

2023

How Economic Distribution Impacts Human Rights on an International Level: A Case Study in Africa and the Balkans

Lindsey G. Ingraham
University of Northern Iowa

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©2023 Lindsey G. Ingraham

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/hpt>

Recommended Citation

Ingraham, Lindsey G., "How Economic Distribution Impacts Human Rights on an International Level: A Case Study in Africa and the Balkans" (2023). *Honors Program Theses*. 692.

<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/hpt/692>

This Open Access Honors Program Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Program Theses by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

Offensive Materials Statement: Materials located in UNI ScholarWorks come from a broad range of sources and time periods. Some of these materials may contain offensive stereotypes, ideas, visuals, or language.

HOW ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION IMPACTS HUMAN RIGHTS ON AN
INTERNATIONAL LEVEL: A CASE STUDY IN AFRICA AND THE BALKANS

A Thesis Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Designation
University Honors with Distinction

Lindsey G. Ingraham
University of Northern Iowa
May 2023

May 2023

This Study by: Lindsey Ingraham

Entitled: How Economic Distribution Impacts Human Rights on an International Level: A Case Study in Africa and the Balkans

has been approved as meeting the thesis or project requirement for the Designation

University Honors with Distinction

Approved by:

Dr. Evan Renfro, Honors Thesis Advisor

Dr. Jessica Moon Asa, Director, University Honors Program

Introduction

Freedom of the press and gender equality are both human rights that the United Nations argues should be available to all people on Earth. However, it is continually observed that media suppression and gender inequality persist across the globe. If an individual is facing a violation of one of their human rights, any other additional societal stressors can compound the situation and impact their quality of life overall. In the world's capitalist based system, in which the means of production are controlled by the private sector, it is vitally important to understand how the distribution of wealth across that system impacts those already facing human rights abuses. The government is not the primary actor in a capitalistic economic system, but governments do have a responsibility to regulate and understand what overarching impacts their economic distribution may be causing. There is plenty of research that examines abuse of human rights, but there is a significant gap in the literature regarding what role economic distribution within a state plays on that state's human rights measures. Access to power and resources, such as wealth, will impact an individual's ability to protect themselves against human rights abuses; it is therefore important to understand how this affects the system as a whole.

In order to look at how economic distribution is impacting human rights globally, it is important to first identify a measure of economic distribution that can be consistent and allow for comparisons between state's with vastly different amounts of wealth and economic resources. One of the most common measures of economic dispersion within states is the Gini Coefficient. This places states on a scale from 0, perfect income equality, to 1, perfect income inequality where all of the wealth is in one person's hands. This measure allows for states with very different amounts of economic resources to be accurately compared to one another, making Gini Coefficient the easiest and most reliable way to examine economic distribution for the purposes

of this research. The hypothesis for this research was that there will be a positive correlation between Gini Coefficient and human rights measures on an international level. As this research was designed to address multiple different human rights, the two human rights with the most available and consistent data points were selected for this research: freedom of the press and gender equality. From these two human rights, three variables with specific data points were selected to provide ample data for analysis. These variables were Press Freedom Index, Births Per Woman, and Percentage of Children out of Primary School, Female. Press Freedom Index examines how protected journalist expression in a state is as a specific ranking of states, Births Per Woman examines how many children on average a woman in a given country will have, and Percentage of Children out of Primary School, Female examines what percentage of the children pulled out of primary school are female. The gender equality measures were specifically selected due to their connection to economic factors; women who give more births on average are more likely to be at home with their children rather than participating full time in the workforce, and girls being pulled out of school denies them an education that impacts their ability to participate in the workforce later on.

Data from Reporters Without Borders and the World Bank was used in this small case study to assess correlations between economic dispersion, freedom of the press, and measures of gender equality in eight countries. These countries were selected from two regions, with four from both Africa and the Balkans to total eight: Angola, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and Zimbabwe. The regions were selected to account for any regional trends affecting the data. These countries were selected based on their Gini Coefficients with the hopes of identifying correlations between economic distribution and their measures of human rights. By doing research into how Gini Coefficients are correlated with measures of

human rights, we can more fully understand how economic conditions impact an individual's personal freedoms on a macro level. In other words, understanding how a country's economic distribution directly impacts its citizens' abilities to exist with freedom and dignity is important, and this research hopes to examine this issue. This research produced statistically significant research showing correlations between economic dispersion within a state and that state's human rights measures. This shows that the economic distribution within a country has a direct impact on how protected their human rights are, which is a finding relevant to everyone participating in a capitalist state. This could be used as the foundation for further research with a larger sample size to apply this regional analysis to the global scale.

Literature Review

According to the fourth edition of *Human Rights in International Relations*, "human rights are widely considered to be those fundamental moral rights of the person that are necessary for a life with human dignity" (Forsythe, 2018, p. 3). Social scientists who focus on human rights recognize that while these rights should be theoretically guaranteed to all humans, they still have to be identified and codified within the law in order to ensure their protection (Forsythe, 2018, p. 3). Modern history has seen the issue of human rights pushed to the international stage following major global catastrophes such as the Holocaust and World Wars. The United Nations formed following the second World War, and immediately began working to codify some form of human rights protections into international law. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted on the 10th of December in 1948, is the first document of its kind; it laid out the fundamental human rights that were agreed to be universally protected by a collection of sovereign states (United Nations, 1948).

The current field of human rights generally operates under the rights and norms laid out under this document. That is not to say that every state or actor agrees with the westernized view of human rights that the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, or UDHR, professes. That being said, for the purposes of this research the discussion of human rights will adhere to this declaration. The UDHR has 30 Articles, each of which discusses a separate human right that is internationally recognized and protected. While it would be idealistic for these rights to be guaranteed because of this international action, it is undeniable that human rights violations persist across the globe into today. Recognizing human rights and codifying them into law is the first major step to ensuring protection for all human beings, but until there is a way to actually guarantee those rights globally it is important to continually critique and improve upon the field. One helpful theoretical lens for examining human rights is feminist theory.

Feminist theory is a theoretical framework that attempts to increase intersectionality in social science discussions by focusing on historical inequalities such as race and gender. Political scientists have long since argued that improving the quality of life for marginalized groups will greatly impact the society as a whole. “Given that half of the planet’s population is female, if we could continue to make major strides in better protecting women’s rights, that would lead to a quantum leap in human rights protection overall” (Forsythe, 2018, p. 379). Feminist theory exists in many forms across multiple disciplines, and is regularly studied in social sciences ranging from sociology to political science. “The core concepts in feminist theory are sex, gender, race, discrimination, equality, difference, and choice. There are systems and structures in place that work against individuals based on these qualities and against equality and equity” (Arinder, n.d.). Generally speaking, feminist scholars are largely accepting of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and were highly involved in the development of the document. “Women’s

organizations were highly active in negotiating the Declaration and achieved a number of semantical changes to their liking” (Forsythe, 2018, p. 55).

However, ensuring the protection of human rights across the globe requires a clear and honest assessment of the state of those human rights in each country; it goes without saying that countries would have something to gain by making it seem like they value and protect human rights more than they actually do. It has taken vigilance by feminist activists and allies to ensure accurate information is being dispersed about the protections of women and other marginalized groups. “Under CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women), when governments submitted the required report about national implementation, the International Women’s Rights Action Watch submitted a ‘shadow report’ usually providing a more honest evaluation of the situation” (Forsythe, 2018, p. 259). It is clear that protections of human rights, particularly those which address historic inequalities, should be highlighted and diligently studied. There are multiple passages in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that address social issues relevant to feminist scholars. As the human rights being studied in this research are rights laid out in the UDHR, a feminist theoretical perspective will allow for clarity between this existing literature, the international law, and the correlations being studied.

Human rights have been pushed to the forefront of global politics within recent history, and are regularly addressed and discussed by hegemonic states and global actors. Article 2 of the U.N. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes,

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status

of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty. (United Nations, 1948)

This article deals with many of the historic inequalities present in the western world, and is one of the only articles that directly mentions gender equality in its language. Another prominent article is Article 16, which establishes equal rights for men and women in marriage. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” (United Nations, 1948). This document outlines the things necessary to ensure the inherent dignity of humans is protected across the globe, and is widely referenced and respected in the field of human rights. However, abuses of these human rights are still prevalent nearly 80 years after its publishing, which necessitates further action and research on how to ensure each human being has access to those rights. There are various organizations and foundations around the world which work to study and protect freedom of expression and freedom of the press, however for the purposes of this research the NGO Reporters Without Borders and the IGO World Bank will be referenced most prominently.

Reporters Without Borders is an international NGO that has annually published the World Press Freedom Index since 2002. According to Reporters Without Borders, “the Index ranks 180 countries and regions according to the level of freedom available to journalists. It is a snapshot of the media freedom situation based on an evaluation of pluralism, independence of the media, quality of legislative framework and safety of journalists in each country and region.” (Presentation, 2016). Each country is assigned a score based on their current status of freedom of the press, and that score is later used to rank that country. The eight countries being analyzed in

this research, which are Angola, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and Zimbabwe, have all had zero imprisonments or deaths for journalists, civilian journalists, or media assistants in the year 2022 according to Reporters Without Borders.

Furthermore, Reporters Without Borders' Violations of Press Freedom Barometer shows that there have been no deaths for journalists, civilian journalists, or media assistants within the last five year period (Presentation, 2016). This NGO has also compiled brief summaries of the history of freedom of the press in each country.

The World Bank is an IGO which focuses on a shared goal of reducing poverty and other such development projects. "With 189 member countries, staff from more than 170 countries, and offices in over 130 locations, the World Bank Group is a unique global partnership: five institutions working for sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries" (Organization, 2022). It supplies grants, loans, and other such investments to developing countries. They also help supply the public with data on various factors for countries', which ranges from gross domestic product to CO2 emissions to school enrollment. The relevant information stored on their database for the purposes of this research are their records of Gini Coefficient, Births per Woman, and Percentage of Children out of Primary School, Female. Gini Coefficient is a way to examine economic dispersal within a country by assigning it a numerical score between 0 and 1. This coefficient places states on a scale from 0, perfect income equality, to 1, perfect income inequality where all of the wealth is in one person's hands. The Gini Coefficient is regularly used to assess economic distribution within countries, and the Gini Coefficient World Bank estimate is considered a fairly accurate measure (Gini Index, 2022). Births per Woman is an average of how many children women have over their lifetimes within that state. Percentage of Children out of Primary School, Female is a measure of

how many young girls in that country are currently not attending primary school as a percentage of the total children not attending primary school. Current literature is lacking in assessments of how this economic dispersion plays into human rights protections within a state. Utilizing the data from these sources, it is now important to examine each of the selected countries for research: Angola, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and Zimbabwe. These countries were chosen due to having either an incredibly high or incredibly low Gini Coefficient, meaning there is either high or low ranges of economic distribution within the state.

The eight states were chosen because of their region, Africa and the Balkans respectively, as well as their status as the highest and lowest Gini Coefficient states within those regions. Furthermore, all four African countries are former colonies, while the Balkan states are not, which can allow for controls to be put in place to ensure the effects of colonization do not impact this data. For the purposes of this research, “former colony” will refer to any country where a foreign Western European power asserted control over the indigenous people of that area during the years 1500 to 1900, in an attempt to direct attention to the Colonial Era. Though Africa is a continent and the Balkans is only a region, many African countries experienced similar consequences of colonization during the Colonial Era, where the Balkans did not. This distinction is necessary for this research, as long-lasting effects of colonization may impact current levels of freedom of the press regardless of that state’s Gini Coefficient. Furthermore, this research limited itself to Sub-Saharan Africa to further isolate a specific region. Picking two vastly different regions for this research will allow the results to show whether there are macro level trends between Gini Coefficients and freedom of the press. Understanding the history of each state is important to provide context for their measures of human rights.

Angola is an interesting country for the field of human rights, as independence from Portugal was only gained in 1975 and was immediately followed by 27 years of civil war (Mouzinho, 2017). After this conflict and further political tensions, feminist activists in Angola have taken a less adversarial approach to protecting their interests. “Given the Angolan government’s history of repression of dissent, it is not surprising that many women’s CSOs strategically adopt a cooperative approach to women’s rights advocacy, positioning themselves exclusively as partners as opposed to critics of the government. This strategy has been adopted by many women’s CSOs, and can be considered pragmatic because it allows the CSOs to continue doing the important work of defending women’s rights, without much opposition from the state” (Mouzinho, 2017). Angola is described as having “press freedom still fragile despite the old dictator’s departure” by Reporters Without Borders. Though there is a new executive in Angola, there are still existing laws that threaten journalists with criminal defamation suits and require media stations to broadcast presidential addresses (Angola, 2016). Though there have been victories recently for journalists in Angola, such as the acquittal of two journalists in 2018 due to journalistic freedom of expression, there are still areas of concern for the country’s media population (Angola, 2016). Pluralism is difficult due to the high costs of media production in the country, and there is still a large amount of governmental supervision or control for many media outlets. Angola’s Press Freedom Index score for 2021 is 34.06, ranking at 103rd internationally; this ranking is three placements higher than the previous year, when Angola ranked 106th. Current information has Angola’s births per woman average at 5.4 (*Fertility Rate, Total (births per woman)*, 2022), and the percentage of children out of primary school that are female is 77.97% (*Children out of School, Primary, Female*, 2022).

Bulgaria and other eastern European countries have had tumultuous relations between feminist movements and government. A 2019 research article notes that many discussions of gender equality in Bulgaria are used as mobilization tools rather than discussions of the condition of this human right. “The term gender was immediately used as a ‘political weapon’ and the understanding of gender in the social sciences was totally rejected as ‘unnatural’” (Darakchi, 2019). Bulgaria is noted for having their press freedom “trapped,” according to Reporters Without Borders. Though there are no recorded deaths for journalists or media assistants within Bulgaria’s recent history, there are significant dangers associated with being involved in the Press in Bulgaria. Reporters Without Borders claims that much of this danger exists socially, though some journalists still fear for their physical safety. “The few outspoken journalists are constantly subjected not only to smear campaigns and harassment by the state, but also to intimidation and violence” (Bulgaria, 2016). The past few years have seen Bulgarian journalists beaten and assaulted for their work, oligarch Delyan Peevski controlling and manipulating media outlets, and fear tactics being levied against journalists by police forces (Bulgaria, 2016). The situation for media in Bulgaria is dismal, with a Press Freedom Index score of 37.29 and a ranking of 112th, which is the highest ranking for a Balkan country in this research study. Bulgaria’s births per woman average is 1.6 (*Fertility Rate, Total (births per woman), 2022*), and the percentage of children out of primary school that are female is 48.60% (*Children out of School, Primary, Female, 2022*).

Czechia, which for the purposes of this research will be referred to as the Czech Republic, has long since found itself at the forefront of international action for human rights. “Indeed, one of the reasons advanced for the 1998 expansion of NATO to include the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland was to provide an additional, military framework for reinforcing

liberal democracy in those three formerly communist states” (Forsythe, 2018, p. 194). Assessing how to prioritize human rights after shifting from communism to capitalism is particularly relevant for the Czech Republic and other block countries. “Recent changes in women's life strategies and orientations towards career goals, birth control, marriage, and motherhood suggest that the gap between Czech and western feminist frames may be narrowing. As new cohorts are coming of age, as they encounter living conditions which are increasingly similar to those prevailing in other western democracies, and, as the legacies of communism begin to fade, framing efforts along western feminist lines may become more successful” (Heitlinger, 1996). Though human rights are improving in some areas within the Czech Republic, freedom of the press is still facing challenges. According to Reporters Without Borders, the Czech Republic’s freedom of the press is currently under some strain. “Unrestrained verbal attacks by President Miloš Zeman and other senior officials have helped foster a climate of widespread mistrust of journalists and acts of violence against them” (Czech Republic, 2016). Press conferences are becoming increasingly limited within the Czech Republic government, with questions being unable to be raised or answered during the pandemic due to government restrictions and regulations of journalistic freedom or expression. There are also concerns of smear campaigns towards journalists that have created a tense atmosphere for the media in the country (Czech Republic, 2016). The Press Freedom Index score for the Czech Republic is 23.38 with a ranking of 40th. The Czech Republic’s births per woman average is currently 1.7 (*Fertility Rate, total (births per woman)*, 2022), and the percentage of children out of primary school that are female is 34.58% (*Children out of school, primary, female*, 2022).

Though political scientists have noted improvements for some human rights within Romania, both gender equality and freedom of the press are reckoning with persistent issues

following a regime change. “In the post-Communist time and space of Romania, it seems that the values of gender rights are lagging behind other concepts such as democracy, human rights, civil society, and political institution building” (Roman, 2001). Romania is noted by Reporters Without Borders for having difficulty with transparency with their media policies. “The government’s vision of journalism and freedom of expression encourages censorship and self-censorship. The mechanisms for funding the media are, in many cases, opaque or even corrupt, and editorial policies are subordinated to the interests of owners, who often use them as propaganda tools” (Romania, 2016). The pandemic facilitated blurred communication between the Romanian government and the media, which led to a lack of clarity with how the pandemic was going to be handled. That being said, there has been push within the government to help fight back against “fake news” and misinformation, which is currently being implemented and studied within the country. Romania has a Press Freedom Index of 24.91, and is currently ranked at 48th in the world. Romania's average for births per woman is currently estimated at 1.6 (*Fertility Rate, total (births per woman)*, 2022), and the percentage of children out of primary school that are female is 48.86% (*Children out of School, Primary, Female*, 2022).

Seychelles is interesting due to its physical distance from other landmasses, as an island nation. It is occasionally viewed as an outlier in its region. “Since its social revolution in the last quarter of the 20th century, Seychelles has been considered very avant-garde in its promotion of women in responsible positions. It is important to note, however, that though this promotion of women has not specifically targeted any social class, it is working-class women who have benefited the most from it” (Choppy, 2020). Reporters Without Borders describes Seychelles’ media situation as both free and varied. Pluralism and government funding of media is difficult due to the country’s small size, however there have been recent positive developments in the

industry. Generational trauma due to years of oppression by regimes is slowly lessening its hold on the media in Seychelles. “The self-censorship reflexes inherited from decades of communist single-party rule and close control of the media are gradually dissipating and giving way to a broader range of opinion and more editorial freedom” (Seychelles, 2016). It is rare for penalties to be levied against journalists or media outlets in Seychelles, and Seychelles’ Press Freedom Index score for 2021 is 25.66 with a ranking of 52nd. Seychelle has a births per woman average of 2.3 (*Fertility Fate, total (births per woman)*, 2022), and the percentage of children out of primary school that are female is 61.61% (*Children out of School, Primary, Female*, 2022).

Human rights in Sierra Leone have been contentious throughout modern history, however the state has made large strides in recent years within the realm of human rights. “Perhaps the most successful [of the International special courts] was the one created for Sierra Leone in 2002. The government that emerged from a brutal internal armed conflict signed an agreement with the United Nations to create a special criminal court... Judgments were handed down in nine cases, and there were convictions against both pro-government individuals as well as against rebel commanders” (Forsythe, 2018, p. 152). Sierra Leone has been experiencing upswings in human rights since the special courts enactment. “In spite of the steady upswing in the number of women elected or appointed to positions of political authority, the growing influence of women in politics runs into male resistance which privately and derisively refers to women's newly held positions of authority and public clout as ‘bottom power’” (Day, 2008). Sierra Leone has seen immense progress for their freedom of the press within recent years, according to Reporters Without Borders. “The 1965 public order law criminalizing defamation and press offenses, under which journalists were often arrested arbitrarily, was repealed in August 2020, while the Independent Media Commission law was revised” (Sierra Leone, 2016).

Many media outlets are able to broadcast without censorship or restriction. However, a journalist in Sierra Leone was detained for 24 hours on libel claims in November of 2019, and the story that the journalist was working on was never published (Sierra Leone, 2016). Currently the country of Sierra Leone has a Press Freedom Index score for 2021 of 29.61 and a ranking of 75th. Sierra Leone's births per woman average is 4.1 (*Fertility Rate, total (births per woman)*, 2022), and the percentage of children out of primary school that are female is 47.02% (*Children out of School, Primary, Female*, 2022).

Slovenia's relationship with human rights has been rocky since the collapse of Yugoslavia, a state which Slovenia was a part of prior to its collapse in 1991. Yugoslavia's status as a majorly agrarian society for most of its history meant that women were not able to amass large swaths of capital. "Although the percentage of women among industrial workers had almost doubled between 1921 and 1926, the overall employment of women nevertheless remained low. In 1939, they represented 18% of the total workforce. The status of women in marriage, family, and society was regulated in different ways in different parts of the country, according to customary law and other legal and religious norms dating back to earlier times" (Kralj, 2015). Though Reporters Without Borders notes that Slovenia has a "dangerous path for press freedom" (Slovenia, 2016), it has the lowest Press Freedom Index ranking of the Balkan region and the lowest ranking of this research's sample. This dismal statement regarding press freedom in Slovenia is due to the rise in smear campaigns levied against journalists by government officials, as well as diminished funding for the national press agency (Slovenia). Though there have been no deaths or attacks of journalists in Slovenia to decrease their Press Freedom Index ranking, there are dangers of government overreach when it comes to press freedom in the area. Slovenia has a Press Freedom Index score of 23.10, which ranks them 36th

internationally in 2021. Slovenia's current average for births per woman average is 1.6 (*Fertility Rate, Total (births per woman), 2022*), and the percentage of children out of primary school that are female is 23.15% (*Children out of School, Primary, Female, 2022*).

Zimbabwe has many tensions in its human rights due to tense historical inequalities. "Women in the former colony of Southern Rhodesia and contemporary Zimbabwe were and still are defined as 'respectable' or 'unrespectable'. These terms carry different meanings, but for purposes of this discussion, a 'respectable' woman in Zimbabwean society is one who is treated with deferential esteem, and who is perceived as an honorable and dignified member of her community or society. An 'unrespectable' woman, however, is seen as dishonorable and lacking in dignity; she will attract social opprobrium and her behavior may not be emulated" (Hungwe, 2006). Zimbabwe is still haunted by the history of media oppression under former president Robert Mugabe, according to Reporters Without Borders. Their summary of the situation within Zimbabwe shows how the situation for journalists and reporters in the country are still dealing with the ramifications of a restrictive leader:

Installed as president in November 2017 and then elected to the position in July 2018, Emmerson Mnangagwa, Robert Mugabe's former vice-president, pledged to reinforce the pillars of democracy including the media, which were harassed and gagged for 37 years under his dictatorial predecessor. However, Mnangagwa was notorious for suppressing dissent when he was national security minister and his first steps with regard to press freedom have been marked more by promises than anything like the concrete progress for which that journalists had hoped. Access to information has improved and self-censorship has declined, but journalists are still often attacked or arrested. (Zimbabwe, 2016)

There are increasing improvements for journalists in the country, but there are still many concerns for reporters in Zimbabwe. The current army chief has referred to social media as a threat to national security. Currently Zimbabwe has a Press Freedom Index score of 31.61 and a ranking of 130th in the world for 2021, which is both the highest ranking for an African country in this research but also the overall highest ranking for any country in this research. Zimbabwe's current average for births per woman is 3.5 (*Fertility Rate, Total (births per woman), 2022*), and the percentage of children out of primary school that are female is 46.65% (*Children out of School, Primary, Female, 2022*).

Research has been done that has discussed economic inequality in relation to human rights within the Balkan and Sub-Saharan African regions that has hinted at a connection with freedom of the press. The Journal of Balkan & Near Eastern Studies found that unlimited economic freedom resulted in poverty and threats to human rights within the Balkan states (Dokmanović et al., 2020). Current research conducted for the journal *Postmodern Openings* found that not only were Gini Coefficients rising within some African states, but that concerns about compromised media control were also becoming more prevalent (Muko et al., 2013). With existing literature already observing rises in press freedom abusers in states with high or rising Gini Coefficients, it is increasingly important to continue research into the subject. While literature shows connections between economic distribution and human rights violations in these areas, there is a gap in the literature regarding the human right to freedom of expression and press. This research was designed to attempt to fill that gap.

Methodology

This research utilizes a data analysis focus by using Gini Coefficient as the independent variable and three measures of human rights as the independent variables: Press Freedom Index,

Births per Woman, and Percentage of Children out of Primary School, Female. The variables will then be compared using Pearson's R, an equation that helps determine if there are statistically significant correlations between variables. The Press Freedom Index was gathered from Reporters Without Borders, while all other variables were obtained from the World Bank. States were grouped as high Gini Coefficient or low Gini Coefficient, as well as taking into account their regional status. Only countries with Gini Coefficients recorded within the last five years were considered for sampling to ensure that outdated information did not skew the data. However, not all of the states used for this study had recently updated information on Births Per Woman or Percentage of Children Out of Primary School, Female. Due to this, some of the data points gathered for those two dependent variables were older than the five year cutoff used for the other two variables.

This research experienced limitations regarding the availability of data for the various countries in both Sub-Saharan Africa and the Balkans. Some countries with high Gini Coefficients, like Sao Tome and Principe, did not have available data in Reporters Without Borders. Additionally, multiple countries in both regions were either missing their Gini Coefficient data on the World Bank's database, or the data was over five years old and therefore not considered for this research. Therefore, there is the possibility that lack of available data for all countries may have impacted the results of this research.

For this research, two high Gini Coefficient countries were chosen for each region, as well as two low Gini Coefficient countries. Angola and Zimbabwe were chosen as the high Gini Coefficient countries for the Sub-Saharan Africa region, with the low Gini Coefficient countries Seychelles and Sierra Leone chosen for the same region. Bulgaria and Romania were chosen as the high Gini Coefficient countries for the Balkans, with the low Gini Coefficient countries

Czech Republic and Slovenia being chosen for that region. Each country's Gini Coefficient, Births Per Woman, and Percentage of Children Out of Primary School, Female were recorded from the World Bank, as well as their Press Freedom Index score from Reporters Without Borders (Appendix A). This data was plotted on a line graph to see if there was a visual trend in the data (Appendix C). At that point, the statistical formula for Pearson's R, also known as Pearson's Correlation, was used in order to determine if any existing correlations were statistically significant (Appendix B). By doing a data analysis methodology, this research will supplement existing literature regarding modern human rights violations.

Results

The first step in obtaining the results was isolating the independent variable, Gini Coefficient, and the dependents variable, Press Freedom Index, Births per Woman, and Percentage of Children out of Primary School, Female, for each country. The eight independent variables for this study were 51.3 (Angola), 41.3 (Bulgaria), 25.0 (Czech Republic), 35.8 (Romania), 32.1 (Seychelles), 35.7 (Sierra Leone), 24.6 (Slovenia), and 50.3 (Zimbabwe). The Press Freedom Index variables for this study were 34.06 (Angola), 37.29 (Bulgaria), 23.38 (Czech Republic), 24.91 (Romania), 25.66 (Seychelles), 29.61 (Sierra Leone), 23.10 (Slovenia), and 31.61 (Zimbabwe). The Births per Woman averages were 5.4 (Angola), 1.6 (Bulgaria), 1.7 (Czech Republic), 1.6 (Romania), 2.3 (Seychelles), 4.1 (Sierra Leone), 1.6 (Slovenia), and 3.5 (Zimbabwe). The variables for Percentage of Children out of Primary School, Female were .7797 (Angola), .4860 (Bulgaria), .3458 (Czech Republic), .4886 (Romania), .6161 (Seychelles), .4702 (Sierra Leone), .2315 (Slovenia), and .4665 (Zimbabwe). The independent mean for this research was 37.01, and the means for the dependent variables in this sample were 28.70 for Press

Freedom Index, 2.7 for Births per Woman, and .4855 for Percentage of Children out of Primary School, Female.

Using the Pearson's Correlation statistical formula, the data points for Gini Coefficient and Press Freedom Index produced a Pearson's Correlation of 0.808 (Appendix B). In order to be significant, the sample's correlation must have been greater than or equal to critical value. Using the formula for degrees of freedom $df = n - 2$, where n is the number of pairs, the degree of freedom for this sample was 6. At the 0.05 level of significance for two-tailed tests, that would make the critical value 0.707. Because 0.808, the correlation, is greater than 0.707, the critical value, this research is able to reject the null hypothesis. This means that it is statistically significant, therefore it can be put outside the realm of possibility that these numbers were acquired by chance. All other correlations found within this research are only statistically significant at the .10 level of significance, which has a critical value of .622. The independent variable Gini Coefficient and the dependent variable Births per Woman had a Pearson's Correlation of .6944. Gini Coefficient and Percentage of Children out of Primary School, Female had a Pearson's Correlation of .6985. Finally, through the course of this research I found it helpful to compare the two dependent variables regarding gender equality, and calculated a Pearson's Correlation between the two variables and included it within the final results. The final correlation examined for this research, between the two dependent variables of Birth per Woman and Percentage of Children out of Primary School, Female, resulted in a correlation of .6743. All dependent variables, when compared with the independent variable of Gini Coefficient, produced a correlation that was statistically significant at at least the .10 level of significance.

There is a statistically significant positive correlation between Gini Coefficient and all dependent variables for these countries. Creating four graphs and plotting these eight countries

on a line graph where the vertical axis represents the dependent variable and the horizontal axis represents Gini Coefficient shows a positive slope (Appendix C). The strongest r^2 , which represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be predicted by the independent variable, was 0.6529 for the correlation between Gini Coefficient and Press Freedom Index. The research did not produce statistically significant correlations between freedom of the press and either measure of gender equality, however the two measures for gender equality showed strong positive correlations between one another which is why that correlation was included in the research results.

These data points are promising, and necessitate further research with a larger sample size. Though this research has succeeded in establishing a statistically significant correlation between economic inequality and freedom of the press, further research may help to clarify if this research can be applied to other regions of the world.

Conclusion

It is important to protect and uphold human rights so that all people can live lives with dignity and respect. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the international political community has made great strides to further understand human rights and their interconnections. The gap in the literature regarding how economic distribution plays into human rights was addressed in the development of this research design, with the hope of further understanding how economic factors impact areas well outside the economy. This research has succeeded in establishing that there is a statistically significant relationship between economic inequality, measured using Gini Coefficient, and measures of human rights. This supports the idea that certain human rights can be predicted by examining, or impacted by altering, a state's economic distribution. The data produced from this research will be used in

further research with larger sample sizes to attempt to find a statistically significant correlation between economic inequality, measured by Gini Coefficient, and freedom of the press, measured by the Press Freedom Index for other regions of the world. Human rights need to be protected and upheld. Part of that process is studying how human rights exist today across this increasingly globalized world. If the work is done today to preserve and uplift human rights, then the future generations will have a greater ability to live a life with dignity in the future.

Appendix A

Table of variables

Country	Gini Coefficient	Press Freedom Index	Births per woman	Percentage of children out of school, female
Angola	51.30	34.06	5.4	0.7797
Bulgaria	41.30	37.29	1.6	0.4860
Czech Republic	25	23.38	1.7	0.3458
Romania	35.8	24.91	1.6	0.4886
Seychelles	32.10	25.66	2.3	0.6161
Sierra Leone	35.7	29.61	4.1	0.4702
Slovenia	24.60	23.10	1.6	0.2315
Zimbabwe	50.3	31.61	3.5	0.4665

Appendix B

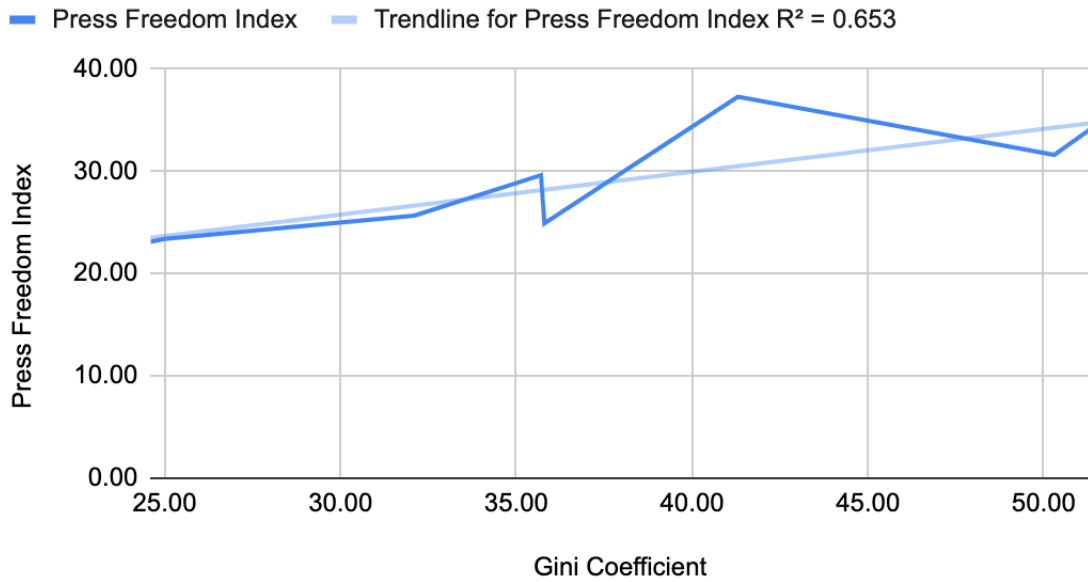
Table of research results

Variables	Pearson's R	Level of Significance	R ²
Gini Coefficient and Press Freedom Index	0.8080	0.05	0.6529
Gini Coefficient and Births Per Woman	0.6944	0.10	0.4822
Gini Coefficient and Percentage of children out of school, female	0.6985	0.10	0.4879
Births Per Woman and Percentage of children out of school, female	0.6743	0.05	0.4546

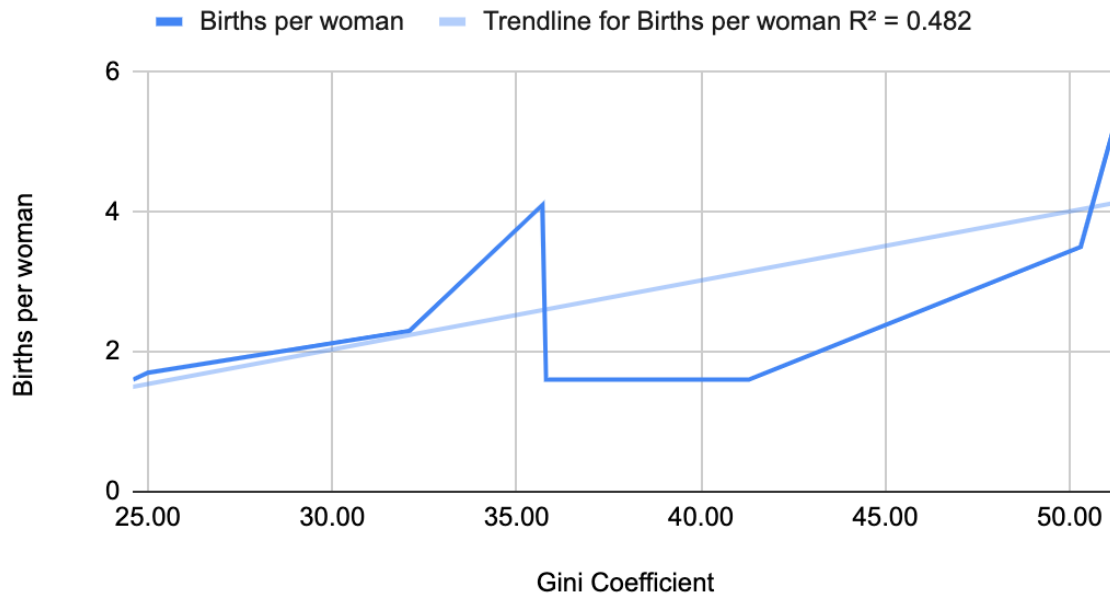
Appendix C

Graphs of research results

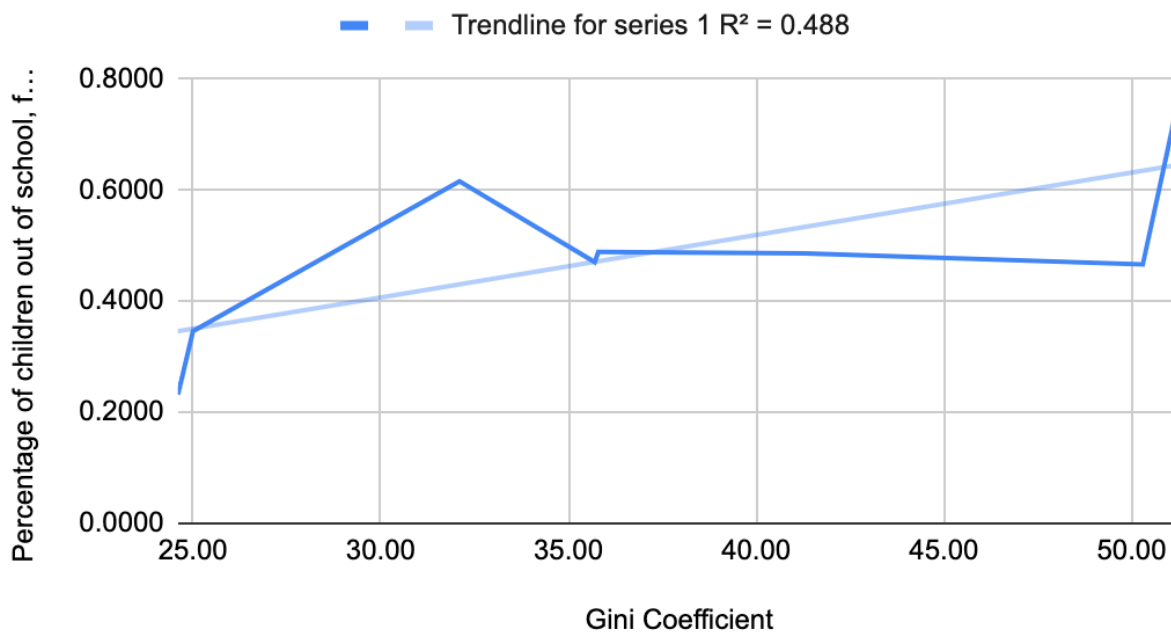
Press Freedom Index vs. Gini Coefficient



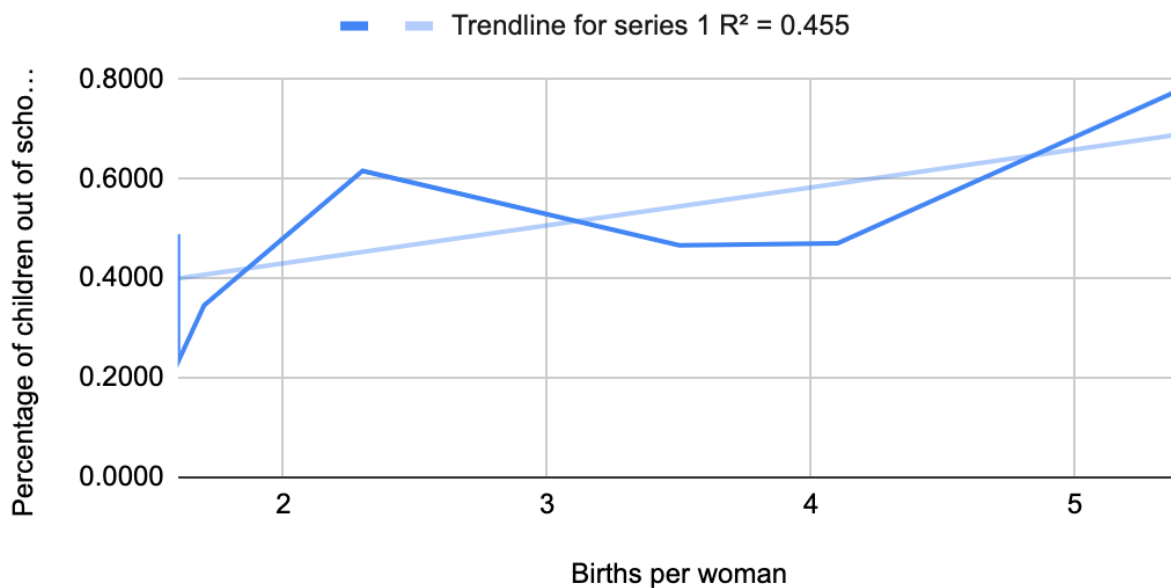
Births per woman vs. Gini Coefficient



Female Children out of School vs. Gini Coefficient



Percentage of children out of school, female vs. Births per woman



References

- Ackerly, B., & True, J. (2008). Reflexivity in practice: Power and ethics in feminist research on international relations. *International Studies Review*, 10(4), 693-707.
- Arinder, J. A. (n.d). *Theoretical Models for Teaching and Research: Feminism*. WSU PB Pressbook.
<https://opentext.wsu.edu/theoreticalmodelsforteachingandresearch/chapter/feminist-theory/>
- Choppy, P. (2020). Women in Seychelles. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*.
- Cudd, A. E., & Holmstrom, N. (2011). *Capitalism, for and against: A feminist debate*. Cambridge University Press.
- Darakchi, S. (2019). The western feminists want to make us gay”: Nationalism, heteronormativity, and violence against women in Bulgaria in times of “anti-gender campaigns. *Sexuality & Culture*, 23(4), 1208-1229.
- Davis, K. (2008). Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful. *Feminist theory*, 9(1), 67-85.
- Day, L. (2008). " Bottom Power:" Theorizing Feminism and the Women's Movement in Sierra Leone (1981-2007). *African and Asian studies*, 7(4), 491-513.
- Dokmanović, M., & Cvetićanin, N. (2020). Economic Freedom in the Balkan Transition Countries from a Valuable Human Ends Perspective. *Journal of Balkan & Near Eastern Studies*, 22(5), 629–648. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2020.1799597>
- Forsythe, D. P. 2018. *Human Rights in International Relations* (4th ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Heitlinger, A. (1996). Framing feminism in post-communist Czech Republic. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 29(1), 77-93.

- Hungwe, C. (2006). Putting them in their place: “respectable” and “unrespectable” women in Zimbabwean gender struggles.
- Kralj, A., & Renner, T. (2015). Slovenia: from “state feminism” to back vocals. *Gender (In) equality and Gender Politics in Southeastern Europe: A Question of Justice*, 41-61.
- Kruger, D. J., Fisher, M. L., & Wright, P. (2014). Patriarchy, male competition, and excess male mortality. *Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences*, 8(1), 3.
- Liebenberg, I., & Zegeye, A. (1998). Pathway to Democracy? The case of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Process. *Social Identities*, 4(3), 541.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13504639851762>
- Mouzinho, Â., & Cutaia, S. (2017). Reflections on feminist organizing in Angola. *Feminist Africa 22 Feminists Organizing—Strategy, Voice, Power*, 33.
- Muko Ochanda, R., Kisolo Wakinya, P., & Omondi Odipo, W. (2013). Human Rights in the Context of Deepening Integration of East African Community (EAC). *Postmodern Openings / Deschideri Postmoderne*, 4(2), 1–27.
- Reporters Without Borders. (2016). *Angola*. Reporters Without Borders. <https://rsf.org/en/angola>
- Reporters Without Borders. (2016). *Bulgaria*. Reporters Without Borders.
<https://rsf.org/en/bulgaria>
- Reporters Without Borders. (2016). *Czech Republic*. Reporters Without Borders.
<https://rsf.org/en/czech-republic>
- Reporters Without Borders. (2016). *Presentation*. Reporters Without Borders.
<https://rsf.org/en/presentation>
- Reporters Without Borders. (2016). *Romania*. Reporters Without Borders.
<https://rsf.org/en/romania>

Reporters Without Borders. (2016). *Seychelles*. Reporters Without Borders.

<https://rsf.org/en/seychelles>

Reporters Without Borders. (2016). *Sierra Leone*. Reporters Without Borders.

<https://rsf.org/en/sierra-leone>

Reporters Without Borders. (2016). *Slovenia*. Reporters Without Borders.

<https://rsf.org/en/slovenia>

Reporters Without Borders. (2016). *Zimbabwe*. Reporters Without Borders.

<https://rsf.org/en/zimbabwe>

Reporters Without Borders. (2016). *2021 World Press Freedom Index*. Reporters Without Borders. <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>

Roman, D. (2001, January). Gendering Eastern Europe: Pre-feminism, prejudice, and East-West dialogues in post-communist Romania. In *Women's studies international forum* (Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 53-66). Pergamon.

United Nations. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. United Nations.

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

The World Bank Group. (2022). *Children out of school, primary, female*. The World Bank.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.UNER.FE>

The World Bank Group. (2022). *Gini Index (World Bank estimate)*. The World Bank.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>

The World Bank Group. (2022). *Fertility rate, total (births per woman)*. The World Bank.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>

The World Bank Group. (2022). *Organization*. The World Bank.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership>