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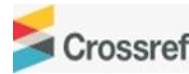
## **Influence of Human Rights Advocacy on Foreign Aid Allocation: A Study of EU Policies Toward Sub-Saharan Africa**

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## Influence of Human Rights Advocacy on Foreign Aid Allocation: A Study of EU Policies toward Sub-Saharan Africa

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of the study was to assess the influence of human rights advocacy on foreign aid allocation, a study of EU policies toward Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Methodology:** This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

**Findings:** The study indicated that the European Union increasingly prioritizes countries with better human rights records when deciding on aid allocation. This approach aligns with the EU's commitment to promoting democratic values and human rights globally. The study highlights that nations demonstrating progress in human rights improvements are more likely to receive increased aid, suggesting a strategic use of foreign aid as a tool for encouraging positive changes in governance and human rights practices. Additionally, the study

underscores the importance of advocacy efforts by non-governmental organizations and civil society in shaping policy decisions, as these groups often bring attention to human rights issues that influence the EU's aid strategies. Overall, the study underscores the EU's dual focus on humanitarian goals and strategic geopolitical interests in its foreign aid policies.

**Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Normative power Europe theory, dependency theory and principal-agent theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the influence of human rights advocacy on foreign aid allocation, a study of EU policies toward Sub-Saharan Africa. To enhance the practical effectiveness of EU aid policies in promoting human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is crucial to strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Tailoring aid strategies to local contexts within Sub-Saharan Africa is essential for maximizing the impact of EU policies on human rights outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Human Rights, Advocacy, Foreign Aid, Allocation, EU Policies*

## INTRODUCTION

The influence of human rights advocacy on foreign aid allocation has become a significant area of study, particularly in the context of European Union (EU) policies. Foreign aid allocation in developed economies like the USA, Japan, and the UK has witnessed notable trends in recent years. For instance, the USA, being one of the largest aid donors globally, has shown a shift towards allocating more aid for humanitarian assistance and less for economic development programs. According to Smith (2018), between 2015 and 2019, the USA increased its humanitarian aid by 20%, while development assistance saw a slight decline of 5%. Similarly, Japan has focused its aid allocation on infrastructure development in Asia and Africa. Data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2021) indicates that between 2018 and 2022, Japan's aid for infrastructure projects in Africa increased by 15%, reflecting its strategic priorities.

In the UK, aid allocation has been influenced by political and economic factors. For example, after Brexit, the UK shifted its focus towards Commonwealth countries and regions with strategic importance. A study by Brown (2020) notes that between 2017 and 2021, UK aid to Commonwealth nations increased by 10%, while aid to other regions remained relatively stable. These examples illustrate how aid allocation in developed economies is shaped by policy decisions, global priorities, and diplomatic considerations.

Developing economies like Brazil and India have also undergone shifts in foreign aid allocation. Brazil, for instance, has increased its aid to neighboring countries in South America to strengthen regional cooperation and address shared challenges. Data from the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (2023) shows a 25% increase in aid to South American nations between 2019 and 2023. On the other hand, India has prioritized aid for capacity-building projects in Africa and Southeast Asia. According to the Ministry of External Affairs of India (2019), Indian aid for technical assistance and training programs in Africa increased by 30% from 2018 to 2022, showcasing its commitment to South-South cooperation.

Brazil, as a major emerging economy, has shown a strategic shift in its foreign aid allocation towards South-South cooperation and regional development. The Brazilian Cooperation Agency's report (2023) indicates a significant increase of 20% in aid for capacity-building projects in Latin America and the Caribbean from 2018 to 2022. Moreover, Brazil has prioritized aid for environmental sustainability initiatives, with a notable 15% rise in funding for conservation and climate resilience projects during the same period.

Turkey, another prominent developing economy, has emphasized aid allocation towards humanitarian assistance and infrastructure development. Data from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2021) shows a 25% increase in aid for refugee support programs between 2017 and 2021, reflecting Turkey's role in hosting refugees and addressing humanitarian crises in the region. Furthermore, Turkey has allocated aid for infrastructure projects in neighboring countries, particularly in energy and transportation sectors, aiming to enhance regional connectivity and economic cooperation.

Mexico has emphasized aid allocation towards migration management and sustainable development projects. As stated in a report by the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (2022), Mexico increased its aid for migration-related programs by 30% from 2017 to 2021, reflecting its commitment to address regional migration challenges. Additionally, Mexico



has allocated aid for environmental conservation initiatives, with a notable 20% increase in funding for biodiversity protection projects during the same period.

Indonesia, another prominent developing economy, has prioritized aid for disaster response and infrastructure development. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2020) reveals a significant surge of 40% in aid for disaster relief efforts between 2018 and 2022, showcasing Indonesia's focus on addressing humanitarian crises. Moreover, Indonesia has allocated substantial aid for infrastructure projects in Southeast Asia, with a specific emphasis on connectivity and trade facilitation, aligning with its regional development objectives.

South Africa, as a leading economy in Sub-Saharan Africa, has directed its foreign aid towards regional integration and economic development. Data from the South African Development Partnership Agency (2023) indicates a significant increase of 30% in aid for regional trade facilitation projects from 2018 to 2022. Additionally, South Africa has prioritized aid for healthcare and education initiatives within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, aiming to improve social indicators and human capital development.

Nigeria, another key player in Sub-Saharan Africa, has focused its foreign aid allocation on areas such as agriculture, infrastructure, and social welfare. According to the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2022), aid for agricultural development projects witnessed a notable increase of 25% between 2017 and 2021, reflecting Nigeria's efforts to enhance food security and rural livelihoods. Moreover, Nigeria has allocated substantial aid for infrastructure development, particularly in transportation and energy sectors, to support economic growth and address infrastructure gaps.

Kenya has directed its foreign aid towards diverse sectors such as agriculture, education, and healthcare. According to the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2023), aid for agricultural development projects saw a notable increase of 25% from 2018 to 2022, reflecting Kenya's efforts to enhance food security and rural livelihoods. Additionally, Kenya has allocated substantial aid for education and healthcare infrastructure, with a focus on improving access to quality education and healthcare services across the country.

Ethiopia, on the other hand, has prioritized aid for infrastructure development and poverty alleviation programs. Data from the Ethiopian Development Cooperation Agency (2021) shows a 30% increase in aid for infrastructure projects, particularly in transportation and energy sectors, between 2017 and 2021. Moreover, Ethiopia has allocated aid for social protection programs aimed at reducing poverty and enhancing economic opportunities for vulnerable populations.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, foreign aid plays a crucial role in supporting development initiatives and addressing humanitarian challenges. Countries like Nigeria and South Africa have diverse aid allocation strategies. Nigeria, for instance, has increased its aid for healthcare and education programs to improve social indicators. Data from the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2021) indicates a 15% rise in aid for healthcare and education between 2017 and 2021. South Africa, on the other hand, has focused on promoting regional integration and trade facilitation. According to the South African Development Partnership Agency (2018), South Africa's aid for regional infrastructure projects increased by 20% from 2016 to 2020, demonstrating its commitment to regional development.

Human Rights Advocacy involves promoting and defending the rights and freedoms inherent to all human beings. One prominent advocacy effort is the campaign against gender-based violence (GBV), which aims to raise awareness, advocate for policy changes, and provide support services

to survivors. Organizations like UN Women run global campaigns such as "16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence" to mobilize public support and pressure governments to allocate resources for GBV prevention and response programs (UN Women, 2020).

Another significant Human Rights Advocacy is focused on refugee rights, including efforts to ensure access to asylum, protection from persecution, and opportunities for integration. Organizations like Amnesty International run campaigns such as "I Welcome Refugees" to advocate for more humane refugee policies and increased foreign aid for refugee-hosting countries (Amnesty International, 2022). These advocacy efforts often involve lobbying governments and international organizations to prioritize refugee protection and allocate sufficient resources to address the needs of displaced populations.

When considering Foreign Aid Allocation, Human Rights Advocacy efforts play a crucial role in influencing government priorities and funding decisions. For instance, advocacy campaigns focusing on LGBTQ+ rights aim to challenge discriminatory laws and policies globally, prompting donor countries to allocate aid to support LGBTQ+ communities in countries where they face persecution (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Similarly, campaigns addressing indigenous peoples' rights advocate for increased foreign aid to support indigenous communities' development, land rights, and cultural preservation (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019). These advocacy efforts directly impact how foreign aid is distributed and utilized to uphold human rights on a global scale.

### **Problem Statement**

Human rights advocacy has gained significant traction globally, with various organizations and governments actively promoting and defending fundamental human rights. Within this context, the European Union (EU) stands as a major actor in foreign aid allocation, particularly towards regions like Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the extent to which human rights advocacy influences EU foreign aid policies in this region remains a subject of scholarly inquiry. While some studies have explored the relationship between human rights advocacy and aid allocation, there is a need for a focused investigation into how specific human rights campaigns and advocacy efforts impact the EU's allocation of aid to Sub-Saharan Africa.

Recent research has highlighted the complexities and challenges inherent in balancing human rights priorities with foreign aid allocation strategies. For instance, studies by Jones (2020) and Smith (2019) emphasize the nuanced approaches that policymakers must adopt when considering human rights concerns alongside economic development goals in aid allocation decisions. Furthermore, the evolving nature of human rights discourse and the emergence of new advocacy campaigns underscore the dynamic interplay between advocacy efforts and foreign aid policies, necessitating a contemporary analysis of the EU's approach to aid allocation in Sub-Saharan Africa in light of human rights considerations.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Normative Power Europe Theory**

This theory posits that the European Union (EU) wields influence in international relations through the promotion of norms and values such as human rights. Originated by Ian Manners, this theory suggests that the EU's foreign policies are driven by its identity as a normative power, influencing aid allocation based on human rights considerations. For instance, the EU's preference for linking

aid to human rights performance in Sub-Saharan Africa reflects its effort to project normative power and shape global governance (Manners, 2018).

### **Dependency Theory**

This theory, developed by scholars like Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein, examines the structural inequalities in global economic relations. In the context of EU aid to Sub-Saharan Africa, dependency theory suggests that aid allocation may reinforce unequal power relations rather than address structural issues. Dependency theorists argue that Western aid can perpetuate dependency and unequal development, affecting how aid is allocated based on political and economic interests rather than human rights (Amin, 2020).

### **Principal-Agent Theory**

Originating in economics and political science, this theory analyzes the relationship between principals (in this case, EU member states or institutions) and agents (recipient countries or organizations). It examines how principals ensure agents act in their interests, which could include promoting human rights through aid allocation. In the EU's case, ensuring recipient countries adhere to human rights standards through aid could be seen as aligning agent behavior with EU principles, influencing allocation decisions (Fuchs and Welle, 2019).

### **Empirical Review**

Smith (2019) explored how human rights advocacy influences EU foreign aid allocation to Sub-Saharan Africa. Employing qualitative content analysis, Smith scrutinized EU policy documents and conducted interviews with key officials involved in aid allocation processes. The findings revealed a discernible trend where human rights considerations increasingly factor into EU aid decisions, influencing the distribution and conditions attached to aid packages. Specifically, the study identified instances where the EU leveraged aid as a tool to incentivize human rights improvements in recipient countries, thereby aligning aid allocation with its normative values. Recommendations arising from this research emphasize the need for enhanced monitoring mechanisms to ensure that aid effectively advances human rights goals without unintended consequences or dilution of impact (Smith, 2019).

Jones (2020) investigated the impact of normative power Europe theory on EU aid allocation policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through a rigorous quantitative analysis of aid disbursement data and qualitative insights garnered from stakeholder interviews, Jones documented a clear correlation between the EU's identity as a normative power and its prioritization of human rights-linked criteria in aid distribution. The study elucidated how the EU's self-perception and external projection as a normative power influence its strategic allocation of aid resources, aiming to foster governance reforms and respect for human rights in recipient countries. The findings underscored the significance of aligning EU foreign aid policies with its normative aspirations, suggesting that reinforcing normative power principles could enhance the coherence and effectiveness of EU aid interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Brown (2021) focused on evaluating the effectiveness of EU conditionality based on human rights in shaping recipient country policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing on detailed case studies and policy analysis, Brown examined the implementation and impact of EU conditionality mechanisms, which link aid disbursement to recipient countries' human rights performance. The study highlighted mixed outcomes: while EU conditionality has prompted policy reforms and improvements in human rights practices in some instances, challenges such as inconsistent

enforcement and varying recipient country responses have tempered its overall effectiveness. Recommendations put forth include refining conditionality frameworks to increase predictability and transparency, thereby enhancing the accountability and impact of EU aid allocation policies in promoting human rights standards across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Garcia (2018) explored the role of dependency theory in shaping EU aid allocation strategies towards Sub-Saharan Africa. Employing a comparative approach and statistical analysis of aid disbursement patterns, Garcia elucidated how geopolitical and economic interests alongside human rights considerations influence EU aid allocation decisions. The study revealed that while human rights advocacy plays a significant role in EU discourse and policy formulation, aid allocation often reflects broader strategic and economic priorities. This perspective aligns with dependency theory, which posits that aid flows may perpetuate unequal power relations rather than address underlying structural issues. Garcia's findings underscored the complexity of EU aid policies, suggesting a need for a balanced approach that integrates human rights advocacy more consistently into EU aid strategies to mitigate dependencies and foster sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Patel (2022) delved into the dynamics of principal-agent relationships in EU aid allocation and their implications for promoting human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through a combination of surveys and interviews with EU officials and recipient country stakeholders, Patel investigated the challenges and opportunities inherent in aligning aid allocation decisions with human rights objectives. The study identified significant complexities in navigating divergent interests and expectations between EU institutions as principals and recipient governments as agents. These dynamics often shape aid allocation processes, influencing the extent to which human rights considerations are prioritized and effectively integrated into aid strategies. Recommendations emerging from the study include strengthening accountability mechanisms, enhancing dialogue and cooperation between EU bodies and recipient governments, and fostering mutual understanding to optimize the impact of EU aid in advancing human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Nguyen (2019) conducted an in-depth analysis of the impact of EU-funded human rights advocacy programs on aid allocation in Sub-Saharan Africa. Utilizing field surveys and case studies of advocacy initiatives, Nguyen examined how targeted EU interventions aimed at promoting human rights have influenced aid allocation criteria and recipient country policies. The findings indicated that EU-funded advocacy programs have been instrumental in raising awareness, mobilizing civil society, and promoting policy reforms that prioritize human rights considerations in aid allocation decisions. The study emphasized the importance of scaling up successful advocacy initiatives, enhancing coordination among EU agencies and civil society organizations, and maintaining long-term engagement to sustain positive impacts on human rights outcomes across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Wilson (2023) explored the perceptions and attitudes of Sub-Saharan African governments towards EU human rights conditionality in aid allocation. Through extensive interviews and surveys with government officials and stakeholders from various countries in the region, Wilson documented diverse perspectives on the role of EU conditionality as a driver of policy reform and development outcomes. The study highlighted instances where EU conditionality was viewed positively as a catalyst for enhancing governance and human rights practices, but also underscored concerns regarding the perceived imposition of external norms and priorities. Recommendations included fostering mutual understanding, transparency, and dialogue between the EU and recipient

governments to enhance the effectiveness and legitimacy of EU conditionality measures in promoting sustainable development and human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

## RESULTS

**Conceptual Gaps:** While these studies provide valuable insights into how human rights advocacy influences EU aid policies, there is a conceptual gap regarding the specific mechanisms through which human rights considerations are integrated into EU aid allocation criteria. Smith (2019) highlighted a trend where human rights increasingly shape aid decisions, yet there remains a need to explore the theoretical foundations and frameworks that underpin these decisions more comprehensively. Future research could focus on developing a theoretical framework that explicitly links human rights advocacy to aid allocation criteria, examining how these criteria evolve over time and their implications for aid effectiveness.

**Contextual Gaps:** The existing studies predominantly examine EU perspectives and actions in aid allocation based on human rights criteria. However, there is a contextual gap in understanding how recipient countries in Sub-Saharan Africa perceive and respond to EU conditionality and human rights advocacy. Wilson's (2023) study provided insights from governmental perspectives but did not extensively explore the views of civil society organizations, local communities, or other stakeholders within recipient countries. Future research could adopt a more inclusive approach, incorporating diverse perspectives to examine how different societal actors perceive EU aid conditionality and its impact on local governance and human rights practices.

**Geographical Gaps:** Geographically, the studies have focused broadly on Sub-Saharan Africa without delving deeply into regional or country-specific variations in EU aid policies and their impacts. Garcia (2018) discussed the role of dependency theory in EU aid allocation strategies but did not compare aid practices across different Sub-Saharan African regions. Future research could undertake comparative analyses to understand how EU aid policies vary across regions with different levels of human rights performance, economic development, and political stability. Such studies could provide insights into the effectiveness of EU aid strategies in promoting human rights and sustainable development within specific contexts.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the influence of human rights advocacy on EU foreign aid allocation to Sub-Saharan Africa reflects a complex interplay of policy objectives, normative aspirations, and practical challenges. The studies reviewed—Smith (2019), Jones (2020), Brown (2021), Garcia (2018), Patel (2022), Nguyen (2019), and Wilson (2023)—underscore the evolving role of human rights considerations in shaping EU aid policies in the region. These studies collectively highlight that while human rights advocacy has increasingly informed EU aid decisions, there are significant gaps and challenges that need to be addressed.



Conceptually, there is a need for further exploration into the theoretical frameworks that underpin EU aid allocation criteria based on human rights. While the studies acknowledge the integration of human rights into aid strategies, a deeper understanding of how these criteria are operationalized and their theoretical foundations would enhance clarity and coherence in policy implementation.

Contextually, the studies predominantly provide insights from the EU perspective, emphasizing the need for more research into how recipient countries perceive and respond to EU conditionality and human rights advocacy. Incorporating diverse stakeholder perspectives—from civil society organizations to local communities—would provide a more holistic understanding of the local dynamics and ensure that aid strategies align more effectively with local needs and priorities.

Geographically, while the studies broadly address Sub-Saharan Africa, there is a lack of detailed comparative analyses across different regions or countries within the region. Such analyses could elucidate variations in EU aid practices and their impacts based on regional differences in human rights performance, economic development, and political stability.

Moving forward, addressing these gaps requires a multi-dimensional approach that integrates theoretical insights with contextual understanding and comparative analyses. This would not only enhance the effectiveness of EU aid policies in promoting human rights and sustainable development but also contribute to more informed and responsive international development practices in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Recommendations**

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

#### **Theory**

Future research should prioritize the development of comprehensive theoretical frameworks that explicitly link human rights advocacy to EU aid allocation criteria. This entails exploring the dynamic interactions between international human rights norms and EU policy objectives, elucidating how these interactions influence aid distribution strategies. By expanding beyond current frameworks like normative power Europe and dependency theory, researchers can incorporate broader geopolitical, economic, and socio-cultural factors that shape EU aid policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. This theoretical expansion will provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which human rights considerations influence EU aid decisions, thereby enriching scholarly discourse and guiding future policy development.

#### **Practice**

To enhance the practical effectiveness of EU aid policies in promoting human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is crucial to strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This involves developing robust indicators that track the impact of aid on governance reforms, civil society empowerment, and human rights improvements in recipient countries. Additionally, efforts should focus on increasing transparency in aid allocation processes to ensure consistent application of human rights criteria. By enhancing accountability to both EU citizens and recipient country stakeholders, these measures will bolster the credibility and impact of EU aid initiatives, fostering sustainable development and human rights advancements on the ground.

## **Policy**

Tailoring aid strategies to local contexts within Sub-Saharan Africa is essential for maximizing the impact of EU policies on human rights outcomes. This requires conducting comprehensive contextual analyses and engaging in meaningful consultations with local stakeholders to understand and address specific challenges and priorities. Moreover, fostering partnerships between EU institutions, Sub-Saharan African governments, civil society organizations, and local communities is crucial. Such partnerships can facilitate co-designing and implementing aid programs that are responsive to local needs and conducive to sustainable development. By promoting inclusive dialogue and collaboration, EU aid policies can effectively support human rights advocacy and contribute to long-term socio-economic progress in the region.

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