

Beyond the veil: identifying the underlying factors of digital inequality between men and women

Alison Gillwald and Mariama Deen-Swarray

After Access CPRsouth Conference

Maputo, Mozambique

September 2018



Introduction

- Closing the gender divide in ICT access and connectivity is a policy concern
- The need to understand the determinants of the digital inequality
- There is limited empirical evidence
- Differences between men and women in ICT access and use
- Attempt to locate gender at the intersection of other factors of inequality

Methods

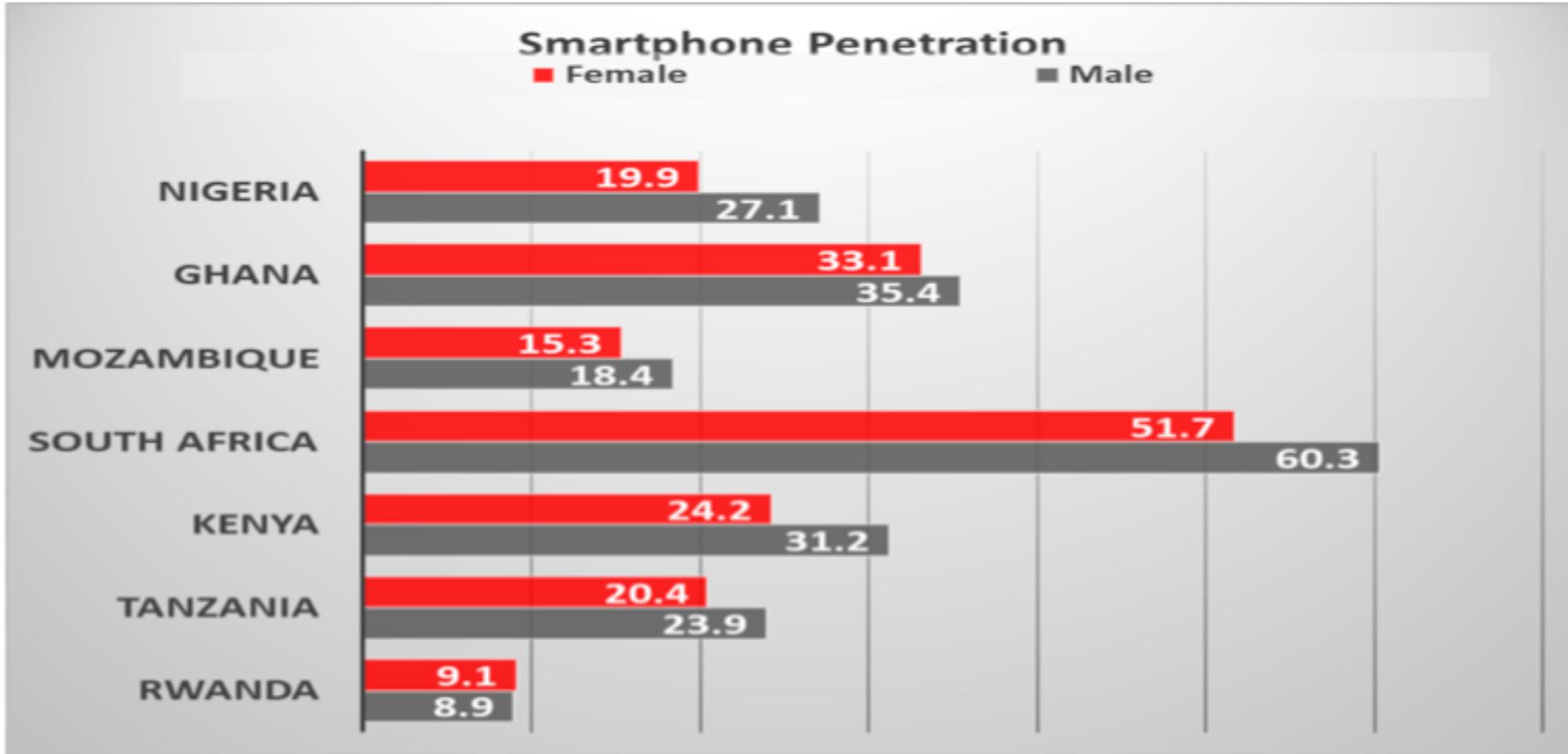
- 2017 nationally representative survey in seven sub-Saharan African countries
- Disaggregation of data based on sex to provide a more accurate picture of gender differences
- The descriptive results used to show these gender differences
- The study further analyses the data using binary regression
- Allows the study to investigate the factors affecting access and use and to establish the direction of the effects

Trend in Mobile Phone Ownership

Country	Sex	2008	2012	2017
Rwanda	Male	12.0	27.6	60.4
	Female	8.0	21.2	37.2
Tanzania	Male	27.0	41.7	64.3
	Female	18.0	30.9	53.5
Kenya	Male	58.0	83.8	92.1
	Female	49.0	67.9	82.7
South Africa	Male	56.4	86.3	82.6
	Female	65.0	82.4	84.8
Mozambique	Male	21.7	42.8	49.8
	Female	32.4	42.1	31.7
Ghana	Male	62.0	61.2	80.7
	Female	58.0	58.2	67.4
Nigeria	Male	-	76.5	70.5
	Female	-	54.9	58.3

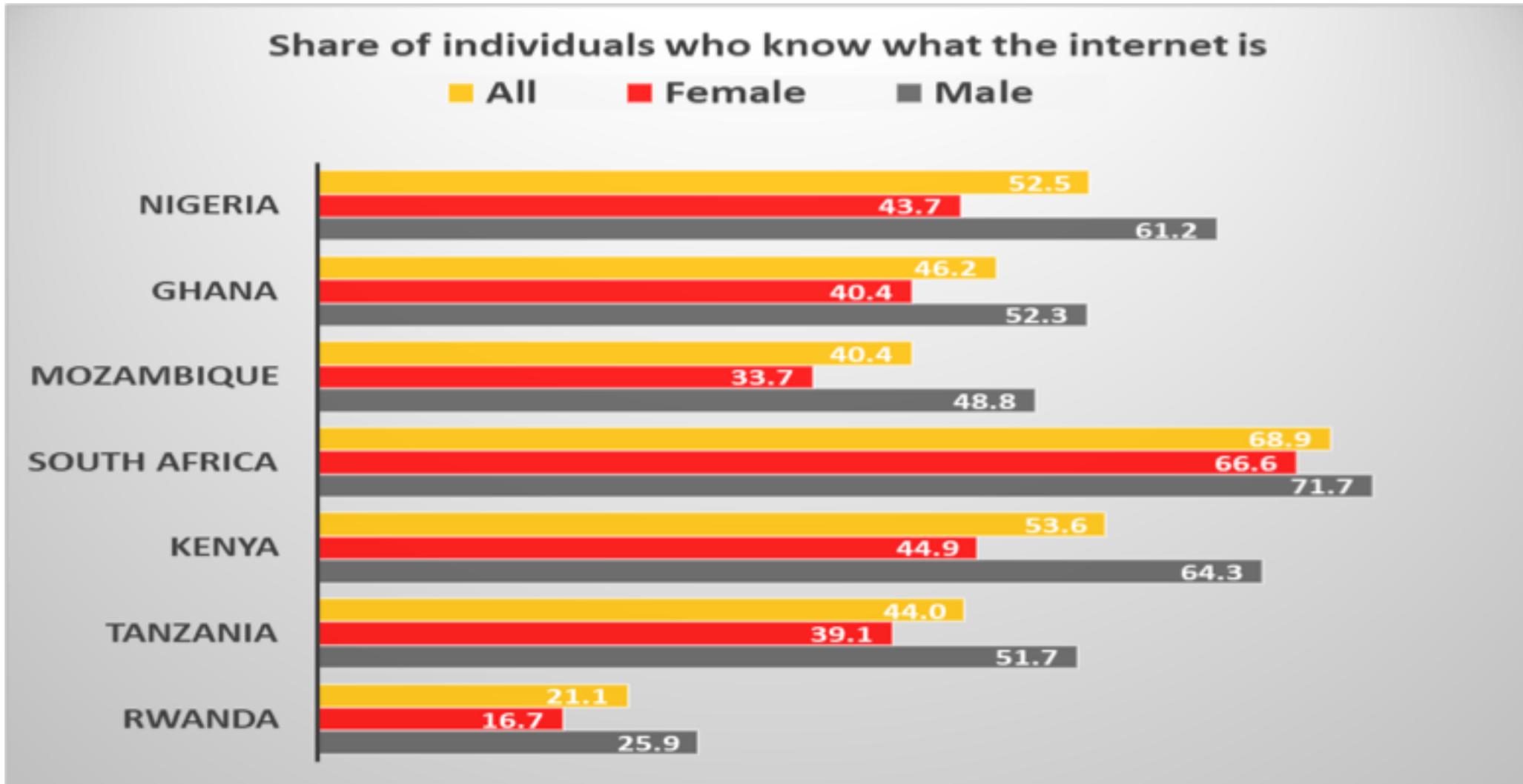
- ❖ In general, mobile phone ownership amongst women has increased
- ❖ However, women continue to lag behind men

Smartphone Ownership

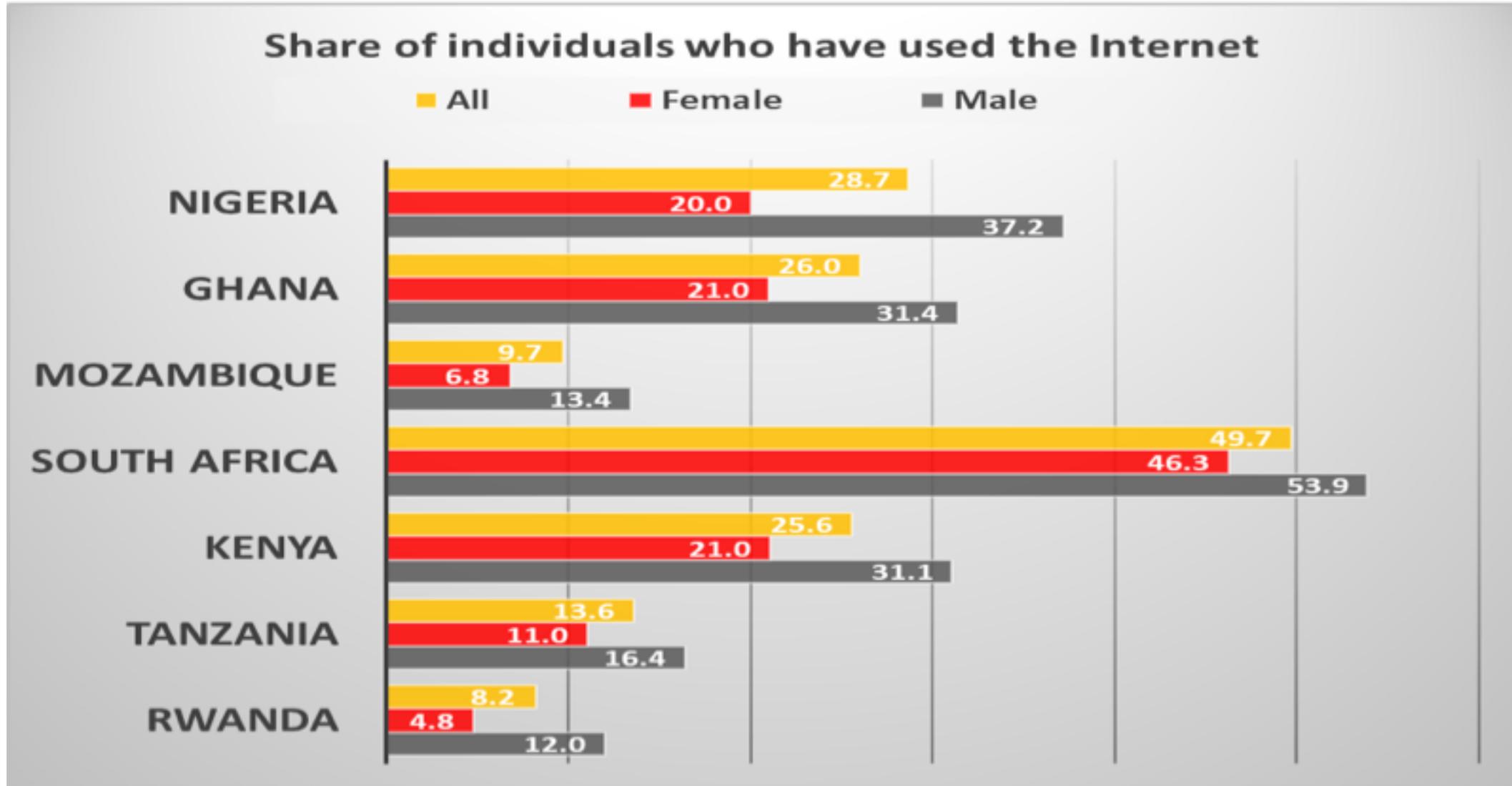


- ❖ Smartphone penetration is in general low
- ❖ Women still lag behind men

Women lag behind men in knowledge of the internet



More men than women use the internet



Barriers and strategies to internet access

Strategies individuals who access the Internet use to save on data charges		Use internet in a free WiFi area	Use internet at home or at work	Use special data promotions
Rwanda	Male	35.2	34.8	61.6
	Female	47.1	53.6	74.0
Tanzania	Male	5.8	4.4	86.7
	Female	6.1	6.8	92.2
Kenya	Male	10.5	43.2	65.8
	Female	14.5	29.1	61.5
South Africa	Male	31.0	26.9	46.2
	Female	31.2	16.6	53.1
Mozambique	Male	19.5	23.9	54.3
	Female	27.5	25.5	50
Ghana	Male	14.8	34.9	55
	Female	4.2	27.2	53.1
Nigeria	Male	7.6	28.8	53
	Female	1.5	27.9	47.8

- ❖ Cost of devices, price of data and access to electricity remain major barriers
- ❖ Lack of awareness, issues of literacy and lack of relevant content are also some of the barriers
- ❖ Men and women adopt multiple strategies to access the Internet
- ❖ However, there is a greater use of free public Wi-Fi by women than men in most of the countries

Gender gap not always in favour of men

- The gender gap is evident in both rural and urban locations
- There is a different gender dynamics when data is looked at across locations
- Women in urban areas are more exposed to and use ICTs more than women in rural areas
- Women in urban areas access and use ICTs more than men in rural areas
- This indicates that the gender gap is not necessarily because of the sex of an individual

Urban-rural gender comparison on ICT access and use

	Rural			Urban		
	National	Male	Female	National	Male	Female
Do you own a mobile phone?	58.8	64.7	53.1	79.8	84.9	75.5
Is your mobile phone a smartphone?	18.5	21.5	15.0	42.8	44.9	40.8
Do you know what the Internet is?	41.0	49.2	33.2	67.4	74.3	61.4
Have you ever used the Internet?	16.9	21.5	12.4	43.1	52.3	35.2
Do you use social media?	15.4	19.7	11.1	40.4	48.5	33.4

Results of model on mobile phone ownership

- The sex of an individual can determine ownership
- Direction of the relationship varies across countries and locations
- As was the case in the 2008 and 2012 studies, levels of income and education continue to influence mobile phone ownership
- However, in this study, it is education that maintains a consistent relationship across countries and geographical locations

Results of model on internet use

- In the case of internet use, sex continues to play a significant role
- Across countries and in different locations, women are less likely to make use of the internet
- Education and income continue to be significant determinants of internet use

Conclusions

- Even when people are able to access networks affordability remains a challenge
- High price of devices and services contribute to the digital inequality
- Digital inequality exists amongst women as much as it does between men and women
- Rural women are worse off in terms of the digital inequality

Policy Implications

- Combining supply-side and demand-side interventions
- Catering to the specific needs of the poor and rural populations
- Introducing Free Slow Internet (FSI) using 2G networks
- Developing free public Wi-Fi networks
- Transforming the existing structural inequalities

Thank You