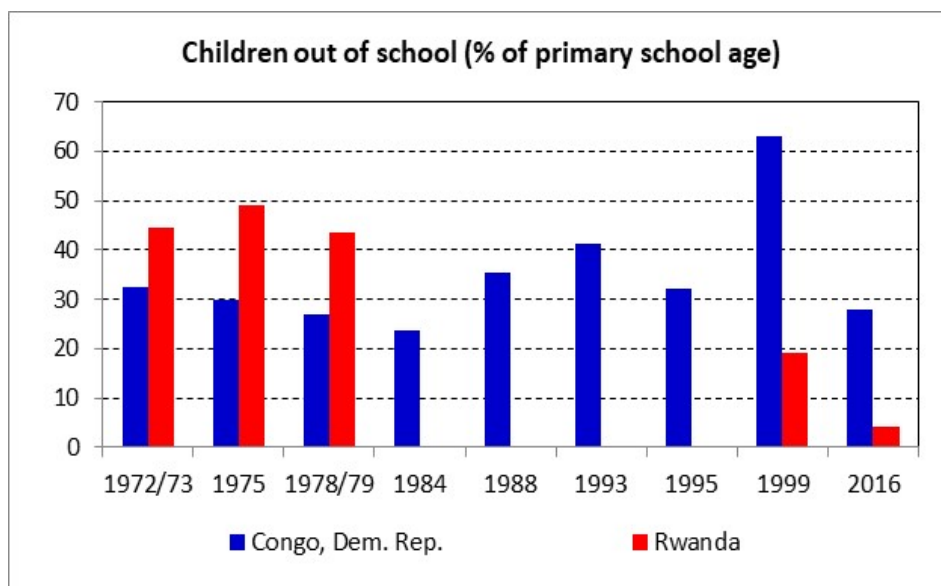
²⁸ Farmer et. al (2013).

groups operating within the DRC continue to abduct and recruit children.²⁹ There has been significant progress on this issue, particularly on the part of the national army. However, as Kiyala (2018) states, an estimated 7,000 children still serve as fighters, guards, and sexual slaves within the militia groups around the country.

In Rwanda, there are far fewer mines and armed groups. Rwanda’s political stability has kept conflicts since the 1994 genocide to a minimum. While it may seem obvious that war is the biggest factor in the recruitment of child soldiers, it is nevertheless true that Rwanda’s peace is a big victory for children.³⁰ Still, child labor in Rwanda’s agricultural sector remains an issue, including in potentially dangerous roles. Approximately 5.4 percent of Rwandan children between the ages of 6 and 14 work.³¹ Child trafficking is also a significant concern; Rwanda’s borders are not tightly managed, which has made it a hotspot for trafficked children’s transit.³²

The DRC also faces challenges regarding education. Not only is the population spread out, but recurring conflict often makes setting up safe schools difficult. As Figure 7 shows, far too many of the DRC’s primary school-age children do not attend school. While the percentage has been volatile over time (and data is likely not fully accurate), there were still an estimated 28 percent of the DRC’s primary school-age children who did not attend school in 2016, compared to 4.1 percent in Rwanda. Furthermore, there are considerable issues with the quality of education provided in both countries.

Figure 7: Percentage of Children at Primary School-age Out of School (available years)



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019) and data provided in United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2019).

²⁹ Bureau of International Labor Affairs (2018a).

³⁰ Kiyala (2018).

³¹ Bureau of International Labor Affairs (2018b).

³² United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2019).

V.4. Current Efforts to Protect Children

The DRC has not experienced the economic growth and stability that has allowed Rwanda to direct resources to poverty reduction and children's rights. Additionally, the country has not made children's wellbeing a top priority. In 2009, the government passed the *Child Protection Code*, which included many of the provisions outlined in the CRC, but it has failed to adopt any action plan that would actually operationalize the law.³³ Far too few resources are devoted to protecting children in the DRC.

The Rwandan government has passed several pieces of legislation designed to bring the country closer to the vision laid out by the CRC. In 2012, the country passed a law *Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child* that serves as a bill of rights for Rwandan children.³⁴ In 2018, the government supplemented that law with stronger protections for children; they also passed a comprehensive anti-trafficking law and a law imposing heightened penalties for the use of children in armed conflict, and launched an advocacy campaign against child labor.³⁵ These government efforts have facilitated decreases in child poverty and child labor, as well as increases in primary school enrollment. However, Rwandan culture and law places much emphasis on families and so does little to address child abuse in the home.³⁶

VI. Conclusion

This article has sought to provide an in-depth examination of how the DRC and Rwanda are similar and different in their historical and current situation, and how children's rights in both countries reflect those realities. A look at statistics for both countries' GDP per capita, life expectancy, and literacy indicate that Rwanda has recently had rapid development while the DRC has not.

Regardless of ethical approach, all ethical reasoning comes to the conclusion that children's vulnerability to their environment makes their protection a moral obligation. However, that very vulnerability means that children are likely to be much worse off in a nation that is less capable of caring for them. Child labor and multidimensional poverty present challenges in both countries, but the DRC is far behind Rwanda in addressing them.

Both the DRC and Rwanda have struggled with the legacy of colonial exploitation. But Rwanda's success in reducing violence, childhood poverty, and child labor in the last few decades should send a message to other countries that tackling children's rights is possible when it is made a priority by the state. Despite its overall economic success in recent years, Rwanda is still an LDC, just like the DRC; if Rwanda can make such rapid progress, other countries may be able to follow its example.

One important topic for future study is the role of violence in children's lives. In the DRC, especially in the eastern region, militia violence is a regular and pervasive force. In Rwanda, militant conflict is rare but abuse at home is not. Because the types of violence are not necessarily comparable, the topic was not broached in this article. However, the gap in the

³³ Universal Periodic Review (UPR) (2012).

³⁴ Abbott and Sapsford (2012).

³⁵ Bureau of International Labor Affairs (2018b).

³⁶ Abbott and Sapsford (2012).

literature around how countries' national outcomes affect violence against children should be filled.

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Struggling to Survive: Water Scarcity and Poor Sanitation in Colombia and Kenya

Morgan Bluma

Abstract

This article compares and contrasts the access to safe water and sanitation in Colombia and Kenya. Kenya has some serious issues with access to clean and safe water, whereas Colombia has a large majority of people able to have clean water. Yet, only a few cities in Colombia allow people to drink tap water due to some high levels of contamination. On the bright side, both countries have been improving access to water from an improved source for the last few years. But the major issue, for both countries, is access to safe water in rural areas. Surprisingly, Colombia struggles to have improved water sources for its rural areas, even though they have a high level of economic development. Even though Colombia is one of the most water-rich countries, it still struggles with water stress. Kenya has distant water sources that make getting water to rural areas a struggle. This article analyzes why both countries continue to struggle to create safe water and improved sanitation at their different levels. It will also examine how two different governments are trying to improve the issues that remain.

I. Introduction

Not having access to clean water is an issue that affects about 790 million people around the world.¹ This is most likely to get worse as climate change will increase water scarcity, especially in many developing countries. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2019), half of the world's population will be living in water-stressed areas by 2025. Safe water and sanitation are essential for human development and are two of the great drivers of world poverty and inequality.²

This article aims to understand the difference and similarities between Colombia's and Kenya's progress in getting safe water and sanitation to all of their population. Both Colombia and Kenya have struggled to improve their water and sanitation sectors, especially in rural areas. Kenya has a larger issue with access to safe water and sanitation than Colombia, which has recently been improving water safety. Even though there are still major issues with water safety in Colombia, it

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016).

² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2006).

provides a great demonstration of how safe water and sanitation help the people and the economy.³ Through their differences and similarities, both countries can still learn from one another to find solutions to their water and sanitation issues. This article also aims to show possible solutions using new technologies that could reduce water scarcity within both countries.

Following this brief introduction (Section I), Section II offers a brief review of the literature. After that, Section III provides some background information on the two countries' socio-economic evolution. Section IV examines the evolution of access to water and sanitation in Colombia and Kenya based on the available data. Section V examines first the ethical origins for the human right on water and sanitation and then reflects on current water and sanitation policies, including the development of new technologies. Section VI provides the conclusion.

II. Brief Literature Review

Since water is a necessary resource for life, many articles and research are discussing why access to safe water and sanitation that provides solutions for developing countries. The water crisis has plenty of research in both Kenya and Colombia. Stratfor (2016), Salleh (2019), and World Bank (2016) discuss the water and sanitation issues of Colombia. Development Initiatives (2018) and Kamau and Njiru (2018) provide reports on the issues of water and sanitation in Kenya as well as the major issues within slums and possible ways to improve water and sanitation issues.

- Stratfor (2016) discusses that even though Colombia has an abundant resource of water does not mean Colombia is not experiencing water stress in areas or water scarcity due to pollution, insufficient infrastructure, unequal distribution, and weather changes due to climate change. The article goes in-depth about the location of water resources and how they are either polluted that makes them unsafe or is used primarily for agricultural production and hydropower. This article stresses that water scarcity is due to natural and human-made circumstances. The natural issues have to do with flooding from El Nino's and La Nina's and droughts from the long summer seasons. Human issues are the lack of revenue and investment in infrastructure to make the water crisis improve. Furthermore, this article mentions how Colombia's water scarcity will affect many regions, not just a small area.
- Salleh (2019) reports on a presentation made by Natalia Jiménex at the Nexus Seminar No. 33, which focuses on the safe use of wastewater from agriculture that ultimately will promote food security. Jiménex emphasized that the agriculture sector in Colombia is expected to grow 2.5 percent annually with an increase of 44 percent in land area in the next 15 years, which will increase the demand for water, and hence, using wastewater is a key alternative to increase water availability for agriculture in Colombia. However, Colombia faces various lacks, including awareness, technology, economic incentives, sectorial thinking, and administrative process. Jiménex suggests some solutions to these issues by adopting a multi-barrier approach, which implies applying measures at every stage of the process that considers health and environmental risks. Jiménex concludes with the suggestion to further discuss the energy consumption needed for the treatment of wastewater and the impact wastewater can have on crops within the Colombian community.

³ World Health Organization (2019).

- World Bank (2016) is a full report of the water and sanitation programs within Colombia for rural areas and small towns. This report studies the domestic private sector provision of water and sanitation services in rural and small towns and the role of the public sector. It provides both background information into the development of public services at the municipal level and the positive effects and achievements of domestic private sector participation (DPSP) within Colombia. This report also emphasizes the lack of attention given to the provision of water and sanitation services in rural areas. There is background information on Colombia's economic situation as well as regulations and policies in place for the water and sanitation sectors. This report aims to find key factors that can help improve water and sanitation services in developing countries, especially for rural areas where water stress is far more common. It concludes with areas for improvement and ways to encourage DPSP.
- Development Initiatives (2018) is a report on Kenya's water and sanitation issues and how there can be progress towards getting universal access to water and sanitation in Kenya. This article estimates that by 2030, access to water will fall below the water scarcity level of 500m³ (132,086 gallons) per person per year due to population growth. This report gives specifics as to which of Kenya's counties have had significant improvements in access to safe water like Kisii, Nyamira, and Migori. There is also a discussion of how access to improved sanitation services has not improved much since 2009. This report also shows the investments made by the national government as well as the county governments towards water and sanitation programs between the years of 2016 and 2018. This report ends with the barriers that remain for poor households due to a lack of pro-poor tariffs and access to facilities.
- Kamau and Njiru (2018) conducted a study to examine the water, sanitation, and hygiene situation within Kenya's more urban slums. They discuss the rapid urbanization from increasing population growth, which has led to overcrowding due to poor infrastructure. The majority of individuals without improved sanitation, which is about 70 percent, live in rural areas. Kamau and Njiru (2018) also discuss the major health issues from a lack of sanitation and access to clean water. Four of the seven slums used for this study were randomly selected around the capital of Kenya. They also dive into hygiene knowledge and the factors that affect water and sanitation in these slums. They concluded that individuals living in slums are far more vulnerable to health-related issues due to a lack of clean water and sanitation.

III. Socio-economic Background

Kenya is located in Eastern Africa, and its agricultural sector constituted 31.5 percent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017.⁴ However, due to climate change that causes flooding and droughts, Kenya's agricultural sector is struggling. Yet, Kenya has made considerable improvements over the last decade towards significant political, structural, and economic reforms that have increased economic growth and human development.⁵ In 2017, 38 percent of the total population worked in agriculture.⁶ As detailed in the next section, only 58.4 percent of Kenyans

⁴ World Bank (2019a).

⁵ World Bank (2019b).

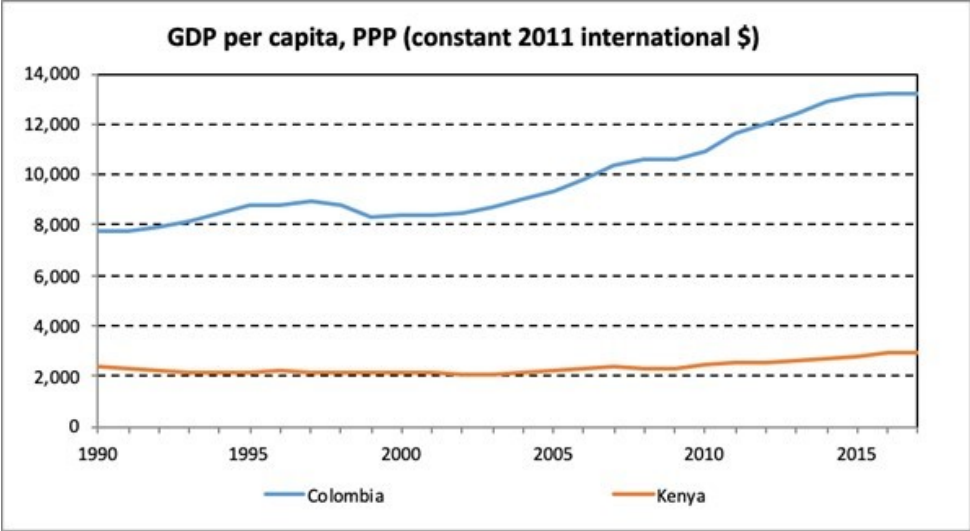
⁶ World Bank (2019a).

have access to improved drinking water, and only 29.8 percent have access to improved sanitation in 2015. If adequate access to water and sanitation improves, violent conflicts over water resources are likely to decrease, as well as a reduction in poverty and a boost in economic growth.⁷

Colombia is located in the north-western corner of South America, and its agricultural sector constituted 6.5 percent of the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017, employing 16 percent of Colombia’s workforce.⁸ Colombia’s main sectors are public services and manufacturing, though Colombia’s agriculture sector attracted some foreign investments due to its large exports of coffee. Colombia’s GDP grew rapidly until the commodity crisis in 2014 sharply reduced oil revenues.⁹ As detailed below, 96.5 percent of Colombians have access to improved drinking water, and 84.4 percent have access to improved sanitation in 2015.

As shown in Figure 1, there is a very large difference between Colombia’s and Kenya’s GDP per capita (in constant 2011 international dollars). Colombia’s GDP per capita (in constant 2011 international dollar) increased from \$7,534 in 1990 to \$13,255 in 2017. This is a cumulative increase of 76 percent over 27 years. On the other hand, Kenya’s GDP per capita increased by only 25.7 percent over 27 years, from \$2,380 in 1990 to \$2,993 in 2017.

Figure 1: GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2011 international dollar), 1990-2017



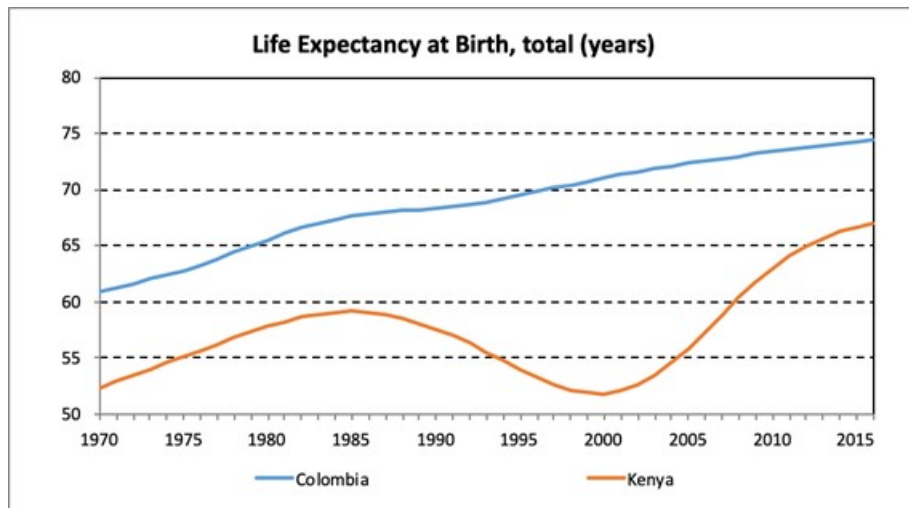
Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

Given these large differences between GDP per capita for Colombia and Kenya, Figure 2 shows large differences in life expectancy as well. Kenya’s life expectancy has been unstable, while Colombia’s life expectancy has risen fairly constantly between 1970 to 2016. The gap between Colombia’s and Kenya’s life expectancy had remained about the same except when Kenya took a very drastic dip between 1990 and 2000, mainly due to HIV/AIDS crisis happening during this

⁷ Development Initiatives (2018).
⁸ World Bank (2019a).
⁹ Colombia Reports (2018).

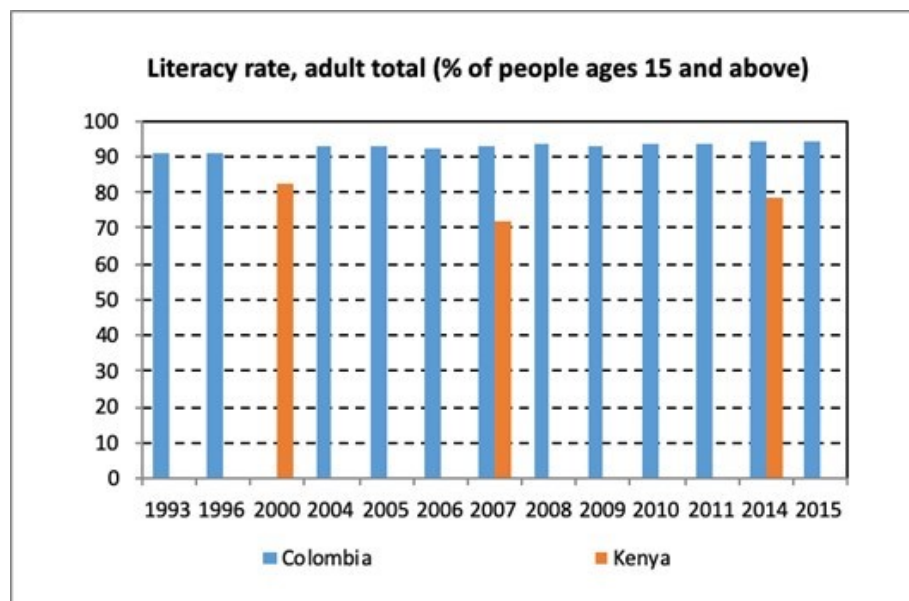
time.¹⁰ This dip is also reflected in Figure 1 when Kenya's GDP per capita fell from \$2,380 in 1990 to \$2,107 in 2002. However, overall, both countries have seen an increase in life expectancy since 1970. Colombia's life expectancy reached 74.4 years in 2016, which is an increase of 13.5 years since 1970. Kenya's life expectancy was only 67 years in 2016, though Kenya's life expectancy increased by 14.8 years since 1970.

Figure 2: Life Expectancy at Birth (in years), 1970-2016



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

Figure 3: Total Adult Literacy Rates (all available years)



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

¹⁰ Fengler (2012).

Data available for Kenya’s adult literacy rates are poor compared to Colombia’s data availability. Still, as shown in Figure 3, Kenya’s literacy rates have been considerably lower and more volatile than Colombia’s literacy rates. Kenya had an adult literacy rate of 82.2 percent in 2000, which dropped down to 72.2 percent in 2007, and then rose to 78.7 percent in 2014. This evolution is similar to Kenya’s GDP per capita between 2000 and 2014, as it fluctuated as well, but it is inconsistent with the steady increase in life expectancy during this same period. Colombia’s literacy rates showed a small but steady increase from 91.1 percent in 1993 to 94.2 percent in 2015.

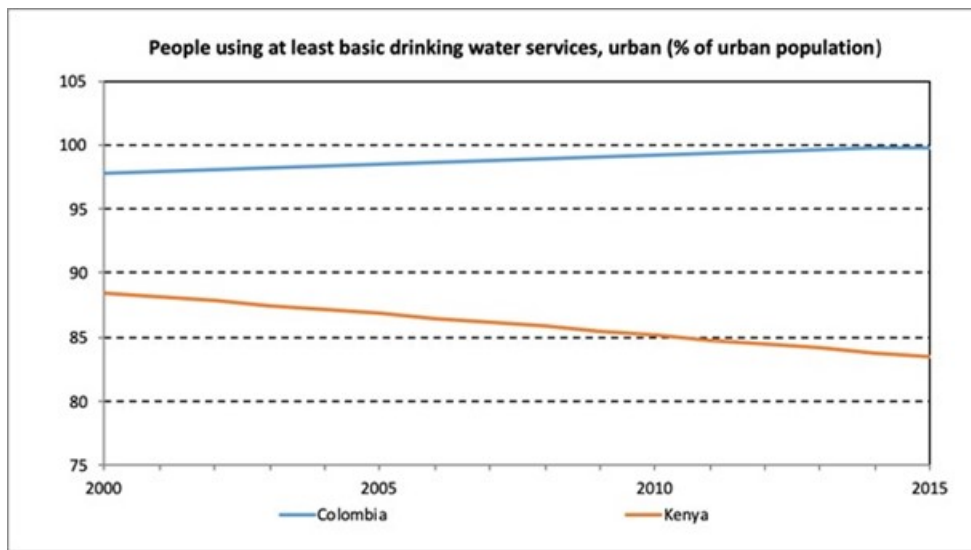
IV. Access to Water and Sanitation in Colombia and Kenya

IV.1. Access to Basic Water Services

Figures 4 and 5 display, respectively, rural and urban access to basic drinking water services in Colombia and Kenya. Access to basic drinking water services are defined as access to drinking water from an improved source, which includes piped water, boreholes, protected dug wells, protected springs, and packaged and delivered water.¹¹

Figure 4 shows that percentage of people with access to at least basic water services has decreased for Kenya’s urban population. This development is very concerning and has been explained by cycles of long droughts, which are increasing as time goes on. Rainfall in Kenya has significantly decreased in the past five years.¹² This decrease in urban access rate is also due to population growth, urbanization, and the destruction of water catchment areas for settlements and farming in urban areas.¹³ However, in Colombia, urban access to at least basic water services has reached 99.8 percent in 2015.

Figure 4: Urban Access to Basic Water Services, 2000-2015



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

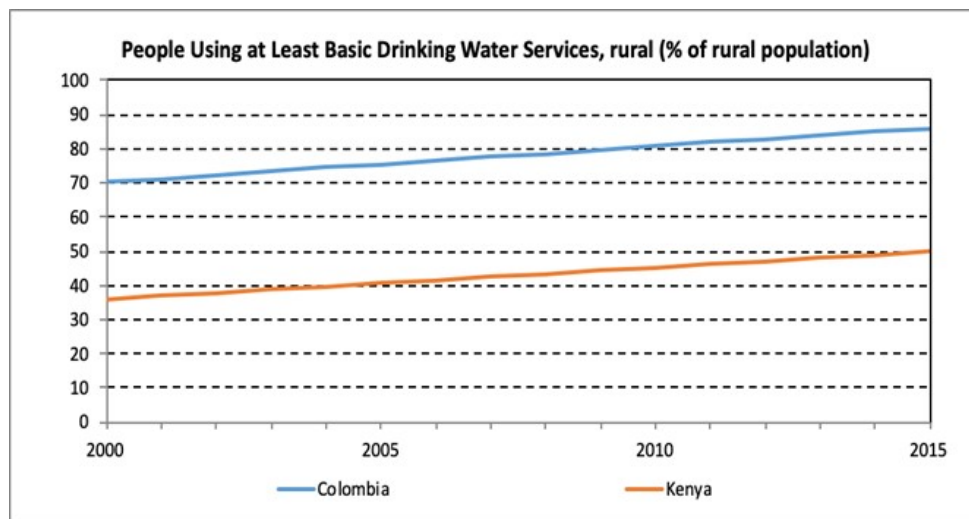
¹¹ This is different than the category in the World Bank (2019) database titled “people using safely managed drinking water services”, which is defined as using drinking water from an improved source that is accessible on premises, available when needed, and free from fecal and priority chemical contamination.

¹² Barton (2019).

¹³ Development Initiatives (2018).

Fortunately, as shown in Figure 5, Kenya is making steady progress in improving access to basic water services for the rural population. Yet, this progress only reaches to just barely 50 percent of the rural population in 2015. Figure 5 also shows that Colombia is improving its access to basic water services for the rural population, reaching 86 percent in 2015.

Figure 5: Rural Access to Basic Water Services, 2000-2015



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

IV.2. Access to Sanitation

Figures 6 and 7 show, respectively, the percent of the urban and rural populations that have access to basic sanitation services in Colombia and Kenya. Comparing Figures 6 and 7 (access to sanitation) with Figures 4 and 5 (access to water), we can see that access to sanitation is lower than access to water in both urban and rural areas for both countries. This is a kind of obvious as people consider access to water more important than access to sanitation. However, as stressed in UNDP (2006), this is problematic because poor sanitation does not only contaminate water but also spreads diseases. Without proper sanitation systems, having clean water does not prevent the spread of some diseases. Having sanitation facilities also enforces and teaches the proper way of washing hands and hygiene knowledge. Because of the lack of knowledge with hygiene due to the lack of sanitation services, many soaps within rural households were used for laundry and bathing, and not for washing hands.¹⁴

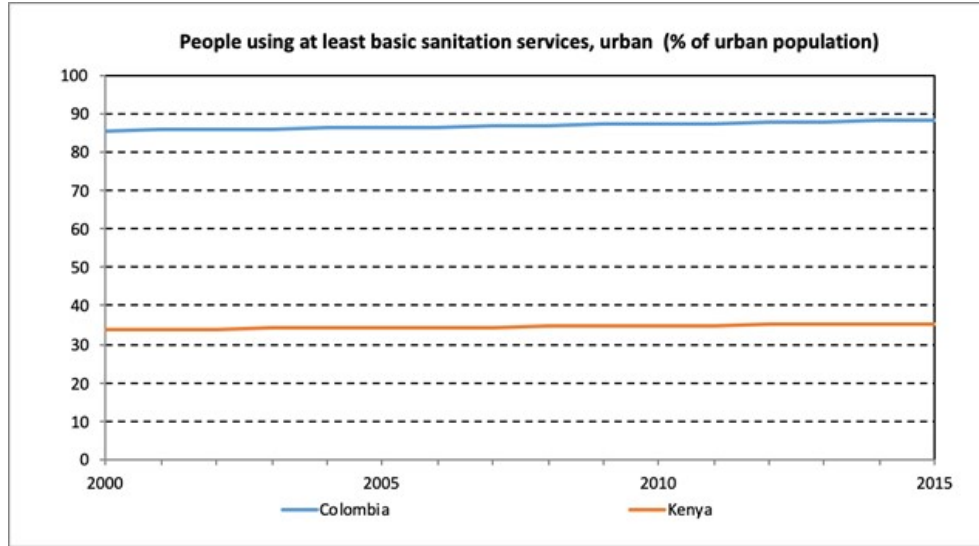
As shown in Figure 6, Kenya's urban population is lacking access to basic sanitation services with only 35.3 percent having access in 2015. Colombia has had slow but steady progress in improving its urban population's access to basic sanitation services. In 2015, 88.2 percent had access to basic sanitation services compared to the 85.6 percent in 2000, which is a marginal improvement over 15 years.

Figure 7 shows that there has been a very large increase in basic sanitation services for Colombia's rural population, reaching 72.0 percent. However, for Kenya, there was a decrease in basic sanitation services for its rural population, dropping from 30.3 percent in 2000 to 27.9 percent in 2015. This reduction can be explained by the slow progress in scaling up the provision of sanitation

¹⁴ Kamau and Njiru (2018).

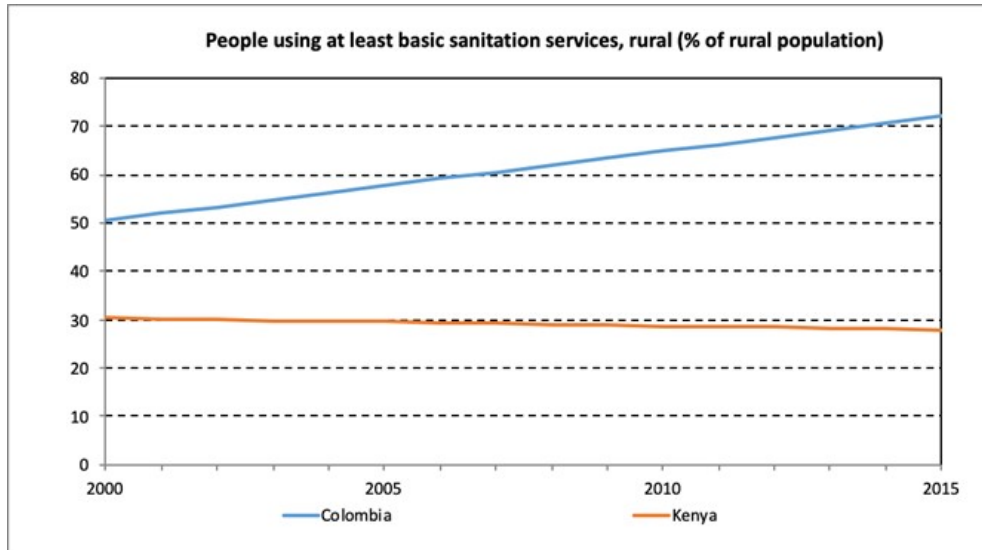
services in response to increasing needs. These basic sanitation services are low quality with many washing their hands in household toilets, increasing the risk of spreading diseases.¹⁵

Figure 6: Urban Access to Basic Sanitation Services, 2000-2015



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

Figure 7: Rural Access to Basic Sanitation Services, 2000-2015



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

¹⁵ Development Initiatives (2018).

V. Ethical Origins and Ethical Reflection on Current Policies

V.1. Ethical Origins

Water is a fundamental necessity for human life and a part of nature. So, there are two forms to discuss about the human right to water: a right to safe drinking water, and a right to sanitation.¹⁶ For individuals involved in water resource management and public health, it is important to understand the moral values and ethical reasoning for the significance of water as a human right. The use of water for agricultural, manufacturing, and land-use practices all over the world are contaminating groundwater that causes many to suffer from water-borne diseases that can lead to death.¹⁷ This affects both Colombia and Kenya by bringing down life expectancy.

Water ethics is a response to challenges like violent conflicts over scarce water resources, reseeding rivers, ocean pollution, and illnesses.¹⁸ There are two crucial points that make water a justice issue: water is life-giving and non-substitutable and water is part of nature.¹⁹ The idea too that freshwater is not as infinite as once thought since it only makes up about 30 percent of the water on earth that kickstarted a stronger push for water ethics.²⁰ So, humanity ultimately collectively owns the earth making each person possess a set of natural rights with a status of co-owners. But this is complicated due to the separation and borders developed from nation-states. Once nation-states or institutions start to dominate, they must guarantee that the co-owners of the planet will not be forgotten and that they will not violate their natural rights.²¹

The first major global agreement on water was adopted at the 1977 United Nations Conference on Water held in Mar del Plata, Argentina. The adoption of the Mar del Plata Action Plan was the first internationally coordinated approach to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). However, it was not until July 28, 2010, that the United Nations General Assembly “explicitly recognized the human right to water and sanitation and acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realization of all human rights.”²²

V.2. Ethical Reflection on Current Policies

As was shown in the previous section (Section IV), the water and sanitation supply in Colombia has improved in a variety of ways over the past years, and the coverage is relatively high. However, the relatively low coverage in rural areas remains a problem that is unethical. The unequal distribution of water shows the importance of having ethical policies that determine water access. What improved water and sanitation so much in Colombia was the establishment of private sector participation in the poorest parts of the country, where utilities were not as abundant and up to date in the 1990s.²³

According to the World Bank (2016), unlike in many other countries, the privatization of water supply and sanitation had a positive effect in Colombia due to adapting ethical models and developing homegrown solutions to particular circumstances based on the culture of Colombia.

¹⁶ Risse (2014).

¹⁷ Jennings, Gwiazdon and Heltne (2009).

¹⁸ Grunwald (2016).

¹⁹ Risse (2014).

²⁰ Schmidt and Peppard (2014).

²¹ Risse (2014).

²² See https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml.

²³ World Bank (2016).

There was also the establishment of key institutions like the *Comisión Reguladora de Agua Potable y Sanemiento* (which regulates water supply and sanitation tariffs) and the Vice-Ministry of Water and Sanitation (which implements policies and programs in the water supply and sanitation sector). The Colombian Constitution establishes that it is the State's duty to provide public services for all inhabitants in the national territory through utilities, companies, or municipalities.²⁴

Ethically, the government is doing a fair job of implementing policies and programs to evenly distribute water and sanitation to areas that are lacking. However, Colombia still needs to work on building new and expanding existing infrastructures to improve water supply and sanitation. This will require greater revenue and more investments in new technologies to improve water supply and sanitation.²⁵ That means that the government will need to focus on water infrastructure projects rather than other projects because access to water is ethically a higher priority. If water inequality continues, poverty will also continue to thrive.

On the other hand, Kenya's government struggles to implement ethical programs and policies to improve water supply and sanitation because of the lack of engagement with communities. As has been established, an improvement in water supply and sanitation will improve the economy as well as improve health and wellbeing. Reductions in violent conflicts will also occur when water resources are improved.²⁶ Like Colombia, Kenya's Constitution recognizes that access to safe water and improved sanitation is a right to every Kenyan, regardless of location. It is the responsibility of the national and local governments to provide water resource management and services. Yet, these governments struggle to do so. There needs to be more investment in the water and sanitation sectors, including through private participation. Since climate change is affecting water availability for all countries and there is such a heavy reliance on water for many aspects of life, the development of new technologies is what will continue human development.

Nanotechnology allows for the removal of microbes, bacteria, and other harmful microorganisms from water through the use of composite nanoparticles, which emit silver ions that destroy these dangerous microorganisms.²⁷ Nanotechnology was promoted and headed by countries in Latin America, like Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina. This technology has been encouraged by policies within Colombia. However, there is very unequal development in nanotechnology, especially in the development of research labs within Latin America.²⁸ Larger countries have more endowment for their research labs, leaving smaller countries like Colombia to scramble to find funding for their research labs.

Figure 8 shows the money invested in water and sanitation with private participation in Colombia from 1995 to 2013 (which is the last year such data is available for Colombia). According to the definition provided by the World Bank (2019a), these amounts refer to "commitments to water and sanitation projects that have reached financial closure and directly or indirectly serve the public, including operation and management contracts with major capital expenditure, greenfield projects (in which a private entity or public-private joint venture builds and operates a new facility), and divestitures." As Figure 8 shows, there is considerable volatility, which is however difficult to interpret, especially as there were seemingly no such investments from 2007 to 2012.

²⁴ World Bank (2016).

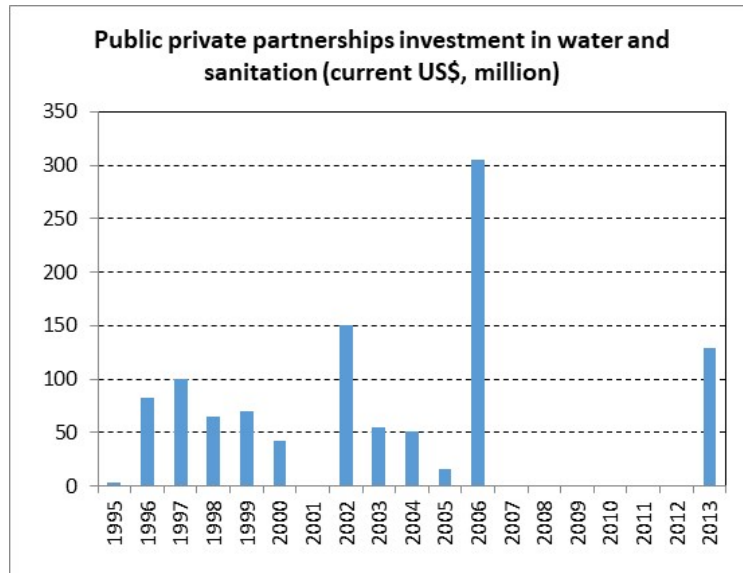
²⁵ Stratfor Worldview (2016).

²⁶ Development Initiatives (2018).

²⁷ Henley (2013).

²⁸ Foladori and Invernizzi (2013).

Figure 8: Investment in Water and Sanitation with Private Participation in Colombia (current US\$, million)



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

It is important to notice that Kenya is not included in Figure 8 due to the lack of information on such investments in Kenya. There is no data for any years between 1970 to 2017 for Kenya in the World Bank (2019) dataset, even though about 87 percent of the people in Kenya who pay for water are provided with water from private businesses.²⁹ This is problematic as it shows that there is a lack of transparency in investments in Kenya’s water and sanitation sectors. What we do know based on various reports is that Kenya has tried privatizing water supply and sanitation, which was, however, not successful because of the lack of water ethics in their policies. The privatization of water supply and sanitation sectors can only be effective if Kenya has strong stakeholder engagement and community consultations.³⁰ Such communication with local communities will be needed to ensure that ethical policies are being proposed as well as implemented.

The fact that about 87 percent of the people who pay for water in Kenya are provided with water from private businesses is also ethically problematic. If water is indeed a human right, and we are co-owners of the water on the planet, it is concerning that poor people have to pay for access to a minimum amount of water. This is where the privatization of water supply and sanitation sectors becomes an issue. Providing clean water should not be profitable for private companies. If companies do charge for water and sanitation, then it is the companies’ responsibility to ensure that poor households receive a minimum of safe water and sanitation services. If they do not, this makes poor citizens vulnerable to environmental health-related conditions.³¹

Since the development of the Safe Use of Wastewater in Agriculture (SUWA) in Colombia in 2016, water access has been improving.³² This is because the use of wastewater stops farmers from

²⁹ Kamau and Njiru (2018).

³⁰ Ndungu (2018).

³¹ Kamau and Njiru (2018).

³² Salleh (2019).

using drinking water for their crops. Since they now use less clean water and are reusing repurposed wastewater, this allows clean water to be redirected to the population for sanitation and drinking.

There is also still a lack of funding for water supply and sanitation services in rural areas for both Colombia and Kenya. In order to improve these services, new technologies need to be proved, and the only way to do this is by investing in it. Nanotechnology is a great way to improve sanitation. Seawater desalination is another way to provide more water supply. This technology would remove the saltwater from seawater and microorganisms that would enable it to become something usable. However, this technology is still in the works and is extremely expensive, which makes it inaccessible to developing countries.³³ There are other water technologies that can provide new sources of water supply and sanitation at affordable costs. It is just a matter of both countries prioritizing the water supply and sanitation sectors over other areas of the economy. The Kenya Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene Policy hope to ensure that everyone in Kenya has 100 percent access to improved sanitation services by 2030,³⁴ but it is unlikely that this goal will be achieved.

VI. Conclusion

Both Kenya and Colombia have to improve various issues in the water and sanitation sectors. These improvements include investments from both national and local governments in water supply and sanitation services, funding new technology, focusing equally on rural and urban populations access, and involving the thoughts of the community in policy and decision making. This will require more focus from both governments into the human right of water rather than other areas. Since water is a human right, this is a major priority over other economic areas. If both countries want to improve human development and lower poverty rates, they first must improve the water and sanitation sectors.

The water and sanitation services in both Colombia and Kenya have room for improvement, especially in rural areas. This improvement can be made through investments in new technologies that have the power to improve limited water sources. Furthermore, it appears that the ethical and moral wrongdoings of both countries are catching up to them a bit due to the decreases in past improvements. It is also clear that both countries would do best by learning from one another. Kenya would be able to catch up to Colombia if it followed by incorporating ethical ideas in their policies through communal communication. Further research will be needed to determine the new technologies to improve water and sanitation as well as to understand how developing countries will be able to invest in these technologies.

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Fighting for Equality: Analyzing Inequality in Rwanda and South Africa

Eleanor Dennehy

Abstract

This article examines the inequality that exists within South Africa and Rwanda. Both countries have a history of genocide that have both stemmed and resulted in inequalities, some aspects are similar in both countries, and some are wildly different. This article looks at the inequality in South Africa and Rwanda regarding income and education. Both South Africa and Rwanda have spent the last 25 years trying to rebuild their countries after experiencing a genocide in Rwanda and overcoming Apartheid in South Africa.

I. Introduction

According to Oxfam International (2014), extreme inequality undermines economic growth. In the past, most economists believed that inequality had little to no impact on a country's growth prospects. The source for this belief was based on the fact that most countries suffering from low economic growth were newly independent countries. It was thought that it was mostly a shortage of capital that was holding these countries back.

The purpose of this article is to examine and discuss inequality, focusing mostly on income inequality and education inequality in Rwanda and South Africa. Inequality in incomes and education are intertwined and results of each other. In the case of Rwanda and South Africa, these inequalities are heavily influenced by racial discrimination, especially the 1994 Rwandan genocide and South Africa's Apartheid rule, which came to an end in the early 1990s.

This article is structured into six sections. Following this Introduction, Section II provides a literature review that discusses three articles related to each country. Section III summarizes some basic socio-economic background of the two countries, which is followed by an analysis of inequality in Rwanda and South Africa (Section IV). Section V provides some ethical discussion on the origins of inequality in the two countries, some differences and similarities across the two countries and the way forward. The last section provides some conclusions.

II. Literature Review

There is a vast amount of literature regarding various inequalities existing in South Africa and Rwanda. Most of the literature discussing inequalities link the topic to income inequality, showing

that income inequality often leads to other forms of inequality. Most of the literature has been published following the Rwandan genocide and the end of Apartheid in South Africa. Uvin (1997), Muller (2002), and Finnoff (2015) analyze inequalities in Rwanda, while Spreen and Vally (2006), Leibbrandt, Finn and Woolard (2012), and Lehohla and Shabalala (2014) focus on South African inequalities.

- Uvin (1997) discusses the socio-economic inequalities that existed within Rwanda until the Rwandan genocide. Before the genocide, there was a longstanding idea among the inhabitants of Rwanda that there was a social class system based on the two major ethnic groups, the majority Hutus and the minority Tutsis, when in reality Rwandans as a whole were a single ethnic group. However, divisions existed between Hutus and Tutsis mostly in terms of political power. The consequences associated with the determination of whether you were Hutu or Tutsi also flooded other aspects of their lives.
- Muller (2002) discusses the relationship of the cost of living in Rwanda and how it connects to a negative association against the poor. They write about how to pay for the prices of goods in Rwanda, it is necessary to have an income, without one, families aren't able to participate in the consumer aspect of life. This article focuses on the rural area of Rwanda, where most of the poor are situated. In Rwanda, prices of goods fluctuate because of the seasons. Food prices are often also higher where there is worse income distribution. Often times, poor families will try to move where prices are cheaper, but the overall process of that is expensive. In conclusion, Muller finds a strong sense of discrimination against the poor because of the prices of goods. In addition, Muller tries to show that welfare would help to allow the use of different sources of prices for households with lower incomes.
- Finnoff (2015) discusses the inequality in Rwanda regarding gender, wealth, education, and location. The paper gives an overview of human capital, measured by education levels. Poor households were likely to have the head of the family to be without an education. In some instances, a household run by a woman does not have access to education because of her gender. Finnoff determined that in the early 2000s, education was a factor for how much income was made in a household. As time has passed, education has become a more important factor to limiting other inequalities. Finnoff concludes by providing ways to limit inequality by encouraging the importance of education.
- Spreen and Vally (2006) explore the future of education in South Africa by determining the existing inequality and creating policies to fix it. They highlight the importance of not just education but the quality of education a person has the right to receive. They emphasize that social injustice is still extremely relevant in society, therefore they link education with human rights. In conclusion, they discuss how education is the solution to aiding not only equality, but other issues such as eliminating poverty.
- Leibbrandt, Finn, and Woolard (2012) discusses the changes in income inequality in South Africa over the post-Apartheid period. They analyze income data from 1993 and 2008. Throughout their findings, they show an increase in income inequality, as most of the income goes towards the richest members of South Africa, while the poor community makes their money from social grants. Because of the income inequality, this also perpetuates racial inequality. The majority of the wealthy people in South Africa are white, while the middle and lower classes are African. In conclusion, there is rising inequality among the labor markets, as a result of unemployment and income, which also affects the

level of education. Most people who are making a low income did not receive a secondary education, which in South Africa is necessary to advance in the labor market, and therefore the cycle of inequality is a vicious cycle.

- Lehola and Shabalala (2014) discuss the racial inequality and present segregation that was a result of the Apartheid era. All of the urban areas in South Africa during Apartheid were inhabited by white people, and the rest of the land was given to the rest of the population. They analyze the 2011 census of South Africa that shows that most of the land is still segregated. They determine that most of the white people still live in these urban settlements that are naturally associated with wealth and the overall well-being of the inhabitants. The traditional settlements remain the same racially, almost 100 percent African, proving there has been little done to end the racial inequality that still lingers after Apartheid.

III. Socio-economic Background

Following the shooting down of a plane carrying then-President Juvenal Habyarimana and his counterpart Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi (both Hutus), 800,000 people (mostly Tutsis) were killed over a span of 100 days during the Rwandan genocide.¹ Twenty-five years later, Rwanda is one of the fastest growing economies in Central Africa, having grown at 8 percent per year between 2001 and 2014. Rwanda's goals are to reach the status of being a middle-income country by 2035 and being a high-income country by 2050.²

After the end of the Apartheid rule in South Africa, the political transition has been described as one of the most remarkable political undertakings in the past century. South Africa is considered to have a highly advanced political system, run by the African National Congress. South Africa has also made considerable strides toward improving the wellbeing of its citizens since its transition to democracy in the mid-1990s, but progress is slowing. Based on the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day, 18.8 percent of South Africans were poor in 2015, following a decline from 33.8 percent in 1996. However, high inequality has been perpetuated in South Africa by a legacy of exclusion and the nature of economic growth, which is not pro-poor and does not generate sufficient jobs.³

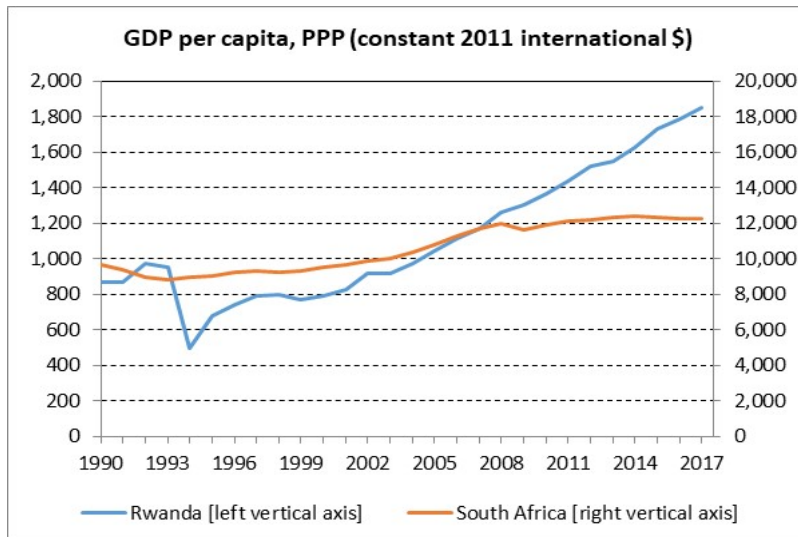
Figure 1 shows purchasing power parity (PPP) adjusted GDP per capita for Rwanda and South Africa from 1990 to 2017, using the left vertical axis for Rwanda and the right vertical axis for South Africa. Given the difference ranges, it is clear that South Africa has a dramatically larger GDP per capita than Rwanda. In 1990, Rwanda's GDP per capita was less than one tenth of South Africa's GDP per capita: \$873 for Rwanda and \$9,696 for South Africa. Rwanda then experienced a sharp decline during the Rwandan genocide in 1994, but grew very strongly subsequently, reaching \$1,854 in 2017, which is more twice that of its value in 1990. South Africa on the other hand made very little progress. South Africa's GDP per capita declined moderately during the early 1990s, then grew moderately in the late 1990s, relatively strongly during the early 2000s, but stagnated basically since 2008, reaching \$12,295 in 2017.

¹ BBC (2019).

² World Bank (2020).

³ World Bank (2019b).

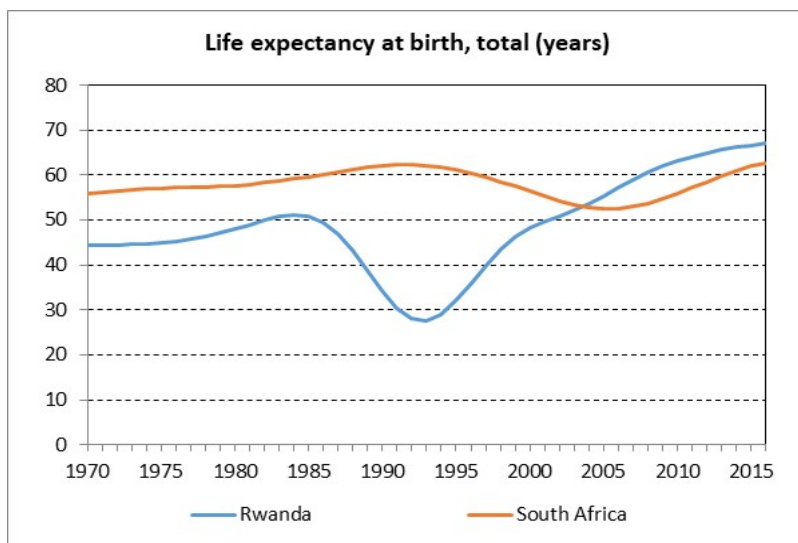
Figure 1: Rwanda and South Africa's PPP adjusted GDP per capita, 1990-2017



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

Figure 2 shows life expectancy at birth in Rwanda and South Africa from 1970 to 2016. In 1970, the life expectancy of Rwanda was 44.3 years, while it was 55.9 years in South Africa. Hence, like for GDP per capita, South Africa life expectancy has been much higher initially. And like for GDP per capita, life expectancy then collapsed in Rwanda during the genocide, but recovered very quickly and continued to grow, reaching 67.1 years in 2016. On the other hand, South Africa experienced a long though moderate decline in its life expectancy from 1993 to 2005, reaching an all-time low of 52.6 years. It then rose moderately during the last few years, reaching 62.8 years in 2016, which is however 4.3 years lower than that of Rwanda.

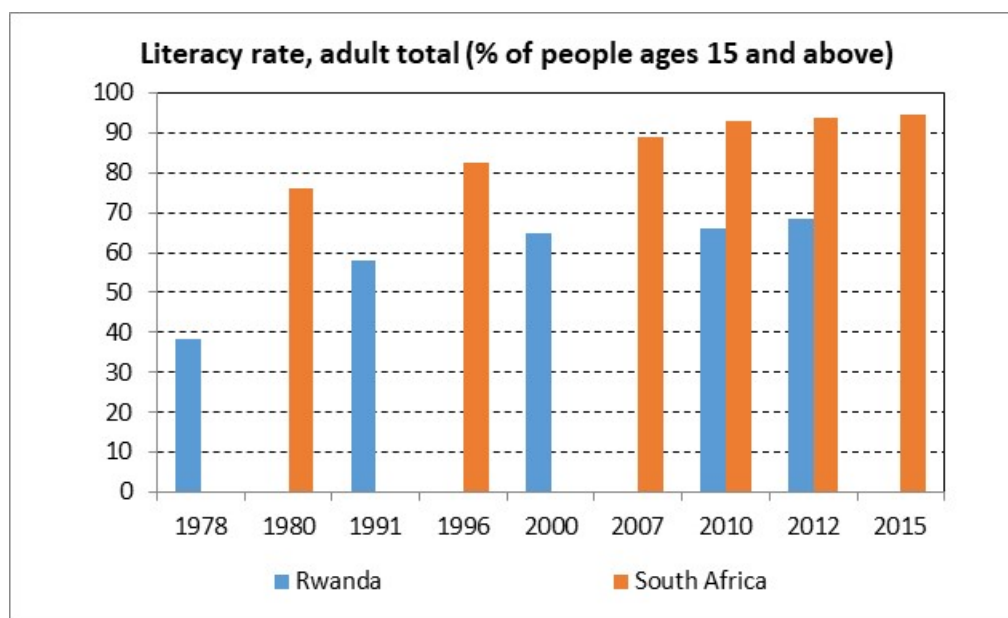
Figure 2: Rwanda and South Africa's Life Expectancy, 1970-2016



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

Figure 3 shows the literacy rates in Rwanda and South Africa. In 1980, South Africa had a literacy rate (among its people ages 15 and above) of 76.2 percent. By 2015, it increased to 94.4 percent, which is much higher than Rwanda’s literacy rate, which increased from 38.2 percent in 1978 to 68.3 percent in 2012 (the last year such data is available for Rwanda). Hence, while Rwanda has overtaken South Africa in terms of GDP per capita and life expectancy, Rwanda is still far from reaching South Africa’s literacy rate based on the currently available data.

Figure 3: Rwanda and South Africa’s Literacy Rates



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

IV. Inequality in Rwanda and South Africa

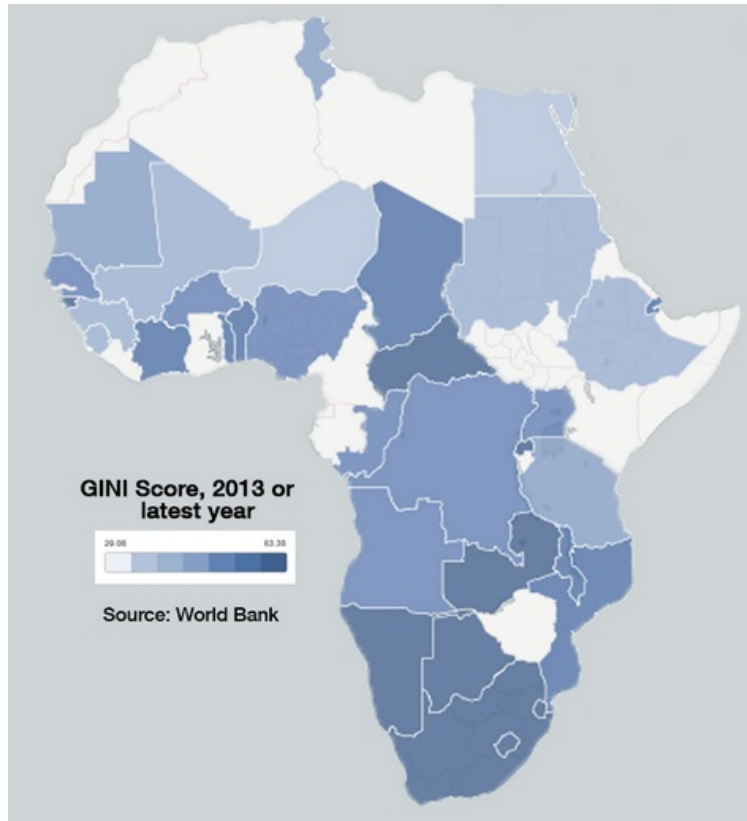
IV.1. Income Inequality

Figure 4 shows the Gini coefficient for income inequality for the African continent. It shows both Rwanda and South Africa in the darkest blue shade, indicating the highest level of inequality, even though as Figure 5 shows, Rwanda is less unequal than South Africa. As of 2018, the World Bank placed South Africa as the most unequal country in the world, Rwanda was ranked as the twelfth most unequal country.⁴

Despite the limited data available for income inequality, Figure 5 shows clearly that South Africa’s inequality has actually increased since the end of the Apartheid rule. Measured from 0 to 100, the Gini reached an all-time high of 64.8 in 2005. It has nearly remained at that high level during the last decade, reaching 63.0 in 2014. Compared to South Africa, Rwanda has a considerably lower level of inequality for most of the years we have data, though Rwanda was relatively close to catch up with South Africa in 2005, which was also the year Rwanda had its highest level of inequality, with a Gini coefficient of 52.0. Rwanda’s Gini then decreased to 45.1 in 2013, which is the last year such data is available.

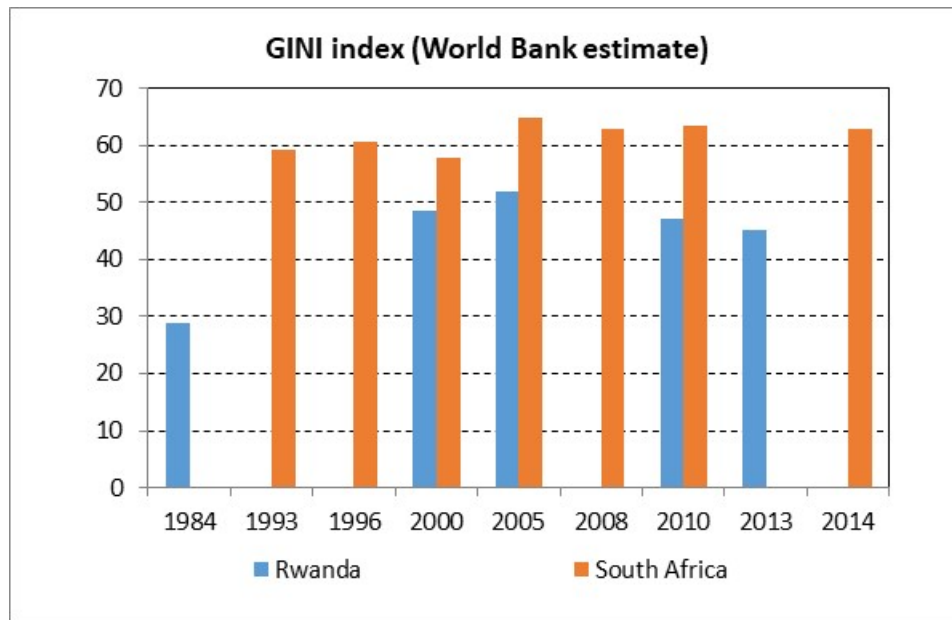
⁴ Scott with Pattersson (2019).

Figure 4: Mapping of Income Inequality in Africa



Source: Myers (2015), based on World Bank data.

Figures 5: Gini Coefficient for Rwanda and South Africa (all available years)

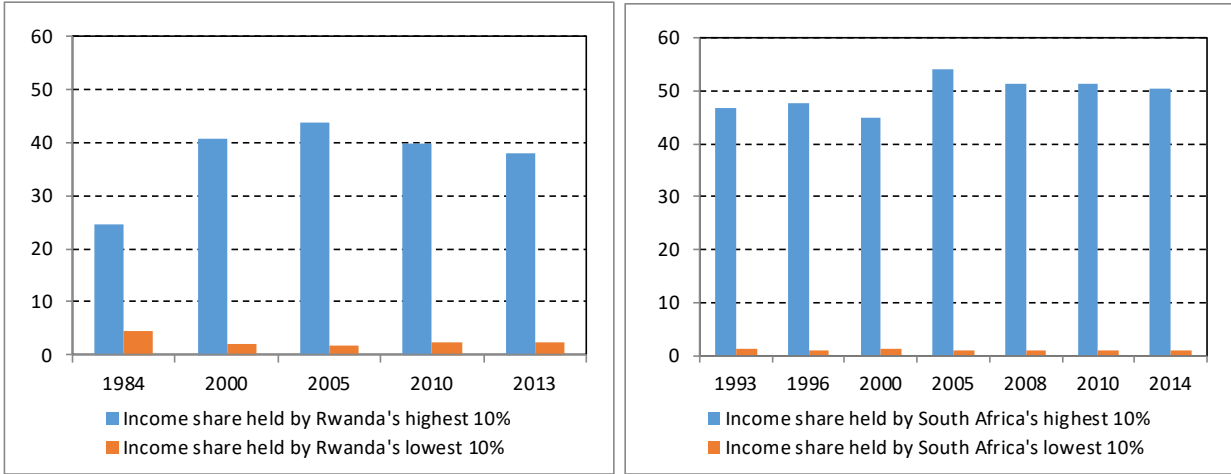


Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

Figures 6 and 7 show the income shares of the richest and the poorest 10 percent of the population, respectively for South Africa and Rwanda and South Africa. There is a clear disparity between the wealthy and the poor classes in both countries, especially in South Africa. Figure 6 shows that the disparity in income has increased significantly in Rwanda since 1984, when the highest ten percent earned 24.6 percent of total income, while the lowest ten percent earned 4.4 percent of total income.

On the other hand, as Figure 7 shows, income disparity was always very high in South Africa. The lowest income disparity of South Africa was in 2000, when the highest ten percent earned 44.9 percent of total income, while the lowest ten percent earned 1.3 percent of total income. Five years later, South Africa reached its highest level of income disparity, with the highest ten percent earning 54.2 percent of total income (i.e., more than half), while the lowest ten percent earned only 1.0 percent of total income.⁵ While data for wealth inequality is even less sparse than for income inequality, based on data provided by the World Bank (2019b), the richest 10 percent of the South African population held about 71 percent of net wealth in 2015, whereas the bottom 60 percent of South Africa held 7 percent of the net wealth.

Figures 6 and 7: Income Shares of the richest and poorest ten percent (all available data)



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

In South Africa especially, the ten percent with the highest income are mostly white. This shows that income inequality exists racially as well. The labor markets in both South Africa and Rwanda rely heavily on agriculture for their income. Income in South Africa is hard to measure because of the many factors that are associated with the labor markets. Recently, income inequality in South Africa has been measured by a questionnaire regarding expenditure. One of the questionnaires is completed for each household. In the past, the majority of income has been from the agriculture market, but as of late that income has now been removed from the questionnaire.⁶ There is some controversy regarding these questionnaires and how accurate they are within the community.

⁵ South Africa’s income inequality is covered in more details in Odusola, Cornia, Bhorat and Conceição (eds.) (2017).
⁶ Leibbrandt, Finn and Woolard (2012).

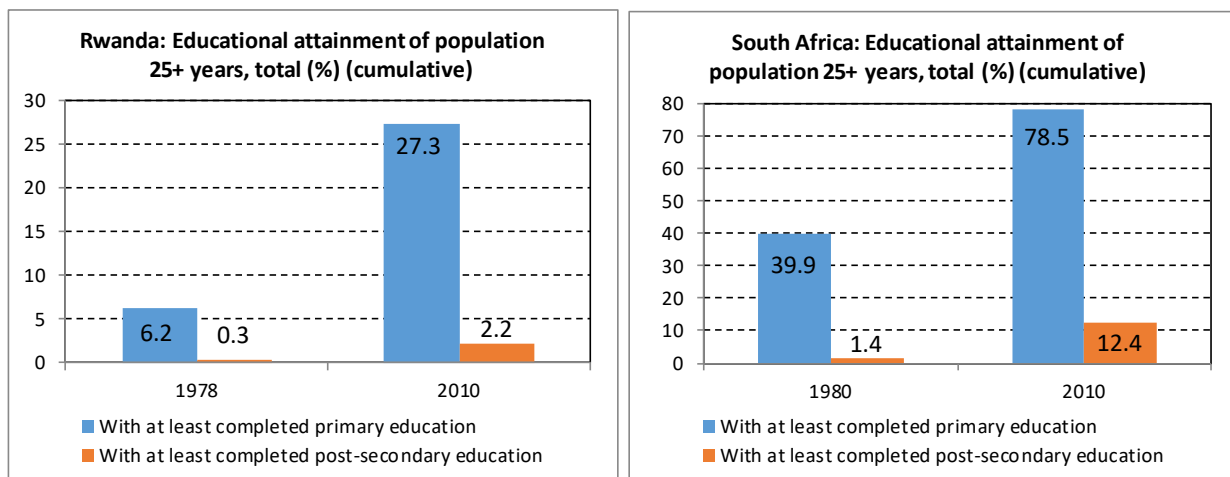
V.2. Inequality in Education

We already had shown in Figure 3 above that Rwanda has very low literacy rates compared to South Africa. Looking at the educational attainment of the total population of age 25+ years in Figures 8 and 9, respectively for Rwanda and South Africa, we see once again a huge difference between Rwanda and South Africa. However, right now we are more interested in educational inequality in these two countries.

As Figure 8 shows, that despite progress in Rwanda in increasing educational attainment, the inequality in educational attainment has barely changed from 1978 to 2010. In 1978, the ratio of people having at least completed post-secondary education among those who have at least completed primary education was 0.05 (i.e., 0.3 percent divided by 6.2 percent). In 2010, the percentages of people having completed at least primary and at least post-secondary education has gone up significantly, yet the ratio of people having at least completed post-secondary education among those who have at least completed primary education has increased to only 0.08 (i.e., 2.2 percent divided by 27.3 percent).

Comparing Figure 8 (Rwanda) with Figure 9 (South Africa) shows that the educational attainments have been much higher in South Africa. However, looking again at the ratio of people having at least completed post-secondary education among those who have at least completed primary education, that ratio has increased from 0.04 in 1980 to 0.16 in 2010. Hence, not only does South Africa have higher levels in educational attainment than Rwanda, South Africa has also been able to reduce the educational inequality more than Rwanda.

Figure 8 and 9: Educational Attainment in Rwanda and South Africa (limited to around 1978 and 2010, which are the only years this data is available for Rwanda)



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019a).

Finally, there is also a rural/urban educational inequality. Schools in both countries vary between regions, schools in rural and farm areas do not provide the same education as to those in urban areas.⁷

⁷ Spreen and Vally (2006).

V. Ethical Discussion

V.1. Origins of Inequality

As a result of the dispossession of land in South Africa, many of black South Africans were forced to work in cheap labor markets, which helped create the income inequality gap between South Africans. As shown in Philip, Tsedu and Zwane (2014), social grants play a critical role on helping lessen inequality in South Africa. These social grants give students school uniforms and in the long term, has help lessen income inequality. There is no doubt that race has an effect on income share inequality in South Africa. In 2012, 51 percent of the middle class were black people, as opposed to in 2004, when 52 percent of the middle class was white people.⁸

Within that middle class, 57 percent of black people work in the public sector. Because of this, there is a divide in income between those who work in the private sector and make higher wages.⁹ Through the creation of social grants in South Africa, these are not only helping fix income inequality, but through this, this is helping families pay for a child's education, therefore, increasing education inequality that is often associated with the income inequality.

A significant gap exists between those who are unemployed. Only three percent of people are supported through the South African Unemployment Insurance Fund.¹⁰ The rest of the unemployed population has no form of support, except for their families and friends. This is seen as very disempowering and stalls people from pursuing another job. Aside from the creation of social grants, South Africa invested in large-scale public employment. This explains why most people are often seen working in the public sector. Through these programs, income is earned, and social benefits and economic benefits are gained.

In Rwanda income inequality and education inequality go hand in hand. When one increases, so does the other and vice versa. A new policy regarding an increase in primary school enrollment has been put in place and the overall inequality index has decreased slightly. The ethics of income inequality stem from the genocide, geographical disparities, and access to education. The World Bank (2015) poverty assessment of Rwanda states that the population has shifted toward non-farm occupation, and because of this, people have more access to education, which has increased in the past couple of years. Public subsidies play a large role in helping families access education services, especially the poor. As opposed to South Africa, agriculture has helped many Rwandans through reducing their inequality seen in their income and education. Many jobs in Rwanda are centered around agriculture, and surprisingly, agriculture has held the key for sustaining poverty for the short term. Although this is only a short term, it has helped families gain a steady income to help their children get an education and succeed further in life.¹¹

V.2. Some Similarities and Differences

When looking at countries who have both suffered atrocities such as genocide it is important to remember one of the effects was the mass reconstruction of each country's political and economic structures. As a result of this, both Rwanda and South Africa had to rebuild their economic and social system. It is evident that many of the institutions in Rwanda and South Africa have suffered

⁸ Philip, Tsedu and Zwane (2014).

⁹ Philip, Tsedu and Zwane (2014).

¹⁰ Philip, Tsedu and Zwane (2014).

¹¹ World Bank (2015).

because of the income share inequality, and this inequality has then also trickled into other aspects of life.

A difference between South Africa and Rwanda is the existence of different markets to help increase income shares. In South Africa, the main driver of the change in inequality regarding income was because of the increase of government grants given to those in a low-income household.¹² Rwanda, has not been known for given grants to low-income households. To help those who are in a low-income household, Rwanda provides jobs in the public sector. There is also a difference in South Africa regarding races and the labor markets. Leibbrandt, Finn and Woolard (2012) show that South Africa's labor market is not helping the equalization of income across racial groups. Although there is an increase in formal labor markets, it is still difficult to help all races in income equality.

As opposed to South Africa, Rwanda's inequality is geographically rooted. Those in rural areas often make less money and receive less of an education compared to those in urban areas. Muller (2002) portrays the inequality in commercial markets: goods are often more expensive in rural areas. Muller discovers that the price index in rural Rwanda is negatively related to the real living standards and discrimination against the poor is constant.¹³

When looking at income inequality in Rwanda, Schiel, Leibbrandt and Lam (2014) also examine inequality by looking at who is at the head of the household. Finoff (2015) noticed that in Rwanda, widows were increasingly less likely to be poor, but when the widows were females, they were more likely to be poor.¹⁴ This knowledge simply strengthens the idea that income inequality in Rwanda is intertwined with education. When a female would run the household, she is most likely to be poor because of the lack of her education. Males are more often able to receive an education and they also get a job much more easily than women.

There is a similar situation in South Africa, as there is not always an equal household regarding gender. Another difference was the duration of racial conflicts in South Africa and Rwanda: In South Africa, Apartheid lasted a long period of time and was severely implemented into citizens' everyday life. In Rwanda, the genocide happened across the span of a summer, but with mass casualties. Inequality in Rwanda increased in the decade following the genocide, though Rwanda has made some progress in reducing inequality in more recent years. On the other hand, South Africa has made very limited progress since post-Apartheid.

V.3. The Way Forward

After looking at the data regarding the severity of income inequality and education, it is clear that changes need to be made at local levels. In a recent speech by UNDP's Resident Representative, reference has been made to the importance of Rwanda's agenda to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁵ This agenda, includes reducing inequalities, emphasizing as before, investing in education and fixing the way labor and capital are rewarded in the economy. Fixing income inequality is addressed in Rwanda's Agenda 2030 by suggesting creating solutions such as appropriate labor laws and minimum wages.¹⁶

¹² Leibbrandt, Finn and Woolard (2012).

¹³ Muller (2002).

¹⁴ Finnoff (2015).

¹⁵ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Rwanda (2019).

¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Rwanda (2019).

With regards to South Africa, according to Schiel, Leibbrandt and Lam (2014), social grants are the main way in which South Africa addresses its income inequality. The purpose of the study was to observe the role of social grants in reducing income inequality during post-Apartheid. Although inequality levels have decreased in some sectors of life in South Africa, the inequality has remained stagnant and the racial association seen with Apartheid remained. South Africa measures income inequality in four categories: labor, old-age pension, other government transfers, and other income. Schiel, Leibbrandt and Lam (2014) conclude that overall, social grants have led to a decrease in inequality. Some programs that have failed were the social assistance to the elderly and changing the state pension. The one program that has proved to be the most successful in reducing income inequality was the social protection programs that were started after the Apartheid rule.

Similarly, Verpoorten (2014) looks at inequality from the post-war lens and studies the economic and social mobility of human development in Rwanda. After the war, Rwanda was able to get out of such intense poverty through the help of massive aid that was given to them, and the increased budget shares for health, education, and agriculture. Basically, after the war, Rwanda had a complete restructure of all of their sectors, helping them for future success, as now their economy is one of the fastest growing in Africa. There have been many campaigns that help get children educated through the mandatory primary education program. This is beneficial but only applies to children in certain areas. When looking at the background of education in Rwanda, it is clear that those in rural areas are severely under-privileged.

Turning away from the focus of education, there is then a focus on economic mobility. Because of how heavily income is based outside of agriculture, there is a push to create more jobs in non-agricultural sectors in Rwanda. As a part of the program that gives low income household jobs, there is work in construction and rebuilding. Parts of Rwanda are still underbuilt and there is much to be done after the genocide. This gives civilians the opportunity to improve Rwanda. Through these programs, low income households can gain a feeling of empowerment that some other nations lack. If a person is out of a job and struggling financially, they are less likely to go out and look for a job because of their state of being. But in this case, Rwanda has implemented a program in which people can secure a job in the public sector and slowly inch their way out of the income inequality they are suffering.¹⁷

Overall, according to the various studies, income inequality and education are addressed most successfully through empowerment programs (including grants), as seen in Rwanda and South Africa. According to the trends given by Schiel, Leibbrandt and Lam (2014), it appears that social grants will help to further eliminate income inequality in South Africa. On the other hand, as the Rwandan economy grows, there will be more access to grants given to low-income families by the government, eventually helping to eliminate all income inequality. Hence, it appears as that South Africa and Rwanda have very similar ethical concepts, they have just been implemented at different times and through different ways.

VI. Conclusion

This article analyzed the evolution of income and education inequalities in South Africa and Rwanda. These inequalities are results of a long-standing racial and social class inequalities. Through looking at income inequality through the lenses of education and race, it is clear there is

¹⁷ Verpoorten (2014).

a vicious cycle of a division between the rich and poor, and sometimes even between the races living in each respective country.

There are a variety of social policies in South Africa that aim at decreasing inequalities, but they have not been very effective. In Rwanda, there is empowerment seen through the jobs offered to low income individuals in the private sector. As Rwanda's economy continues to successfully grow, one can only hope that there will be more grants accessible to help everyone in each geographic region the chance to equal job opportunities and education. Given the theoretical knowledge we have on how to tackle inequality, much more can be done than is currently done for people living in both South Africa and Rwanda to gain more equality in every aspect of their life.

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Closing the Gender Gap: Women’s Rights in Ethiopia and Mexico

Ain Wright

Abstract

This article examines gender inequality in Ethiopia and Mexico as both countries are slowly advancing on the path to gender equality. Over the past two decades, both Ethiopia and Mexico have enacted many public policies aimed at empowering women, increased investments in girls’ education, greatly expanded childcare and preschool, improved gender mainstreaming in government, and ensured that female politicians are well-represented at the ballot box. Yet, despite these efforts, these changes have not sufficiently addressed the deep-seated bias against women and many women in these countries still do not feel the effects of these policies at home, at work, or in public. Large gender gaps remain in educational outcomes, participation in the labor market, pay, informality status, and hours of unpaid childcare and housework. While the implementation of new policies carries a lot of potential for gender equality that potential is thwarted by not only violence but also other insidious obstacles: cultural conceptions of gender, workplace discrimination, and impediments to education.

I. Introduction

Hanna Lalango, a 16-year-old girl from Ethiopia’s cosmopolitan capital, Addis Ababa, was abducted by a group of men from a minibus on the outskirts of the city. She was raped over several days and died in the hospital about a month later from her injuries.¹ Similarly, Marlen Ochoa-Lopez, a 17-year-old girl from Mexico was walking the streets of Azcapotzalco in northern Mexico City after a party. Four police officers abducted her, and sexually assaulted her for several hours.² Both of these crimes are a byproduct of a society that has been built on patriarchal norms which disregard the lives and rights of women.

Women’s rights around the world are an important indicator to understand global well-being. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly and ratified by nearly all countries. Yet, despite the many successes in empowering women, numerous issues still exist

¹ As reported by Davison (2015).

² As reported by BBC News (2019).

in all areas of life, ranging from the cultural, political to the economic. In Ethiopia and Mexico, these social and cultural norms prevent women from reporting injustices and in the cases that women do communicate crimes against them, they are likely to be targeted and/or ostracized from their communities without the perpetrators being reprimanded. Highly publicized brutal sexual assaults are many times not condemned and acted upon by these two countries, even though both countries have ratified international human rights accords.

The focus of this article is to examine the multidimensionality of gender inequality beginning with the cultural and social dynamics that play a large role in how women are treated. It examines similarities and differences between Ethiopia and Mexico in terms of political and cultural conditions for women. Following this introduction (Section I), this article provides a brief literature review (Section II), which outlines some of the discourses surrounding the issues of gender inequality in these two countries. Section III presents some socio-economic background on Ethiopia and Mexico, while Section IV illuminates the degree of gender inequality in these two countries and how established gender norms culturally and socially perpetuate violence against women. Section V summarizes various approaches to mitigate gender inequality in both countries. The last section provides some conclusions.

II. Brief Literature Review

With the heightened global commitment to reduce gender inequality and the resurrection of feminist movements across the globe lobbying for women's rights, scholars have focused on gender issues in developing countries, including in Ethiopia and Mexico. Many scholars emphasize that political instability paired with patriarchal norms results in harsh living conditions for the women in these countries. Kedir and Admasachew (2010) and Lailulo, Susuman and Blignaut (2015) focus on Ethiopia, while Frias (2014) and Domínguez-Villalobos (2012) deal with these issues in Mexico.

- Kedir and Admasachew (2010) explore violence against women in the context of culture, theory of fear of violence and literature on spaces perceived to be 'safe' or 'dangerous' by women victims/survivors of violence in Ethiopia. They conducted 14 semi-structured interviews with Ethiopian women who are victims/survivors of violence and three interviews with gender experts in Ethiopia. They find that many women suffer in 'silence' and confide only in friends and relatives. These women did not resort to institutional support due to lack of awareness and general societal disapproval of such measures. This contrasts with claims by experts that the needs of these women are addressed using an institutional approach. They also find that culture, migration status and lack of negotiating power in places of work are key factors when considering violence. They propose that education of both sexes, creation of awareness, sustainable resource allocation to support victims/survivors, ratification of the Maputo protocol and effective law enforcement institutions are some of the practical strategies to mitigate the incidence of violence in Ethiopia.
- Lailulo, Susuman and Blignaut (2015) use data from the Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) 2005 and 2011 to examine the relationship between gender characteristics, health and empowerment of women in Ethiopia. Their findings show that the low status of women and their disempowerment are highly associated with poor health outcomes. More specifically, they conclude that married women with educational attainment of primary education and above are less likely to get married at an early age. They recommend that

women must be empowered in terms of decision-making power, purchasing power, special policy to promote female education, addressing various health care and family planning issues.

- Frias (2014) focuses on the effects of Mexico's Machismo culture on societies attitudes towards women's rights. She discusses that while machismo is a concept that dictates many aspects of Latin American male behavior, it has particular relevance to male sexual culture. *Machismo* refers to an attitude or conception that men are, by nature, superior to women. She argues that *Machismo* reinforces the idea of women as second-class citizens whose rights and opportunities even when included in public policies are undermined in their households, in the streets, at school or work. It also perpetuates relations based on power. It imposes specific ways of how to act and think, limiting female agency over their lives and bodies. She briefly discusses the pervasiveness of catcalling and how in some cases women are beaten or killed for not responding or just declining the offer and how *Machismo culture* protects the aggressors by normalizing these conducts and not considering the implementation of consequences but instead blames the women or the victim.
- Domínguez-Villalobos (2012) focuses on how the catholic church influences social norms and social ideas about gender. She highlights the fact that a majority of Mexican society is deeply entrenched in the Catholic Church. And that church has its own gender hierarchy where it allows women to serve as nuns but bans ordination. When one considers that some religions face a crisis of falling priestly vocations, yet refuse to ordain women, it seems that the churches would literally rather die than accept women as equals of men. A lot of priests and churches perpetuate this idea that men are supposed to be the one in power and women are nothing more than a supporting role. A lot of women tend to be religious and have accepted the discrimination against them as being the norm. Hence, it is harder to break these traditions.

III. Socio-economic Background

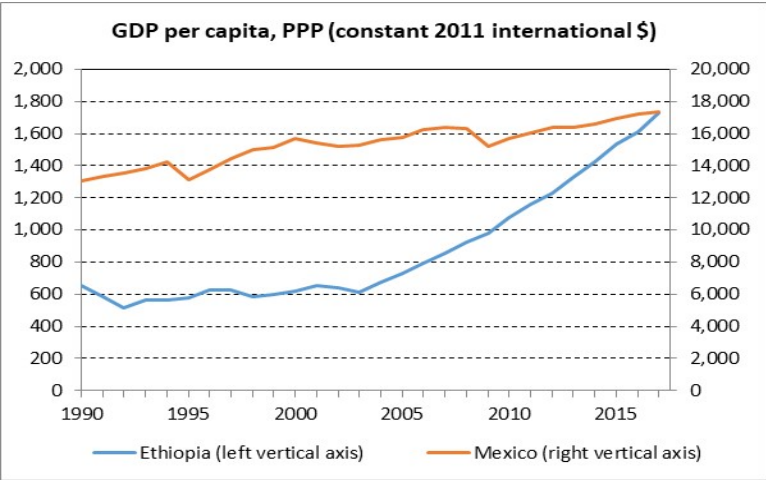
Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa and one of the fastest growing economies in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the IMF.³ Ethiopia's growth has been largely driven by an increase in industrial activity, including investments in infrastructure and manufacturing as well as sustained progress in the agricultural and service sectors. However, more than 70 percent of Ethiopia's population are still employed in the agricultural sector, even though the service sector has surpassed agriculture as the principal source of GDP. Ethiopia's efforts to focus more on industry and services than agriculture have not been without problems. Some of the reforms have led to civil unrest. For instance, opposition to an urban development plan for the capital Addis Ababa sparked public demonstrations against political restrictions, land grabs and human rights abuses. Parts of the country have also experienced changes in rainfall associated with changes in local and world-wide weather patterns resulting in the worst drought in 30 years in 2015/2016, creating food insecurity for millions of Ethiopians. In April 2017, the number of people in need of emergency food aid had increased to more than 7.7 million. Ethiopia has the lowest level of income-inequality in Africa, comparable to that of the Scandinavian countries. Yet despite

³ See Giles (2018).

progress toward eliminating extreme poverty, Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world, due both to rapid population growth and a low starting base.⁴

Mexico’s US\$2.4 trillion economy (the 11th largest in the world) has become increasingly oriented toward manufacturing since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) entered into force in 1994. Mexico has become the U.S.’ second-largest export market and third-largest source of imports. In 2017, two-way trade in goods and services exceeded US\$623 billion. Mexico has free trade agreements with 46 countries, putting more than 90 percent of its trade under free trade agreements. Mexico’s current government has emphasized economic reforms, passing and implementing sweeping energy, financial, fiscal, and telecommunications reform legislation, among others, with the long-term aim to improve competitiveness and economic growth across the Mexican economy. Since 2015, Mexico has held public auctions of oil and gas exploration and development rights and for long-term electric power generation contracts. Mexico has also issued permits for private sector import, distribution, and retail sales of refined petroleum products in an effort to attract private investment into the energy sector and boost production. However, despite all this progress, over the last three decades Mexico has underperformed in terms of growth, inclusion and poverty reduction compared to similar countries.⁵

Figure 1: GDP per capita (PPP-adjusted, constant 2011 international \$), 1990-2017



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

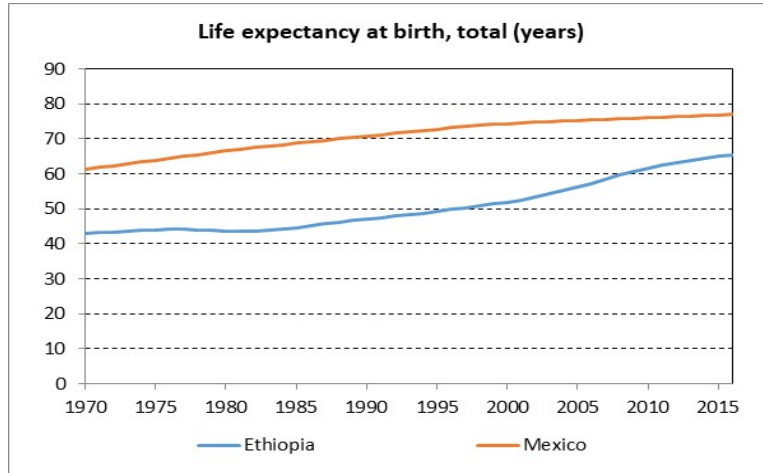
As shown in Figure 1, Ethiopia’s GDP per capita (in 2011 international dollar) stagnated from 1990 to 2003 at around \$600, after which it rose rapidly, reaching \$1,730 in 2017. Mexico’s GDP per capita (in 2011 international dollar) stood at \$13,070 in 1990 and increased moderately over the last 27 years, with various setbacks, especially in 1995 and in 2009). In 2017, it reached \$17,336, which is a cumulative growth of 32.6 percent over 27 years, compared to a cumulative growth of 165.3 percent for Ethiopia over the same time period.

Along with the improvement in GDP per capita for both Ethiopia and Mexico, life expectancy has increased over the past 46 years, as shown in Figure 2. Ethiopia’s life expectancy increased from 42.9 years in 1970 to 65.5 years in 2016, while Mexico’s increased from 61.4 years in 1970 to 77.1

⁴ This paragraph is based on Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2019a).
⁵ This paragraph is based on Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2019b).

years in 2016. Like for GDP per capita, Ethiopia has made more progress than Mexico in relative terms. From 1970 to 2016, Ethiopia’s life expectancy increased by 52.5 percent, while Mexico’s increased by 25.7 percent over the same 46 years.

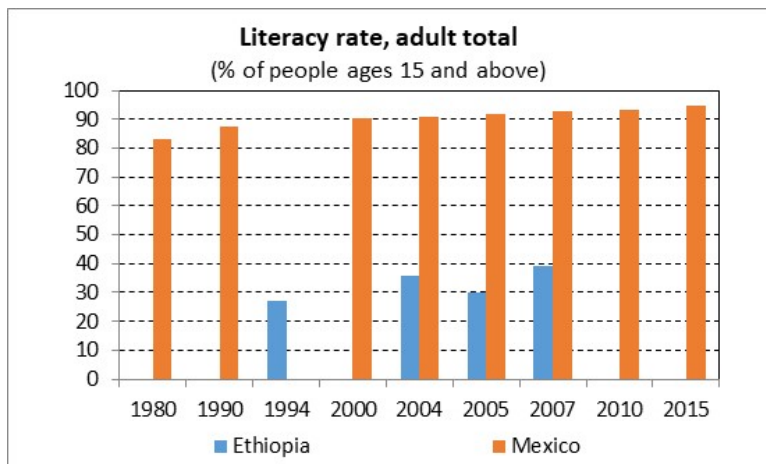
Figure 2: Life Expectancy in Ethiopia and Mexico, 1970-2016



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

Data concerning the adult literacy rate is very sparse and unevenly collected, especially in Ethiopia, for which the last data available in the World Bank (2019) database is for 2007. But regardless there is a dramatic difference between the two countries as shown in Figure 3. Like for GDP per capita, Ethiopia has far lower literacy rates than Mexico. While Mexico had a literacy rate of 83.0 percent in 1980, Ethiopia’s literacy rate was only 27.0 percent in 1994 (the first year such data is available for Ethiopia). In 2007, Ethiopia’s literacy rate increased to 39.0 percent, while that of Mexico increased to 92.8 percent. In 2015, Mexico’s adult literacy rates reached 94.5 percent.

Figure 3: Literacy Rate in Ethiopia and Mexico, all available years⁶



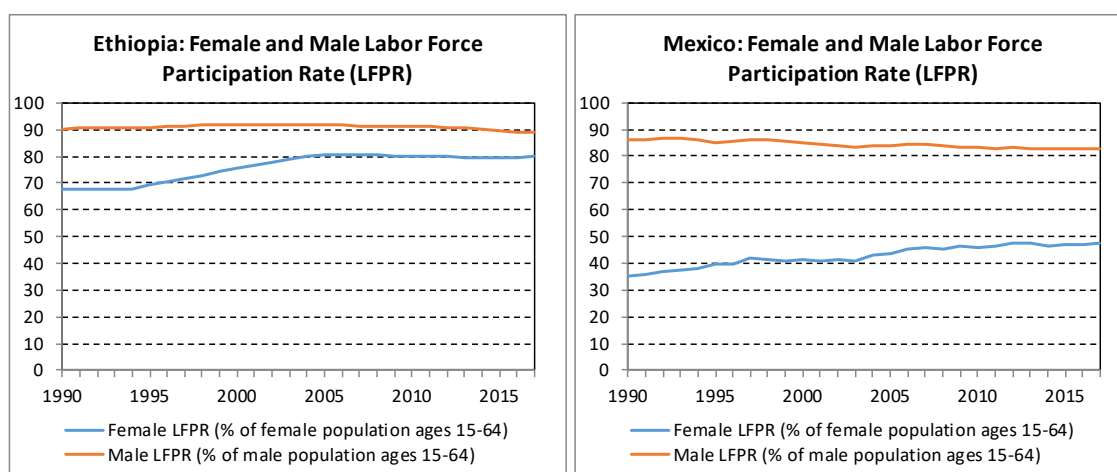
Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

⁶ Some Mexican data for intermediate years have been dropped as they add little information.

IV. Evolution and Degree of Gender Inequality

Figure 4 shows that the Labor Force Participation Rates (LFPRs) are lower amongst women than men in both countries, especially in Mexico. According to the data, the gap between female and male LFPRs declined in Ethiopia from 22.4 percentage points in 1990 to 9.3 percentage points in 2017. In Mexico, the gap between female and male LFPRs also declined from a huge gap of 51.1 percentage points in 1990 to 35.2 percentage points in 2017. Hence, not only has the gap been much smaller in Ethiopia than in Mexico, Ethiopia has also made more progress in relative terms in reducing the gender gap in labor force participation. It should however be explained that the far higher female LFPR in Ethiopia is due to many women working in very low paid or even unpaid activities, especially in agriculture. Still, the little progress Mexico has made is a reflection on the paternalistic society in Mexico.

Figure 4: Female and Male Labor Force Participation in Ethiopia and Mexico



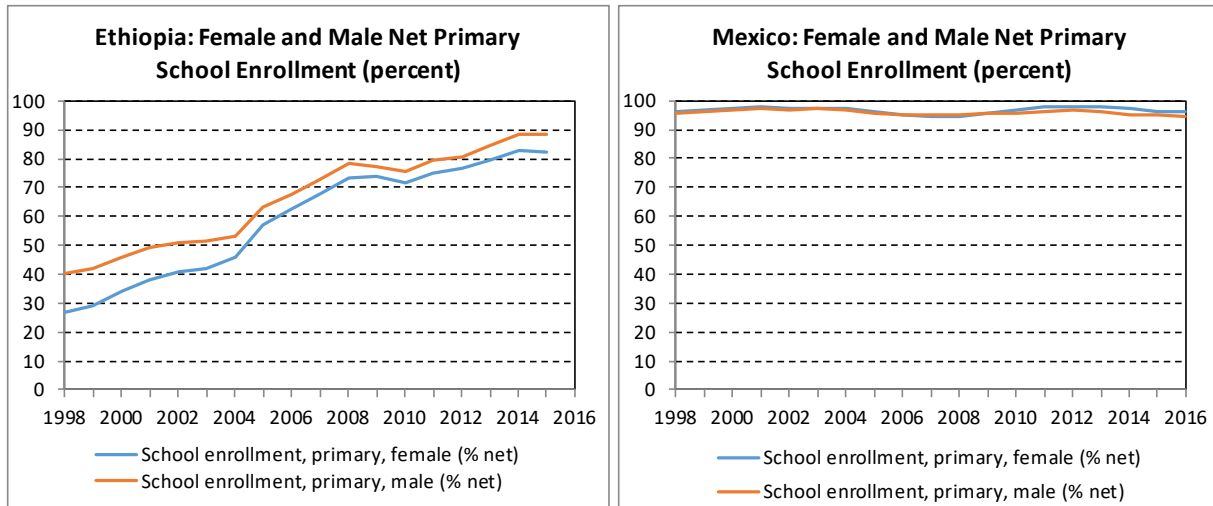
Source: Created by author based on World Bank 2019.

As in other traditional societies, in Ethiopia and Mexico a woman's worth is measured in terms of her role both as a mother and wife. In Ethiopia over 85 percent of women reside in rural areas, where households are engaged primarily in subsistence agriculture. In the countryside, women are integrated into the rural economy, which is often labor-intensive and exacts a heavy physical toll on all, including children. This leaves many women without social protection, health benefits, and legal status. Women's work is many times also happening in unsafe conditions, including the risk of sexual harassment. Though the rural population accounts for only 20 percent in Mexico, those women remaining in Mexico's rural areas face similar challenges as Ethiopia's rural women, though to a lower degree.

IV.1. Educational Gender Inequality

Globally, one of the key sources and consequences of gender inequality is the lower education of women. This is certainly the case for Ethiopia. As Figure 5 shows, female net school enrollment rates have increased significantly during the last two decades in Ethiopia, from 26.6 percent in 1998 to 82.3 percent in 2016. However, there is still a gender gap of 6.3 percentage points in 2016. Mexico on the other hand already had a close to universal primary school enrollment since 1998, with no significant gender gap.

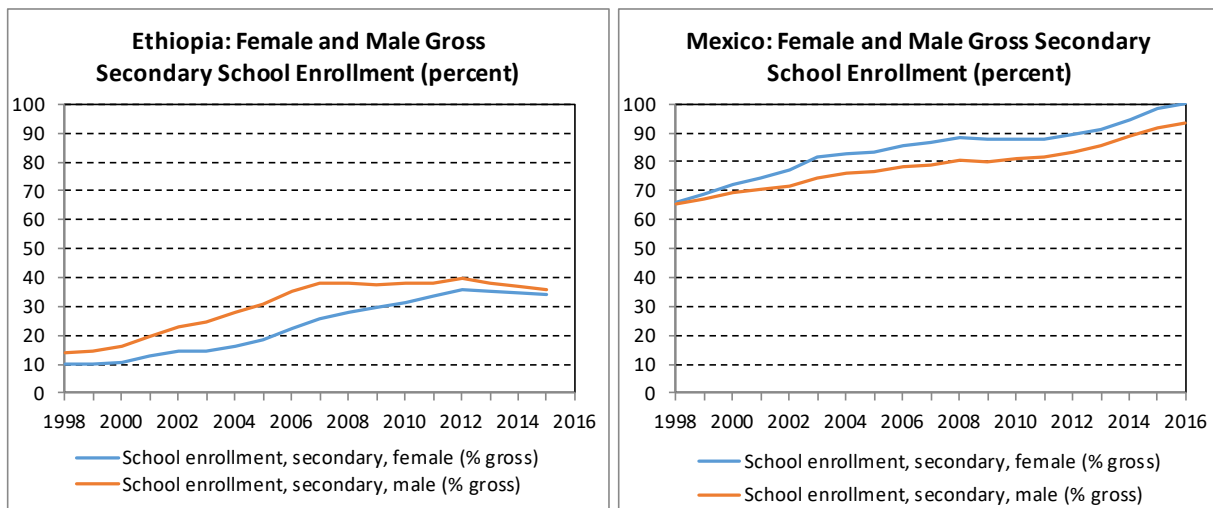
Figure 5: Female and Male Net Primary School Enrollment in Ethiopia and Mexico



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

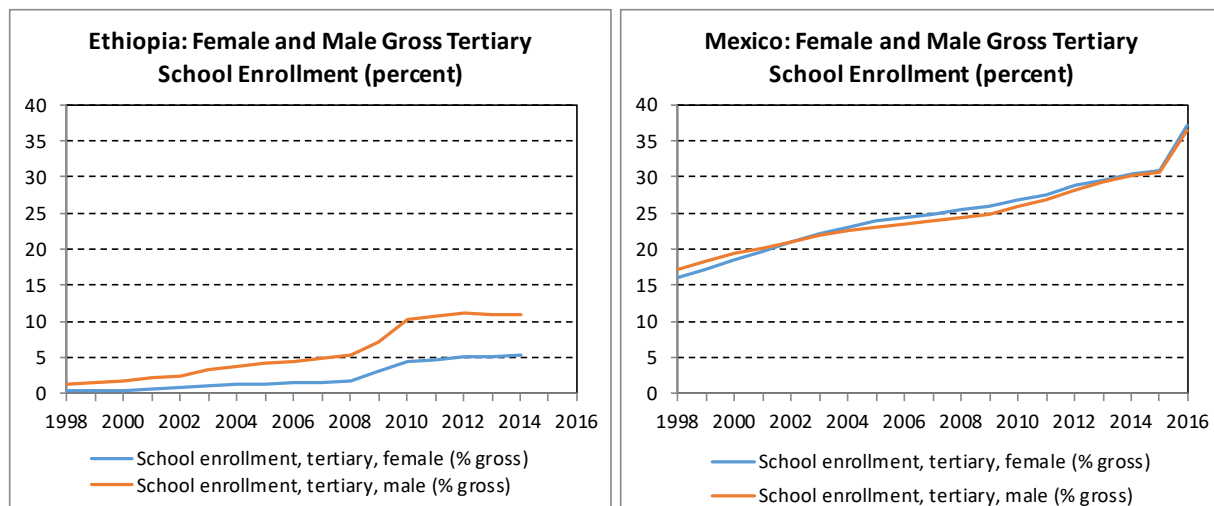
As Figure 6 shows, female gross secondary school enrollment has increased from 9.8 percent in 1998 to 34.4 percent in 2015 for Ethiopia, and from 65.8 percent in 1998 to 100 percent in 2016 for Mexico. Ethiopia’s gender gap in gross secondary school enrollment has decreased from 4.1 percent from 1998 to 1.5 percent in 2015, while Mexico had already eliminated the gender gap in gross secondary school enrollment in 1998. With regards to tertiary school enrollment, shown in Figure 7, Mexico has also eliminated the tiny gender gap it had in 1998. This is however very different from the developments in Ethiopia, where the gender gap has actually increased steadily from 1998 to 2010, and then remained stable at about 6 percentage points from 2010 to 2014, which is the last year for which there is such data for Ethiopia.

Figure 6: Female and Male Gross Secondary School Enrollment in Ethiopia and Mexico



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

Figure 7: Female and Male Gross Tertiary School Enrollment in Ethiopia and Mexico



Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

A joint 2014 MDG report by Ethiopia’s National Planning Commission (NPC) and the United Nations highlights some of the key remaining socioeconomic challenges impeding women’s educational attainment in Ethiopia, including: early marriage, violence against girls, abduction, household chores, parents’ lack of awareness about the benefits of education, and the absence of gender-sensitive facilities in schools.

Despite that Mexico has achieved gender parity in primary, secondary and tertiary school enrollment, some gender issues remain in Mexico, especially that some female students leave school early in Mexico. According to Roy (2018), the founding president of the Mexican Federation of University Women, Patricia Galeana, stated that girls do not miss school for lack of intellect, but because there is social deprivation, including child marriages. Worldwide, Mexico has the eighth-highest number of child marriages, with Ethiopia not too far behind.

IV.2. Violence Against Women

Gender inequality is a big concern and violence against women is also a common challenge in the country, which hinders girls’ education in almost every respect. At the same time, the roles of women vary from one region to another. The Zapotec community of Juchitan, for example, is a matriarchal society where women play more leading roles than males. Mexico City-based research claims that 25,000 girls between 12 to 14 are in an early marriage union. Research also says indigenous girls face more hindrance than other girls in Mexico. Primary schools are free and mandatory in the country and taught mostly in Spanish. With more than 68 linguistic groups, there comes an uneven learning process in classrooms. The opportunity to attend primary schools is nearly equal for both females (49 percent) and males (51 percent), but due to socio-economic problems, women are forced to work and support their family.⁷

Both countries in the last three years have made active strides to improve the representation and rights granted to women. Ethiopia’s new leader, prime minister Abiy Ahmed, has made half of his

⁷ Roy (2018).

cabinet female, brought in a female president and put a woman at the head of the Supreme Court for the first time. They have enacted numerous protections for assault victims and survivors of domestic abuse. In Mexico, an unprecedented nearly 3,000 women ran in the June elections earlier this year, which resulted in the election of the first female mayor of Mexico City, and full gender parity in parliament.⁸

However Ethiopian and Mexican women still endure unbearable oppression. Though the both constitutions are progressive in nature, the oppression is still in place for lack of enforcing capacity by the government as well as religious values within the country. 85 percent of the Ethiopian people live in rural areas and over 45 percent of them practice Islam, and it is here that much of the repression against women takes place. A school age girl won't be allowed to attend school with a pretext that she may be raped, abducted or harmed while going to school. Girls are circumcised depending on the context of each culture and tradition.

Women in most parts of Ethiopia are subjected to an arranged marriage. Either the parents choose the bride, or the groom will marry the girl of his choice, regardless of her desire. A girl is not allowed to choose her husband. It is difficult for her to leave her husband after marriage and she normally absconds and goes to the nearby town. If she is considered to be attractive, the pimps will pave the way for her to engage in prostitution.

Girls who got lucky to attend school have a wider risk of being raped, abducted and married off without their desire. If the girl manages to withstand all these challenges and graduates from college, she will be received with yet another mistreatment at her place of employment. Most Ethiopian men don't show the appropriate respect to women. Men in Ethiopia are still unsure if a woman can think, work and serve equally with a man. Only few Ethiopians consider women for other purposes than sex tools.

Within both countries many women are raped and abused by their employers. Reporting of rape assault to the police is unusual and considered a taboo. Touching the body of a woman, assaulting, pinching and sometimes beating a woman is yet to be considered a criminal offence in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia such practice is considered normal in rural parts of the country and the rural men reflect their habit when coming to urban areas (Kedir and Admasachew, 2010). A woman, who is the victim of a rape assault, will be subjected to several stages of humiliation starting from the police. Rape is not treated seriously. Most of the time, a woman who goes to the police and report the case of physical assault and sexual harassment will surely become the subject of mockery. Women are victims of acid attacks and daylight shooting.

Mexico's history is similar to that of Ethiopia. Its Congress has passed hundreds of constitutional reforms, laws, and administrative measures in the name of advancing equality and combating violence against women. Between 2014 and the first quarter of 2018, Mexico reformed over 450 norms in penal and civil and family codes with the goal of protecting the rights of women and girls. Misogyny was formally included as a type of illegal discrimination, stricter laws to prevent and investigate sexual violence were passed, paying women less than men for the same job was deemed a form of 'economic and labor violence,' and dozens of justice centers dedicated to eliminating abuse against women opened. Yet, just like Ethiopia, reality for women changed little.

Mexico has many religious and cultural beliefs that influence the patriarchal norm. But unlike Ethiopia, this is not just predominant in the rural areas, but all over Mexico, even in the more urban

⁸ Kahn (2018).

areas. Mexico is a conservative Catholic country where machismo reigns and traditional concepts of gender are deeply entrenched. Hispanic culture is traditionally associated with distinct gender roles for men and women, known as "machismo" and "marianismo," which dictate certain behavioral expectations for members of that community.⁹ In addition, there is a strong emphasis on family and community that interacts with the couple's expectations and decision-making while reinforcing the importance of cultural and societal norms.¹⁰ The Mexican culture places a high value on manliness. In general, men are expected to be dominant and independent and females to be submissive and dependent a byproduct of the gender roles that are taught by Catholicism.¹¹ Within this dominant power structure between men and women violence against women and girls is an ongoing problem.

The murder rates and prosecution rates in both countries are also telling of the lack of gender inequality. As reported by Isabel Cholbi (2019), in 2018, 3,580 women were killed in Mexico. And it is not simply that women are murdered, 98 percent of the time, they are killed by men, often by a relative, partner, or someone close to them, which speaks volumes about the patriarchal aspect of these attacks. Moreover, the killings often have a sadistic motive: victims are frequently tortured or sexually abused before their deaths. Just like Ethiopia women who speak out against murders of their friends or loved ones have to fear deadly retaliation, even in the most public of places.

With 1,812 women murdered between January and July of 2019 in Mexico, Mexico is Latin America's second-most dangerous country for women, according to the United Nations.¹² Girls suffer far more violence, rape, harassment and abuse than boys in Mexico, said Christian Skoog, a representative for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Mexico.¹³ Indeed, about one in five Mexican girls ages 15 to 17 (that is almost 700,000 young women) experienced some form of violence in 2015.¹⁴

While American women are marching for representation and equal pay, women in Mexico were protesting the failure of law enforcement to investigate the murders of their daughters. For more than two decades, rates of misogynistic murder of women, or femicide, in Mexico have been alarmingly high. Nevertheless, the problem remains largely unaddressed by the Mexican government. The femicide epidemic is a powerful illustration that the state cannot be given the titles of both judge and executioner. When state actors are not held accountable by external parties, they face no incentive to make the effort to properly enforce their own rulings – in other words, they look the other way.

IV.3. Overall Gender Inequality Index

Despite many similarities, as Figure 8 shows, Mexico ranks far better than Ethiopia in terms of the Gender Inequality Index of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which measures gender inequality across three dimensions (reproductive health, empowerment, and economic status). As of 2018, Mexico ranked 76 among 188 countries, while Ethiopia ranked 173. Both countries have made some progress over the last few decades: Ethiopia's index decreased from

⁹ Frias (2014).

¹⁰ Frias (2014).

¹¹ Domínguez-Villalobos (2012).

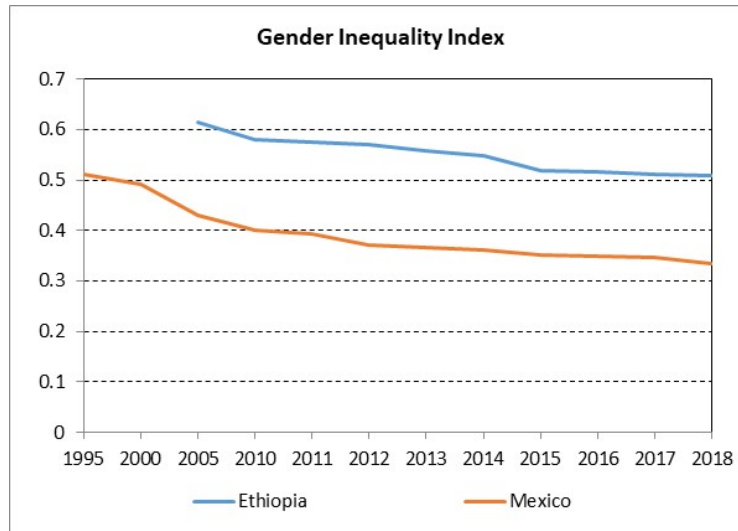
¹² Gómez Romero and de la Macarena Iribarne González (2019).

¹³ Lopez (2019).

¹⁴ Lopez (2019).

0.614 in 2005 (the earliest year this index is available for Ethiopia) to 0.508 in 2018, while Mexico's index decreased from 0.512 in 1995 to 0.334 in 2018.

Figure 8: Progress with Gender Inequality Index



Source: Created by author based on United Nations Development Programme (2019).

V. Policy Approaches to Women in Development

Feminist movements in Western societies have led to an increased awareness of gender inequality issues in the developing world and the role of development projects to redefine these norms. With the increased attention to gender inequality issues, there also has been a rise in the approaches taken to achieve gender equality. Some of the prominent research include Buvinić (1983) and Moser (1989), who have identified five policy approaches to women in development: welfare, efficiency, anti-poverty, equity, and empowerment.

The welfare approach considers women as the recipients of aid or charity rather than as active participants in the process of development. Moser (1989) and Buvinić (1986) both reject the welfare approach because it reinforces gender roles by placing women in a sort of passive position within society. It does not tackle the root of the problem with is the fact that women in developing countries lack status, and education/skills so they can make decisions of power.

The efficiency approach suggests that investments in women will result in higher productivity. There are various non-profit organizations in Ethiopia and Mexico, which are broadly based on the efficiency approach. Ethiopia's Association of Women in Business (AWiB) is a volunteer-driven membership that provides loans to people for business ventures. The nonprofit began in 2012 with mostly female membership backing from the Ministry of Trade and 232 loans. In addition to providing loans, the program also carries out training modules to build business skills and guide participants through legal sides of owning a business. This definitely is an indicator of the efficiency approach through teaching women skills and allowing them greater opportunities as well as empowering them.

Las Hijas de Mexico works specifically with indigenous women and aims to teach skills in agribusiness, basket making, small business, and restaurant/catering. This resulted in an increase in female labor force participation as well as an increase of female entrepreneurs. Like the Association of Women in Business, this program follows the efficiency approach through the investment in women through skills building.

The anti-poverty approach describes women as economically subordinate due to social forces and focuses on lifting women out of poverty. The equity approach builds on the anti-poverty approach by focusing on efforts to confront political, social, cultural and legal barriers holding women from full participation in society. There are various organizations in Ethiopia and Mexico that focus on lifting women out of poverty and achieving gender equality.

A fifth and probably most powerful approach focuses on empowerment. This approach suggests that women with the ability to gain control in their own lives have the ability to change injustice in the structure in which they have to interact. Women in Ethiopia and Mexico lack decision-making power within their communities. Given these conditions, some of the more effective programs are those which follow the efficiency, empowerment and equity approaches. The result is that these programs help to transform communities through positively reshaping the gender norms and increasing the independence and self-sufficiency of women.

Despite cultural and social norms are not on the side of women, perceptions and conditions for women can be changed at least on the local level through empowerment. But this concept cannot be effectively applied without addressing ethical development strategies. Of the five ethical approaches to positive gender development discussed previously, the most prevalent approaches are equity and empowerment with an emphasis on empowerment through all projects. These approaches attempt to change cultural norms that oppress women. The greater effort behind many of these development projects suggest that increased economic independence will foster professional and personal independence. If you are empowering women economically, they will have more independence and more opportunities beyond the domestic work, greater access to education, later marriage and more decisions in public areas.

One of Ethiopia's organization focusing on the empowerment of women is the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA). The EWLA's main objective is to promote legal, economic, and social empowerment for women and children. This has taken the form of workshops, political lobbying and investments in businesses. This program exemplifies the empowerment and equity approaches. Female advocates are breaking down the cultural taboo by supporting women through actually investing in small businesses and influencing the local laws and helping women support themselves economically. Another organization working in Ethiopia is the Center for Accelerated Women's Economic Empowerment (CAWEE), which was established in 2004 as a membership organization. CAWEE promotes women in business, with a special focus of working on value-chains through the provision of technical and marketable skills that can help women to get involved in income generating activities.

Mexico has an organization called *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* ("May Our Daughters Return Home") which focuses on returning the bodies of femicide victims to their families for a proper burial and bringing their aggressors to justice as well as increasing the accountability of law enforcement. This organization helps spread the word about gender violence and gives legal support to victims looking for justice who cannot afford it. It empowers women to seek justice against the perpetrator as well as hold law enforcement agents accountable to the law. For her

work, Marrufo Nava, the leader of the organization, has received multiple awards, including the Anne Klein Women's Award, which recognizes advocates of gender equality.

VI. Conclusion

Through examining the social and cultural norms this article aims to illustrate how women in Mexico and Ethiopia struggle with systemic oppression. While women have legal protections under the law and the constitution the society in which they live creates a vicious cycle of discrimination and violence.

Although both countries have various organizations supporting development and empowerment, they have done little to address the norms and institutions that perpetuate women's subordinate role in society. As discussed above, although both countries have spent 7-10 years expanding the rights and representation of women they still struggle with poor numbers in educational attainment of women, labor participation from women and the wages of women. This reflects poorly on the prospects for gender equality and parity any time soon in either country.

Norms inform the institutions and while it is a good step to begin expanding the representation of women in the minds of public, they unfortunately do not enforce a lot of these laws. You can give them all the legal rights in the world but if you are not prosecuting rapists or punishing those who hurt women, then nothing will change. The perpetuation of certain behaviors by law enforcement as well as by the general society puts women in a space where they cannot progress. Further research is necessary to understand and develop ways to ensure justice for women in countries where society does not protect women. Since norms are difficult to change, the most success for women has occurred with empowerment initiatives front-lined by those on the scene, including nonprofits run by women.

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