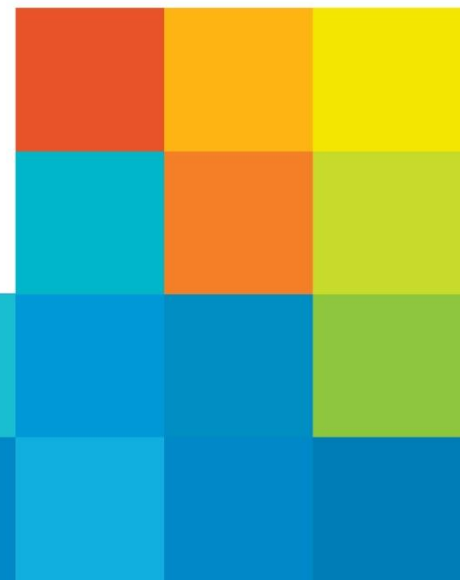


Male migration and Women empowerment: The Case of Samoa

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Big picture

- Women provide essential but more often unrecognized and unpaid work (Elson, 1999; Grantham et al., 2021)
- Migration is a key economic feature in Pacific Island Countries
- Open question: Can migration of male (husband) opens opportunities for women to strengthen their influence in the household?

Samoa context

- Dependent on agriculture, fishing, tourism and handicrafts
- One of important livelihood strategies: **Migration**
 - ✓ The second largest recipient of remittances in the PICs.
 - ✓ Top seven Asia-Pacific countries with the highest remittance inflows: nearly 30 per cent of GDP in 2021
- A significant part of the Samoan household's income come from remittances

Samoa context: women employment

- Women labor force participation: 31.5%
- Over-represented in informal and vulnerable employment
- Women-owned micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the informal sector account for 97.4% of such businesses.
- Agriculture remains the most important employment sector for women
- Absence of an entrepreneurial culture that supports and encourages women's business ventures (IFC 2016).



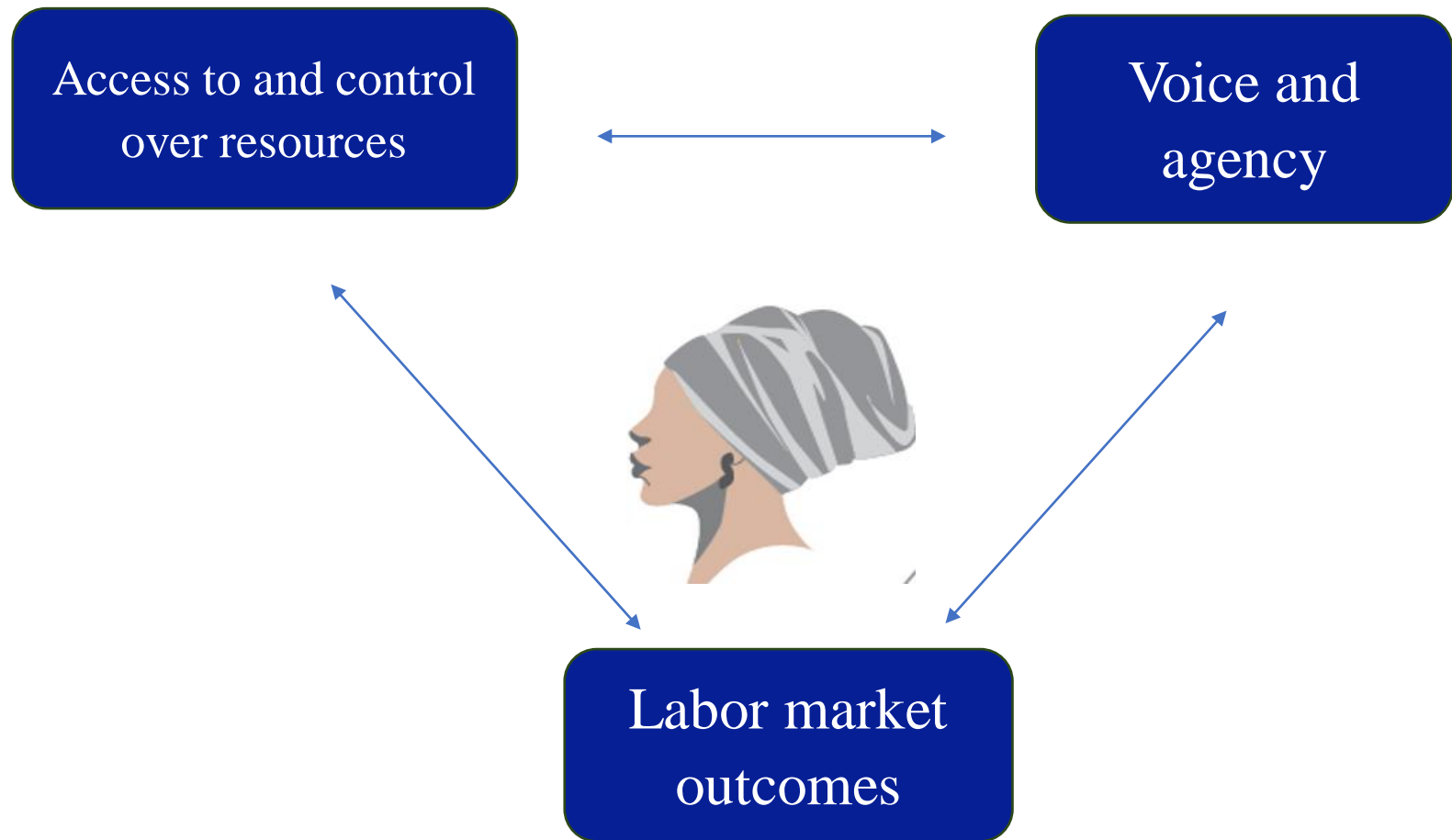
Samoa context: barriers to women

- Cultural and social norms
- Time-poor: **lack of data!** (FAO, 2019), often not recognized for women contributions
 - Unpaid care and domestic work.
 - engage in unpaid agricultural labor (classified as unemployment)
 - Not represented in agricultural decision-making.
- *Fa'a* ('the Samoan way'): responsibility towards the family/village/community.
 - Matai: family and village chiefs
 - Aiga: several family members living in the same household
 - **Nofotane**: Women who enter a village and family through marriage find themselves at the lower end of the social hierarchy (Stewart-Withers, 2011).

This study

- Explores women employment and economic empowerment when men are absent in the family
- Data: Samoa Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey 2019 - 2020
 - N = 2,137 (married women aged 14-49)
- Male migration: husband does not live at home, either living abroad or in another region within the country.

Women Economic Empowerment



Source: author summarizes based on Laszlo et al. (2020)'s three-dimensional approach

- Trade-offs among the different domains of empowerment
 - 1. Remittances
 - Ease liquidity constraints and financial limitations (Sen, 1999)
 - More control over household resources => improves intra-household bargaining power (Chiappori 1992; Kar et al., 2018).
 - Pull women out of the formal labor market (Lokshin and Glinskaya, 2009).
 - 2. Male absence
 - Potential increase in wage due to shortage of workers, which draws in women to the labor market
 - Intra-household adjustment of available labor hours (Mendola and Carletto, 2012)
 - Increased work burdens
 - Higher workloads may accompany greater autonomy and responsibility (Sevoyan, 2010)

Literature Review: diverse and inconclusive findings

Findings	Countries	Outcomes
<i>Positive</i>	Bangladesh, Morocco Mozambique, Guatemala Southeast Asia and India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gains in women's decision-making autonomy. ○ Self-employment and farm activities. ○ Holding financial account, group membership;
<i>Negative</i>	Nepal, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Philippines and Albania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase level of labor market participation compensating for the lost labor hours in agriculture => 'feminization of agriculture'. ○ Increase workload and non-wage activities.
<i>No impact</i>	Armenia, Guatemala, México China, India, and Morocco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No significant in increase the burden

Notes: Studies in the countries: Hadi (2001), Debnath and Selim (2009), Stanley (2015), Paris et al. (2005), Kar et al, 2018), Slavchevska et al. (2016); Funkhouser (1992), Arouri and Nguyen (2018), Binzel and Assaad (2011), Mendola and Carletto (2012), Sinha, Jha and Negi (2012)

Econometric framework

$$Y_{ih} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 M_{ih} + \theta X_{ih} + \varepsilon_{ih}$$

Y_{ih} is an outcome variables for woman i in household h

M_{ih} indicates that women i is living in household h with husband migrant at the time of the survey

X_{ih} is a set of control variables

Husband migration could be **endogenous**

- *Omitted variable bias* could confound estimates due to unobserved individual-level characteristics or local economic conditions
- *Simultaneity bias* if women's decision-making power over household resources affect the probability that their husbands migrate (i.e., in Mexico (Nobles and McKelvey, 2015) or large dowry payment from women's family in Nepal or India)

=> Use propensity score matching: Mahalanobis matching

Descriptive statistics (1)

	Mean	SD
Husband outmigration	0.09	0.287
Husband abroad	0.048	0.215
Husband in another region	0.043	0.203
Age of woman	34.71	8.15
Women education, secondary school or higher	0.97	0.17
Age of husband	22.2	9.6
Husband education, secondary school or higher education	0.86	0.35
Household size	8.99	4.42
Number of children per women	2.88	1.59
Living in extend family (=1)	0.81	0.39
Rural area	0.73	0.44
Nofotane	0.39	0.49

Descriptive statistics (2)

Variable	(1) Non-migrant	(2) With migrant husband	Difference
	Mean/(SE)	Mean/(SE)	(1)-(2)
<i>Household characteristics</i>			
Number of children per women	2.898 (0.037)	2.661 (0.097)	0.237*
Number of adult women in household	0.381 (0.032)	0.146 (0.062)	0.235**
Age of husband	22.320 (0.218)	20.552 (0.691)	1.768**
Husband education, secondary school or higher	0.847 (0.008)	1.000 (0.000)	-0.153***
Women education, secondary school or higher	0.970 (0.004)	0.979 (0.010)	-0.009
Rural area	0.723 (0.010)	0.797 (0.029)	-0.074**
Household owns agricultural land (=1)	0.466 (0.011)	0.469 (0.036)	-0.003
Living in extended family (=1)	0.810 (0.009)	0.786 (0.030)	0.023

Results: Mahalanobis matching

ATT	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Labor force participation (yes=1)	Employed (yes=1)	Work for pay/profit	Formal job
Husband emigration	-0.00281 (0.0152)	0.0883 (0.0808)	0.0827** (0.0411)	0.151** (0.0632)
Observations	2,137	2,100	496	496
Mean of dep.var of women with non-migrant husband	0.98 (5)	0.24 (6)	0.91 (7)	0.41 (8)
	Control over household income	Own phone	Make decision about own healthcare	Make decision on birth control
Husband emigration	0.128* (0.0684)	-0.0351 (0.0573)	-0.0213 (0.0822)	0.0225 (0.0639)
Observations	2,137	2,137	2,137	2,137
Mean of dep.var of women with non-migrant husband	0.26 (9)	0.88 (10)	0.25 (11)	0.14 (12)
	Make decisions for major household purchases	Make decisions for daily household purchases	Make decisions for visits to relatives	Life satisfaction in comparison with last year (improved=1)
Husband emigration	0.0358 (0.0630)	0.0810 (0.0891)	0.0248 (0.0561)	0.0463** (0.0215)
Mean of dep.var of women with non-migrant husband	0.09	0.29	0.14	0.86
Observations	2,137	2,137	2,137	2137

Results in more details

	Living in extended family		Nofotane	
	=1	=0	=1	=0
<i>Labor force participation</i>				
Husband migration	-0.00985 (0.0187)	0.0268*** (0.00844)	-0.0133 (0.0195)	-0.0282 (0.0192)
<i>Employed</i>				
Husband migration	0.0644 (0.0888)	0.214** (0.0866)	0.0179 (0.0735)	0.118 (0.0991)
<i>Self-employed</i>				
Husband migration	-0.104 (0.106)	0.346** (0.143)	-0.0684 (0.160)	0.0196 (0.0767)
<i>Formal job</i>				
Husband migration	0.131* (0.0737)	0.292* (0.164)	0.0947 (0.131)	0.203 (0.259)
<i>Control over household income</i>				
Husband migration	0.131 (0.0947)	0.0255 (0.0994)	0.0916 (0.0652)	0.283*** (0.0659)
N	1726	411	824	1313

Results in more details (2)

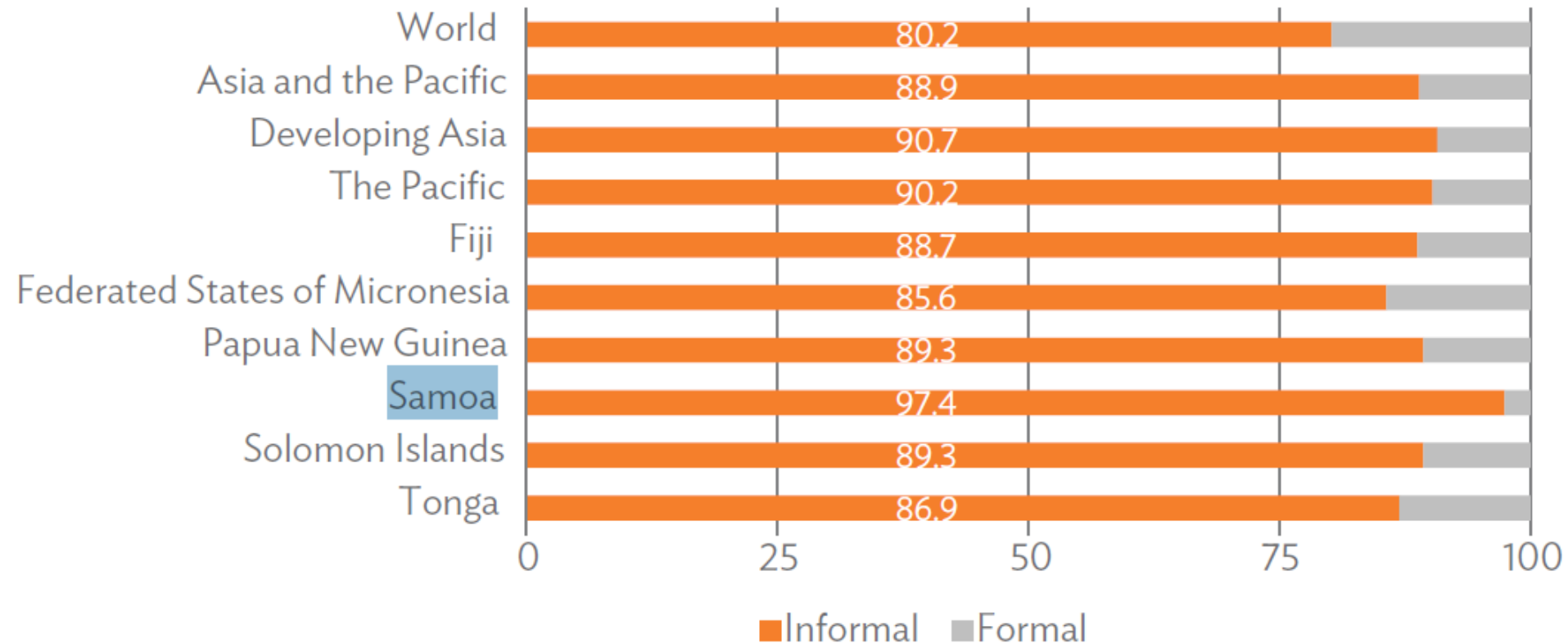
	Living in extended family		Nofotane	
	=1	=0	=1	=0
<i>Make decisions for major household purchases</i>				
Husband migration	0.0400 (0.0755)	0.00852 (0.0586)	0.0971** (0.0455)	0.0754 (0.104)
<i>Make decisions for daily household purchases</i>				
Husband migration	0.107 (0.105)	-0.106 (0.0950)	0.147* (0.0784)	0.167 (0.111)
<i>Make decisions for visits to relatives</i>				
Husband migration	0.0209 (0.0669)	0.0170 (0.0763)	0.0765* (0.0439)	0.0640 (0.104)
<i>Improved life satisfaction compared to last year</i>				
Husband migration	0.0423* (0.0222)	0.0170 (0.0653)	-0.00607 (0.0340)	0.0457* (0.0257)
N	1726	411	824	1313

Conclusion

- Migration of husband improves women employment and economic empowerment.
- Compared to women from non-migrant households, women from households with primary male migrants are more likely to
 - ✓ have formal jobs
 - ✓ work for pay/profit
 - ✓ Greater financial autonomy (Gulati, 1992 for India; Khaled, 1995 for Jordan; and Fakir and Naveen, 2021 for Bangladesh)
 - ✓ Improve life satisfaction

VINAKA!

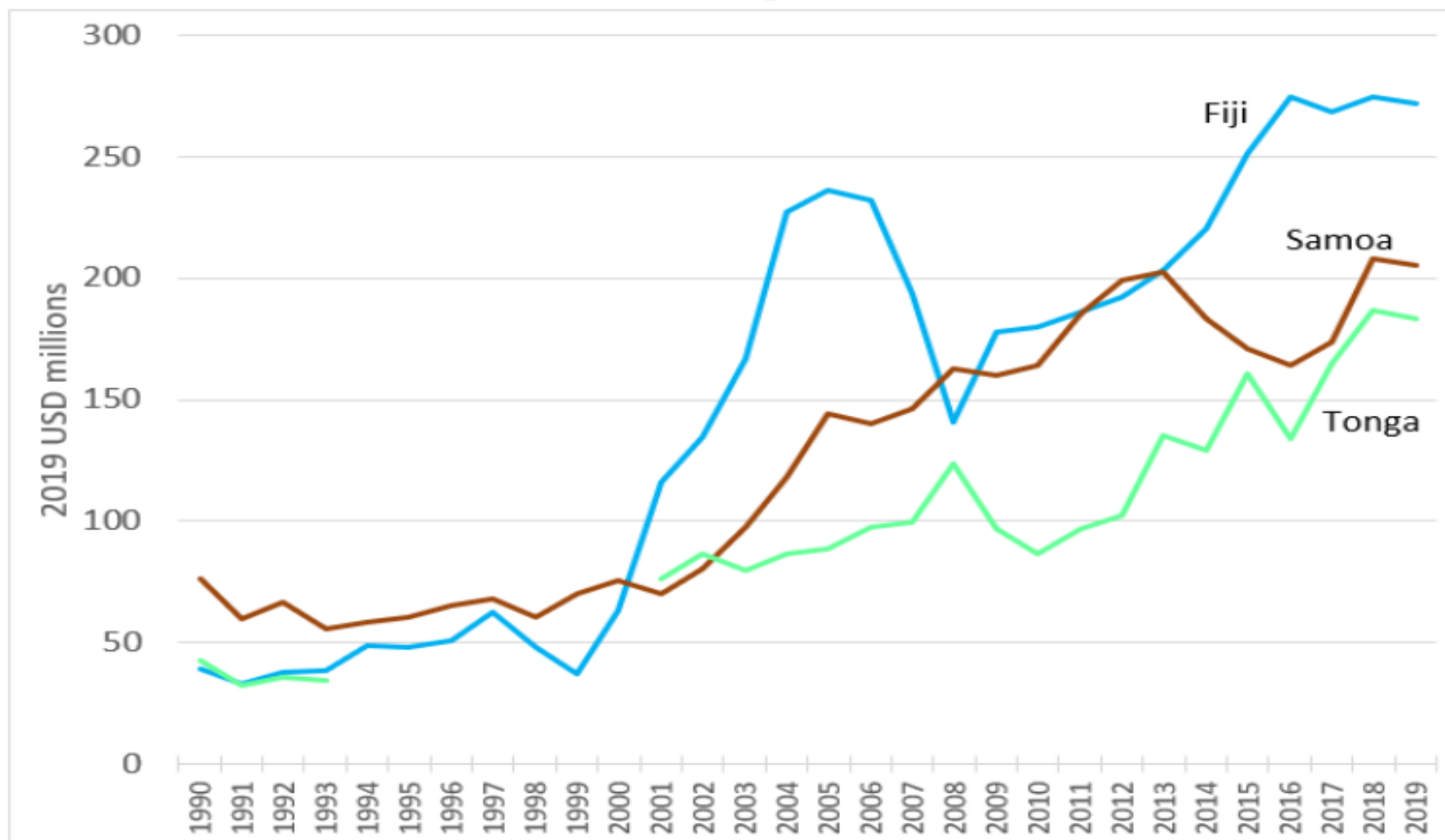
Percentage of women-owned micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, by sector



Note: Statistics do not include the Marshall Islands; Myanmar; Nauru; Palau; Taipei, China; Tuvalu; and Vanuatu.

Source: ADB. 2019. *Leveraging Trade for Women's Economic Empowerment in the Pacific*. Manila.

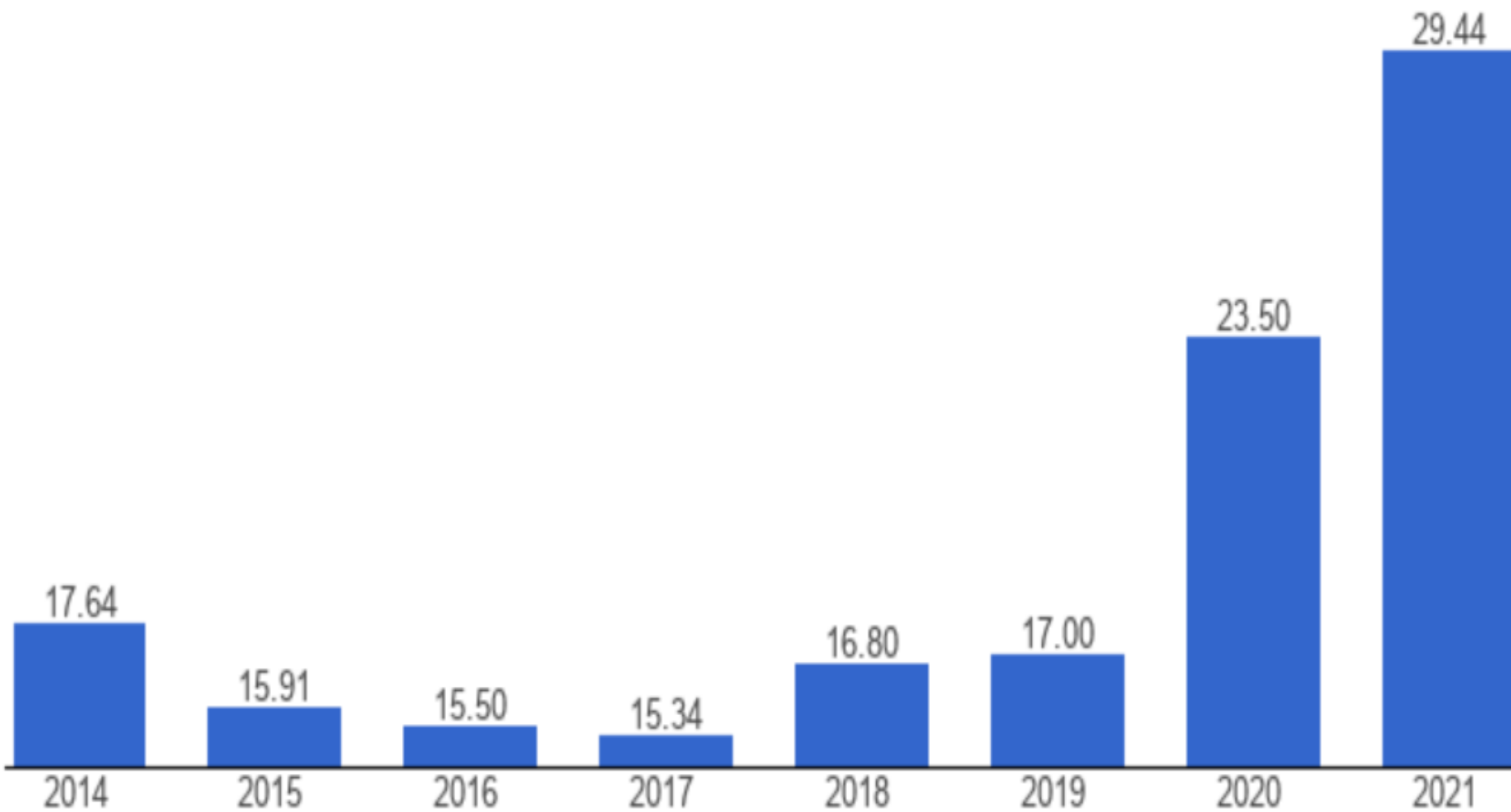
Remittances into Fiji, Samoa and Tonga (in 2019 constant USD millions)



Samoa, the second largest recipients of remittances in the Pacific

¹⁹Source: <https://devpolicy.org/the-pacific-remittances-boom-its-for-real-20201105/>

Appendix: Samoa, Remittances, percent of GDP



²⁰ Source: The Global economy

Descriptive statistics (3)

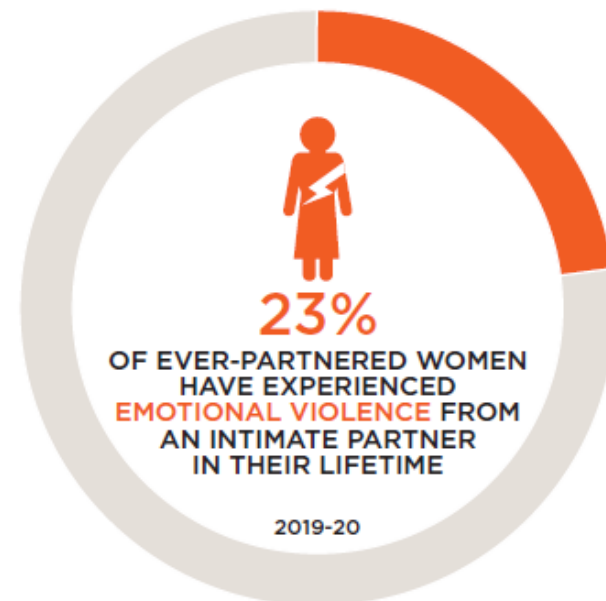
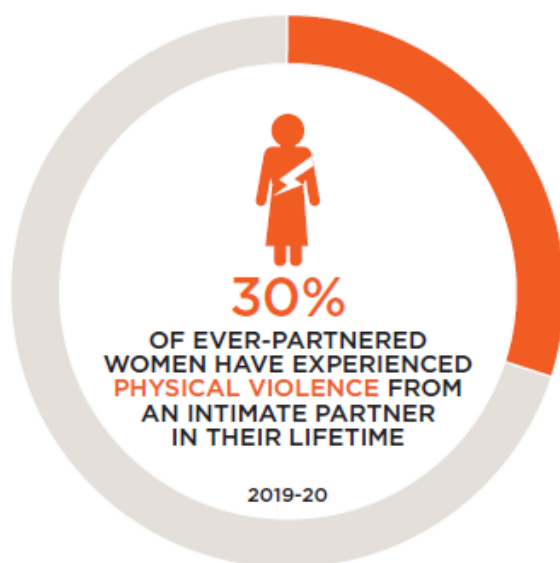
<i>Employment and Empowerment outcomes</i>			
Employed	0.236 (0.010)	0.241 (0.031)	-0.005
Paid job	0.914 (0.013)	0.978 (0.022)	-0.064
Self-employed	0.204 (0.019)	0.333 (0.071)	-0.129**
Control over household income	0.259 (0.010)	0.448 (0.036)	-0.189***
Own phone	0.882 (0.007)	0.932 (0.018)	-0.050**
Using internet	0.427 (0.011)	0.557 (0.036)	-0.130***
Make decision about own healthcare	0.250 (0.010)	0.365 (0.035)	-0.115***
Make decisions for major household purchases	0.090 (0.007)	0.208 (0.029)	-0.118***
Make decisions for daily household purchases	0.287 (0.010)	0.406 (0.036)	-0.119***
Make decisions for visiting relatives	0.141 (0.008)	0.271 (0.032)	-0.130***
Make decision on birth control (=1)	0.136 (0.008)	0.245 (0.031)	-0.109***
Overall happiness	4.592 (0.015)	4.641 (0.047)	-0.049
N	1945	192	

- Samoa is dependent on the informal economy (agriculture and coastal fishing).
- Women collect many species of shellfish, but typically use only basic tools, equipment, and techniques in comparison to their male counterparts.
- The top three industries for formal employment: (March 2021)
 - ✓ public administration (31.2% of female formal employment, 20.8% of male formal employment)
 - ✓ commerce (14.7% female, 16.3% male) and
 - ✓ other services (12.2% female and 10.5% male)
- Women outnumbered men in public administration, finance services, health, and education industries.
- Women tend to work in office-based roles, while men are more likely to be in labour-intensive and trade occupations.

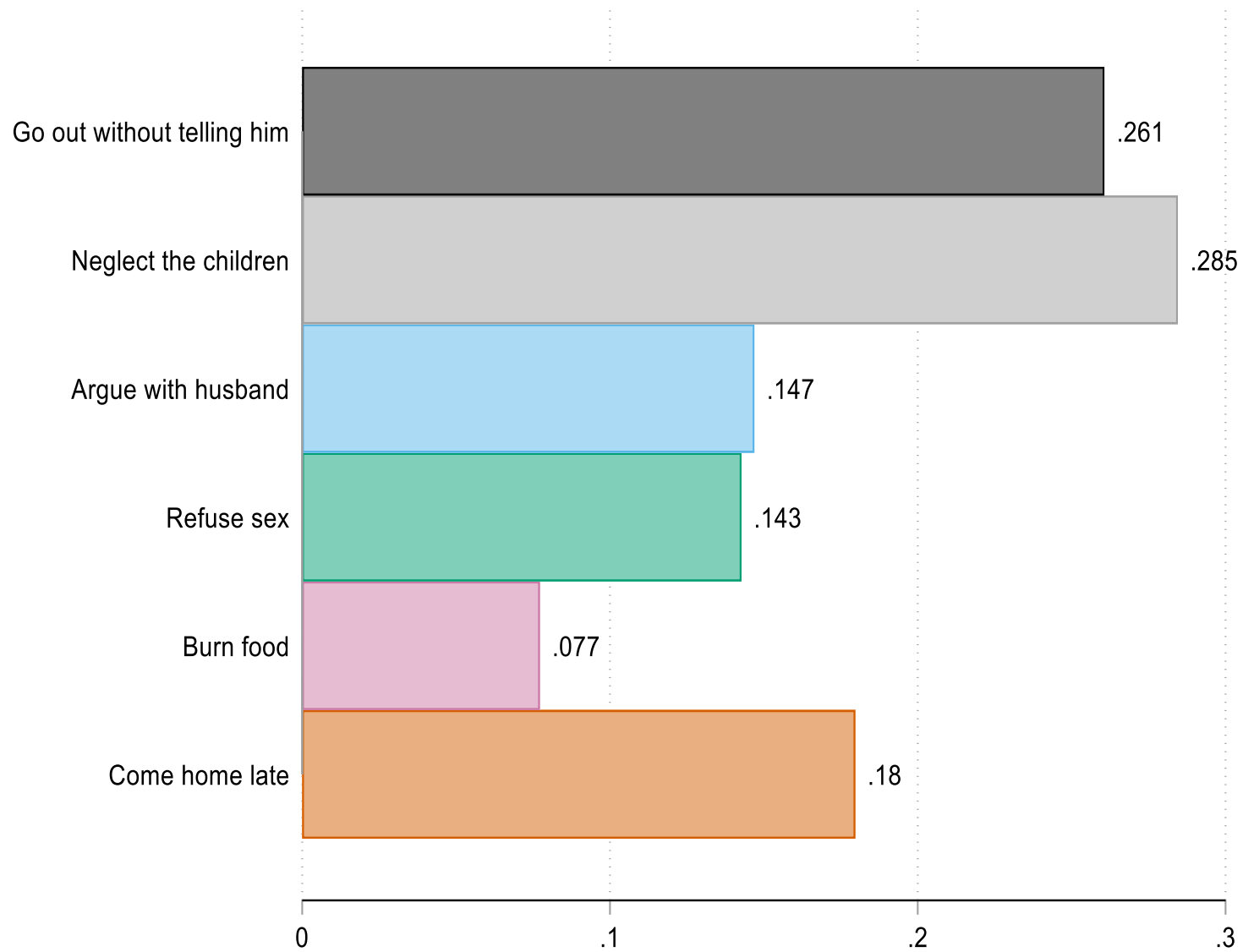
Violence Against Women

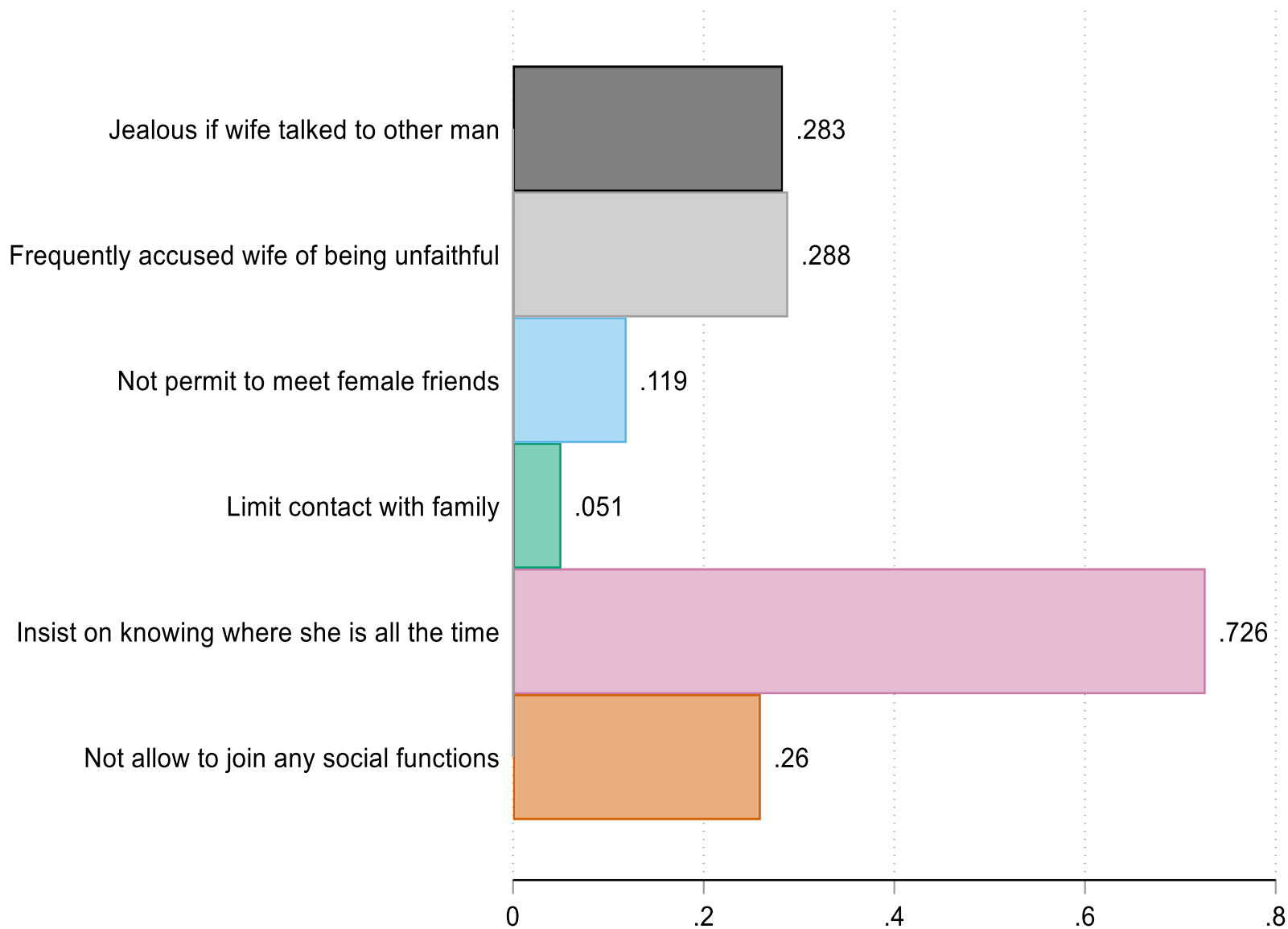
- Violence against women presents major health issues for Samoan women.
- Overall, 46% of Samoan women who have ever been in a relationship have experienced one or more kinds of partner abuse. The most common form is physical abuse (38%), followed by sexual abuse (20%) and emotional abuse (19%).
- Approximately 30% of women who had been physically abused reported being injured as a result of this abuse. Of the women who reported physical partner violence, 24% had been punched, kicked or beaten while pregnant.
- In almost all of these cases, the perpetrator was the child's father. Of the women who reported being victims of violence, 78% said they had experienced domestic violence, 11% were victims of sexual violence, and 11% had experienced indecent assault.

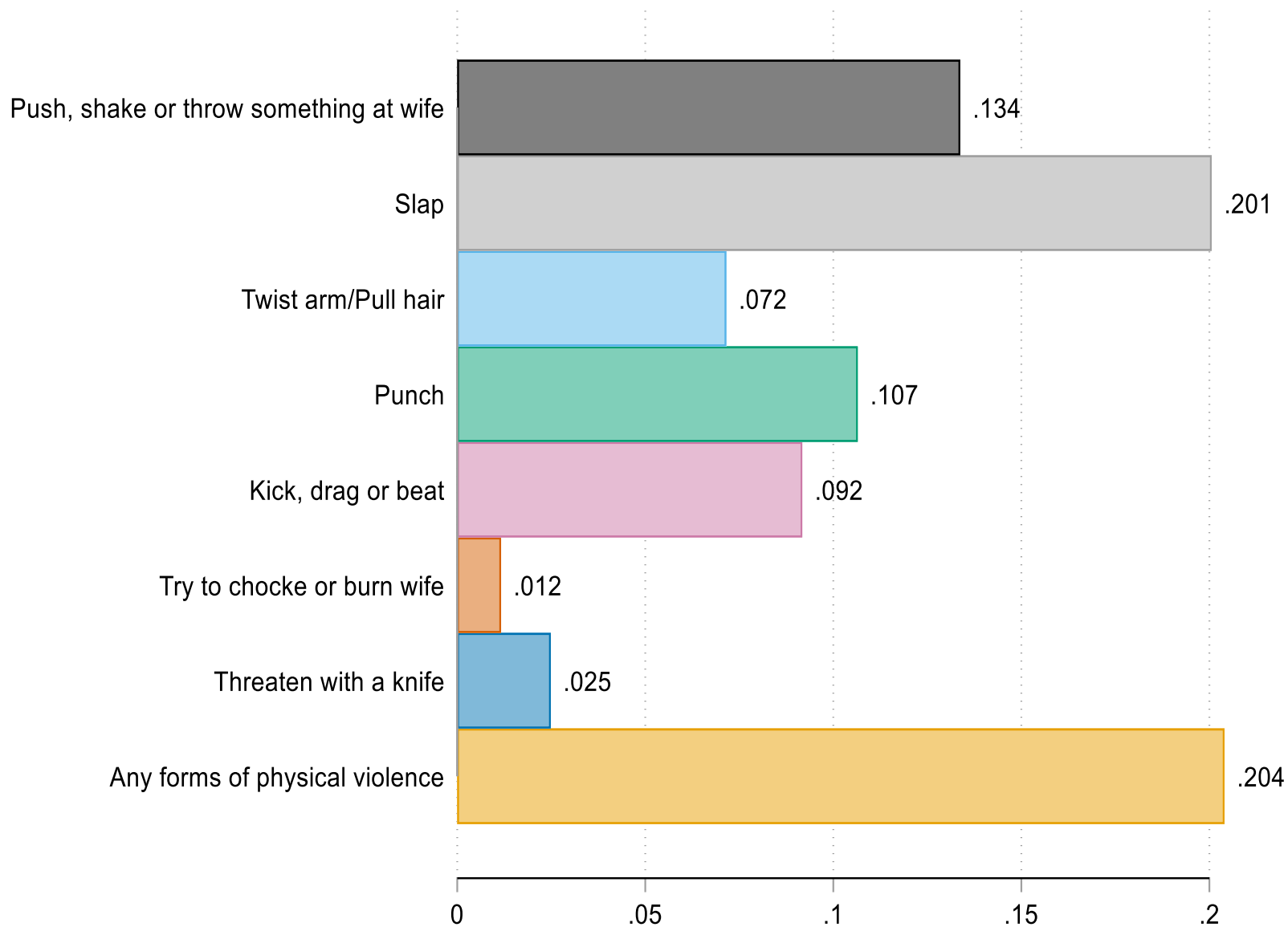
About 70% of women think that men sometimes have a good reason to beat their wives.



Source: 2019-2020 MICS; UN Women







Main Barriers to the Expansion and Formalization of Women-Owned Businesses in the Pacific



Social norms

Gender stereotypes can limit women's business aspirations, opportunities, and access to support. Unpaid work burdens also limit the expansion and formalization of women-owned businesses.



Access to commercial finance

Women's limited ownership of private land restricts the use of land as a collateral for commercial finance.



Business literacy, skills, and access to information

There is limited access to skills development programs and a lack of information on business regulations and procedures. Market analyses and business plans are often not conducted.



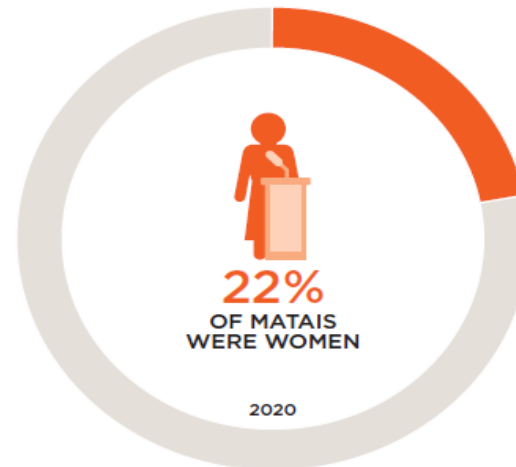
Voice and accountability

Women in business are less likely to be consulted for their views, and justice systems are not set up to be accessible for women in resolving commercial disputes.

Source: ADB. 2023. *Women's Economic Empowerment in the Pacific Region: A Comprehensive Analysis of Existing Research and Data*. Manila.



Female Representation in Traditional Leadership Roles in Samoa



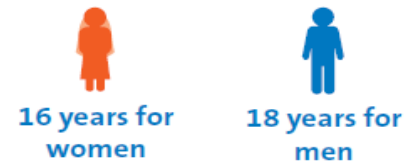
Source: *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade*

Legal Marriage Age in Samoa

Internationally accepted age:



Average marriage age
in Samoa:



Source: *UNDP*



Source: UN Women: https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/UN_WOMEN_SAMOA.pdf



Extension of the study

- The story of women's empowerment in Samoa is a dynamic one and will continue to change. It will be important to continue to analyze these changes over time and mixed methods approaches will be critical to fully understanding what is happening.
- Longer panel studies are needed to examine whether these impacts are sustained when the migrants return.
- The impact depends on household receives remittances or owns land, and women's position within the household.