

Targeting Gender Equality through Foreign Aid

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Abstract

Although the rhetoric of gender equality is now ubiquitous within international development organizations, we show that the actual practice of prioritizing women's rights in assistance programs varies considerably across recipient countries. We theorize two possible logics to explain this variation: following a needs-based logic, donors may prioritize gender equality as a policy goal in countries where women's rights are more suppressed; whereas a political logic would expect gender targeting to center on countries that have demonstrated a commitment to advancing women's rights, that is, in contexts where women's rights are compatible with the policy priorities and political survival of the regime. Moreover, donors might respond to a recipient's level of *de jure* and *de facto* gender equality differently in democracies versus autocracies. We draw information from the OECD's Gender Equality Policy Marker (GEPM), which tracks whether bilateral aid projects include gender equality as a goal. Our analysis reveals differences in how Western donors engage with democracies and autocracies on women's rights, consistent with the idea that political considerations do shape the design of assistance programs. In autocracies, donors adopt a more cautious approach: they respond more strongly to policy cues and target gender equality in those recipients with existing *de jure* and *de facto* support for women's rights. By uncovering the recipient-level conditions under which donors prioritize gender equality, our inquiry sheds new light onto debates about the domestic effects of foreign aid, as well as how Western donors interact with autocrats.

1 Introduction

Gender equality is a major policy goal of Western development assistance. This has been the case since at least the mid-1990s, when the Beijing world conference on women saw an unprecedented global consensus to bring women’s rights to the forefront of the international development agenda. Major Paris Club donors including the United States, Sweden, Germany, and the European Union have adopted gender mainstreaming policies requiring all programs to be evaluated based on their impact on women. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has a dedicated Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy. In 1999, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD initiated the Gender Equality Policy Marker (GEPM), which tracks whether aid projects have gender equality as a policy goal. This sets a high expectation for DAC members to increase their efforts toward gender mainstreaming, that is, incorporating a gender equality perspective into the design and evaluation of all projects.

Despite the normative universalism of the OECD’s rhetoric surrounding women’s rights, for recipient countries, gender equality reforms are a distinctly political issue that can be costly to implement. This is especially true for authoritarian regimes, where any policies encouraging the expansion of rights or freedoms must be evaluated based on their implications for political survival (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2005; Gandhi, 2008). Notably, gender-related reforms are often acceptable or even palatable for autocrats: many contemporary nondemocracies have embraced women’s rights as a way to enhance international legitimacy and expand domestic popular support (Tripp, 2019; Barnett, 2022; Donno, Fox and Kaasik, 2022). Yet this is not always the case, and donors must look for signals and information shortcuts to discern the domestic acceptability of their policy goals.

Here, we depart from the simple premise that when designing aid packages, donors consider the political implications of their projects in recipient countries. Programs perceived as

politically threatening by the recipient government will face domestic (state) resistance and implementation problems, and potentially generate adverse consequences for bilateral relations. Donors seek to avoid these frictions. For example, Bush (2015) documents Western donors’ preference for ‘regime-compatible’ goals, in order to increase domestic buy-in and thus the chances of program success. According to this *political logic*, we expect donors to design their programs to align with recipient country policy priorities, or at minimum to reduce outright political conflict with recipient governments. That is, to target women’s rights in countries where these goals are acceptable to the government, and—in autocracies—to design the programs in a way that avoids threatening the survival of the regime. We contrast this with an apolitical, *needs-based logic* of aid program design, which would predict that donors target gender-related policy goals in the countries where women’s rights are most suppressed.

We explore these expectations using data from the OECD’s Gender Equality Policy Marker. Since 1999, the DAC has asked all member countries to record, at the project level, whether gender equality is a “significant” or “primary” goal. Compliance with these reporting requirements is high, providing us with a full and detailed picture, at the recipient and donor levels, of how often gender equality goals are incorporated into aid programs, and in which types of projects (sectors) this occurs. Analyzing these patterns over a 22-year time frame (1998–2020), we find that DAC members engage differently with democracies and autocracies on the issue of women’s rights. Generally speaking, donors target greater proportions of their aid to gender equality when working with democratic recipients. However, donors also seem to be more attentive to domestic conditions and policy cues in autocracies than in democracies—where a rights-based agenda is perhaps less politically sensitive. Autocracies where women have low political representation and weak legal status see much less gender targeting than comparable democracies. But as these conditions improve—that is, as autocracies signal greater openness to advancing women’s rights—gender targeting in aid

programs increases also.

Taken together, these findings paint a nuanced picture of how DAC members apply the OECD’s gender mainstreaming agenda. When designing their assistance programs, donors account for the political sensitivities surrounding their projects. The implications for aid effectiveness cut in different directions. On one hand, the fact that donors shy away from targeting gender equality in regimes that are highly repressive of women’s rights is discouraging. It suggests that there are missed opportunities and that the global agenda for advancing women’s rights is not being energetically applied in the cases that need it most. On the other hand, it is understandable that donors should consider where their efforts can gain real traction. The idea that women’s rights can be imposed from the outside, without the acceptance or cooperation of the recipient government, is unrealistic. By focusing on the more progressive and modernizing regimes, Western donors are developing synergies with domestic political actors—both state and non-state—that can lead to more successful outcomes.

2 Foreign Aid and the Promotion of Women’s Rights

The practice of targeting gender equality as a goal of development assistance projects began in earnest—as with so many other rights-based foreign policy agendas—at the end of the Cold War. In 1999, the OECD DAC inaugurated the Gender Equality Policy Marker (GEPM), which asks all donors to *screen* their projects and *mark* whether gender equality is a focus. Though this official marking policy began in 1999, some donors were screening for gender equality even before this, providing us with about 20 years of data on gender equality screening and targeting. We use the term *gender targeting* to refer to projects where women’s rights are a goal of the project. Targeting can take two levels: projects where gender is *significantly* targeted are those in which women’s rights are an important—but

not the primary—focus; projects where gender is *primarily* targeted are those whose main purpose is advancing women’s rights.

Gender targeting occurs in a range of different types (sectors) of projects. Here, we group sectors into three broad categories: economic (including direct budget support) and ‘other’; social; democracy and governance. To provide a few examples of projects with gender as the *primary* target: A grant from Canada to Kenya in 2018 for the purpose of supporting business opportunities for rural women in east and southern Africa; a grant from the U.S. to South Sudan to provide reproductive healthcare needs of girls, women, and underserved communities; a grant from Spain to Colombia to implement the restitution of land rights to women that had been displaced by conflict. Examples of projects with gender as a *significant* (secondary) goal include: a 2017 grant from the UK to Myanmar to improve civil society participation in the peace process, including women’s groups; a 2013 grant from the EU to Nicaragua to improve higher education competitiveness; and a 2008 grant from Belgium to Cambodia for the construction of a water navigation center to improve transport on the Mekong river. For these latter examples (of ‘significant’ targeting), we see that the projects are based on general development goals but with a gender equality dimension.

Figure A1 tracks the practice of gender screening and targeting among DAC members over time. Recall that screening (the light blue bar) refers to projects where donors evaluate and report whether gender equality is a goal; targeting (the dark blue bar) refers to projects where gender is either a significant or primary goal. We see that targeting begins in the early 1990s and increases steadily over time. Still, as of 2020, only a minority of projects target gender equality as a goal. This is not necessarily surprising or problematic; in the aggregate, there is no reason to think that every project should focus on women’s rights.

The more interesting facet of this variation is at the country level, where differences across recipient countries are quite stark. Figure A2 lists the recipient countries with the highest and lowest gender targeting, averaged over our sample period. It shows the average

percentage of commitments targeting gender equality as either a primary or significant goal. There is a wide range, with the top countries experiencing upwards of 25% targeting (meaning that 25–33% of aid commitments are in projects where gender equality is a policy goal) and the bottom countries experiencing essentially no gender targeting. Of note is the fact that the list of most highly-targeted states includes many authoritarian regimes, such as Uganda, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Belarus, and Rwanda. But none of these top twenty stand out as particularly regressive regimes when it comes to women’s rights. Rather, it is the countries at the bottom of Table 1—the 20 states with the least gender targeting—that includes several Middle East monarchies where women’s rights are tightly suppressed. Other less-targeted countries are more economically developed democracies, like Israel, Cyprus, and Costa Rica, suggesting that there are various motivations explaining the intensity of gender targeting in DAC aid packages. Donors may avoid attaching women’s rights goals to programs either where it is too much of an uphill climb or where it is less necessary.

Research on the allocation and effectiveness of foreign aid programs provides some insights to guide our inquiry, yet several theoretical gaps remain. A large body of research explains allocation decisions from the perspective of donors, namely how their political, strategic, and geopolitical interests shape where aid is sent (Heinrich, 2017; Kilby and Dreher, 2010).¹ The conclusion is that aid allocation, although guided most basically by recipient-country need, is also meaningfully shaped by donors’ political considerations—a fact that can undermine aid effectiveness because it implies that assistance is regularly sent without any serious policy conditionality attached.

Aid effectiveness is also undermined, at the domestic level, by recipient-country corruption and poor bureaucratic capacity—an insight which forms the heart of the quality of governance (QoG) research agenda in the study of foreign aid (Dietrich and Winters, 2021;

¹Donor preferences may be nakedly self-interested—as was the case for Cold War support for client states—or, more recently, accord with a more enlightened self-interest whereby donors seek to promote development in countries where poverty has the largest global spillovers (Bermeo, 2017).

Brautigam and Knack, 2004). Some studies also examine the relationship between governance and aid from the opposite angle, that is, whether donors reward improvement in governance (Alesina and Weder, 2002). On this point, there is specific evidence that advances in women’s rights—including gender quota laws and reforms to women’s economic rights—are rewarded with increased aid allocation from Western donors (Hicks and Maldonado, 2020; Bush and Zetterberg, 2021, 2022; Okundaye and Breuning, 2021). Evidence as to the overall effectiveness of ODA at promoting gender equality is more mixed (Baliamoune-Lutz, 2016; Pickbourn and Nkdikumana, 2016; Swain and Wallentin, 2020), perhaps because—as explored here—we need a better understanding of the domestic conditions under which gender targeting is applied.

Research on how recipient-level factors shape the *design* of aid programs—that is, which sectors are targeted and which policy goals are attached—is rather less developed. Winters and Martinez (2015) and Bermeo (2017) show that donors consider recipient government capacity when determining the sectoral focus of their support, avoiding sectors that require high government involvement (such as direct budget support and infrastructure projects) in recipients with poor governance. Dietrich (2013, 2021) shows that donors alter their aid delivery tactics in poorly governed states, focusing on supporting non-state actors rather than the government. In these studies, state capacity is treated as largely an apolitical problem.

Coming closer to a political theory of aid composition, Dietrich and Wright (2015) argue that Western donors tend to favor economic development assistance in closed dictatorships, and shift more toward democracy and governance packages once regimes transition to multipartyism. The underlying logic is that the domestic regime context shapes the anticipated effectiveness of different (sectoral) aid tactics. Bush’s analysis of the ‘taming’ of democracy assistance similarly demonstrates that Western donors think about results when determining which policy goals to prioritize: they seek to identify projects that will win the acceptance,

perhaps even the cooperation, of the recipient government (Bush, 2015). Her work is now joined by other studies which show that for many nondemocracies, externally-incentivized reforms focused on women’s rights are more palatable than reforms that directly target elections and political competition (Donno, Fox and Kaasik, 2022; Bjarnegård and Zetterberg, 2022). In what follows, we develop these insights further, to provide an explanation of gender targeting that accounts for the political sensitivities of particular policy goals in recipient countries.

3 Theoretical Expectations

To theorize how domestic political factors shape donor decisions about targeting gender equality, we start by considering what an apolitical logic of program design would look like. Where would donors target gender equality based solely on *need*? In recent decades, the international development community has moved toward an accepted view on the key markers of gender equality, providing donors with a way to conceptualize and identify which recipients are in most need of progress in this area. The Millennium Development Goals, for example, stress women’s access to reproductive health care and improved maternal health, equality in education, increased participation in the workforce, and increased legislative representation. The World Bank’s project on Women, Business and the Law (WBL) identifies a range of legal rights that are essential for women’s full and equal participation in the economy and society, and publishes an index that captures performance on these dimensions. A needs-based logic would predict that *gender targeting should increase as countries’ performance on metrics of women’s empowerment declines* (**Hypothesis 1**).

The problem is that far from being a technocratic, apolitical goal, advancing gender equality is a disruptive endeavor that upsets political, social, and economic hierarchies. It can therefore generate pushback from officials and gatekeepers in recipient countries.

Emerging research on the backlash against international norms shows just how powerful this phenomenon can be, with real consequences for outside actors' ability to engage effectively on gender-related issues (Terman, 2022; Graff, 2014; Zarembeg and Friedman, 2021). For example, governments may impose legal restrictions on foreign NGO activity or prohibit domestic NGOs from partnering with foreign entities, with the consequence of choking off an important delivery channel for Western aid (Dietrich, 2013).

Donors seek to avoid these types of frictions which pose obvious problems for the successful implementation of their projects. For Western aid agencies, demonstrating success is essential. They face stringent reporting and accountability requirements from their principals. USAID, for example, must regularly report to Congress with evidence that its projects are producing quantifiable positive results. Rational, survival-oriented aid agencies therefore have incentives to consider how their policy goals will be received by the recipient government. We refer to this domestic reception, and the attendant likelihood of pushback, as the *domestic political costs* of gender targeting. We argue that donors ascertain these costs by examining domestic political institutions as well as policy cues, which signal the extent to which recipient governments are willing to constructively engage on women's rights.

Our argument implies, further, that donors adjust to these costs by designing their aid packages in a way that favors the cooperation (or, at minimum, the acceptance) of domestic stakeholders. This idea is familiar to observers of the International Monetary Fund, which has enacted a major shift toward ensuring domestic "ownership" of its policy conditionality (Drazen, 2002), on the logic that greater coherence with domestic preferences contributes to successful implementation.

3.1 Domestic Policy Cues

The extent to which gender equality is (or can safely be) embraced by recipient governments as a policy priority varies substantially across countries, and depends to a large extent

on the ideological orientation of the government. Progressive stances on women’s rights are associated most closely with so-called “modernizing” regimes, which pursue economic development through a Western/secular model of social and economic reforms. There is no single institutional profile that characterizes modernizing regimes. A diverse array of democracies (e.g., Indonesia), military dictatorships (Brazil and Argentina in the 1960s), secular-nationalist regimes (Turkey under Ataturk), and even some monarchies (e.g., present-day Morocco, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia) fit the bill. What these regimes have in common is that women’s rights are viewed as associated with modernity and its attendant benefits, including economic growth (Coleman, 2004) and international prestige (Towns, 2012).

International actors therefore have no simple institutional markers to look for when ascertaining a government’s orientation toward women’s rights. Rather, they must look for policy cues. Here, we focus on one particular policy—legislative gender quotas—and the closely-related outcome of female legislative representation. Both are widely understood to signal affinity with the normative agenda of Western donors. As Edgell (2017) and Bush (2011) describe, the momentum for gender quotas emanated from the global development community (rather than from bottom-up domestic activism). Moreover, women’s representation is a measurable, clear-cut, and noticeable outcome that is well suited for domestic actors to use as a signaling device.² As quotas have diffused globally, women’s legislative representation has notably increased in many countries (Paxton and Hughes, 2015; Hughes et al., 2019), and regularly grabs headlines in the international press.

Note that we treat women’s legislative representation as primarily a *symbol* of the government’s openness to women’s rights, rather than as a measure of women’s empowerment itself. This is so because there is not always a close connection between women’s descriptive and substantive representation. Having more women in parliament does not necessarily imply a more gender-equal society. In nondemocratic settings, women legislators are often loyal

²See also Hughes and Paxton (2015) on transnational activism and gender quotas.

to the regime and vote accordingly, rather than independently advancing a women-focused agenda (Clayton and Zetterberg, 2021; Bush and Gao, 2017; Sater, 2007; Bjarnegård and Zetterberg, 2016; David and Nanes, 2011). This is not to say that women’s representation does not matter; certainly in democracies, but also in some dictatorships, there is evidence that over time a high proportion of female legislators is associated with policy outcomes on issues that women care about (Clayton and Zetterberg, 2018; Forman-Rabinovici and Sommer, 2019; Mechkova and Carlitz, 2021; Tripp, 2001; Bauer and Burnet, 2013). Yet, the relationship is quite context-dependent. For this reason, we employ different measures for women’s empowerment and treat legislative representation as a more symbolic signal of the government’s orientation toward women’s rights.

In sum, for donors, quota adoption and increased female legislative representation serve as information shortcuts. They send the message that gender targeting is “safe,” and even welcome, in that country. We therefore expect that *gender targeting increases as quota adoption and/or female legislative representation increases* (**Hypothesis 2**).

3.2 Regime Type

When accounting for the domestic political costs of gender targeting, perhaps the most basic distinction to consider is between democracies and nondemocracies. One might at first assume that—as with other rights-based agendas—democracies are more open to engaging with foreign donors on women’s rights. But it is not necessarily the case. Many autocracies are in fact world leaders in advancing *de jure* women’s rights.³ Indeed, one reason for the meteoric rise of gender equality as a favored policy goal of Western donors is precisely that it is less controversial in autocracies compared to other goals, such as electoral reform, that pose a more immediate threat to political survival. Yet, among autocracies, there is high

³The question of implementation and substantive outcomes is another matter, as autocracies may lag behind democracies on this score. See ?

variance in openness to women’s rights. For the cases like Rwanda that stake their modernizing reputations on female empowerment, there are also the cases like Iran, where suppressing women’s rights is at the very ideological core of the regime’s support coalition. For this reason, we anticipate that donors may make more careful assessments of domestic conditions in autocracies, seeking to avoid gender targeting in highly gender-repressive and/or retrograde contexts, while energetically promoting gender equality in the more progressive ones. When determining whether to employ gender targeting, *policy cues, such as gender quotas and women’s legislative representation, are relatively more important in autocracies than in democracies* (**Hypothesis 3**).

4 Research Design

To empirically investigate our set of hypotheses regarding the level to which donors prioritize gender equality in different recipient country contexts, we construct a panel data set utilizing data from the OECD’s Creditor Reporting System (CRS). CRS data is reported at the project level. For the purpose of our main analyses, we collapse the data to the donor-recipient-year level. This allows us to explain the variation in the percentage of aid commitments that target gender equality—by a given donor to a given recipient in a given year. The main analyses in the paper use all available data from 1998 until 2020, encompassing over 35K observations.

4.1 Outcome Variables: Aid Targeting Gender Equality

Our primary outcome variable is the *percentage of aid commitments* (in deflated US Dollars) where the Gender Equality Marker indicates that they either significantly or primarily target gender equality. In the appendix, we show additional models using the *percentage of aid activities* (a.k.a. projects) marked as targeting gender as the dependent variable.

Figure A4 in the appendix displays the distribution of both dependent variables used. A large number of observations are either fully targeting gender (close to 100% of aid commitments and projects marked as targeting gender equality) or targeting gender to a very limited degree (close to 0% of aid commitments and projects marked as targeting gender equality). However, variation still exists across the full range of the distribution in between. Figures A1 and A2 show that, while there has been a general increase in gender equality targeting of aid over time, there is considerable variation between recipient countries. Our analysis seeks to explain this variation.

4.2 Main Explanatory Variables

We argue that three key factors are important in explaining variation in the level of gender equality targeting in aid activities. These are the recipient country's performance on metrics of women's empowerment, policy cues relating to the recipient government's willingness to improve on gender equality, and recipient regime type. In the appendix, we also evaluate the importance of aid sectors and delivery channels.

To capture aid recipient's performance on metrics of women's empowerment, we look at indicators of women's legal protection, economic conditions, education and health. As indicator of women's legal protection we include the Women in Business and Law index (`WBL_Index`). The composite index is produced by the World Bank. It captures countries' legal protection of women in the areas of mobility, workplace, pay, marriage, parenthood, entrepreneurship, assets and pensions. The data is collected via expert surveys and observations can range from 0, indicating no legal protection for women to 100, indicating very high legal protection across all areas. Figure A4 shows the distribution of `WBL_Index`. Since the indicator focuses on women's legal protection as economic actors, it is also closely linked to women's economic empowerment. To capture economic empowerment more directly, a second model instead includes women's participation in the labour force relative to men

(Labour Force). Female enrollment in secondary and tertiary education relative to male enrollment (`FemaleEducation.Secondary`, `FemaleEducation.Tertiary`) are used as indicators of women’s inclusion in education. Lastly, we capture women’s health conditions with the maternal mortality rate (`Mat.Mortality`). The needs-based logic leads us to expect that donors target gender equality aid towards recipients who perform poorly on metrics of women’s empowerment and women’s rights protection: we would thus expect lower levels of `WBL.Index`, `Labour Force`, `FemaleEducation.Secondary`, `FemaleEducation.Tertiary`, and higher levels of `Mat.Mortality` to lead to an increased percentage of aid targeting gender equality. Alternatively, donors might target recipients who are already showing promise in their protection of women’s rights: in that case, higher levels of `WBL.Index`, `Labour Force`, `FemaleEducation.Secondary`, `FemaleEducation.Tertiary`, and lower levels of `Mat.Mortality` would be associated with higher percentages of aid targeting gender equality.

As policy cue donor’s may use to gauge a recipient country’s willingness to improve on gender equality and women’s rights we focus on the existence of parliamentary gender quota’s (`Gender Quota`) and women’s legislative representation (`Female_Seats`) in recipient countries. `Gender Quota` is provided by the QAROT dataset and indicates whether a country has adopted a gender quot for the elections to national legislatures. The distribution of this variable can be found in Figure A3. `Female_Seats` is the percentage of women-held seats in national parliaments and available from the World Bank. `Female_Seats` varies between 0 and 70% in our data set⁴.

A recipient country having adopted a national gender quota and having more female representation within the national parliament signals a willingness to allow advances in women’s empowerment. Donors may interpret this as an indication of a higher likelihood of gender equality targeted aid being effective in these recipients. We, therefore, expect both

⁴See Figure A4 in the appendix for the distribution.

quota adoption and an increase in the percentage of women-held parliamentary seats to positively correlate with the gender equality targeting of aid. However, we believe this effect to likely be greater in autocracies than in democracies, as the higher variance in openness to women’s rights in autocratic countries incentivizes donors to consider domestic conditions more carefully.

Therefore, we include a binary measure of regime type (**Democracy**) which takes the value 0 if the VDem data set classified the recipient as either a closed or electoral autocracy and the value 1 if the recipient is classified as an electoral or liberal democracy.⁵ We do not expect that autocratic regimes receive overall less gender-targeted aid. However, our theoretical expectation is that regime type qualifies both the relationship between policy cues and aid gender targeting and sectoral preferences regarding gender targeting.

Finally, the appendix includes additional analyses that factor in the aid sectors and channels of delivery. Using the sector classification of the CRS data, we categorize our observations into three broad sectors: Social Sector aid, Government and Democratization Aid, and Other. The Other category includes both Economic aid and all other and unclassified aid activities. We expect that, in autocracies, the percentages of aid targeted toward gender equality will be lower in the government and democratization sector, compared to democracies.

4.3 Main Model Specifications

We seek to explain the variation in aid targeting gender equality with a set of seven linear regressions at the donor-recipient-year level.⁶ In Model 1, we regress the outcome variable—i.e., the percentage of donor-recipient-year aid commitments marked as targeting gender

⁵As robustness check, the appendix also includes the results of an analysis which uses a dummy variable based on the polity V project’s polity2 variable as a binary measure of regime type.

⁶In the appendix, we conduct further robustness tests with different model specifications, including fractional logit models and split sample models which look at democracies and autocracies separately.

equality—on two key explanatory variables: our dichotomous measure recipient regime type (**Democracy**) and our dichotomous gender quota measure —i.e., the presence of a gender quota in national legislature elections (**Gender Quota**). The model also includes an interaction term of these two variables to investigate whether the effect of **Gender Quota** on the percentage of gender targeted aid differs between democracies and autocracies. Model 2 swaps out **Gender Quota** for the continuous measure of women’s legislative representation (**Female_Seats** and stays otherwise the same. Models 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 include one of the operationalized metrics of women’s empowerment instead of the policy cue variable. These metrics are also interacted with **Democracy**.

All seven models control for recipient aid dependence (aid/GDP); the importance of the given recipient to the given donor (aid from that donor to that recipient/total aid from that donor); a post-conflict dummy, indicating whether a recipient is in the five year period after a conflict recorded in the PRIO data set; and recipient economic development (log of GDP per capita). All seven models also include donor and year fixed effects; and cluster standard errors at the donor-recipient level.

5 Results

Table 1 reports the results of these seven main regression analyses. **Democracy** has a positive effect on gender targeting across nearly all models. This positive effect is statistically significant at the 5% level of lower in all but two of the models with our main specification. It is also robust to the changes of model specifications found in the secondary analyses in the appendix. On average, then, donors are more likely to attach gender-focused policy goals in democratic recipient states.

We find no consistent evidence of a direct relationship between a recipient country’s performance on metrics of women’s empowerment and gender targeting in aid giving. The

coefficients of `WBL_index`, `Labour Force` and `FemaleEducation_Tertiary` are weakly negative in the main specification models, as well as most additional analyses. They are however not statistically significant. `FemaleEducation_Secondary` consistently has a weakly positive effect on gender targeting which is also statistically insignificant in most model specifications. `Mat_Mortality` has a statistically significant positive effect on gender targeting that is robust to all changes in model specifications. This indicates that donors do respond to worse recipient performance on this metric of women’s health by allocating a larger amount of gender targeted aid. This finding is in line with our needs-based argument. However, the cumulative findings across different metrics of recipient’s performance on women’s empowerment metrics does not suggest that such are consistently used to allocate gender targeted aid where it is most needed as none of the other indicators of women’s legal protection, economic conditions and inclusion in education have a significant effect on gender targeting.

There seems to be more consistent evidence of an effect of policy cues on the gender targeting of aid. Both `Gender Quota` and `Female_Seats` have a positive effect on gender targeting. These effects are statistically significant at the 1% level in the main model specifications and remain statistically significant at at least the 5% level in most additional analyses. This strengthens our hypotheses that donor’s utilise information on women’s legislative representation and the legal commitment to improving on women’s representation to target gender equality aid towards recipients that display a willingness and openness to improve on women’s rights conditions.

These average effects mask considerable variation across regime type. Figure 1 maps how the effects of our various measures of gender equality differ across democracy and dictatorship. Overall, the picture that emerges is one in which donors are more sensitive to policy cues in dictatorships, but also tend to respond more to the “needs-based” logic (i.e., targeting gender where it is most needed) in democracies. Consider first the interaction terms between `Democracy` and `Gender Quota`. This policy cue has a much stronger in autocratic

regimes than in democratic regimes. The interaction term between **Democracy** and **Gender Quota** is negative and statistically significant across most model specifications. Removing the interaction term also greatly weakens the effect of **Gender Quota** on gender targeting. The visualisation of the marginal effects of **Gender Quota** in 1, as well as A6, A8, A7, A9, A10 and A11, all show that in democracies, a gender quota in national elections to the legislature has little effect on gender targeting of aid. In autocracies, however, a gender quota significantly increases the percentage of aid targeted towards gender equality. The interaction between regime type and the percentage of women-held parliamentary seats is somewhat less statistically significant but moves in the same direction. As Figure 1 illustrates, in both democracies and autocracies, an increase in the percentage of women-held seats increases the gender targeting of aid commitments. But this increase is greater in autocracies. Notably—and similar to the quota results—low-performing autocracies receive significantly less gender targeting whereas the high-performing autocracies are on par with democracies.

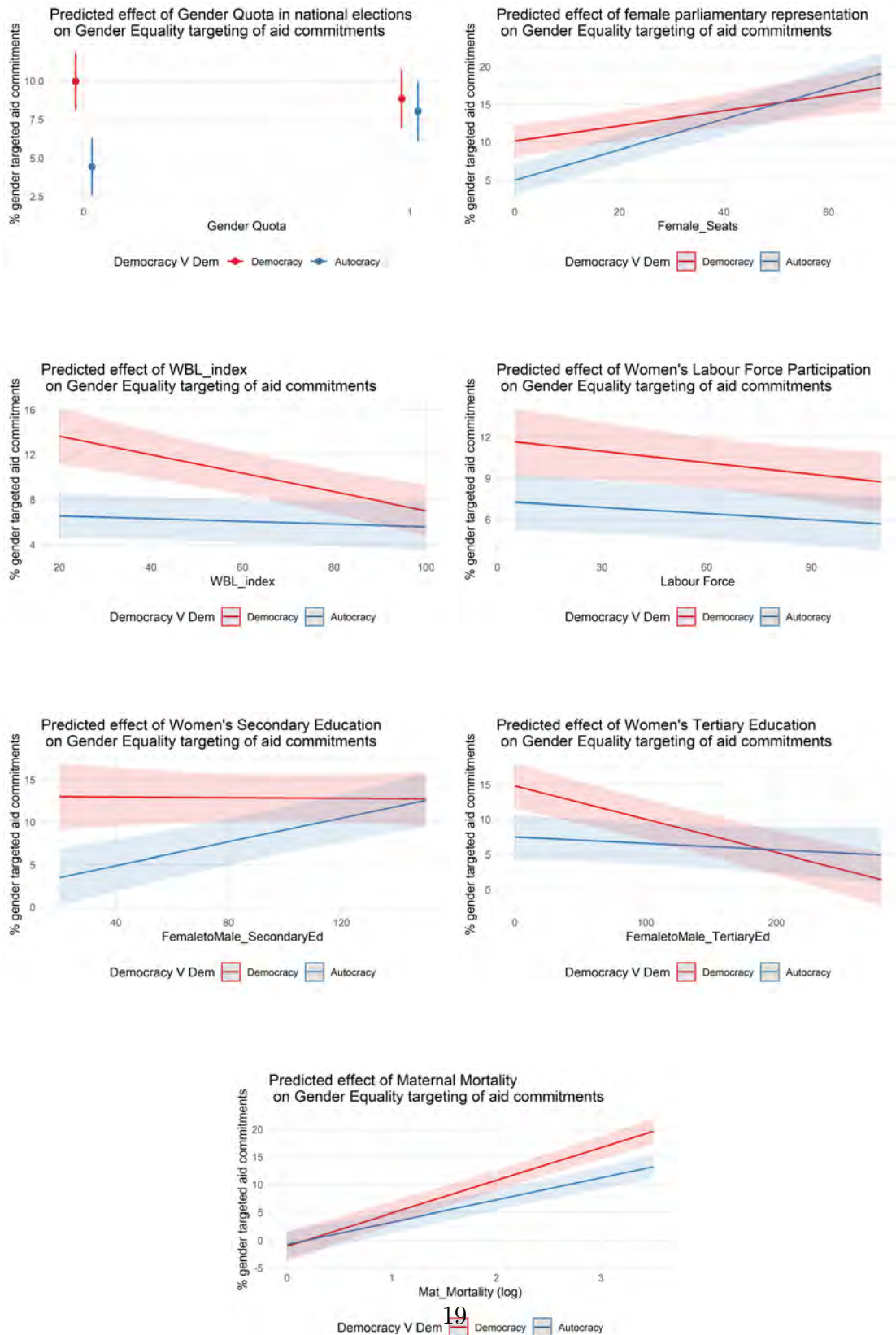
There is also indication that donors respond differently to performance on women’s empowerment metrics in autocratic and democratic recipients, though these results are less consistent. The interaction terms of models 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 tend to be weak and statistically insignificant. Examining marginal effects visually, however, reveals some interesting differences at high and low levels of female empowerment. The marginal effects visualisations in 1, A6, A8, A7, A9, A10 and A11 illustrate that the effects of these metrics of women’s empowerment tend to go in the same direction for democracies and autocracies. Yet, for the WBL index, women’s access to education, and maternal mortality rates, we see that low-performing dictatorships receive significantly *less* gender targeting than do higher-performing dictatorships.

Table 1: Determinants of Gender Targeting in Recipient Countries

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	% Gender targeted aid commitments						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Democracy	5.547*** (1.086)	5.112*** (1.160)	8.468* (3.106)	4.468 (2.872)	10.945** (3.390)	7.313** (2.170)	-0.339 (2.288)
Gender Quota	3.579** (1.075)						
Female_Seats		0.201*** (0.049)					
WBL_index			-0.012 (0.036)				
Labour Force				-0.015 (0.024)			
FemaleEducation_Secondary					0.070* (0.034)		
FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.009 (0.019)	
Mat_Mortality (log)							3.989** (1.352)
AidDependence	-0.246*** (0.060)	-0.272*** (0.066)	-0.207** (0.058)	-0.204** (0.060)	-0.153* (0.067)	-0.187* (0.078)	-0.202** (0.061)
DonorImportance	0.225 (0.152)	0.253 (0.181)	0.269 (0.181)	0.267 (0.181)	0.272 (0.212)	0.238 (0.228)	0.203 (0.159)
GDP per capita (log)	-5.033*** (0.892)	-5.230*** (0.944)	-4.917*** (0.876)	-5.238*** (0.945)	-5.872*** (0.985)	-5.248*** (0.912)	-3.328*** (0.877)
PostConflict_Dummy	-1.021 (0.889)	0.636 (0.827)	-0.395 (0.805)	-0.322 (0.847)	-0.226 (0.986)	0.102 (0.942)	-1.244 (0.877)
Democracy:Gender Quota	-4.728** (1.586)						
Democracy:Seats		-0.100 (0.061)					
Democracy:WBL_index			-0.070 (0.048)				
Democracy:Labour Force				-0.013 (0.037)			
Democracy:FemaleEducation_Secondary					-0.072* (0.034)		
Democracy:FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.038* (0.017)	
Democracy:Mat_Mortality (log)							1.933 [†] (1.084)
Donor FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clustered SE (Donor, Recipient)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	35,959	45,204	47,449	47,683	30,697	29,569	38,713
R ²	0.354	0.339	0.339	0.338	0.341	0.352	0.358
Adjusted R ²	0.353	0.338	0.338	0.337	0.339	0.350	0.357

Note: [†] $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 1: Visualizing Marginal Effects



In the appendix, analyses accounting for sectors and delivery-channel dynamics highlight that donors target greater proportion of their aid to gender equality (i) when operating in the social sector as well as the democratization and governance sector; and (ii) when bypassing the government and delivering via non-public channels.

6 Conclusion

Gender equality is a prominent goal of DAC donors, yet there has been little effort to systematically study the nuts and bolts of how this goal is implemented. Bearing in mind the distinction between conditionality and direct assistance as the means by which donors pursue their goals, we focus on the latter. Using data from the Gender Equality Policy Marker (GEPM), we explored how recipient-country politics shapes donors' decisions about when and how to incorporate gender equality as a goal of their projects. We showed preliminary evidence that variation in women's rights matters differently in democratic and autocratic recipients.

In particular, donors target a greater proportion of their aid to gender equality when operating in democratic recipients. Donors seem more careful about how they engage on women's rights with authoritarian regimes. Here, they are particularly responsive to policy cues signaling whether the regime is open to advancing women's rights. In autocracies with quotas and high female empowerment, donors target gender equality to a greater extent than they do in the absence of those cues. This accords with what we know about women's rights being a "safe" form of international democracy promotion in many authoritarian regimes, and it indicates that donors consider the degree of domestic cooperation and synergies when designing their programs. In contrast, donors shy away from gender targeting in autocracies that have not signalled openness to women's political representation.

A dimension of variation which we have not yet explored here is *donor-level* differences

in gender targeting. This is certainly a question worthy of further study. Related research shows, for example, that there is substantial variation among countries in compliance with the DAC requirement for gender *screening*—that is, the practice of reporting which assistance projects specify gender equality as a primary or secondary goal. We might expect that variation in donor institutions and governing party ideology matter for how assertively donors pursue gender equality. A complete theory of gender targeting would therefore combine donor- and recipient-level factors to understand not only where gender equality is emphasized in foreign assistance packages, but also by whom and via which channels.

While we do not explore the effectiveness of gender targeting, our findings may help shed light this question (about which prior research is inconclusive). Our results suggest that donors avoid prioritizing gender equality in the “hardest,” more intransigent cases—that is, in authoritarian regimes with low female representation. Rather, they look for evidence of the domestic acceptability of their goals and choose to engage on gender-related issues more in cases where they can build synergies with domestic actors—not only governments but also civil society.

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Appendix

A1 Descriptive Statistics and Figures

Table A1: Summary Statistics for Data at the Donor-Recipient-Year Level, Full Sample

	n	mean	sd	median	min	max	skew	kurtosis	se
% Gender targeted commitments	49,403	28.189	35.964	6.041	0	100	0.935	-0.692	0.162
% primarily Gender targeted commitments	49,403	3.929	12.929	0	0	100	4.876	26.823	0.058
% Gender targeted projects	51,626	25.215	29.910	13.333	0	100	1.116	0.170	0.132
% primarily Gender targeted projects	51,626	4.216	10.348	0	0	100	5.020	34.611	0.046
Democracy	51,626	0.405	0.491	0	0	1	0.387	-1.850	0.002
Polity2_dummy	45,268	0.463	0.499	0	0	1	0.149	-1.978	0.002
Female_Seats	48,798	17.639	11.137	15.455	0	63.750	0.960	0.959	0.050
Gender Quota	39,061	0.382	0.486	0	0	1	0.486	-1.764	0.002
WBL_index	50,581	63.811	16.136	66.300	23.800	96.900	-0.516	-0.398	0.072
Labour Force	51,626	68.480	22.363	72.987	8.999	107.482	-0.668	-0.434	0.098
FemaleEducation_Secondary	32,931	94.058	17.581	98.963	0	145.266	-1.090	1.710	0.097
FemaleEducation_Tertiary	31,722	98.600	40.860	101.520	6.442	267.896	0.143	-0.313	0.229
Mat_Mortality	41,888	298.961	326.513	162	2	2,480	1.568	3.035	1.595
Mat_Mortality (log)	41,888	2.153	0.595	2.210	0.301	3.394	-0.297	-0.883	0.003
PostConflict	51,626	0.194	0.395	0	0	1	1.548	0.395	0.002
Aid Dependence	49,907	3.914	6.308	1.902	0	65.092	4.015	22.132	0.028
Donor Importance	51,540	1.079	3.129	0.174	0	100	9.790	163.208	0.014
GDP per capita	49,808	3,215.177	3,357.103	1,862.424	108.066	25,061.260	1.800	3.788	15.042
GDP per capita (log)	49,808	7.534	1.098	7.530	4.683	10.129	-0.090	-0.869	0.005

Table A2: Summary Statistics for Data at the Recipient-Year Level

	n	mean	sd	median	min	max	skew	kurtosis	se
% Gender targeted commitments	2,766	23.249	19.430	18.355	0	97.791	0.913	0.281	0.369
% primarily Gender targeted commitments	2,766	2.526	4.472	0.958	0	91.809	6.713	89.376	0.085
% Gender targeted projects	2,771	20.934	12.832	19.814	0	63.158	0.368	-0.625	0.244
% primarily Gender targeted projects	2,771	3.664	3.024	2.938	0	25.145	1.534	4.088	0.057
Democracy	2,771	0.405	0.491	0	0	1	0.389	-1.850	0.009
Polity2_dummy	2,389	0.447	0.497	0	0	1	0.211	-1.956	0.010
Female_Seats	2,583	16.881	10.908	14.865	0	63.750	0.985	1.051	0.215
Gender Quota	2,124	0.347	0.476	0	0	1	0.642	-1.588	0.010
WBL_index	2,702	62.981	16.151	64.400	23.800	96.900	-0.465	-0.423	0.311
Labour Force	2,771	68.132	22.033	71.873	8.999	107.482	-0.641	-0.429	0.419
FemaleEducation_Secondary	1,733	94.267	18.214	99.186	0	145.266	-1.062	1.649	0.438
FemaleEducation_Tertiary	1,634	99.575	42.443	101.873	6.442	267.896	0.204	-0.191	1.050
Mat_Mortality	2,171	296.865	327.184	160	2	2,480	1.601	3.171	7.022
Mat_Mortality (log)	2,171	2.149	0.594	2.204	0.301	3.394	-0.274	-0.911	0.013
PostConflict	2,771	0.186	0.389	0	0	1	1.611	0.596	0.007
Aid Dependence	2,670	3.625	5.998	1.694	0	65.092	4.209	24.984	0.116
GDP per capita	2,664	3,325.698	3,540.199	1,914.124	108.066	25,061.260	1.835	3.940	68.590
GDP per capita (log)	2,664	3.278	0.486	3.282	2.034	4.399	-0.088	-0.877	0.009

Table A3: Summary Statistics for Data at the Donor-Recipient-Sector-Year Level

	n	mean	sd	median	min	max	skew	kurtosis	se
% Gender targeted commitments	130,781	28.091	39.267	0	0	100	0.956	-0.829	0.109
% primarily Gender targeted commitments	130,781	4.800	17.286	0	0	100	4.300	18.444	0.048
% Gender targeted projects	148,159	25.613	33.855	4.706	0	100	1.095	-0.190	0.088
% primarily Gender targeted projects	148,159	4.777	14.426	0	0	100	4.495	23.049	0.037
Democracy	148,159	0.408	0.491	0	0	1	0.375	-1.859	0.001
Polity2_dummy	129,126	0.471	0.499	0	0	1	0.116	-1.987	0.001
Female_Seats	140,219	17.906	11.182	15.833	0	63.750	0.935	0.882	0.030
Gender Quota	112,842	0.394	0.489	0	0	1	0.432	-1.813	0.001
WBL_index	145,608	63.893	16.035	66.300	23.800	96.900	-0.527	-0.366	0.042
Labour Force	148,159	68.580	22.541	73.147	8.999	107.482	-0.651	-0.493	0.059
FemaleEducation_Secondary	95,580	93.665	17.520	98.586	0	145.266	-1.080	1.596	0.057
FemaleEducation_Tertiary	91,878	97.084	40.161	99.379	6.442	267.896	0.144	-0.388	0.132
Mat_Mortality	121,205	302.636	323.130	171	2	2,480	1.517	2.839	0.928
Mat_Mortality (log)	121,205	2.168	0.588	2.233	0.301	3.394	-0.327	-0.871	0.002
Sector	147,942	0.743	0.804	1	0	2	0.496	-1.283	0.002
PostConflict	148,159	0.204	0.403	0	0	1	1.470	0.162	0.001
Aid Dependence	143,748	4.087	6.540	1.996	0	65.092	3.936	20.831	0.017
Donor Importance	148,040	1.352	3.428	0.304	0	100	8.504	122.754	0.009
GDP per capita	143,532	3,030.576	3,181.688	1,728.147	108.066	25,061.260	1.853	4.054	8.398
GDP per capita (log)	143,532	3.250	0.470	3.238	2.034	4.399	-0.058	-0.845	0.001

Table A4: Summary Statistics for Data at the Donor-Recipient-Channel-Year Level

	n	mean	sd	median	min	max	skew	kurtosis	se
% Gender targeted commitments	73,816	27.507	37.077	1.965	0	100	0.984	-0.668	0.136
% primarily Gender targeted commitments	73,816	3.825	13.635	0	0	100	4.955	26.817	0.050
% Gender targeted projects	81,413	24.926	31.346	10	0	100	1.134	0.091	0.110
% primarily Gender targeted projects	81,413	3.983	11.074	0	0	100	5.165	34.624	0.039
Democracy	81,413	0.409	0.492	0	0	1	0.372	-1.862	0.002
Polity2_dummy	71,158	0.475	0.499	0	0	1	0.099	-1.990	0.002
Female_Seats	77,766	18.259	11.225	16	0	63.750	0.918	0.831	0.040
Gender Quota	60,833	0.406	0.491	0	0	1	0.382	-1.854	0.002
WBL_index	79,874	64.756	15.985	67.500	23.800	96.900	-0.572	-0.318	0.057
Labour Force	81,413	68.735	22.223	73.221	8.999	107.482	-0.681	-0.416	0.078
FemaleEducation_Secondary	52,314	94.640	16.661	99.099	0	145.266	-1.088	1.836	0.073
FemaleEducation_Tertiary	51,277	99.263	39.931	101.670	6.442	267.896	0.136	-0.318	0.176
Mat_Mortality	67,611	285.844	311.408	160	2	2,480	1.581	3.067	1.198
Mat_Mortality (log)	67,611	2.138	0.590	2.204	0.301	3.394	-0.299	-0.871	0.002
Bypass Channel	62,799	0.542	0.498	1	0	1	-0.171	-1.971	0.002
PostConflict	81,413	0.194	0.396	0	0	1	1.545	0.387	0.001
Aid Dependence	78,888	3.792	6.059	1.899	0	65.092	4.086	23.329	0.022
Donor Importance	81,309	1.200	3.345	0.217	0	100	9.338	145.512	0.012
GDP per capita	78,773	3,298.089	3,338.497	2,008.404	108.066	25,061.260	1.755	3.629	11.895
GDP per capita (log)	78,773	3.295	0.465	3.303	2.034	4.399	-0.118	-0.850	0.002

Figure A1: Use of the GEPM Over Time

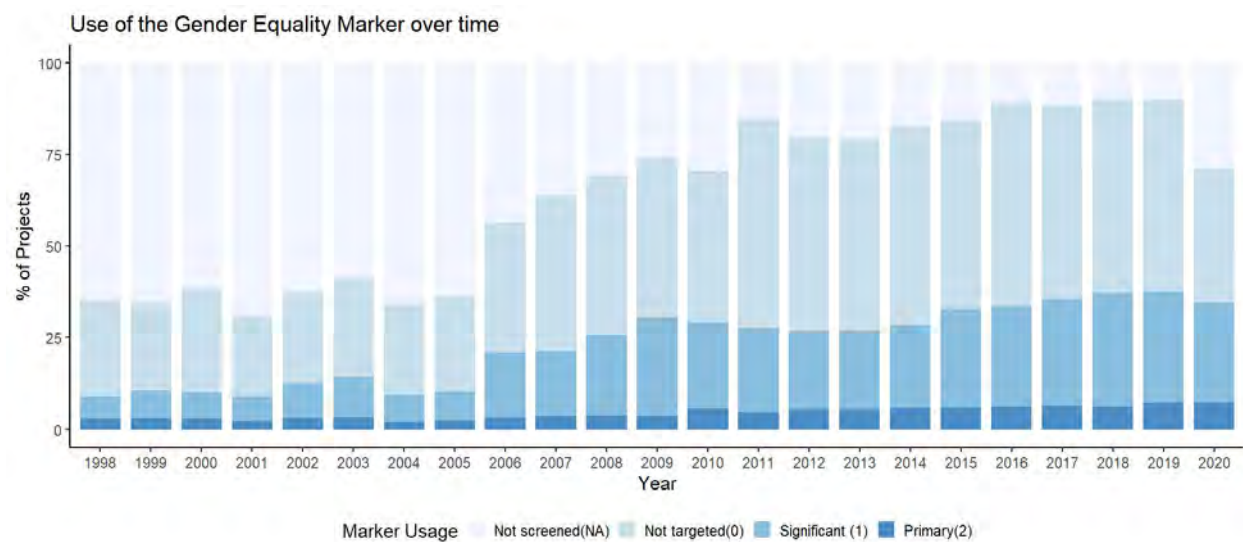


Figure A2: Use of the GEPM for Top and Bottom Recipients of Gender-Targeted Aid

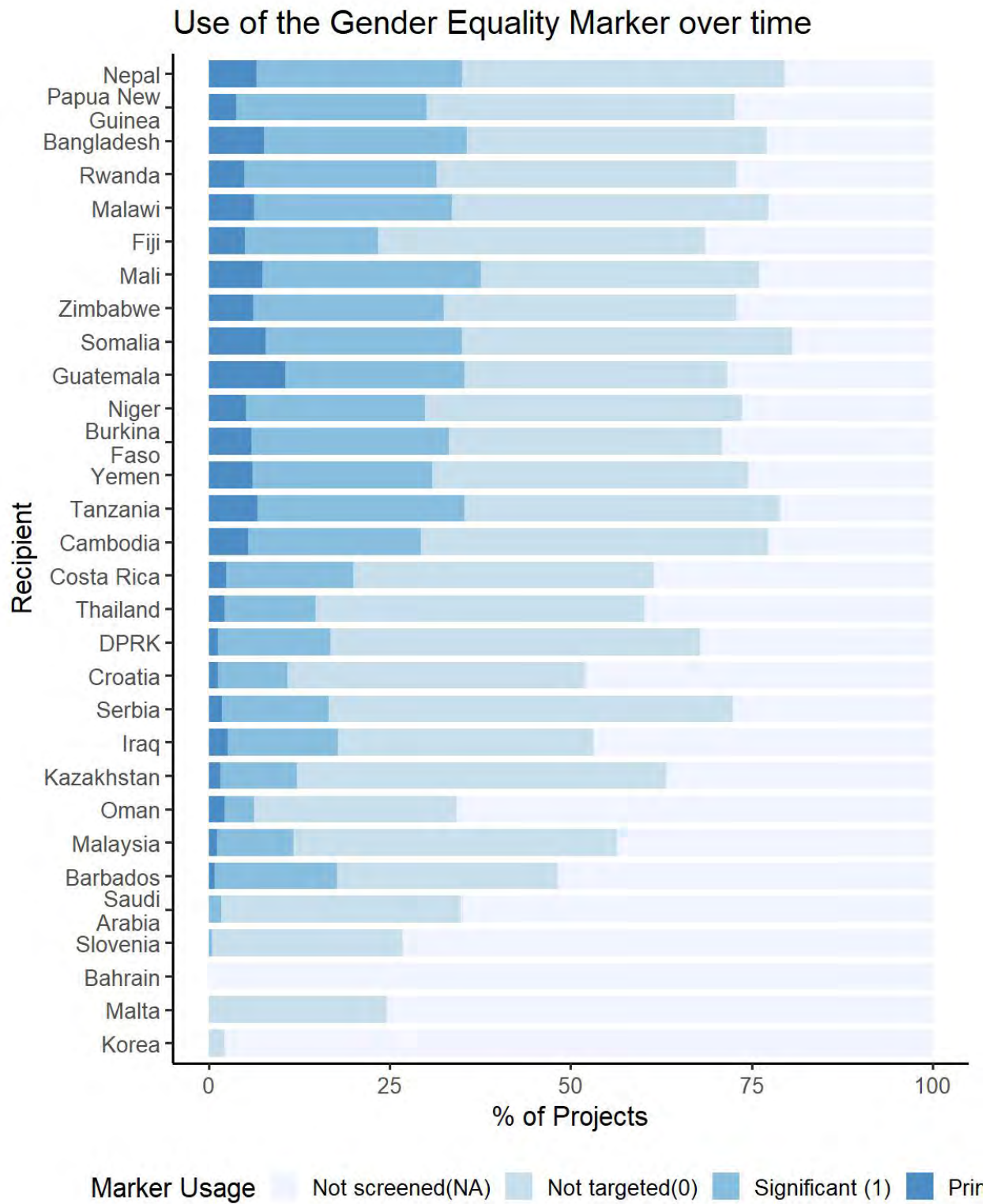


Figure A3: Distribution of Categorical Variables

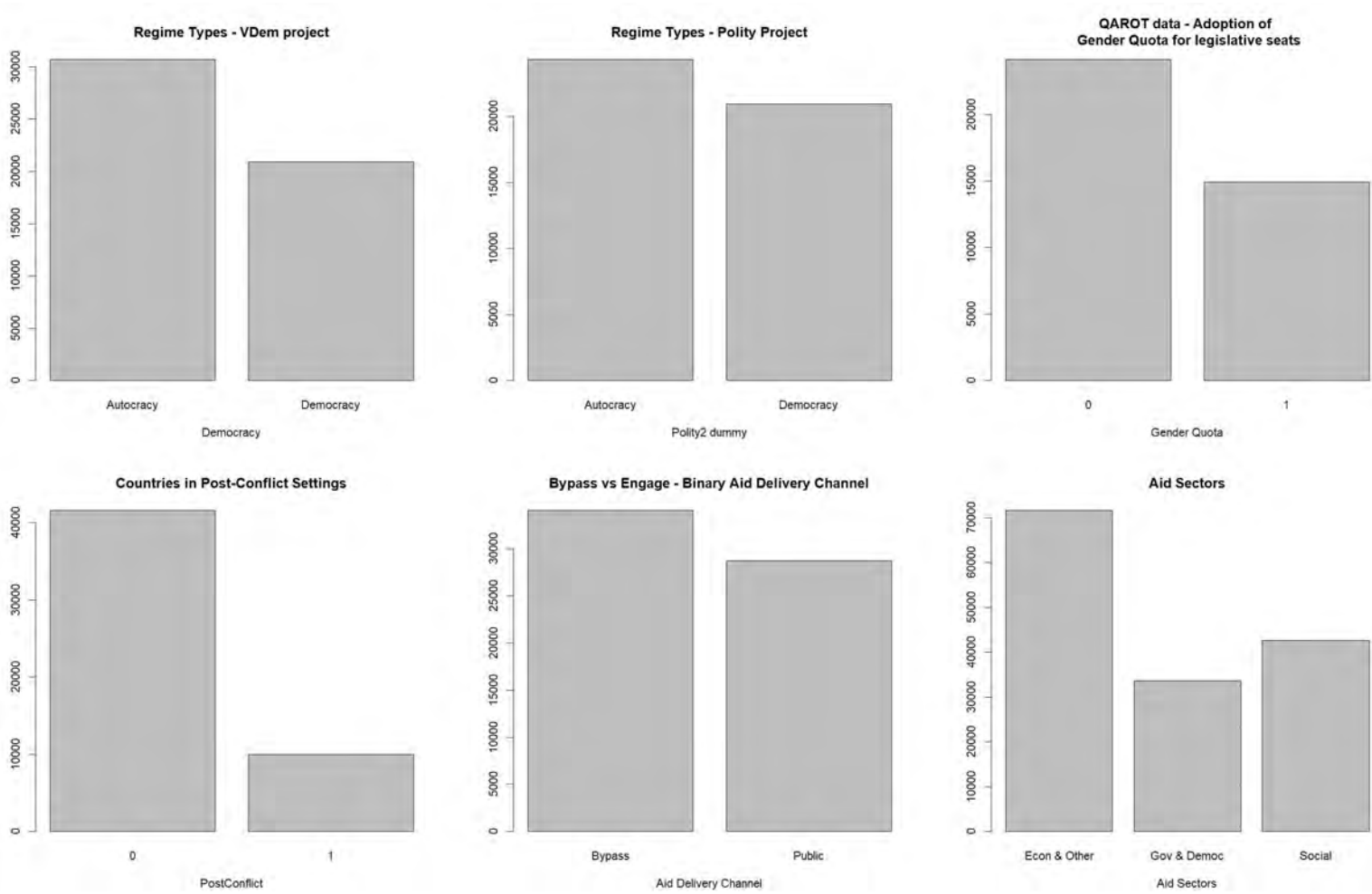
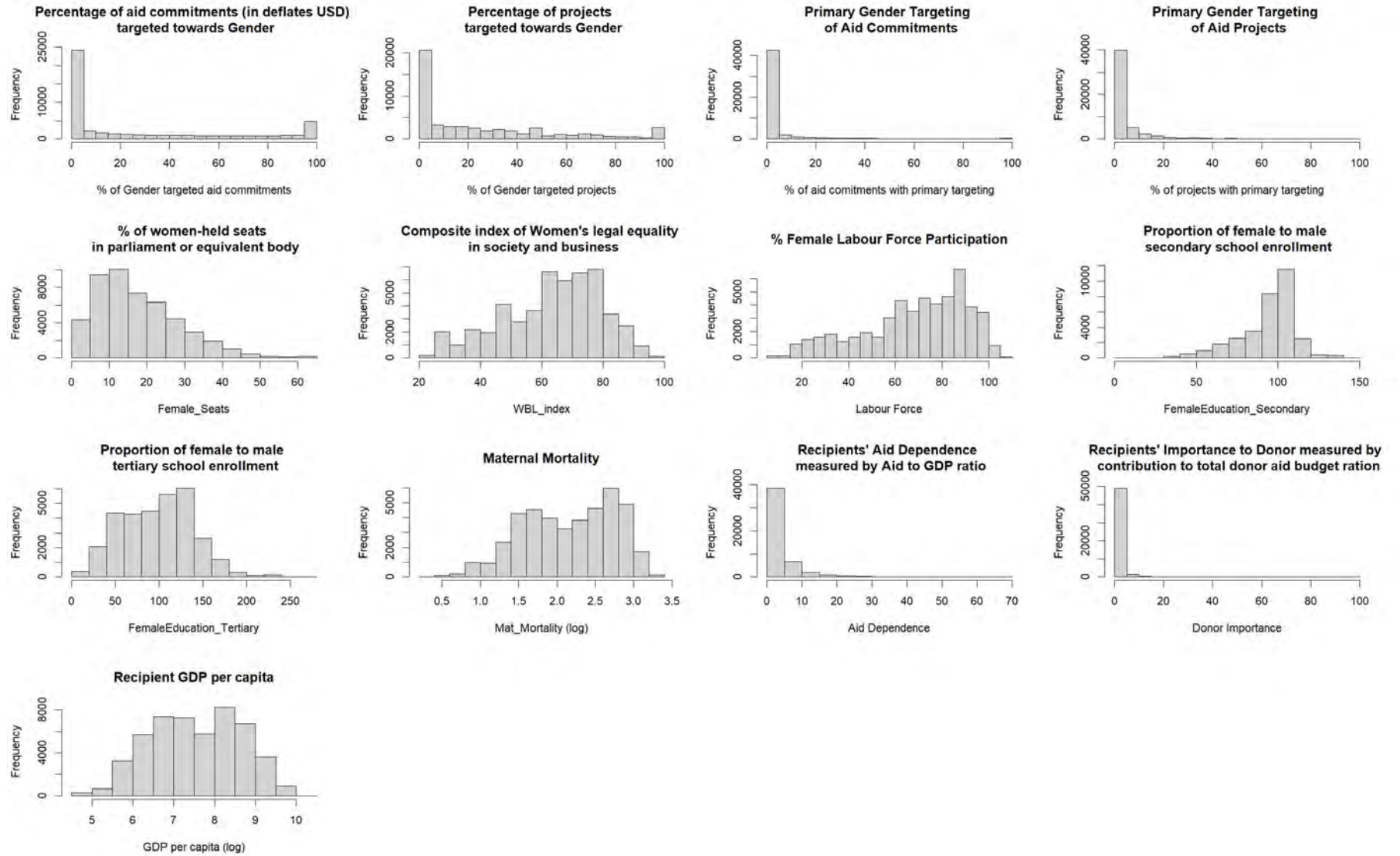


Figure A4: Histograms



A2 Alternative Model Specifications

Table A5: Determinants of Gender Targeting in Recipient Countries - Models without interaction terms

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	% Gender targeted aid commitments						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Democracy	3.785*** (0.964)	3.401** (0.977)	3.753*** (0.950)	3.571*** (0.974)	4.103** (1.211)	3.448** (1.129)	3.777*** (0.921)
Gender Quota	1.471 [†] (0.863)						
Female_Seats		0.161*** (0.043)					
WBL_index			-0.029 (0.035)				
Labour Force				-0.018 (0.024)			
FemaleEducation_Secondary					0.044 (0.035)		
FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.030* (0.014)	
Mat_Mortality (log)							4.608** (1.326)
AidDependence	-0.235*** (0.063)	-0.270*** (0.064)	-0.211** (0.059)	-0.206** (0.058)	-0.175* (0.064)	-0.206* (0.077)	-0.208** (0.061)
DonorImportance	0.229 (0.154)	0.261 (0.181)	0.270 (0.181)	0.267 (0.181)	0.274 (0.212)	0.241 (0.229)	0.201 (0.159)
GDP per capita (log)	-5.148*** (0.894)	-5.318*** (0.933)	-5.036*** (0.879)	-5.231*** (0.942)	-5.953*** (0.988)	-5.168*** (0.900)	-3.420*** (0.877)
PostConflict_Dummy	-1.016 (0.900)	0.667 (0.821)	-0.309 (0.800)	-0.289 (0.833)	-0.175 (0.988)	0.230 (0.926)	-1.262 (0.875)
Donor FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clustered SE (Donor, Recipient)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	35,959	45,204	47,449	47,683	30,697	29,569	38,713
R ²	0.353	0.339	0.339	0.338	0.340	0.351	0.358
Adjusted R ²	0.352	0.338	0.338	0.337	0.339	0.350	0.357

Note:

[†] $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table A6: Determinants of Gender Targeting in Recipient Countries - Analysis with % of Projects as Dependent Var

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	% Gender targeted projects						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Democracy	3.380*** (0.790)	2.919** (0.977)	2.937 (2.769)	3.236 (2.412)	5.051* (2.151)	5.163** (1.505)	1.697 (1.746)
Gender Quota	2.240* (0.854)						
Female_Seats		0.111* (0.042)					
WBL_index			-0.029 (0.028)				
Labour Force				-0.015 (0.017)			
FemaleEducation_Secondary					0.021 (0.025)		
FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.020 (0.014)	
Mat_Mortality (log)							4.171*** (0.992)
AidDependence	-0.091* (0.040)	-0.124** (0.042)	-0.086* (0.037)	-0.080* (0.038)	-0.038 (0.048)	-0.092 (0.061)	-0.083* (0.037)
GDP per capita (log)	-3.569*** (0.610)	-4.079*** (0.687)	-3.843*** (0.636)	-4.026*** (0.680)	-4.243*** (0.733)	-3.893*** (0.708)	-2.166*** (0.573)
PostConflict_Dummy	-0.194 (0.725)	0.738 (0.699)	0.080 (0.647)	0.093 (0.670)	0.182 (0.788)	0.491 (0.735)	-0.495 (0.661)
Democracy:Gender Quota	-2.440† (1.261)						
Democracy:Female_Seats		-0.019 (0.053)					
Democracy:WBL_index			-0.001 (0.042)				
Democracy:Labour Force				-0.008 (0.031)			
Democracy:FemaleEducation_Secondary					-0.018 (0.022)		
Democracy:FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.020 (0.013)	
Democracy:Mat_Mortality (log)							0.405 (0.734)
Donor FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clustered SE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	37,539	47,136	49,465	49,723	31,990	30,782	40,391
R ²	0.469	0.464	0.463	0.462	0.466	0.476	0.479
Adjusted R ²	0.468	0.463	0.463	0.462	0.465	0.475	0.478

Note:

† $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Figure A6: Visualizing Marginal Effects - With % of Projects as Dependent Variable

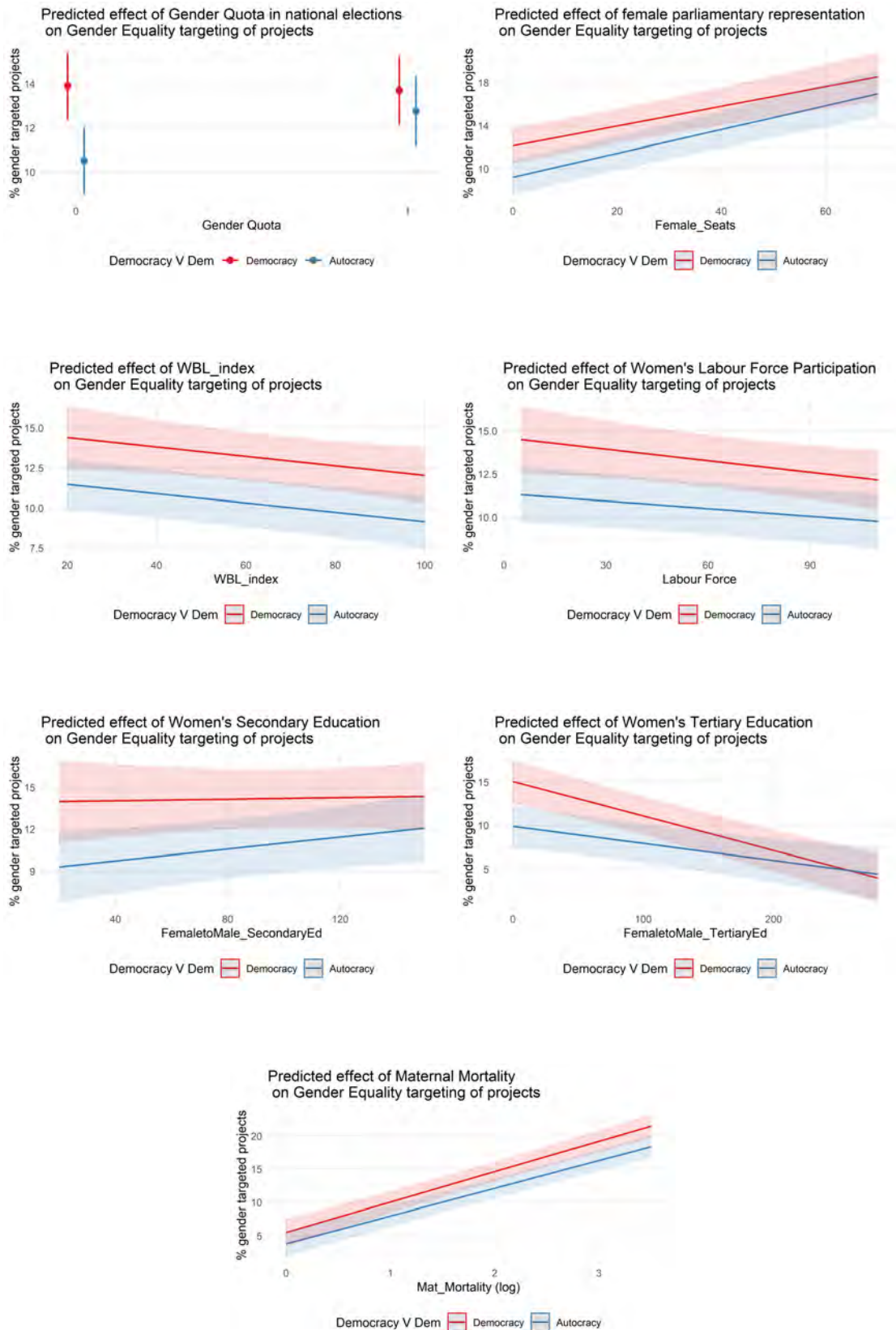


Table A7: Determinants of Gender Targeting in Recipient Countries - Analysis with % of Projects as Dependent Var - Without Interactions

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	% Gender targeted projects						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Democracy	2.474** (0.726)	2.593** (0.777)	2.896*** (0.751)	2.693** (0.770)	3.286** (0.935)	3.145*** (0.855)	2.560** (0.707)
Gender Quota	1.142 [†] (0.662)						
Female_Seats		0.103** (0.034)					
WBL_index			-0.029 (0.028)				
Labour Force				-0.016 (0.018)			
FemaleEducation_Secondary					0.015 (0.027)		
FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.031** (0.011)	
Mat_Mortality (log)							4.300*** (0.939)
AidDependence	-0.085* (0.041)	-0.124** (0.041)	-0.086* (0.037)	-0.081* (0.038)	-0.043 (0.048)	-0.102 (0.061)	-0.084* (0.037)
GDP per capita (log)	-3.627*** (0.609)	-4.096*** (0.677)	-3.844*** (0.638)	-4.022*** (0.677)	-4.263*** (0.730)	-3.848*** (0.700)	-2.186*** (0.571)
PostConflict_Dummy	-0.189 (0.729)	0.744 (0.695)	0.081 (0.651)	0.112 (0.667)	0.196 (0.787)	0.556 (0.724)	-0.499 (0.659)
Donor FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clustered SE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	37,539	47,136	49,465	49,723	31,990	30,782	40,391
R ²	0.468	0.464	0.463	0.462	0.466	0.476	0.479
Adjusted R ²	0.468	0.463	0.463	0.462	0.465	0.475	0.478

Note: [†] $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table A8: Determinants of Gender Targeting in Recipient Countries - Models using polity2 democracy dummy

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	% Gender targeted aid commitments						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
polity2 Democracy Dummy	4.543*** (1.158)	4.292*** (1.144)	5.347 (3.244)	6.319* (2.672)	7.476† (3.811)	5.090* (1.953)	0.003 (2.462)
Gender Quota	3.711** (1.277)						
Female.Seats		0.204*** (0.048)					
WBL_index			0.003 (0.037)				
Labour Force				0.003 (0.026)			
FemaleEducation.Secondary					0.047 (0.039)		
FemaleEducation.Tertiary						-0.027 (0.018)	
Mat.Mortality (log)							4.284** (1.414)
AidDependence	-0.213** (0.074)	-0.249** (0.074)	-0.181* (0.073)	-0.172* (0.078)	-0.158† (0.091)	-0.158 (0.098)	-0.192* (0.078)
DonorImportance	0.358* (0.158)	0.299 (0.177)	0.325† (0.180)	0.320† (0.180)	0.317 (0.202)	0.301 (0.228)	0.286† (0.166)
GDP per capita (log)	-4.638*** (0.900)	-4.953*** (0.960)	-4.647*** (0.895)	-4.825*** (0.958)	-5.404*** (1.016)	-4.641*** (0.938)	-2.887** (0.890)
PostConflict.Dummy	-0.597 (0.951)	0.286 (0.838)	-0.569 (0.874)	-0.714 (0.940)	-0.336 (1.033)	-0.010 (0.960)	-0.991 (0.929)
polity2 Democracy Dummy:Gender Quota	-3.457† (1.739)						
polity2 Democracy Dummy:Seats		-0.070 (0.065)					
polity2 Democracy Dummy:WBL_index			-0.029 (0.049)				
polity2 Democracy Dummy:Labour Force				-0.041 (0.037)			
polity2 Democracy Dummy:FemaleEducation.Secondary					-0.044 (0.040)		
polity2 Democracy Dummy:FemaleEducation.Tertiary						-0.016 (0.017)	
polity2 Democracy Dummy:Mat.Mortality (log)							1.702 (1.176)
Donor FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clustered SE (Donor, Recipient)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	33,851	39,624	41,488	41,706	27,593	26,018	36,307
R ²	0.353	0.349	0.347	0.347	0.348	0.361	0.357
Adjusted R ²	0.352	0.348	0.346	0.346	0.347	0.360	0.356

Note:

† $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Figure A7: Visualizing Marginal Effects - Polity2 Democracy Dummy Interactions

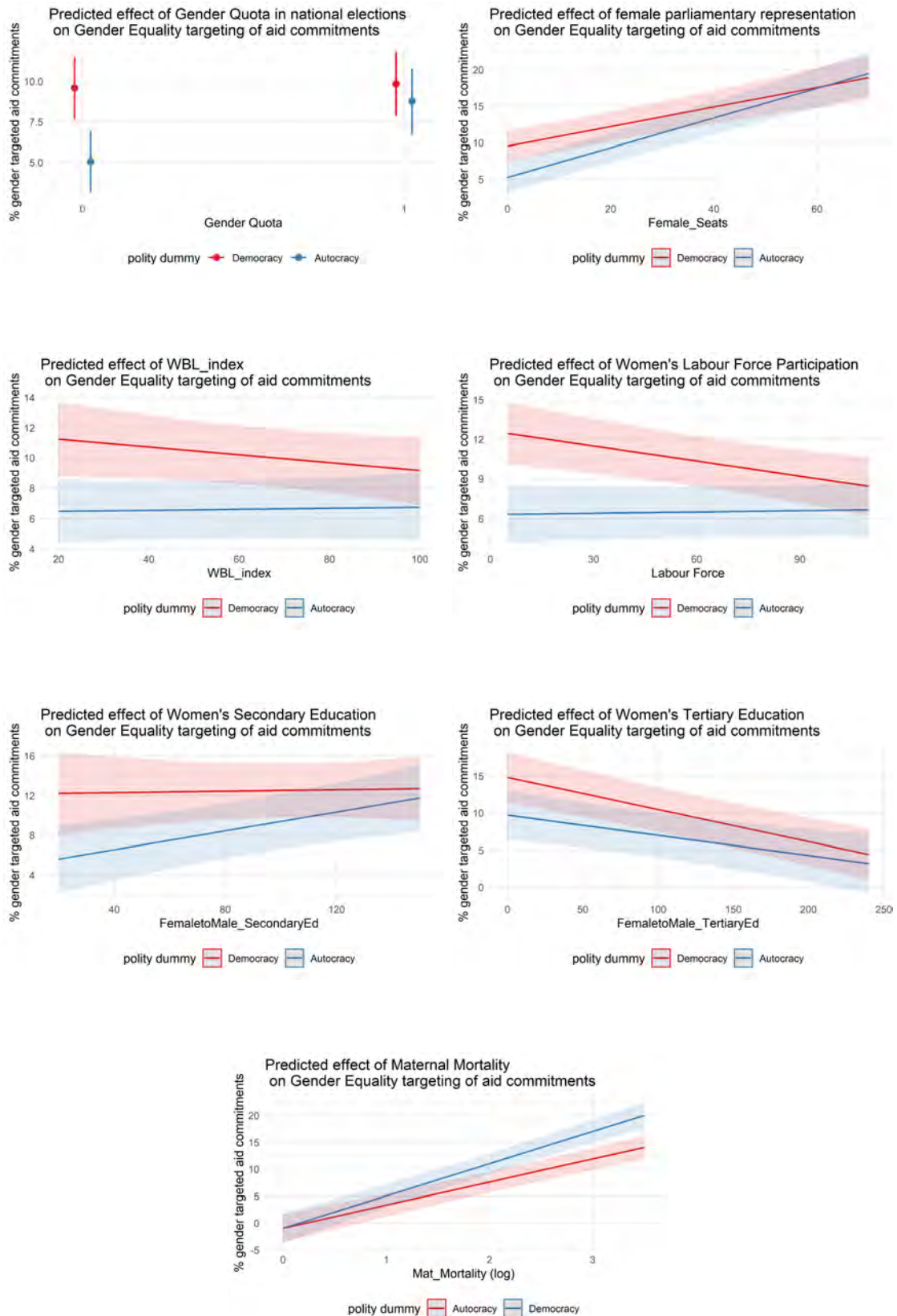


Table A9: Determinants of Gender Targeting in Recipient Countries - Models using polity2 democracy dummy without interaction terms

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	% Gender targeted aid commitments						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
polity2 Democracy Dummy	3.261** (1.001)	3.135** (0.918)	3.445** (0.949)	3.454** (0.951)	3.334** (1.075)	3.545** (1.070)	3.680*** (0.960)
Gender Quota	1.950* (0.871)						
Female_Seats		0.172*** (0.043)					
WBL_index			-0.007 (0.038)				
Labour Force				-0.009 (0.024)			
FemaleEducation_Secondary					0.031 (0.038)		
FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.036* (0.014)	
Mat_Mortality (log)							4.902** (1.401)
AidDependence	-0.218** (0.075)	-0.249** (0.072)	-0.183* (0.074)	-0.179* (0.075)	-0.162 [†] (0.090)	-0.166 (0.100)	-0.196* (0.079)
DonorImportance	0.363* (0.159)	0.305 [†] (0.178)	0.326 [†] (0.180)	0.326 [†] (0.180)	0.317 (0.202)	0.302 (0.228)	0.284 [†] (0.165)
GDP per capita (log)	-4.694*** (0.902)	-4.997*** (0.961)	-4.699*** (0.913)	-4.799*** (0.956)	-5.429*** (1.018)	-4.609*** (0.932)	-2.986** (0.893)
PostConflict_Dummy	-0.706 (0.944)	0.277 (0.832)	-0.540 (0.880)	-0.556 (0.904)	-0.330 (1.029)	0.049 (0.957)	-1.028 (0.919)
Donor FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clustered SE (Donor, Recipient)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	33,851	39,624	41,488	41,706	27,593	26,018	36,307
R ²	0.352	0.349	0.347	0.347	0.348	0.361	0.357
Adjusted R ²	0.351	0.348	0.346	0.346	0.346	0.360	0.356

Note:

[†] $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table A10: Determinants of Gender Targeting in Recipient Countries - Analysis on Recipient-Year Level

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	% Gender targeted aid commitments						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Democracy	6.219*** (1.332)	7.265*** (1.778)	13.378** (4.898)	4.628 (4.181)	11.881* (5.722)	9.390** (3.407)	-2.143 (3.391)
Gender Quota	2.924 (1.968)						
Female_Seats		0.238*** (0.069)					
WBL_index			-0.015 (0.048)				
Labour Force				-0.012 (0.038)			
FemaleEducation_Secondary					0.102† (0.055)		
FemaleEducation_Tertiary						0.010 (0.038)	
Mat_Mortality (log)							4.737** (1.595)
AidDependence	-0.487*** (0.101)	-0.509*** (0.116)	-0.424*** (0.107)	-0.414*** (0.112)	-0.391** (0.127)	-0.510*** (0.118)	-0.379*** (0.105)
GDP per capita (log)	-13.332*** (1.588)	-14.995*** (1.636)	-14.108*** (1.571)	-14.849*** (1.711)	-18.268*** (1.704)	-17.075*** (1.788)	-8.844*** (2.052)
PostConflict_Dummy	-1.229 (1.108)	0.482 (1.100)	-0.576 (1.093)	-0.303 (1.165)	-0.610 (1.121)	1.048 (1.404)	-2.281* (1.141)
Democracy:Gender Quota	-5.554* (2.320)						
Democracy:Female_Seats		-0.224* (0.101)					
Democracy:WBL_index			-0.139† (0.077)				
Democracy:Labour Force				-0.015 (0.058)			
Democracy:FemaleEducation_Secondary					-0.078 (0.062)		
Democracy:FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.052 (0.036)	
Democracy:Mat_Mortality (log)							2.774† (1.619)
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clustered SE (Recipient)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,039	2,492	2,637	2,660	1,681	1,582	2,089
R ²	0.316	0.393	0.400	0.397	0.412	0.416	0.355
Adjusted R ²	0.308	0.386	0.394	0.390	0.403	0.405	0.348

Note: † $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Figure A8: Visualizing Marginal Effects - On Recipient-Year Level

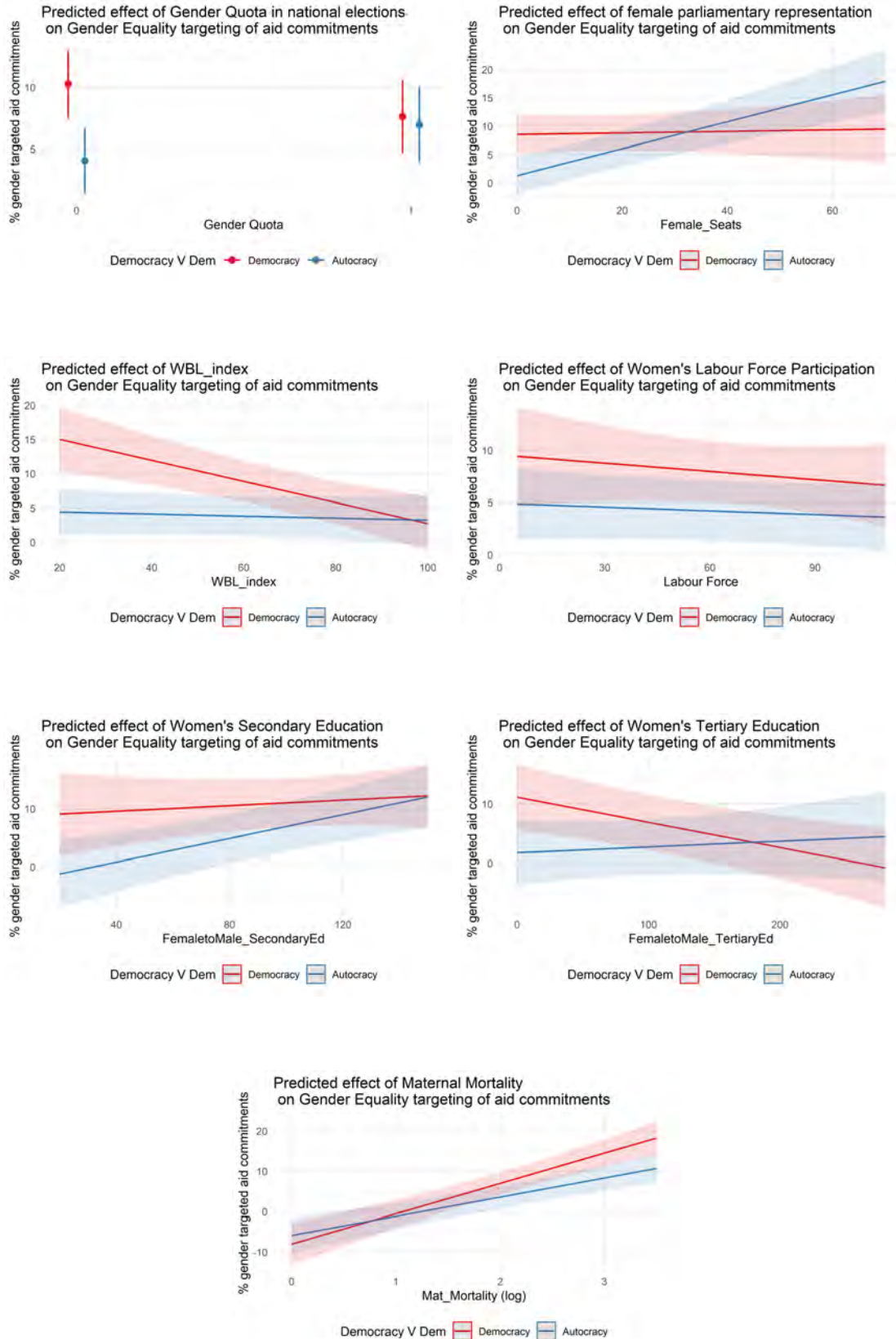


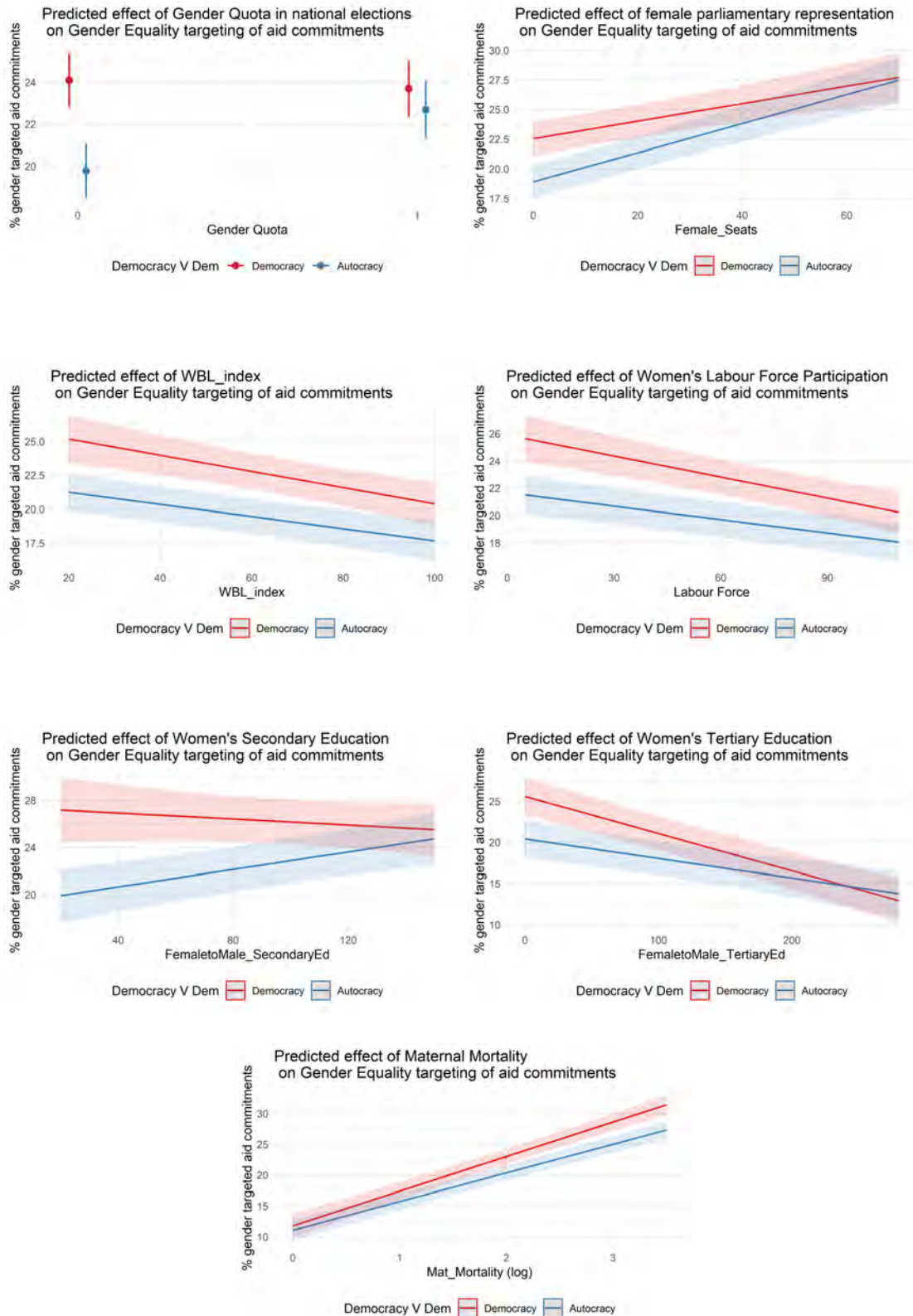
Table A11: Determinants of Gender Targeting in Recipient Countries - Sector Dynamics

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	% Gender targeted aid commitments						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Democracy	4.460*** (0.958)	3.678** (1.021)	4.417 (2.815)	4.379 (2.650)	8.125* (3.180)	5.458** (1.672)	0.887 (2.150)
Gender Quota	2.920** (0.877)						
Female_Seats		0.123** (0.042)					
WBL_index			-0.045 (0.029)				
Labour Force				-0.033 [†] (0.019)			
FemaleEducation_Secondary					0.037 (0.029)		
FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.024 (0.016)	
Mat_Mortality (log)							4.635*** (1.049)
Social	11.693*** (2.078)	11.284*** (2.189)	11.479*** (2.133)	11.466*** (2.149)	11.571*** (2.212)	11.415*** (2.289)	11.703*** (2.250)
Government_Democ	11.993*** (2.281)	13.014*** (2.173)	13.096*** (2.122)	13.037*** (2.133)	12.765*** (2.202)	13.718*** (2.303)	12.623*** (2.234)
AidDependence	-0.201*** (0.048)	-0.211*** (0.054)	-0.176*** (0.043)	-0.169** (0.048)	-0.159** (0.047)	-0.180** (0.058)	-0.166*** (0.045)
GDP per capita (log)	-11.755*** (1.678)	-12.348*** (1.732)	-11.910*** (1.636)	-12.928*** (1.729)	-13.166*** (1.773)	-12.072*** (1.717)	-7.520*** (1.492)
PostConflict_Dummy	-0.290 (0.747)	1.057 (0.727)	0.165 (0.672)	0.104 (0.748)	0.281 (0.796)	0.461 (0.825)	-0.489 (0.739)
Democracy:Gender Quota	-3.323* (1.379)						
Democracy:Female_Seats		-0.049 (0.050)					
Democracy:WBL_index			-0.015 (0.043)				
Democracy:Labour Force				-0.019 (0.033)			
Democracy:FemaleEducation_Secondary					-0.050 (0.032)		
Democracy:FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.021 (0.014)	
Democracy:Mat_Mortality (log)							0.967 (0.948)
Democracy:Social	-1.698 [†] (0.999)	-1.285 (0.998)	-1.480 (0.983)	-1.442 (0.971)	-1.671 (1.008)	-1.873 (1.146)	-1.619 (1.007)
Democracy:Government_Democ	1.608 (1.156)	1.428 (1.124)	1.206 (1.115)	1.250 (1.124)	2.736* (1.186)	1.194 (1.219)	1.303 (1.135)
Donor FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clustered SE (Donor, Recipient)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	96,604	120,204	126,318	126,761	82,449	79,045	104,015
R ²	0.279	0.276	0.278	0.278	0.278	0.286	0.284
Adjusted R ²	0.278	0.276	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.286	0.284

Note:

[†] $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Figure A9: Visualizing Marginal Effects - Sector Dynamics



Predicted effect of Social Sector on Gender Equality targeting of aid commitments



Predicted effect of Governance & Democratization Sector on Gender Equality targeting of aid commitments



Table A12: Determinants of Gender Targeting in Recipient Countries - Channel Dynamics

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	% Gender targeted aid commitments						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Democracy	6.042*** (1.360)	5.235** (1.517)	8.126* (3.839)	2.280 (3.606)	15.728** (5.432)	7.299* (2.772)	0.427 (2.734)
Gender Quota	2.844* (1.109)						
Female_Seats		0.176*** (0.045)					
WBL_index			-0.010 (0.035)				
Labour Force				-0.008 (0.024)			
FemaleEducation_Secondary					0.101* (0.038)		
FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.008 (0.022)	
Mat_Mortality (log)							3.726** (1.155)
Bypass	8.063* (2.959)	7.844* (3.006)	8.089* (3.001)	7.946* (2.997)	7.766* (3.007)	7.459* (3.105)	7.515* (2.990)
AidDependence	-0.248** (0.069)	-0.246*** (0.066)	-0.210** (0.063)	-0.213** (0.065)	-0.136 (0.082)	-0.128 (0.101)	-0.196** (0.067)
GDP per capita (log)	-12.718*** (2.299)	-12.402*** (2.215)	-12.084*** (2.155)	-12.483*** (2.243)	-14.204*** (2.247)	-12.692*** (2.186)	-8.251*** (2.103)
PostConflict_Dummy	-1.167 (1.063)	0.516 (0.873)	-0.291 (0.854)	-0.048 (0.894)	-0.235 (1.076)	-0.128 (0.990)	-1.127 (0.955)
Democracy:Gender Quota	-3.877* (1.644)						
Democracy:Female_Seats		-0.082 (0.058)					
Democracy:WBL_index			-0.059 (0.051)				
Democracy:Labour Force				0.021 (0.045)			
Democracy:FemaleEducation_Secondary					-0.118* (0.049)		
Democracy:FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.038 (0.022)	
Democracy:Mat_Mortality (log)							1.624 (1.335)
Democracy:Bypass	-0.003 (1.145)	0.095 (1.090)	-0.156 (1.068)	-0.008 (1.054)	-0.138 (1.353)	-0.173 (1.155)	0.125 (1.124)
Donor FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clustered SE (Donor, Recipient)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	38,804	55,108	56,499	56,741	36,533	36,959	47,677
R ²	0.293	0.275	0.274	0.274	0.278	0.279	0.290
Adjusted R ²	0.292	0.274	0.273	0.273	0.277	0.277	0.290

Note:

† $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Figure A10: Visualizing Marginal Effects - Channel Dynamics

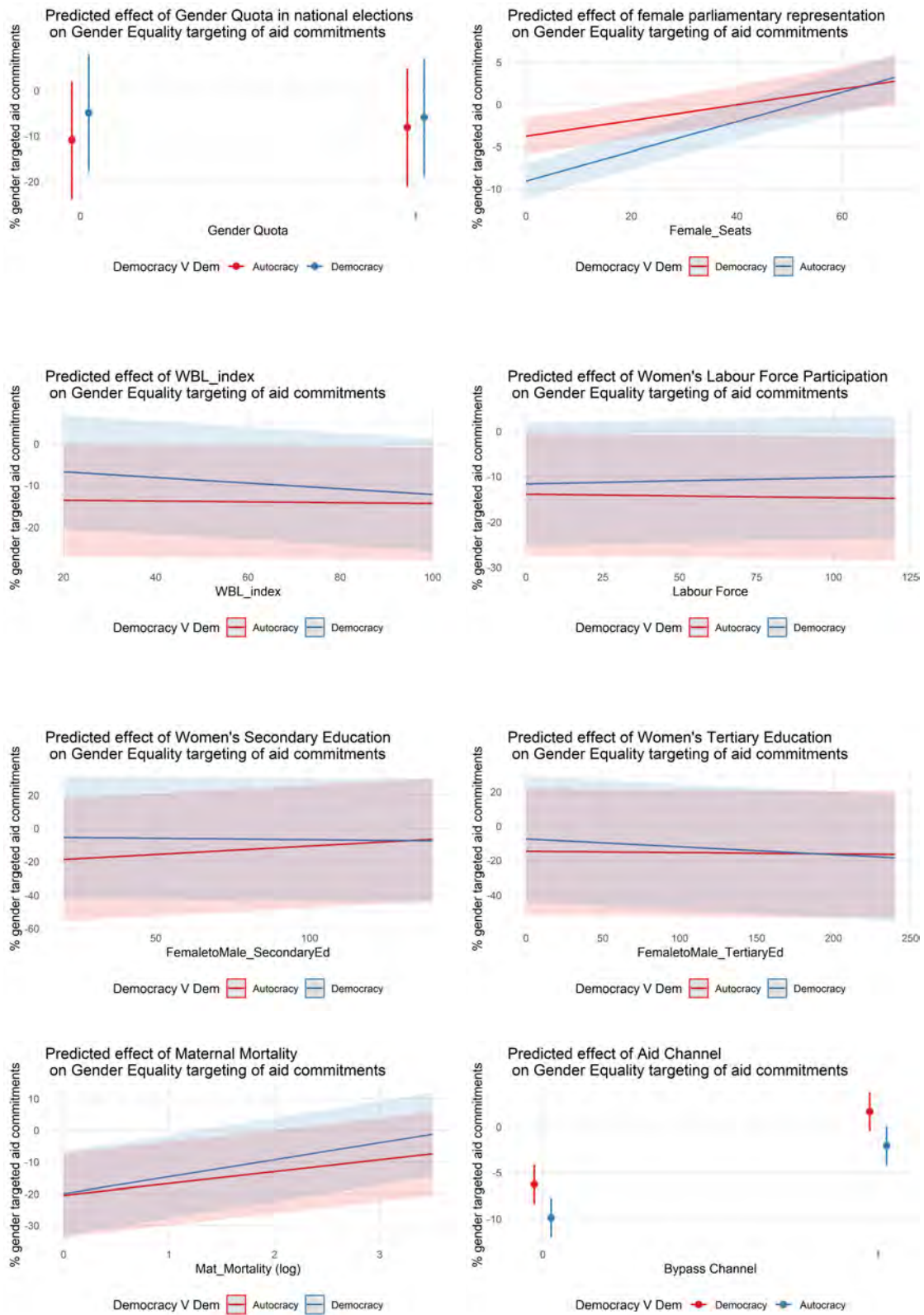


Table A13: Determinants of Gender Targeting in Recipient Countries - Fractional Logit Model

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	% Gender targeted aid commitments (between 0 and 1)						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Democracy	0.386*** (0.027)	0.314*** (0.034)	0.480*** (0.092)	0.314*** (0.070)	0.641*** (0.131)	0.412*** (0.061)	0.008 (0.077)
Gender Quota	0.244*** (0.028)						
Female_Seats		0.012*** (0.001)					
WBL_index			-0.001 (0.001)				
Labour Force				-0.001 (0.0005)			
FemaleEducation_Secondary					0.004*** (0.001)		
FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.001 (0.0005)	
Mat_Mortality (log)							0.271*** (0.026)
AidDependence	-0.017*** (0.002)	-0.017*** (0.002)	-0.014*** (0.002)	-0.013*** (0.002)	-0.010*** (0.002)	-0.012*** (0.003)	-0.014*** (0.002)
GDP per capita (log)	-0.349*** (0.013)	-0.327*** (0.011)	-0.313*** (0.011)	-0.332*** (0.011)	-0.365*** (0.014)	-0.341*** (0.017)	-0.212*** (0.015)
PostConflict_Dummy	-0.069** (0.027)	0.035 (0.023)	-0.024 (0.022)	-0.022 (0.022)	-0.015 (0.027)	0.007 (0.028)	-0.081** (0.025)
Democracy:Gender Quota	-0.316*** (0.041)						
Democracy:Female_Seats		-0.006*** (0.002)					
Democracy:WBL_index			-0.004** (0.001)				
Democracy:Labour Force				-0.001 (0.001)			
Democracy:FemaleEducation_Secondary					-0.004** (0.001)		
Democracy:FemaleEducation_Tertiary						-0.002*** (0.001)	
Democracy:Mat_Mortality (log)							0.106** (0.034)
Constant	0.507*** (0.117)	0.203† (0.111)	0.222† (0.115)	0.377** (0.117)	0.424** (0.155)	0.334* (0.158)	-0.949*** (0.162)
Donor FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	35,959	45,204	47,449	47,683	30,697	29,569	38,713

Note:

† $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Figure A11: Visualizing Marginal Effects - Fractional Logit Models

