Beyond Borders, Beyond Barriers: Globalization's Contradictory Role in Women's Economic Empowerment

Basit Ali[1], Waqas Ahmed[2], Muhammad Saad Khan[3] and Maria Siddique[4]

https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2025.14.2.63

Abstract

In the era of deepening global integration, this study examines how economic globalization, measured by trade openness and foreign direct investment (FDI), shapes women's economic rights across 160 countries (1996-2023). The study constructs a composite women's economic rights index using the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) framework (an ordinal 0–3 scale capturing legal guarantees of equal pay, nondiscrimination, workplace protections, and occupational choice) and employs ordered logistic regression to respect the index's discrete nature. Key independent variables are trade openness and FDI, while control variables include GDP per capita, democracy level, fertility rate, female labor force participation, and female population share. The study results indicate that greater trade openness significantly increases the likelihood that women enjoy stronger economic rights, whereas higher foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows are associated with weaker rights. Among domestic factors, higher per capita GDP and a larger female labor force are associated with enhanced economic rights, whereas higher fertility rates tend to diminish them. These findings suggest that trade liberalization can catalyze women's empowerment; however, the positive effects of FDI depend on the presence of robust, gender-sensitive policies and institutions. To translate globalization into gender-equal outcomes, policymakers should strengthen democratic institutions and media freedom to amplify women's voices, regulate FDI under clear gender-equality standards, and invest in supportive programs, including childcare, education, and workplace safety, to boost female labor participation. By revealing the nuanced interplay of global and domestic forces shaping women's rights, this study provides a critical evidence base for achieving inclusive development in the global economy.

Keywords: Women's Economic Rights; Economic Globalization; Trade Openness; Foreign Direct Investment; Logistic Regression; CIRI Index.

Introduction

In an era increasingly shaped by global economic integration, understanding how the forces of globalization, particularly trade openness and foreign direct investment (FDI), affect women's empowerment (Drezner & Farrell, 2023; Sharma & Li, 2022). Women's empowerment can be defined as the participation of women in economic decisions or empowering women with skill, education, and advanced knowledge so that they can play a significant role in untangling the

[1]*GPGC Mansehra, KPK, Pakistan. Email: basitali16632@gmail.com*
[2]*GPGC Mansehra, KPK, Pakistan. Corresponding Author Email: malik.waqas9390@gmail.com*
[3]*GPGC Mansehra, KPK, Pakistan. Email: saadkhan8879@gmail.com*
[4]*Hazara University Mansehra, KPK, Pakistan. sweet_maria92@yahoo.com*

Compliance with ethical standards: There are no conflicts of interest (financial or non-financial). This study did not receive any funding.

economic issues of the country (Mahbub, 2021). Women's empowerment is also defined by women's education, women's participation in the labor force, women's literacy rate, or women's seats in parliament in the literature (Akram, 2018). The increase in the share of women in the labor force or the increase in the education of women is very important to exploit the full potential of the human capital of the country, which will eventually boost the economic performance of the country (Heath & Jayachandran, 2016).

Theoretical Background

Women have been subjected to discrimination due to some political, cultural, traditional, and educational schools of thought since the creation of the world. Women's empowerment is a hot topic for debate. Many NGOs, government and non-government organizations, international and national organizations, and private and academic institutions are working tremendously on this topic. Some religious, traditional, and cultural extremists are yet skeptically seeing the freedom and empowerment of women in the world. There are many studies that empirically and theoretically prove that women's empowerment plays an important role in the socio-economic, ethical, educational, and cultural progress of human beings. The women are still in the submissive and discriminated conditions of our male-dominated society, especially in developing countries, and it might be the reason for their lower per-capita income. Women's empowerment is equivalent to the execution of the true potential of the human resources of the country. The women's contribution to the socio-economic activities of the state is an important factor in increasing the living standard of the people of the country. The participation rate of women in the economic decision-making and activities of the state is higher in developed countries than in developing ones. The study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls and the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, or improve nutrition and promote health, including the prevention of AIDS. When women are fully involved, the benefits can be seen immediately: Families are healthier; they are better fed; their income, savings, and reinvestment go up. And what is true of families is true of communities and, eventually, whole countries.

Research Objectives

This study aims to examine the impact of economic globalization measured by FDI and trade openness on women’s economic rights, and to assess how key socio-demographic variables influence those rights. Specifically, the study tests how GDP per capita, fertility rate, female labor force participation, and the female population share are associated with women’s economic rights, controlling for trade and FDI.

Literature Review

Globalization’s impact on women is multifaceted. Rapid technological change and declining trade barriers have integrated world markets (Autor et al., 2003). For example, the World Bank (2007) reports that global trade grew faster than world output between 1973 and 1994, expanding opportunities for participation in new markets. The empirical literature offers mixed conclusions: some studies find women benefit from globalization in certain respects, while others find persistent disadvantages. Gray et al. (2006) show that trade is associated with better health outcomes for women (higher life expectancy, lower illiteracy), whereas FDI has little effect on life expectancy and was associated with higher female illiteracy in their sample. They also find that neither trade nor FDI significantly influenced female labor force participation, and only FDI modestly increased

women's representation in parliament. Cho (2013) similarly finds that the effects of globalization (trade, FDI, and social integration) on women's rights are complex, noting, for example, a link between increased globalization and higher rates of human trafficking. Other research highlights a generally positive relationship between trade liberalization and women's economic rights (Gray et al., 2006; Neumayer & De Soysa, 2007; Richard & Gelleny, 2007). In these studies, open economies often create new jobs in export industries that employ women, improving their economic status. In contrast, the effects of FDI are more contested. Some authors argue that FDI may worsen gender inequality unless accompanied by robust policies (Bakker, 2007). For instance, Akhtar and Ward (2009) find that FDI in South Asia decreased women's labor force participation but had a positive effect on girls' secondary school enrollment. Menon and Rodgers (2008) and Ferrufino and Robertson (2011) provide evidence that trade liberalization tends to reduce wage discrimination against women. Duflo (2012) notes a consensus in the literature that trade liberalization raises women's standing, though the actual effects depend on many factors. At the same time, globalization can pose risks to gender equity. Neoliberal policies and fiscal austerity often reduce public services, disproportionately burdening women as primary caregivers (Elson, 2021). Global trade and FDI can reinforce gendered occupational segregation: multinational corporations often employ women in low-wage, low-skill, precarious jobs in export sectors, limiting their advancement (Seguino & Braunstein, 2022). A "race to the bottom" in labor standards may further erode protections and weaken collective bargaining for women. On the other hand, globalization has increased awareness of gender inequality, prompting stronger advocacy and policy reform. For example, Duflo and Topalova (2022) document how global market integration in India coincided with improved gender outcomes in some regions. Trade liberalization often correlates with higher female labor force participation in export-oriented industries, providing opportunities that were previously unavailable (Berik & Kongar, 2023). The diffusion of global norms and the rise of transnational feminist networks have pressured governments and firms to adopt more inclusive practices (True & Parisi, 2023). Despite the widespread belief that globalization fosters economic development and social progress, several recent studies highlight its potential to undermine women's empowerment, particularly in developing countries. One significant concern is that globalization often prioritizes economic efficiency and profit over social equity, leading to the exploitation of vulnerable groups, especially women in low-wage labor markets (Özden & Wagner, 2023). In sum, the literature underscores globalization's contradictory role: it can empower women through new opportunities and advocacy, but it can also exacerbate vulnerabilities and inequalities when left unchecked.

Methodology

Measure of Women's Economic Empowerment

Empowerment has been proxied by various indicators: female labor force participation, education levels, literacy rates, gender wage gaps, women's share of non-agricultural earnings, and women's total income share. However, no single measure captures all dimensions. Cagatay and Ertürk (2004) and Costagliola (2021) note that female labor force participation alone omits important aspects like wages, working conditions, and legal rights; moreover, increased female labor supply can depress wages if labor markets are saturated. Likewise, using women's share of formal wages ignores education, literacy, and income in informal or agricultural sectors (Stanton, 2007; Lehmann, 2023). To address these limitations, the study uses a composite index. Specifically, the dependent variable is the CIRI Women's Economic Rights index (WER), which integrates multiple dimensions of economic rights into an ordinal scale from 0 to 3. A value of 0 indicates

no legal economic rights for women and high legal discrimination; 1 indicates some legal rights but weak enforcement; 2 indicates rights are guaranteed and enforced but some discrimination persists; and 3 indicates full legal protection and enforcement with virtually no discrimination. This discrete index reflects differences in women's ability to work, equal pay, legal protections, and workplace conditions across countries.

Measure of Economic Globalization and Other Variables

The study focuses on economic globalization, distinguishing it from social or cultural globalization. The study's main globalization measures are trade openness (trade/GDP) and FDI stock/GDP, consistent with earlier studies (Richard & Gelleny, 2007; Akhtar & Ward, 2009; Cho, 2013; Aminov, 2023). These variables capture the intensity of a country's integration into global markets. In addition to trade and FDI, the study includes standard macroeconomic and demographic controls. Explanatory variables are: GDP per capita (constant USD, logged), democracy level (Polity IV score), the stock of FDI as a share of GDP, trade (sum of exports and imports) as a share of GDP, female fertility rate (live births per woman), female labor force participation rate, and the share of women in the total population. The last three are treated as control variables. The study expects GDP per capita to have a positive association with women's economic rights, since wealthier governments have more resources to invest in education, health, and legal institutions that support equality. Similarly, democracy is hypothesized to improve women's rights: democratic governments are generally more accountable and inclusive, giving women a greater voice in policy (Neumayer & De Soysa, 2007; Akhtar & Ward, 2009; Cho, 2013).

Description and Data Sources

The motive of the empirical study is to find the effect of economic globalization on women's empowerment. The dependent variables of the study are women's economic rights. The independent variables are FDI, trade, democracy, Economic growth, female fertility, female labor force, and female population.

Table 1: Description of Variables

VARIABLES	ABBERIVATIONS	MEASURES
Women empowerment Women's economic rights	WE WER	CIRI index
Economic growth	GDPpc / Y	GDP per capita
Democracy	Dem	Democracy
Foreign direct investment	FDI	Stock of FDI normalized by GDP
Trade	Trade	Trade in % of GDP
Female population	FePop	Percentage of female population
Female fertility	FeFer	Registered live births per woman
Female share in the labor force	FeLF	Percentage share of females in the labor force

The study has measured the women's economic rights by the index of Cingranelli and Richards (Human Rights Database).

Table 2: Ranking of Women's Economic Rights Index

Ranking	Women economic rights
0	There are no economic rights for women under the law, and systematic discrimination based on sex may be built into the law. The government tolerates a high level of discrimination against women.
1	There are some economic rights for women under the law. However, in practice, the government does not enforce the laws effectively. The government tolerates a moderate level of discrimination against women.
2	There are some economic rights for women under the law. In practice, the government does enforce these laws effectively. However, the government still tolerates a low level of discrimination against women.
3	All or nearly all of women's economic rights are guaranteed by law. In practice, the government fully and vigorously enforces these laws. The government tolerates none or no discrimination against women.

This index provides us with a broad measure of women's economic rights and covers all the aspects of economic rights, like women's participation in the labor force, work environment, wages, and choice of occupation. The data of the women's economic rights index is not continuous data but discrete data and has an ordinal ranking from 0-3. The description of women's economic rights:

Table 3: Description of the Women's Economic Rights Index

Full description of the women's rights index
• Women's Economic Rights Index • Equal pay for equal work • Free choice of profession or employment without the need to obtain a husband or male relative's consent • The right to gainful employment without the need to obtain a husband or male relative's consent • Equality in hiring and promotion practices • Job security (maternity leave, unemployment benefits, no arbitrary firing or layoffs, etc.) • Non-discrimination by employers • The right to be free from sexual harassment in the workplace • The right to work at night • The right to work in occupations classified as dangerous • The right to work in the military and police force

Model Specification

The dependent variable of the study is women's empowerment. Women's empowerment is measured by women's economic rights. In the equation of the model, the study will keep women's economic rights as a dependent variable and will check the effect of trade and FDI on women's economic rights.

$$WER_{it} = \beta_{1i} + \beta_2 Y_{it} + \beta_3 Dem_{it} + \beta_4 Trade_{it} + \beta_5 FDI_{it} + \theta 2 X_{it} + e_{it} \quad (1)$$

The WER shows the women's economic rights, Y is the GDP per capita of countries, Dem shows the democracy level in the country, trade shows the ratio of import plus export and GDP, and FDI shows the ratio of FDI stock and GDP. The variable X in equation 1 shows the vector of control variables that are female fertility, female share in labor force participation, and female share in total population. The term in equation 1 shows the error term, and i stands for country and t stands

for time. The dependent variables are the discrete variables, not the continuous variables. The data of the women economic rights are the ordinal data in the range of 0-3 where 0 shows the economic right, 1 shows some economic right in law has been enforced but not implemented, 2 shows the three enforcement of economic rights by the law and also implemented but there is still some discrimination against the women, and 3 shows the full fledge access to the women rights. As the study has mentioned that the independent variables are not continuous data, but rather categorical and ordinal data, so study cannot apply the OLS or other continuous dependent variables techniques. If the dependent variable is discrete, then the study cannot apply the least squares technique but has to apply the maximum likelihood techniques. If the dependent variables have two categories or the dependent variable is a binary variable, then the study applies the logit or probit model, but the dependent variables are not binary and have more than three categories. The ordinal ranking of the categories of dependent variables is possible because it lies between 0-3, where o shows the lowest provision of rights and 3 shows the highest provision of rights, so the study has to apply the ordered logit model to the equations. In the ordered-logit model, the study cannot tackle the heterogeneity among the countries due to country-specific effects by applying the fixed-effect model.

Regression Assumption

The parallel regression models are those models that have the same slope but different intercepts. To check the parallel assumption of the order-logit model, the study applies the Wald test to check whether the intercept of different categories is significantly different or not. Study whether the cuts in the o-logit models are significant or not.

Ho: $cut_i = cut_j$

H1: $cut_i \neq cut_j$

If Ho is accepted, then it means the regression is not parallel and there is no significant difference between the intercepts of different categories of dependent variables, but if Ho is rejected, then it means the regression is parallel and there is a significant difference between the intercepts of different categories of dependent variables.

Marginal Effect of Independent Variables on Women's Rights

To interpret the model, the study takes the marginal effect of the o-logit model. The marginal effect shows the change in the probability of achieving a specific rank of the dependent variable due to a unit change in the independent variables**.** $\partial y/\partial x$ shows the change in the probability of getting some event, rank, or category due to a unit change in independent variables. Where Y probability of getting some event, rank, or category. In case of lowest, low, high, and highest economic right, the marginal effect can be represented as:

$\partial y/\partial x$ where Y=pr(ECR=0) (2)

$\partial y/\partial x$ where Y=pr(ECR=1) (3)

$\partial y/\partial x$ where Y=pr(ECR=2) (4)

$\partial y/\partial x$ where Y=pr(ECR=3) (5)

Equation 2.1 shows the change in the probability of getting no women's rights due to a unit change in the independent variable. Equation 2.2 shows the change in the probability of getting poor women's rights due to a unit change in the independent variable. Equation 2.3 shows the change in the probability of getting good enforcement and implementation of women's rights due to a unit change in the independent variable, and Equation 2.4 shows the change in the probability of getting excellent women's rights due to a unit change in the independent variable.

Descriptive Analysis

The study statistically analyzes the data by making tables to show the trend of the data. The study has a pie chart to graphically check the average ranking of women's economic rights in the world.

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis

Variables	Mean	Std. dev	Min	Max
WER	1.288	0.711	0	3
Democracy	3.260	6.512	-10	10
GDPpc	7.838	1.611	3.972	11.38
FDI	0.663	0.3021	-0.828	5.90
Trade	85.284	48.165	14.932	562.060
Fertility	3.259	1.749	1.076	7.896
Female labor	56.055	17.603	11.2	90.5
Female pop	50.095	2.604	23.775	54.31

The study has provided a statistical description of the data to show all the information about the statistical properties of the data, like mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values of the data. The pie chart shows the share of the categories in the total categories or the share of the particular rank of women's rights among all ranks in the panel data. Women's economic rights and their mean values are approximately 1.3, which shows that, on average, all the countries of the world tolerate significant economic discrimination against women, and laws have enforced women's economic rights, but have not been implemented on average across the panel of 160 countries.

Figure 1: Share of Ordinal Ranks of Women's Economic Rights

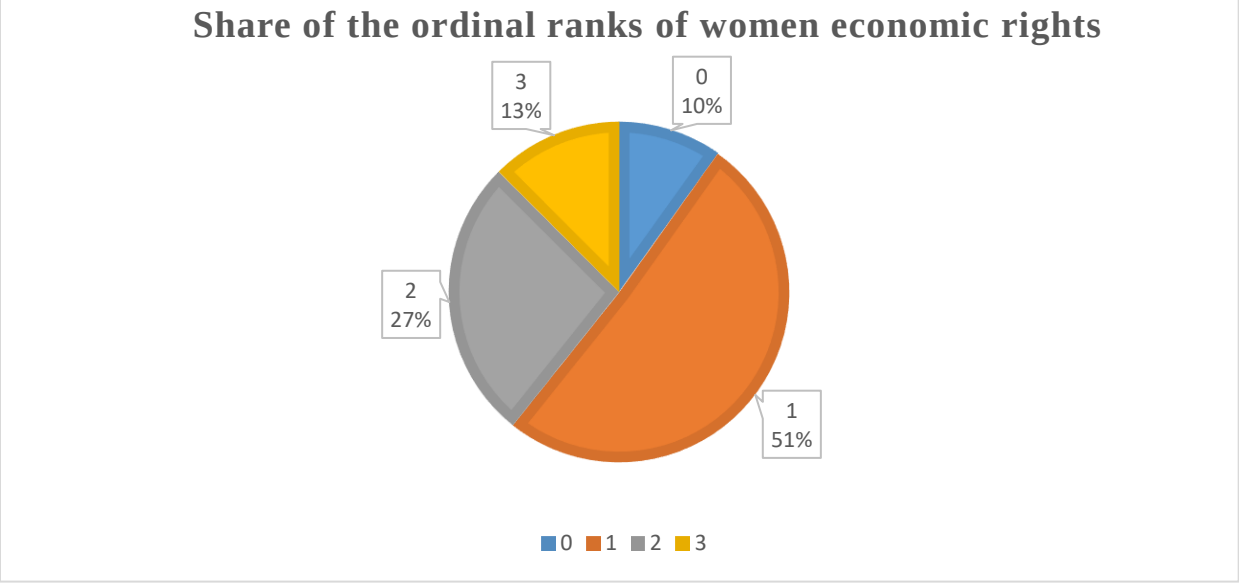

Figure 1 shows that the share of women's poor economic rights is higher in the world, while the share of fully enforced and implemented economic rights is the smallest in the world. More than 51 percent of the countries in the panel tolerate women's economic discrimination. Only less than 13% of the countries of the panel has full enforced and implemented economic right where

governments tolerate zero economic discrimination against women. 30 percent of countries in the panel are in ordinal rank 2, which shows that about 27% of countries in the world have enforced the economic rights of women in law, and it has also been in practice, but still these countries bear economic discrimination against women. There is about a 10% chance in the panel of 160 countries that tolerate high levels of economic discrimination, and there is no law on women's economic rights that has been enforced or implemented in those countries.

Empirical Results

The measure of women's empowerment in the study is women's economic rights. The study has run the six alternative regressions to perform the sensitivity analysis.

Table 5: The effect of economic globalization on women's economic rights

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
VARIABLES	**WER**	**WER**	**WER**	**WER**	**WER**	**WER**
GDPpc	0.549***	0.395***	0.440***	0.484***	0.477***	0.469***
	(0.0397)	(0.0491)	(0.0497)	(0.0530)	(0.0523)	(0.0626)
Dem	0.0395***	0.0293**	0.0250**	0.0154	-0.00907	-0.00631
	(0.0121)	(0.0122)	(0.0122)	(0.0128)	(0.0134)	(0.0138)
Trade	0.00373***	0.00313***	0.00292***	0.00275***	0.00216**	0.00234**
	(0.00101)	(0.00102)	(0.00103)	(0.00103)	(0.00104)	(0.00106)
FDI	-0.319**	-0.322**	-0.326**	-0.319*	-0.386**	-0.392**
	(0.160)	(0.162)	(0.163)	(0.163)	(0.166)	(0.167)
FeFer		-0.230***	-0.259***	-0.232***		-0.0636
		(0.0445)	(0.0447)	(0.0459)		(0.0648)
FeLab			0.0235***		0.0189***	0.0143***
			(0.00316)		(0.00343)	(0.00385)
FePop				0.0552**	0.0352*	0.0142
				(0.0223)	(0.0238)	(0.0253)
Constant cut1	2.000***	-0.0892	1.467***	4.522***	0.728*	1.853
	(0.305)	(0.504)	(0.545)	(1.345)	(0.896)	(1.655)
Constant cut2	5.615***	3.622***	5.216***	8.262***	4.344***	5.694***
	(0.337)	(0.505)	(0.551)	(1.347)	(0.510)	(1.654)
Constant cut3	8.434***	6.402***	8.097***	11.16***	7.308***	8.675***
	(0.373)	(0.533)	(0.587)	(1.370)	(0.535)	(1.670)

Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The results of the first regression show that the trade has a positive effect on women's economic rights, and it can be interpreted that a one-unit increase in the trade will cause a 0.003-unit increase in the log-odds of high women's economic rights. The coefficient of trade is significant at a 1% significance level. The coefficient of FDI is negative and significant at the 5% significance level, and it can be interpreted as the one-unit increase in FDI will cause a 0.32-unit decrease in the order log-odds of getting high women's economic rights. The result shows that the effect of trade on women's economic rights is positive, but the effect of FDI on women's rights is negative. The coefficient of democracy and GDP per capita is positive and significant at the 1% significance level. The coefficient of democracy and per-capita can be interpreted as a one-unit increase in

democracy will bring a 0.04-unit increase in the order log-odds of high women's economic rights, and a one-unit increase in the GDP per-capita will result in a 0.54-unit increase in the order log-odds of strong economic rights of women. The cuts show the intercepts of the ordinal ranks of women's economic rights, and the cuts are significant, which shows that the regression is Parallel.
In the second regression, the study has introduced the fertility of women to check the robustness of the above results. Fertility is an important variable that can affect women's economic rights. The high fertility of women will usually negatively affect women's economic rights because, due to an increase in the number of children, the women's opportunity cost of working increases, thus having a negative effect on their economic aspect of life. The coefficient of fertility is negative and significant at the 1% significance level, and it can be interpreted as a one-unit increase in the fertility of women will cause a 0.23-unit decrease in the order log-odds of high women's economic rights. The effect of trade and FDI remains the same as in regression 1, with a coefficient of 0.003 and -0.322, which shows that trade has a positive effect on the order log-odds of achieving high women's economic rights, while FDI has a negative effect on the order log-odds of achieving high women's economic rights. The coefficient of democracy is also positive and significant at a 1% significance level. The three cuts are significant, which shows that the regression is parallel.
In the third regression, the study has introduced another variable, "labor force participation shares of females," to check the robustness of the results. The increased participation of women in the labor force will protect women's economic rights. The coefficient of female labor force participation is significantly positive at the 1% significance level. It can be interpreted as a one-unit increase in the female share in labor participation rate causes a 0.023-unit increase in the order log-odds of high women's economic rights. The coefficient of trade remains significant and positive, while the coefficient of FDI remains significant and negative. The cuts of the third regression are also significant, which shows that the regressions are parallel regressions.
In the fourth regression, the study has introduced the female population as a control variable to check the sensitivity of economic globalization on women's economic rights. The coefficient of female population is significantly positive at the 5% significance level. It can be interpreted as the one-unit increase in the female population causes a 0.055-unit increase in the order log-odds of high women's economic rights. The results of other coefficients remain the same, so the result is robust.
In the fifth regression, the results show that trade has a positive and significant effect on women's economic rights, whereas FDI harms women's economic rights. Democracy is insignificant. While female labor and female population are significant in this model.
In the sixth regression, the study has incorporated the three control variables, and the result shows that only the coefficient of female participation in the labor force is positive and significant, while the coefficients of female population and female fertility become insignificant. The coefficient of GDP per capita is positive, but democracy becomes insignificant in this model.

Regression Test

In the parallel regression test, the study has checked the significant difference among the cuts of different categories of the women's economic rights index. A study has applied the Wald test to check the parallel assumption of the model. The parallel assumption means the intercepts in the different categories are different, but the slope is the same. The results of the Wald test have rejected the null hypothesis, which shows that there is a significant difference among the cuts or intercepts of different categories of the women's rights index. So study can conclude that the regressions of women's rights index are parallel regressions.

Marginal Effects of Independent Variables on Dependent Variable

The marginal effect of GDP per capita on the zero index value of women's economic rights is -0.0321, and that can be interpreted as a one standard deviation (S.D) increase in the GDP per capita will cause a 3.2% decrease in the probability of no economic rights. The coefficient of per-capita at the 1 index value of women's economic rights is -0.0829, which can be interpreted as the one S.D. increase in the GDP per-capita will cause the 8.3% decrease in the probability of poor economic rights for women. The coefficient of per-capita at the 1 index value of women's economic rights is 0.0011, which can be interpreted as the one S.D. increase in the GDP per-capita will cause a 0.1% increase in the probability of satisfactory economic rights of women. The coefficient of per-capita at the 1 index value of women's economic rights is 0.013, which can be interpreted as the one S.D. increase in the GDP per-capita will cause a 1.3% increase in the probability of full economic rights of women.

The coefficients of democracy at the 0 and 1 index values of women's economic rights are -0.002 and -0.0059 that can be interpreted as the one standard deviation increase in the democracy will cause the 0.2% decrease in the probability no economic rights of women and 0.6% decrease in the probability poor economic rights of women. The coefficients of democracy at the 2 and 3 index values of women economic rights are 0.007 and 0.009 that can be interpreted as the one standard deviation increase in the democracy will cause the 0.7% increase in the probability satisfactory level of economic rights of women and 0.9% increase in the probability full economic rights of women. The coefficients of trade at the 0, 1, 2, and 3 index values of women economic rights are - 0.002, -0.0056, 0.0007, and 0.000008 that can be interpreted as the one standard deviation increase in the trade will cause the 0.2% decrease in the probability no economic rights of women, 0.56% decrease in the probability poor economic rights of women, 0.07% increase in the probability of satisfactory economic rights, and 0.0008% increase in the probability of full economic rights of women.

Table 6: Index values of women's economic rights

Index values of WER	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**
Mean probability	0.0605	0.6447	0.2705	0.0243
GDP per-capita	-0.0312*** (.0028)	-0.0829*** (0.0072)	0.1011*** (0.0077)	0.0130*** (0.0015)
Democracy	-0.002*** (0.0006)	-0.00597*** (0.0018)	0.0073*** (0.0022)	0.0009*** (0.0003)
Trade	-0.0002*** (0.000)	-0.0056*** (0.0001)	0.0007*** (0.00019)	0.00008*** (0.0000)
FDI	0.00182** (0.0091)	.04826** (0.0242)	-0.05884** (0.0294)	-0.00758** (0.0038)

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The coefficients of FDI at the 0, 1, 2, and 3 index values of women economic rights are 0.00182, 0.048, -0.058, and -0.0075 that can be interpreted as the one standard deviation increase in the FDI will cause the 0.18% increase in the probability no economic rights of women, 4.8% increase in the probability poor economic rights of women, 5.8% decrease in the probability of satisfactory economic rights, and 0.75% decrease in the probability of Full economic rights of women.

Conclusion

This study examined how economic globalization influences women's economic rights, the proxy for women's economic empowerment. By constructing a composite CIRI-based index and applying ordered logistic regression with a range of controls, the study has identified key patterns. The empirical analysis shows that trade openness is consistently associated with stronger women's economic rights, while FDI tends to have a detrimental or negligible effect. In most specifications, a one-unit increase in trade/GDP significantly increases the odds of higher women's economic rights, whereas a one-unit increase in FDI/GDP significantly decreases those odds. Studies also find that higher GDP per capita and greater female labor force participation are positively correlated with women's economic rights, while higher fertility is associated with weaker rights. Female labor participation emerges as the most robust predictor of rights across models, underscoring that women's involvement in the workforce is both an outcome and enabler of economic empowerment. Democracy and female population share have positive but less consistent effects. Overall, these results highlight that trade liberalization can act as a catalyst for women's empowerment by expanding employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for women, whereas FDI, often driven by profit motives, does not automatically yield gender-equitable outcomes in the absence of policy safeguards. The study conducted several robustness checks. Wald tests confirm the proportional-odds assumption of the ordered logit model, and marginal-effects analyses illustrate that trade shifts countries toward higher levels of women's rights, whereas FDI tends to have the opposite influence. Importantly, the positive effect of trade openness and the negative effect of FDI persist across all model specifications, indicating the stability of the findings. Despite these findings, the study has limitations that point to areas for future research; the study uses only an economic rights index to proxy women's empowerment. This approach omits other important dimensions such as social rights, political participation, gender-based violence, son preference, or labor market segmentation, which studies like Cho (2013) identify as crucial to understanding women's well-being. Studies focus exclusively on economic globalization and do not consider the role of social and cultural integration (e.g., transnational NGOs, media connectivity, information technology). Social globalization may also affect women's empowerment. For example, increased internet access and global media can spread gender equality norms or improve women's access to information and networks. Study analyzes aggregate trade and FDI flows. Different sectors (e.g., manufacturing vs. services, technology vs. agriculture) may have distinct gender effects. Future work could examine whether FDI in traditionally female-intensive industries (like textiles) affects women's rights differently than FDI in male-dominated sectors. Similarly, disaggregating trade by sector could reveal more nuanced impacts. The results suggest specific gender-sensitive policies that can ensure FDI results in stronger economic rights for women, including implementing laws mandating equal pay for equal work, providing workplace protections against discrimination and harassment, and creating transparent reporting mechanisms for companies on gender equality metrics. Governments can establish incentives for businesses that meet gender-equitable hiring practices and invest in women's training and development programs, ensuring women have access to the same opportunities as men in the workforce. Moreover, to effectively measure and monitor the impact of trade openness on women's economic rights over time, countries can develop comprehensive indices that capture multiple dimensions of women's rights, including legal protections and economic participation. Conducting regular surveys and collecting data on women's workforce participation, wage disparities, and access to education and health services can help track progress. Involving women's advocacy groups in the monitoring process can provide valuable insights and hold governments accountable for their commitments. Finally, cultural

factors significantly influence the effectiveness of globalization on women's empowerment. In some regions, traditional norms and values may hinder women's participation in the economy, irrespective of the legal frameworks in place. Societal attitudes towards gender roles can affect women's willingness to pursue education or careers, limiting their economic empowerment. Addressing these cultural barriers requires targeted awareness campaigns, community engagement, and collaborations with local leaders to foster change and promote gender equality in a way that respects cultural values while advancing women's rights. By revealing the nuanced interplay of global and domestic forces shaping women's rights, this study provides a critical evidence base for achieving inclusive development in the global economy. In conclusion, globalization's impact on women is not uniform. Trade openness offers a pathway to greater economic rights for women, but only if combined with institutional safeguards and supportive policies. FDI, in contrast, may not benefit women without deliberate intervention. Ultimately, domestic factors like women's education, labor participation, and political inclusion play crucial roles. By aligning global integration with gender-inclusive policies, countries can ensure that globalization serves as a tool for women's empowerment rather than a source of new inequalities.

References

- Akhtar, S., & Ward, P. (2009). Globalization and gender equality: Impacts of foreign direct investment and trade liberalization. *Gender & Development, 17*(2), 409–419.
- Akram, N. (2018). Women's empowerment and economic growth: Empirical evidence from developing countries. *International Journal of Economics and Empirical Research, 6*(2), 45–54.
- Aminov, I. (2023). Global economic trends and gender equity in developing nations. *World Journal of Social Economics, 12*(1), 18–36.
- Autor, D. H., Levy, F., & Murnane, R. J. (2003). The skill content of recent technological change: An empirical exploration. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 118*(4), 1279–1333.
- Bakker, I. (2007). *Social reproduction and the governance of everyday life*. In I. Bakker & R. Silvey (Eds.), *Beyond States and Markets: The Challenges of Social Reproduction* (pp. 27–45). Routledge.
- Berik, G., & Kongar, E. (2023). Gender, globalization, and labor market outcomes: Revisiting theory and evidence. *Feminist Economics, 29*(1), 1–24.
- Berik, G., Rodgers, Y. V. D. M., & Zveglich, J. E. (2004). International trade and gender wage discrimination: Evidence from East Asia. *Review of Development Economics, 8*(2), 237–254.
- Braunstein, E., & Brenner, M. (2007). Foreign direct investment and gendered wages in urban China. *Feminist Economics, 13*(3–4), 213–237.
- Cagatay, N., & Ertürk, K. (2004). Gender and globalization: A macroeconomic perspective. *International Labour Review, 143*(1–2), 91–118.
- Cho, S. (2013). Integrating equality: Globalization, women's rights, and human trafficking. *Journal of Human Rights, 12*(2), 193–215.
- Costagliola, P. (2021). *Evaluating women's economic rights in the developing world: A multidimensional approach*. Development Studies Review, 15(2), 67–85.
- Drezner, D. W., & Farrell, H. (2023). Globalization and its discontents revisited: The gendered effects of trade and FDI. *Foreign Affairs, 102*(1), 34–47.
- Duflo, E. (2012). Women's empowerment and economic development. *Journal of Economic Literature, 50*(4), 1051–1079.
- Duflo, E., & Topalova, P. (2022). Globalization, gender, and social change: Evidence from India and beyond. *Economics & Politics, 34*(1), 1–25.
- Elson, D. (2021). Gender justice and public policy in the era of globalization. *Gender & Development, 29(*1), 5–22.
- Ferrufino, A., & Robertson, R. (2011). Trade, wages, and gender: Evidence from Latin America. *Economic Development and Cultural Change, 60*(1), 91–120.

- Gray, M. M., Kittilson, M. C., & Sandholtz, W. (2006). Women and globalization: A study of 180 countries, 1975–2000. *International Organization, 60*(2), 293–333.
- Heath, R., & Jayachandran, S. (2016). *The causes and consequences of increased female education and labor force participation in developing countries*. In J. Strauss & S. Dercon (Eds.), *The Handbook of Economic Field Experiments* (Vol. 2, pp. 107–180). Elsevier.
- Lehmann, M. C. (2023). Reassessing women's income indicators in global data sets. *Social Indicators Research, 170*(3), 1157–1180.
- Mahbub, M. (2021). Women's empowerment and economic productivity in South Asia: A critical analysis. *Journal of Feminist Development Studies, 9*(1), 23–38.
- Menon, N., & Rodgers, Y. V. D. M. (2008). International trade and the gender wage gap: New evidence from India. *World Development, 36*(12), 2320–2341.
- Neumayer, E., & De Soysa, I. (2007). Globalization and the empowerment of women: An analysis of developing countries, 1982–2005. *World Development, 35*(7), 1125–1140.
- Neumayer, E., & De Soysa, I. (2011). Trade openness and gender rights. *Journal of Peace Research, 48(*4), 463–477.
- Özden, Ç., & Wagner, M. (2023). Gendered labor outcomes in global value chains: The hidden cost of efficiency. *Journal of Economic Inequality, 21*(1), 29–51.
- Richard, K. F., & Gelleny, R. D. (2007). Women's status and economic globalization. *International Studies Quarterly, 51*(4), 855–876.
- Seguino, S., & Braunstein, E. (2022). The feminist political economy of globalization: Contradictions and challenges. *Cambridge Journal of Economics, 46*(3), 477–496.
- Sharma, R., & Li, X. (2022). Globalization and gender inequality: A panel study of 140 countries. *Feminist Economics, 28*(4), 95–118.
- Stanton, E. A. (2007). *The human development index: A history*. Political Economy Research Institute Working Paper Series No. 127.
- True, J., & Parisi, L. (2023). Transnational feminist networks and the global gender policy agenda. *Global Governance, 29*(2), 154–175.
- World Bank. (2007). *Global Economic Prospects: Managing the Next Wave of Globalization*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank. (2012). *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development*. Washington, DC: World Bank.