

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

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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

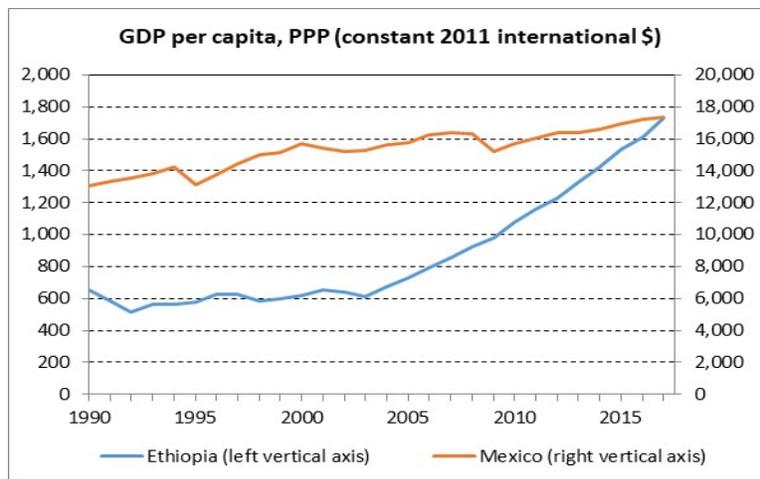
Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa and one of the fastest growing economies in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the IMF.³ Ethiopia's growth has been largely driven by an increase in industrial activity, including investments in infrastructure and manufacturing as well as sustained 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.

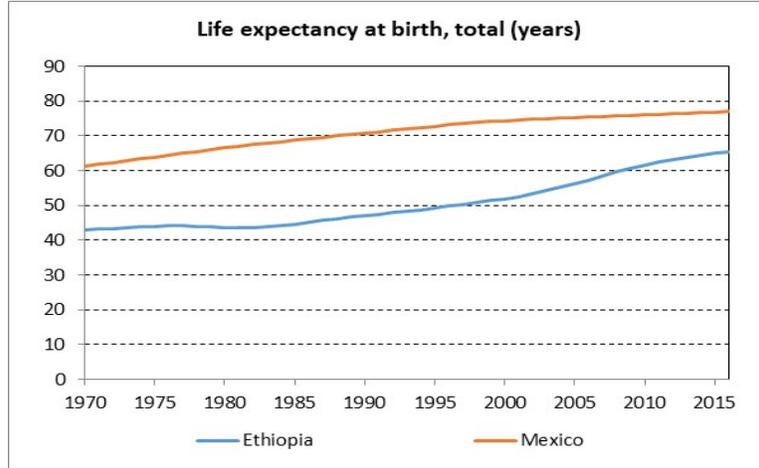
Along with the improvement in GDP per capita for both Ethiopia and Mexico, life expectancy has increased over the past 46 years, as shown in Figure 2. Ethiopia’s life expectancy increased from 42.9 years in 1970 to 65.5 years in 2016, while Mexico’s increased from 61.4 years in 1970 to 77.1

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.

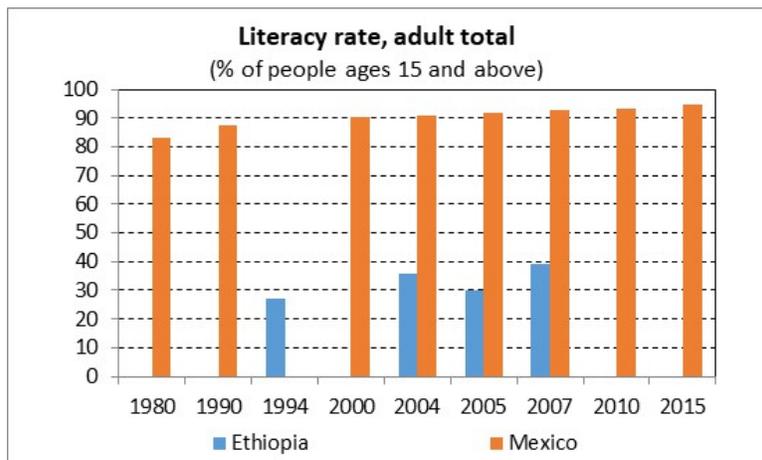
Figure 2: Life Expectancy in Ethiopia and Mexico, 1970-2016



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



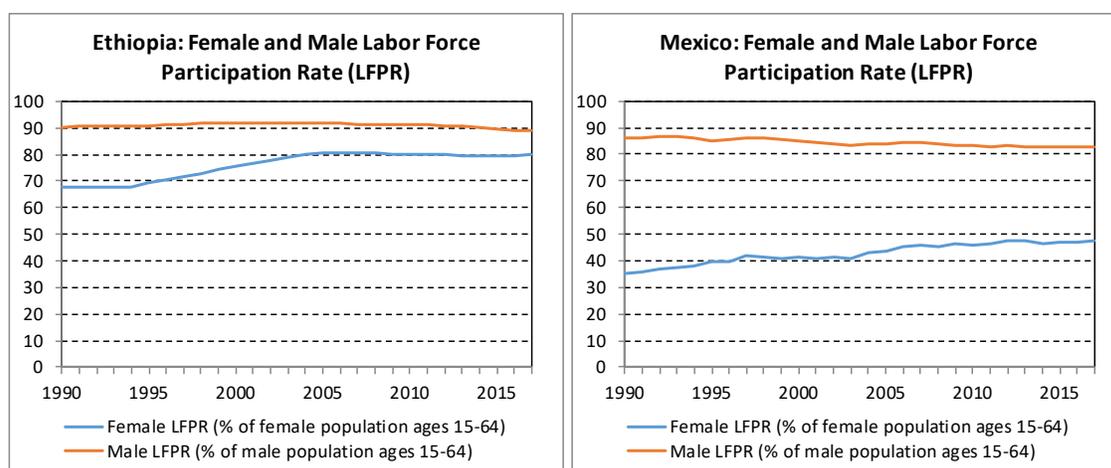
Source: Created by author based on World Bank (2019).

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



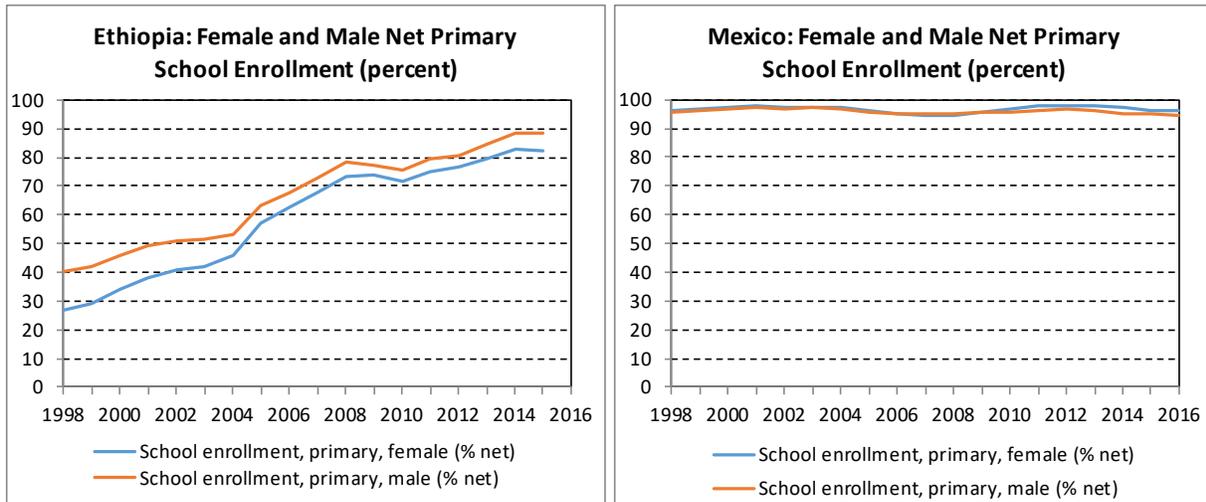
Source: Created by author based on World Bank 2019.

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.

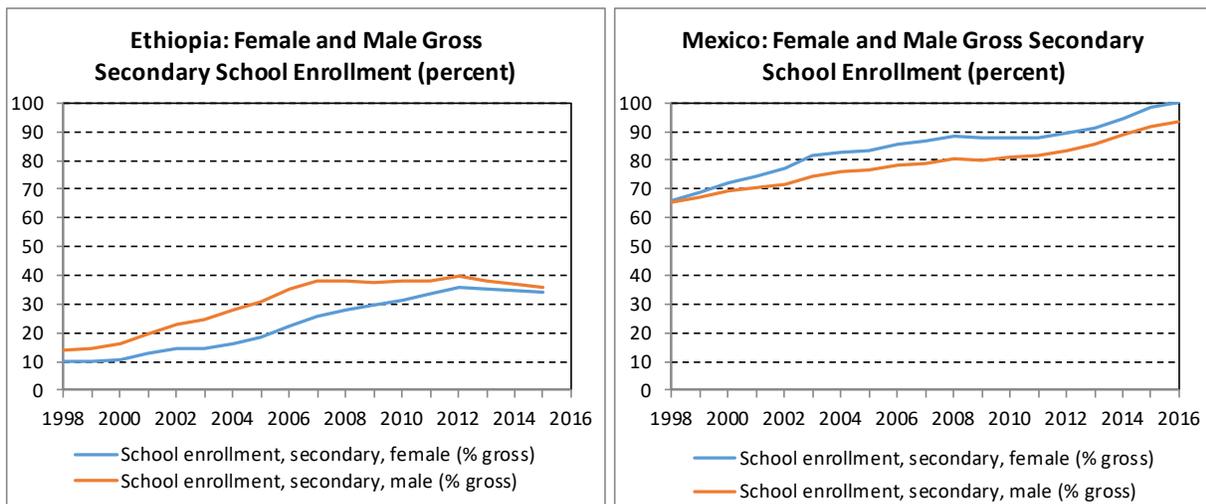
Figure 5: Female and Male Net Primary School Enrollment in Ethiopia and Mexico



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

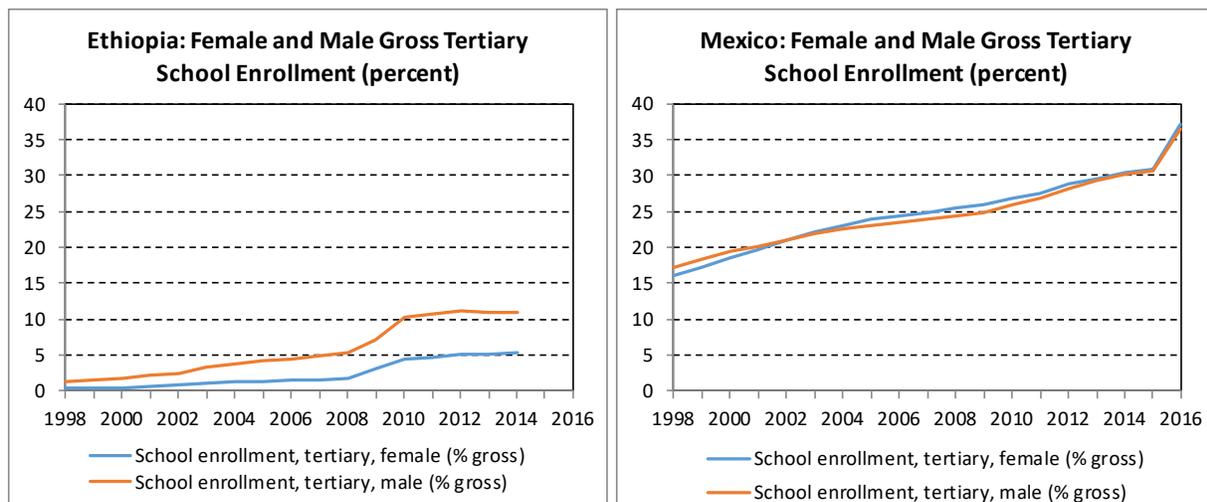
As Figure 6 shows, female gross secondary school enrollment has increased from 9.8 percent in 1998 to 34.4 percent in 2015 for Ethiopia, and from 65.8 percent in 1998 to 100 percent in 2016 for Mexico. Ethiopia’s gender gap in gross secondary school enrollment has decreased from 4.1 percent from 1998 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).

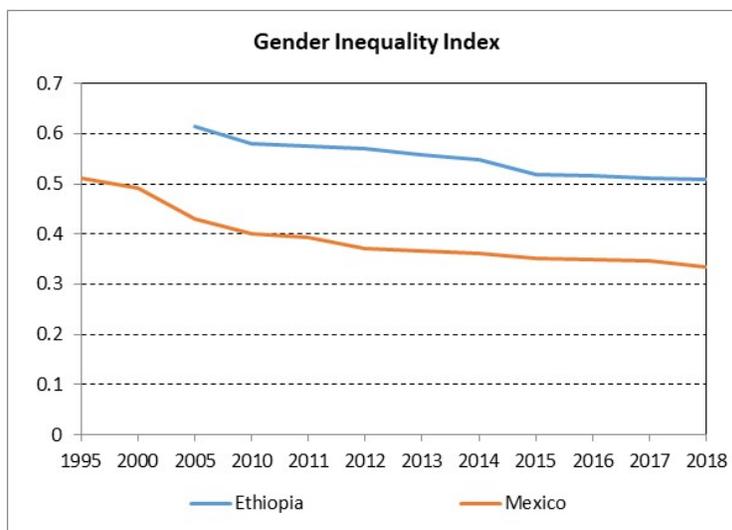
¹² Gómez Romero and de la Macarena Iribarne González (2019).

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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