

Gender difference in support for Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa

Citation for published version (APA):

Konte, M., & Klasen, S. (2016). Gender difference in support for Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa: Do social institutions matter? *Feminist Economics*, 22(2), 55-86.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2015.1103379>

Document status and date:

Published: 02/04/2016

DOI:

[10.1080/13545701.2015.1103379](https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2015.1103379)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Document license:

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To cite this article: Maty Konte & Stephan Klasen (2016) Gender difference in support for Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa: Do social institutions matter?, *Feminist Economics*, 22:2, 55-86, DOI: [10.1080/13545701.2015.1103379](https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2015.1103379)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2015.1103379>



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GENDER DIFFERENCE IN SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: DO SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS MATTER?

Maty Konte and Stephan Klasen

ABSTRACT

Several recent papers have noted gender differences in support for democracy in Africa, but the causes of this difference remain unclear. This article investigates whether the observed gender gap is due to the related gender inequality in social institutions, which affects women's daily life and deprives them of social and economic empowerment inside and outside the home. Using Afrobarometer survey data (rounds 2 [2002–3], 3 [2004–5], and 4 [2008–9]), the study finds that the gender difference in support for democracy is no longer significant once gender discrimination is controlled for in the family code, physical integrity, or civil liberties components of the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI). Interaction terms show that women's support for democracy is only lower in places where gender inequality in these social institutions is particularly large. This study thus provides evidence that women who live in countries with favorable institutions toward women are more supportive of democracy than women who do not.

KEYWORDS

Support for democracy, gender difference, social institutions

JEL Codes: J16, O120, O38

INTRODUCTION

A series of recent studies has investigated the extent to which individuals in a society *support democracy*, in line with the political view that has emphasized the importance of democratic legitimacy on enhancing the level of democracy in a country.¹ For instance, some scholars have pointed out the impact of citizens' level of education (Michael Bratton, Robert Mattes, and E. Gyimah-Boadi 2005; Geoffrey Evans and Pauline Rose 2007b) based on the work of Lipset, which claims that education is a precondition for democracy. Others have looked at the relation between religion and democracy (Charles K. Rowley and Nathanael Smith 2009;

Robbert Maseland and André van Hoorn 2011). These studies also control for gender and surprisingly find a gender difference in support for democracy in developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), where women are less likely than men to assert that democracy is the best political regime.

This recurrent finding of a gender gap in support for democracy has received little attention in the literature and remains an important research question that needs further investigation. As far as we know, an exception is the analysis in Cecilia Garcia-Peñalosa and Maty Konte (2014) who have tried to test potential explanations of this gap, focusing on both differences in socioeconomic characteristics between the two genders and the institutional environment of the countries in which the women live. The main result is that the socioeconomic variables are less important than the institutional variables. Indeed, an increase in the level of the Human Development Index and in political rights reduces the magnitude of this gender difference in support for democracy, but controlling for these institutional variables does not eliminate it. Thus we are still left wondering what explains this gender difference in support for democracy in SSA. Also, this study only considered a cross section of countries, thus not exploiting intertemporal variation within countries.

The present paper seeks to contribute to this literature and adds to the analysis of discrimination in social institutions that has been omitted in previous studies. Gender equality has many distinct dimensions and also involves social institutions.² Social institutions are long-lasting norms, traditions, and codes of conduct that find expression in traditions, customs, cultural practices, and informal and formal laws and guide people's behavior and interaction (Boris Branisa, Stephan Klasen, Maria Ziegler, Denis Drechsler, and Johannes Jütting 2014). An inequality in social institutions deprives women of autonomy and bargaining power in the family, limits their access to the market, public spaces, and to different resources, which may in turn generate additional external forms of inequality between the two genders.

Discriminatory social institutions that restrict women's access to resources are detrimental to welfare and are associated with bad economic and social features – see, for instance, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD; 2010) for the impact of social institutions on some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and OECD (2012), Boris Branisa, Stephan Klasen, and Maria Ziegler (2013), Gaëlle Ferrant and Michele Tuccio (2015), and Asian Development Bank (2013) for the investigation on food security, fertility, South–South migration, and education. So far, studies that have focused on the importance of social institutions on women's behavior in politics are rare.

This paper seeks to fill this gap and examines the extent to which social institutions are related to gender and democracy, and it tests

whether this observed difference in support for democracy in SSA is due to high gender inequality in social institutions, something that affects women's daily lives and deprives them of economic and social autonomy. We suggest that the way women are treated in a society might have major implications for the economic, social, and political functioning of the society (Branisa, Klasen, and Ziegler 2013), and we investigate to what extent this can be related to the gender gap in acceptance and endorsement of democracy. We hypothesize that gender inequality in social institutions limits women's ability to shape their lives, and thus loss of independence also reduces their support for democracy. Indeed, we find that gender discrimination in social institutions that has been previously blamed for slowing down progress in poverty reduction, schooling, and food security also affects women's attitudes in politics, compromising much-needed democratic legitimacy in their own countries.

The analysis is conducted using the Afrobarometer data, a series of national surveys on the attitudes of citizens towards democracy, markets, civil society, and other aspects of development in SSA countries. We start using the most recent Afrobarometer data, round 4 (2008–9), before moving to a larger sample where we add rounds 2 (2002–3)³ and 3 (2005–6) in order to take into account time and country fixed effects simultaneously, thereby extending the existing literature.

To define *support for democracy*, we follow the previous literature – including Geoffrey Evans and Pauline Rose (2007a, 2007b) and Garcia-Peñalosa and Konte (2014), among others – and create a dichotomous variable that takes the value of 1 for people who assert that democracy is the best political regime and zero for all the alternative responses that are proposed in the surveys (see Section 3). In our sample, we find on average a gender gap of 8 points, which goes up to 18 in Malawi, 17 in Burkina Faso and Senegal, 13 in Madagascar, 11 in Zimbabwe and 10 in Mali. To measure social institutions, we use the 2012 version of the recently created OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) as well as its subcomponents.⁴ These indicators inform us about gender discrimination in the family code, gender discrimination in terms of civil liberties, physical integrity, access to different forms of resources, and the degree of preference for boys in a society. An influential literature has recently used this OECD data at the macro level in order to determine the importance of social institutions for various economic and social outcomes – for example, Johannes Jütting, Angela Luci, and Christian Morrisson (2010); OECD (2010, 2012); Boris Branisa and Maria Ziegler (2011); Branisa, Klasen, and Ziegler (2013).

Our econometric results show that there is a significant gender difference in support for democracy in the sample, even conditional on numerous individual socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. This finding

confirms the previous studies, and it is robust to the use of alternative measures of support for democracy, to the use of different Afrobarometer samples, and to the inclusion of both time and country fixed effects. Interestingly, this gap becomes no longer significant after we control for particular social institutions such as gender discrimination in the family code, in physical integrity, and in civil liberties, suggesting it is really gender inequality in social institutions that is driving the gender bias in support for democracy. We thus find that women living in a country with favorable laws and norms toward women have a higher degree of support for democracy than other women.

RELATED LITERATURE

This paper is related to three strands of the literature. First, it contributes to the literature addressing the determinants of support for democracy in developing countries using survey data. Education is one of the standard candidates that have been shown to affect positively the degree of support for democracy, and influential evidence can be found in Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi (2005) and Evans and Rose (2007a, 2007b), among others. These analyses have used different frameworks, but they can all be linked to Lipset's hypothesis that claims that education is a prerequisite for democracy. Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi (2005) have provided evidence that educated people in SSA are more likely to support democratic regimes even though the authors claim that "awareness of the meaning of democracy and knowledge of leaders" remains more important than formal schooling (219). Evans and Rose (2007b) provide a more detailed framework to address the impact of formal education on the support for democracy in Malawi, decomposing the level of education into its different stages. They conclude that primary schooling, which is the level of education of the majority of educated people in Africa, is sufficient for the endorsement of democracy and the rejection of nondemocratic regimes in Malawi. Their recent investigation on the relation between education and support for democracy in Evans and Rose (2007a) considers a larger sample of African countries, and their results still support their previous conclusion.⁵ Robert Mattes and Dungalira Mughogho (2009) have also recently contributed to this strand of the literature, focusing on both direct and indirect impacts of education on the support for democracy through access to the media and political participation using the Afrobarometer data, round 4, similar to our small sample in this paper.⁶ Other work has studied alternative potential determinants of support for democracy, including for instance religion (Rowley and Smith 2009; Maseland and van Hoorn 2011).⁷

In these papers, scholars have controlled for the gender of respondents and have found a significant gender difference in the support for democracy, with a sign indicating that women are less supportive than men of democratic regimes. This recurrent gender gap has received little attention in this literature. An exception is the analysis of the gender gap in democratic attitudes in SSA countries by Garcia-Peñalosa and Konte (2014), which showed the importance of some institutions in affecting the magnitude of this gap but failed to determine what really explains such a gender difference in this region.

Second, closely related to the present paper is the research that has analyzed various aspects of the gender difference in African political behavior. For instance, Hilde Coffe and Catherine Bolzendahl (2011) have focused on the gender gap in political participation. They show that individual socioeconomic characteristics that have been found to be important determinants of the gender gap in political participation in Western countries (see Nancy Burns [2007]) are not very appropriate for explaining the gender gap in political participation in African countries. Instead, they find a strong correlation between a country's level of formal institutions and the level of the gender gap in political participation. These findings have been one of the focal points of the paper by Garcia-Peñalosa and Konte (2014), who have included countries' institutional climate as one of the potential explanations of the gender gap in the support for democracy in SSA countries. Using the Afrobarometer data, round 4, they found that higher levels of Human Development Index and of political rights, which are entered both as separate covariates and as interaction terms with gender, do not eliminate gender gap but reduce its magnitude.

Finally, our paper also relates to the literature that has focused on the negative impact of the different forms of gender inequality and discrimination against women on various economic outcomes such as education and employment (for instance, Dina Abu-Ghaida and Stephan Klasen 2004; Stephan Klasen and Francesca Lamanna 2009). Based on this finding, it is worth looking at the origin of this gender discrimination. Thus, recently Branisa, Klasen, and Ziegler (2013) have posited that gender inequalities are rooted in gender roles that evolve from (often informal) institutions that shape everyday life and form role models that people try to fulfill and satisfy. Indeed, considering social institutions that affect individuals' daily lives and deprive women of autonomy in the home is of major interest for development studies related to gender issues. Previously, a number of studies have also examined the relation between women's autonomy and their fertility decisions at the household level.⁸

At the cross-country level, it has been more difficult to address the impact of social institutions on economic outcomes due to the scarcity of data for this category of institutions. Johannes P. Jütting, Christian Morrisson, Jeff

Dayton-Johnson, and Denis Drechsler (2008) have presented the Gender, Institutions, and Development database, collected by the OECD, which complements the existing gender discrimination indexes; these are the first data on gender inequality that take into account different measures of social norms, traditions, and family laws. Branisa and Ziegler (2011) have used this data in order to reexamine the relation between gender inequality and corruption and added in the measures of social institutions, a variable that had been omitted in the previous literature. They have provided evidence that the level of corruption in a country depends strongly on the extent to which social institutions deprive women of the freedom to participate in social and public life.

In addition, the OECD Development Center (2010) has examined the relation between discriminatory social institutions and some of the eight MDGs. These studies have specifically concentrated on the eradication of extreme poverty (MDG 1), the achievement of universal primary education (MDG 2), and the improvement of maternal health (MDG 5). They show that more gender equality in decision-making power in the household enables women to allocate the resources efficiently, which in turn will increase the welfare of the family, reducing the intensity of poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. They have also provided evidence that an increase of women's decision-making power in the household will expand women's ability to ensure complete schooling for their children. They have further shown that domestic violence against women and genital mutilation of women decrease women's rights and decision-making power and are detrimental to maternal health and fertility control.

In the same spirit, Boris Branisa, Stephan Klasen, and Maria Ziegler (2009) and Branisa et al. (2014) have created a social institutions and gender-related index (hereafter SIGI) that is an aggregate measure of the different indicators presented in Jütting et al. (2008). Using cross-country data, Branisa, Klasen, and Ziegler (2013) have analyzed the effect of the SIGI on various development outcomes. They have found that gender inequality in social institutions lowers women's secondary education and increases fertility rates, child mortality, and the level of corruption. Indeed, this study has shown the importance of considering social institutions in the choice of policies intended to address gendered development outcomes. Using the SIGI index, Jütting, Luci, and Morrisson (2010) have analyzed the impact of gender discrimination in social institutions on discrimination between men and women in the job market for forty-four developing countries. Their results highlight that social institutions are crucial for women's activity patterns and job quality. Lastly, Ferrant and Tuccio (2015) find that high levels of gender inequality in social institutions reduce South-South migration, but that migration to countries with low levels of gender inequality in social institutions helps reduce gender inequality in the source country.

DATA

The Afrobarometer surveys

To carry out our empirical analysis, we start with the most recent available data of the Afrobarometer, round 4. For the purpose of robustness, we will also combine round 4 with rounds 3 and 2 in order to include time and country fixed effects as well as consider variation in social institutions over time. The Afrobarometer, round 4, is a collection of surveys that took place in twenty African countries between March 2008 and June 2009. In total 27,713 individuals ages 18–64 were interviewed face to face, with questions in the local language, in Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Random sampling is used at each stage of the sample in order to provide a representative cross-sectional sample of all the citizens of voting age within countries.⁹ Due to missing data for social institutions, we exclude Cape Verde from our data for the rest of the analysis.

Dependent variable: Support for democracy

The main dependent variable is support for democracy. To build this variable, we use question 30 of the survey,¹⁰ which is: “Which of these three statements is closest to your opinion?” The possible choices are:

- (1) Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.
- (2) In some circumstances, a nondemocratic government can be preferable.
- (3) For someone like me, it does not matter what kind of government we have.
- (4) I don’t know.

Figure 1 presents the share of respondents of these different possible answers. Altogether, 69 percent of people answer (1); the remaining 31 percent are divided into 11 percent for answer (2), 12 percent for (3), and 8 percent “don’t know.” For the purpose of this analysis and following common practice in the literature, all categories other than “Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government” are aggregated because it is not obvious how to order them in terms of preference for a democratic regime (see also Evans and Rose [2007b]; Garcia-Peñalosa and Konte [2014]). We thus code the dummy *democracy* as equal to 1 if the response is (1), meaning that the individual supports democracy, and *democracy* equals 0 for any of the alternative responses.

Furthermore, in robustness checks we consider closely related dependent variables. We particularly define a dummy *election* and code it to 1 if respondents agree that leaders should be chosen through regular, open,

ARTICLES

- Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.
- In some circumstances, a nondemocratic government can be preferable.
- It doesn't matter what kind of government we have.
- I don't know.

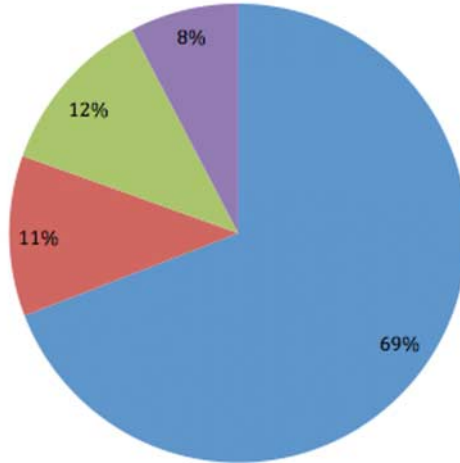


Figure 1 Support for democracy
Source: Afrobarometer, round 4 (2008–9).

and honest elections; a dummy *plurality* and code it to 1 if respondents agree with the need for many political parties to make sure that citizens have real choices in who governs them; a dummy *media* and code it to 1 if respondents agree that the media should constantly investigate and report on corruption and the mistakes made by the government; and finally a dummy *constitution* that takes the value 1 if respondents agree that one should limit the president to serving a maximum of two terms in office.

Table 1 reports some descriptive statistics from the Afrobarometer variables used in this paper. Overall, African citizens register a significant degree of support for democracy with 69 percent of them asserting that democracy is the best political regime; 79 percent agree that elections should be regular, open, and honest; 69 percent are in favor of the existence of multiple political parties in their country; 75 percent support the freedom of the media; finally, 73 percent of African people agree that the number of terms for a leader should not exceed two.

Explanatory variables

Our primary explanatory variable is *female*, which takes the value of 1 for a woman and 0 for a man; 50.07 percent of the sample consists of women

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Table 1 Afrobarometer: Descriptive statistics

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Question</i>		<i>No.</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Support for democracy	q30	Yes	18,285	69.15
		No*	8,159	30.85
Free elections	q31	Yes	20,324	79.05
		No*	5,386	20.95
Multiple parties	q32	Yes	17,435	69.4
		No*	7,689	30.6
Freedom of media	q35	Yes	18,792	75.81
		No*	5,996	24.19
Limited turns for presidents	q38	Yes	18,137	73.71
		No*	6,468	26.29
Female	q101	Male*	13,207	49.93
		Female	13,242	50.07
Education	q89	No formal*	5,454	20.65
		Some primary	4,780	18.1
		Primary	9,348	35.4
		Secondary	4,033	15.27
		Post-secondary	2,793	10.58
Age	q101	< 26*	7,176	27.48
		< 36	7,734	29.61
		> 35	11,206	42.91
Location	URBRUR	Urban	9,761	36.9
		Rural*	16,688	63.1
Head of the household	q2	Yes*	13,646	52.01
		No	12,590	47.99
Employment status	q94	Inactive	8,386	31.82
		Unemployed*	9,042	34.19
		Employed	8,930	33.88
Access to media via radio	q12a	Yes	22,878	86.7
		No*	3,539	13.4
Access to media via TV	q12b	Yes	13,931	52.8
		No*	12,451	47.2
Access to media via paper	q12c	Yes	10,583	40.2
		No*	15,744	59.8
Gone without food	q8a	No*	12,305	44.5
		Yes	15,346	55.5
Gone without water	q8b	No*	14,324	51.77
		Yes	13,345	48.23
Gone without medicine	q8c	No*	11,299	41.01
		Yes	16,254	58.99
Gone without cash	q8d	No*	6,017	21.84
		Yes	21,534	78.16

(Continued).

Table 1 Continued

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Question</i>		<i>No.</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Corrupted	q51	No*	20,510	78.43
		Yes*	5,641	21.57
Extent of democracy	q42a	Full democracy*	7,310	26.38
		Not a democracy	1,875	6.77
		Don't understand democracy	1,202	4.34
		Don't know	1,724	6.22
Vote during last elections	q23d	Has voted*	18,503	69.96
		No (for personal reasons)	1,552	5.9
		No (others reasons)	6,214	23.62
Interested in public affairs	q13	No*	4,674	17.67
		not very or somewhat	12,468	47.59
		Yes	9,051	34.22

Note: *Reference group.

Source: Afrobarometer, round 4 (2008–9).

Table 2 Support for democracy by gender

	<i>Men %</i>	<i>Women %</i>	<i>Gender gap</i>
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.	73.58	65.64	7.94 (0.0055)***
In some circumstances, a nondemocratic government can be preferable.	10.78	11.39	0.61 (0.0038)
For someone like me, it does not matter what kind of government we have.	10.32	12.76	2.44 (0.0038)***
I don't know.	5.31	10.21	4.9 (0.00038)***

Note: Standard errors are in parenthesis. *** denotes statistical significance at the 1 percent level.

Source: Afrobarometer, round 4 (2008–9).

and 49.93 percent of men. Table 2 presents the degree of support for democracy by gender. The last column of this table informs us about the test of equality between the proportion of men and the proportion of women who give similar responses for question 30 on individual preference for democracy. We observe that the test of the equality of the proportion of men and the proportion of women is rejected for the different categories of our main dependent variable except for the category “in some circumstances a nondemocratic regime can be preferable.”¹¹

The choice of the additional explanatory variables is based on the existing theories as well as on the previous literature in this field. As standard covariates, we include education, age, location, head of household, employment status, access to media, understanding of the meaning of democracy, and variables to proxy people's interest in politics and their experience of corruption. Education is divided into five categories: no formal schooling, which includes 20 percent of respondents, incomplete primary school (18 percent), completed primary (35 percent), secondary (15 percent), and post-secondary, which has the lowest rate, at less than 11 percent of the sample. We expect that education significantly increases the degree of support for democracy because educated people are more likely to be interested in politics and are more able to understand the importance of democracy. This is in line with Lipset's hypothesis that education is a prerequisite for democracy.¹²

One of the major disadvantages of the Afrobarometer data is the lack of information on income at the individual level, a variable that may be crucial for people's attitudes toward democracy. The two possibilities that we have chosen for dealing with this issue are, first, to proxy the level of poverty by using the questions of the survey that ask people how often they (or their family) have gone without food, water, medicine, or cash. Only 45 percent have never gone without food, as against 52 percent for water, 41 percent for medicine, and 22 percent for cash. Second we will also include in the analysis the natural logarithm of the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita at the country level.

Another aspect that we will also consider in our analysis is people's understanding and involvement in public affairs and politics. To proxy an individual's understanding of the meaning of democracy, they are asked how democratic their country is, with various possible answers: "Not a democracy," "A full democracy," "A democracy with minor or major problems," "Do not understand the question," or "Do not understand what democracy is." With this information, we create four different categories with the control group being people who think that their country is a full democracy. Finally, individuals are asked whether they have voted in the last election and whether they are interested in public and political affairs.

Measuring social institutions

Different indices of gender inequality have been proposed in the literature. Most of them refer to gender differences in outcomes, such as the UNDP's gender-related indices, the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index, and other indicators proposed in the literature (for a review, see Stephen Klasen and Dana Schüller [2011]).

To measure social institutions, this paper uses the OECD's SIGI. These data provide indicators on discriminatory social institutions for

over 100 developing countries. For the purpose of this paper, we will consider the aggregate SIGI measure and its five components in order to characterize the types of inequality in social institutions that really matter for the endorsement and acceptance of democracy by women. These five indicators of the SIGI are the degree of discrimination in the family code, restricted physical integrity, the son-bias index, the restricted resources and entitlements index, and the restricted civil liberties index. This index was first launched in 2009 and was recently updated in 2012. Branisa et al. (2014) have provided a rich description and implication of these indexes, and explained how they complement existing gender discrimination measures that are more outcome oriented and are less focused on the informal part of gender discrimination. The subcomponents of the SIGI are:

- *Family Code* – captures institutions that influence women’s decision making in the household and gives information on gender inequality in terms of minimum age of marriage as well as in terms of parental authority (both during marriage and after divorce) and in inheritance rights. This index also takes into account the prevalence of women’s early and forced marriages.
- *Physical Integrity* – informs us about violence against women and the existence of legal protection for women from rape, domestic violence, and genital mutilation. It also measures the extent to which women are free to engage in family planning.
- *Civil Liberties* – measures the freedom of participation of women taking into account the restrictions of women in moving alone and accessing public space without the agreement of their husband or other male family member.
- *Resource* – measures the access of women to several types of property, such as agricultural or nonagricultural lands, bank loans, and any other form of credit.
- *Son Preference* – indicates the degree of gender bias in mortality (proxied by the share of “missing women”) and the preference for boys in a society.

While some of these indicators are more focused on gender discrimination inside of the household (Family Code, Physical Integrity), other are more oriented toward discrimination outside of the household (Resources, Civil Liberties). This gives us the opportunity to investigate at the same time the social and economic constraints that women face inside as well as outside of the households.

These indexes take values between 0 and 1, where 1 represents the highest level of gender discrimination, and 0 represents no discrimination.

Table 3 Social institutions related to gender inequality, 2012

Country	SIGI	Family Code	Physical Integrity	Son Preference	Resource	Civil Liberties
Benin	0.4567	0.534	0.512	0.401	1	0.758
Botswana	–	0.375	0.229	–	0.507	0.760
Burkina Faso	0.369	0.706	0.917	0.382	0.507	0.324
Ghana	0.2622	0.429	0.378	0.479	0.689	0.529
Kenya	0.2487	0.383	0.551	0.519	0.649	0.319
Lesotho	–	0.456	–	0.368	0	0.264
Liberia	0.344	0.551	0.823	0.423	0	0.749
Madagascar	0.168	0.544	0.210	0.452	0.179	0.513
Malawi	0.218	0.298	0.313	0.391	0.507	0.702
Mali	0.601	1	0.964	0.347	0.179	0.962
Mozambique	0.22	0.510	0.276	0.325	0.507	0.633
Namibia	0.1358	0.330	0.251	0.428	0.507	0.258
Nigeria	0.442	0.601	0.413	0.52	0.676	0.976
Senegal	0.2304	0.611	0.566	0.450	0.167	0.477
South Africa	0.104	0.022	0.172	0.439	0.507	0.193
Tanzania	0.252	0.726	0.513	0.393	0.507	0.241
Uganda	0.3836	0.523	0.639	0.419	1	0.245
Zambia	0.305	0.585	0.502	0.344	0.507	0.746
Zimbabwe	–	0.575	–	0.456	0.339	0.719
Mean	0.296	0.514	0.484	0.419	0.470	0.546
Standard Dev.	0.131	0.199	0.244	0.056	0.280	0.255

Source: OECD (2012).

The aggregate SIGI index is obtained using the formula of Foster–Greer–Thorbecke, which gives greater weight to larger inequality in a particular component of the index.¹³ Table 3 shows countries’ levels of gender inequality in social institutions. We observe that for the recent data on social institutions provided in 2012, Mali has the highest value for the discrimination in Family Code, Physical Integrity, and Civil Liberties along with Nigeria. Benin and Uganda record the worst value for discrimination in access to resources. In contrast, South Africa has the best position in terms of Family Code, Physical Integrity, and Civil Liberties, while Lesotho has a value of 0 for access to resources. Liberia and Mozambique have the lowest index of Son Preference.

EMPIRICAL STRATEGY

We have data for $J = 1, 2, \dots, 19$ countries, and n_j defines the number of observations per country, which varies across countries. The variable of interest is support for democracy denoted by *democracy*.

Table 4 Support for democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Variable</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Male	Female	-0.409*** (0.028)	-0.289*** (0.031)	-0.301*** (0.032)	-0.198*** (0.033)	-0.198*** (0.033)
No formal	educ1		0.183*** (0.048)	0.178*** (0.049)	0.094* (0.053)	0.097* (0.053)
	educ2		0.508*** (0.047)	0.507*** (0.047)	0.286*** (0.051)	0.290*** (0.051)
	educ3		0.614*** (0.059)	0.609*** (0.060)	0.372*** (0.064)	0.375*** (0.064)
	educ4		0.781*** (0.068)	0.752*** (0.069)	0.516*** (0.072)	0.518*** (0.072)
< 26	age2		0.098** (0.039)	0.111*** (0.039)	0.002 (0.043)	0.003 (0.043)
	age3		0.300*** (0.041)	0.305*** (0.041)	0.142*** (0.046)	0.144*** (0.046)
Rural	Urban		0.047 (0.034)	0.043 (0.035)	0.049 (0.036)	0.049 (0.036)
Yes	head		-0.042 (0.035)	-0.037 (0.035)	-0.018 (0.037)	-0.018 (0.037)
Unemployed	Employed		-0.017 (0.032)	0.0048 (0.033)	-0.018 (0.034)	-0.017 (0.034)
	Inactive		-0.184*** (0.062)	-0.148** (0.064)	-0.173** (0.067)	-0.172** (0.067)
No	tv		0.061 (0.039)	0.056 (0.039)	0.051 (0.042)	0.050 (0.042)
No	radio		0.288*** (0.043)	0.278*** (0.044)	0.121** (0.048)	0.121** (0.048)
No	paper		0.082** (0.039)	0.075* (0.040)	-0.012 (0.042)	-0.011 (0.042)
No	food			-0.169*** (0.035)	-0.145*** (0.037)	-0.144*** (0.037)
No	water			0.018 (0.033)	0.012 (0.035)	0.012 (0.035)
No	medicine			-0.049 (0.036)	-0.042 (0.038)	-0.044 (0.038)
No	cash			-0.013 (0.042)	0.022 (0.044)	0.022 (0.044)
No	corruption			-0.161*** (0.037)	-0.227*** (0.039)	-0.229*** (0.039)
Full democracy	extent1				-0.547*** (0.065)	-0.546*** (0.065)

(Continued).

DO SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS MATTER?

Table 4 Continued

Reference	Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	extent2				- 0.324***	- 0.323***
					(0.038)	(0.039)
	extent3				- 2.199***	- 2.196***
					(0.062)	(0.062)
No	publicinterest1				0.232***	0.232***
					(0.042)	(0.042)
	publicinterest2				0.379***	0.380***
					(0.046)	(0.046)
No	vote				0.298***	0.296***
					(0.036)	(0.036)
	Constant	1.056***	0.204	0.391**	0.748***	1.271***
		(0.132)	(0.147)	(0.152)	(0.144)	(0.120)
	Fixed-effect	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
	BIC	30919	29518	28742	26622	26709
	Deviance	30889	29356	28529	26348	26254
	Intra-Class(ρ)	0.0892	0.0918	0.0926	0.0689	0.0000
	No. obs.	26,444	25,654	25,112	24,817	24,817
	No. countries	19	19	19	19	19

Notes: Table reports the coefficients from the logit estimation; the dependent variable is support for democracy using round 4. Standard errors are in parenthesis. ***, **, * denote statistical significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels, respectively.

Source: Afrobarometer, round 4 (2008–9).

Given the structure of the variable of interest, which is dichotomous, we estimate a varying-intercept multilevel (or hierarchical) logit model where individuals are nested within countries. Hence, we will consider a two-level model where the highest level is the country, and the lowest level is the respondent. We follow the same specification as in previous studies, in particular the one in Garcia-Peñalosa and Konte (2014). Let us denote π_{ij} the probability that the individual i living in country j supports democracy. This probability is given as follows:

$$\pi_{ij} = \text{Prob}(\text{democracy}_{ij} = 1, \omega_{ij}) \quad (1)$$

More explicitly, we can express this probability as:

$$\pi_{ij} = \frac{1}{1 + \exp(-\omega_{ij})} \quad (2)$$

Where

$$\omega_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{female}_{ij} + \beta_2 X_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (3)$$

Our parameter of interest is β_1 , which tells us about the impact of gender on the probability to support democracy. A negative sign means that being a woman decreases the probability to support democracy compared to a man. The vector X_{ij} contains the socioeconomic characteristics of an individual i in country j . Individuals who live in the same country may not be independent, thus standard errors may be underestimated with the traditional regression techniques. Multilevel modeling has the advantage to take into account such a clustering effect. By allowing the intercept to vary across countries, we then have

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Level 1 : } \omega_{ij} &= \beta_{0j} + \beta_1 \text{female}_{ij} + \beta_2 X_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}, \varepsilon_{ij} \sim N(0, \sigma^2) \\ \text{Level 2 : } \beta_{0j} &= \beta_{00} + u_j, u_j \sim N(0, \delta^2) \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

Thus the general model can be written as follows:

$$\omega_{ij} = \beta_{00} + \beta_1 \text{female}_{ij} + \beta_2 X_{ij} + u_j + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (5)$$

The term $u_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$ in equation 5 represents the random part of the model, where u_j is the country-specific effect, and ε_{ij} is the individual-level error term. The parameters δ^2 and σ^2 are, respectively, the variances of u_j and ε_{ij} .

The main focus in this paper is to test whether the gender gap in support for democracy is related to the low quality of social institutions related to gender inequality that affect women's daily life and deprive them of autonomy at home. To test this hypothesis we include aggregate measures of social institutions, as well as the interaction term between social institutions and gender, to control for the indirect impact of being female on the probability to support democracy when confronted with different levels of social institution. In fact the inclusion of this interaction term between gender and social institutions will allow us to compare the degree of support for democracy between women living in different countries with different levels of social institution. Following is the general model including social institutions:

$$\omega_{ij} = \beta_{00} + \beta_1 \text{female}_{ij} + \beta_2 X_{ij} + \beta_3 SI_j + \beta_4 \text{female}_{ij} * SI_j + u_j + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (6)$$

Where, SI_j is the indicator of social institutions in country j . The estimated value of β_4 tells us whether women's degree of support for democracy depends on the environment in which they live, which is determined by the quality of the social institutions in their home country. A negative sign indicates higher discrimination in social institutions and lower degree of support for democracy.

To measure the correlation between individuals who share the same country, we use a measure of intraclass correlation which indicates the proportion of the variance that is explained by the clustering structure.

The formula for the interclass correlation ρ is given by:

$$\rho = \frac{\delta^2}{\delta^2 + \sigma^2} \quad (7)$$

By convention in a multilevel logit model the parameter σ^2 is fixed and is given by: $\frac{\pi^2}{3} \approx 3.329$ (see Joop Hox [2010]), where π is the mathematical constant approximately equal to 3.14.

Before turning to the results, it is important to briefly discuss endogeneity concerns. Endogeneity can arise from reverse causality or unobserved heterogeneity, and it might affect the coefficients on social institutions as well as those on gender. Reverse causality is unlikely to be a problem as support for democracy is unlikely to affect social institutions (nor the gender of the respondent). But unobserved heterogeneity could be a concern in a sense that some unmeasured third variable is correlated with gender or social institutions as well as support for democracy. Of course, part of the purpose of this paper is precisely to see whether gender inequality in social institutions is such an unmeasured third variable, but there could be other unmeasured third variables. To the extent that these unmeasured variables are country specific and time invariant, our country fixed effects in our panel model would capture them. But of course we are unable to control for unobserved heterogeneity that is time varying or individual specific. In this sense, we can only be sure that we have conditional correlations that can be interpreted as causal only when the assumptions above are met.

RESULTS

Support for democracy

Table 4 presents the results of the estimations of the multilevel logit model without controlling for social institutions. The dependent variable is support for democracy. The intraclass correlation values reported at the bottom of the table indicate the share of the variance explained by the characteristics at the country level. For instance in the first column, the intraclass correlation is equal to 0.089, meaning that 9 percent of the variance is explained by the country characteristics. This confirms that taking into account the clustering effect may improve the quality of the estimations of the standard errors. We now start with column 1, where the dummy *female* is the only covariate, and later on the following rows we control for progressively more individual socioeconomic characteristics.

Across these columns we can see that the coefficient on *female* is negative and significant at the conventional level of 1 percent, meaning that being *female* decreases significantly the probability of asserting that democracy is the best political regime. The coefficient on *female* decreases across

columns when we control for additional variables, but it still remains significant at the 1 percent level and continues to have a sizable magnitude. This table confirms the previous results in the literature on the sizable and significant gender gap in support for democracy in SSA. Note also that the gap persists even if we include country fixed effects in the last column.

Turning now to the other individual characteristics included in the regression, we find that education increases the probability of supporting democracy, and this effect increases with the level of education. The variable age is an important determinant of support for democracy, and we find that, somewhat surprisingly, young people support democracy less than their elders. Little attention has been given to explaining the behavior of Africa's youth in politics, but some evidence can be found in Danielle Resnick and Daniela Casale (2011, 2014), who find that youth in SSA have a lower incentive to vote compared to the rest of the population and are also less partisan than their elders. Urban residents are more supportive of democracy than those from rural areas, but this effect becomes insignificant once we control for employment status and access to different sources of media. We do not find a significant difference between employed and inactive individuals, but being unemployed decreases the probability of supporting democracy.

We have investigated the impact of people's understanding of democracy, and column 4 shows that people who know the meaning of democracy are more likely than others to support democracy. Also, the participation in political and public activities is an important determinant of an individual's preference for democracy. For instance, people who have not voted in the last elections are less likely to support democracy than people who have voted. Besides, individuals who are not interested in public affairs are less likely than others to assert that democracy is the best political regime. To be sure, these coefficients can hardly be considered as causal, but they are interesting conditional correlations. In addition, individuals who have experienced corruption favor democracy less than those who have never experienced corruption. This is in line with the existing literature, which has noted the negative correlation between corruption and democracy.

Table 5 presents additional estimations using alternative proxies for support for democracy. We first consider the fact that women may be likely to answer less extremely, or generally opt for "don't know." Thus, we create two new dummies, *dem1* and *dem2*: the former excludes people who reply either "for someone like me, it does not matter what type of government we have" or "I don't know." The latter measure of democracy, *dem2*, excludes only individuals who give the response "I don't know." Results using *dem1* and *dem2* are presented in columns 1 and 2, and highlight that the coefficients on *female* remain negative and significant at the 1 percent conventional level, even though the magnitude of the

coefficients on gender becomes lower than in Table 4. Furthermore, we use alternative proxies for support for democracy: *election*, *plurality*, freedom of the *media*, and constraint on the *constitution*. We find that there is a gender difference in support for democracy using these indicators, but this difference disappears once we use *election* as proxy for support for democracy.

We have shown that there is a gender difference in support for democracy in SSA that is robust to the use of alternative measures for support for democracy. This result is again a confirmation of the findings in the previous literature – including Evans and Rose (2007b), Garcia-Peñalosa and Konte (2014), among others. Yet, little attention has been paid to explaining this gap, and we are still left wondering what explains this gender difference in support for democracy in this region where democracy is a relatively new concept.

Support for democracy and social institutions related to gender discrimination

We investigate the role of social institutions in the degree of support for democracy in SSA, testing whether this observed gender difference can be explained by the low quality of the social institutions related to the gender inequality that affects women’s daily life and deprives them of economic, social, and political autonomy inside and outside of home. We posit that women are less likely to support democracy in societies where women’s economic and social independence and autonomy is strongly circumscribed by discriminatory social institutions. A plausible reason for this effect is that women who experience little autonomy in their personal lives are less likely to demand or favor the freedom to choose their political leaders.

We now add the different measures of social institutions from the OECD 2012 SIGI index described above and their interaction terms with *female* to our baseline model in order to take into account both the direct and the indirect impacts of social institutions on the degree of support for democracy. The results are presented in Table 6 and show that controlling for some of the social institutions related to gender discrimination renders the gender difference in support for democracy much smaller and mostly statistically insignificant. The first column of Table 6 reports the results where we have controlled for the overall SIGI index and its interaction with gender. It shows that in SSA countries with greater gender inequality in social institutions, support for democracy is significantly higher; but the gender gap in support for democracy is small and no longer significant, and the interaction is also not significant. But since the SIGI combines rather different aspects of social institutions, it is well worth examining the SIGI’s subcomponents separately to better understand the link between gender

Table 5 Alternative indicators for democracy

Reference	Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Male	Female	-0.149*** (0.046)	-0.156*** (0.035)	-0.041 (0.036)	-0.175*** (0.031)	-0.205*** (0.034)	-0.137*** (0.034)
No formal	educ1	0.069 (0.075)	0.051 (0.057)	0.029 (0.059)	-0.019 (0.049)	0.145*** (0.055)	0.239*** (0.054)
	educ2	0.247*** (0.072)	0.188*** (0.055)	0.027 (0.056)	0.106** (0.048)	0.138*** (0.052)	0.346*** (0.052)
	educ3	0.277*** (0.088)	0.274*** (0.067)	0.108 (0.069)	0.174*** (0.059)	0.262*** (0.065)	0.501*** (0.065)
	educ4	0.359*** (0.097)	0.431*** (0.076)	0.209*** (0.077)	0.310*** (0.067)	0.343*** (0.074)	0.566*** (0.074)
< 26	age2	-0.002 (0.059)	-0.010 (0.045)	0.064 (0.045)	-0.067* (0.041)	0.058 (0.044)	0.072 (0.044)
	age3	0.117* (0.063)	0.127*** (0.048)	0.180*** (0.049)	-0.063 (0.043)	0.0433 (0.047)	0.0938** (0.047)
Rural	Urban	0.026 (0.049)	0.020 (0.038)	0.043 (0.039)	0.046 (0.034)	0.129*** (0.038)	0.207*** (0.038)
Yes	head	0.005 (0.052)	-0.036 (0.039)	0.083** (0.040)	0.022 (0.035)	0.048 (0.038)	-0.036 (0.03)
Unemployed	Employed	-0.009 (0.048)	-0.044 (0.036)	-0.121*** (0.037)	0.025 (0.032)	0.047 (0.035)	-0.012 (0.035)
	Inactive	-0.274*** (0.089)	-0.232*** (0.069)	-0.236*** (0.072)	-0.095 (0.063)	-0.028 (0.072)	-0.147** (0.069)
	constant	2.177*** (0.163)	1.411*** (0.126)	1.199*** (0.123)	0.592*** (0.107)	0.972*** (0.123)	0.530*** (0.117)
	Fixed-effect	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	BIC	15603	24338	23864	29104	25295	25219
	Deviance	15157	23786	23410	28650	24842	24767
	No. obs.	20,206	23,121	24,236	23,732	23,430	23,253
	No. countries	19	19	19	19	19	19

Notes: Table reports coefficients from the logit estimation, the dependent variable is support for support democracy using alternative measures. The dependent variable is *dem1* in (1), *dem2* in (2), *election* in (3), *plurality* in (4), *media* in (5), and *constitution* in (6). The variables *dem1* and *dem2* correspond to our main dummy *democracy*, excluding the categories “For someone like me it does not matter what type of government we have” and “I don’t know” for the former, and only the category “I don’t know” for the latter. Standard errors are in parenthesis. ***, **, * denote statistical significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels, respectively. All the additional variables reported in Table 6 are included in the estimations but are not reported.

Source: Afrobarometer, round 4 (2008–9).

inequality in social institutions and support for democracy (Branisa et al. 2014).

Column 2 of Table 6 thus considers the SIGI subindex, Family Code. The direct impact of *female* on the probability of supporting democracy becomes insignificant. Turning to the coefficients on *family code* and its interaction with gender, we find that for men, discrimination in the Family Code category does not affect their degree of support for democracy, but such discrimination has a negative, sizable, and significant impact on the degree of support for democracy by women. Indeed, in countries with a high degree of discrimination in Family Code, women exhibit a much lower degree of support for democracy than do women who live in countries with less discrimination.

The results are similar when we replace the discrimination in Family Code by discrimination in Physical Integrity as in column 3. In column 4, social institutions are measured using gender discrimination in Civil Liberties, and the results show that the gender gap in support for democracy becomes insignificant but the interaction between *female* and Civil Liberties is significant only at 10 percent. Column 5 shows the estimates of the baseline model when we have controlled for the index of inequality in access to resources, which measures the degree of restriction of access by women to different types of resources. We do not find that the gender difference disappears once we control for discrimination in access to resources, a variable that has been crucial in other studies that have focused on economic outcomes using cross-sectional data. In addition, the discrimination in access to resources increases the degree of support for democracy by men, but it does not have any impact on the degree of support for democracy by women. Finally, column 6 of the table shows the results using the subindex Son Preference, which measures the extent to which boys are preferred to girls as well as the number of missing women. We find that the coefficient on *female* becomes insignificant but neither the coefficient on son nor the interaction term with *female* remains significant. The last three columns show that the results regarding Family Code, Physical Integrity, and Civil Liberties are robust to the inclusion of per capita income and its interaction with female. Interestingly, these coefficients never turn out to be significant.

We have shown the role of social institutions related to gender inequality in moderating the effect of gender difference in preference for democratic regimes in nineteen SSA countries. The results have confirmed our main hypothesis, which posited that the gender difference in the support for democracy is related to gender discrimination in social institutions that affects women's daily life inside and outside their own home, suggesting that the way women are treated in a society might also have major implications for the political functioning of that society. Indeed, Table 6 has shown that after controlling for the discrimination in the Family Code,

Table 6 Gender difference for support in democracy and social institutions

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Male	<i>Female</i>	- 0.106 (0.079)	- 0.047 (0.075)	- 0.058 (0.071)	- 0.099 (0.067)	- 0.251*** (0.062)	- 0.003 (0.245)	0.047 (0.266)	- 0.001 (0.303)	- 0.193 (0.223)
Social	Institutions									
	<i>SIGI</i>	1.744** (0.795)								
	<i>SIGI*female</i>	- 0.355 (0.245)								
	<i>Familycode</i>		0.464 (0.590)					0.600 (0.604)		
	<i>Familycode*female</i>		- 0.313** (0.140)					- 0.334** (0.151)		
	<i>Physical Integrity</i>			0.693 (0.451)					0.748 (0.491)	
	<i>PhysicalIntegrity*female</i>			- 0.317** (0.134)					- 0.330** (0.152)	
	Civil liberties				0.825* (0.434)					0.851** (0.428)
	Civil liberties*female				- 0.190* (0.113)					- 0.187* (0.113)
	<i>Resources</i>					0.844** (0.369)				
	<i>Resources*female</i>					0.111 (0.111)				

Table 6 Continued

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
<i>Son preference</i>						1.499 (2.134)			
<i>Son preference*female</i>						-0.471 (0.573)			
<i>Ln(GDP)</i>							0.075 (0.092)	0.026 (0.094)	0.059 (0.084)
<i>Ln(GDP)*female</i>							-0.008 (0.022)	-0.005 (0.025)	0.009 (0.021)
Constant	0.269 (0.273)	0.520 (0.335)	0.505* (0.259)	0.304 (0.274)	0.350 (0.218)	0.072 (0.904)	-0.299 (1.060)	0.218 (1.069)	-0.306 (0.898)
No. obs.	21,355	24,817	22,524	24,817	24,817	23,648	24,817	22,524	24,817
No. countries	16	19	17	19	19	18	19	17	19

Notes: Table reports coefficients from the logit estimation, the dependent variable is support for democracy. All the additional variables that are in Table 1 are included in the estimations but are not reported. Standard errors are in parenthesis. ***, **, * denote statistical significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels, respectively.

Source: Afrobarometer, round 4 (2008–9).

Table 7 Large sample: Gender difference in support for democracy and social institutions

Reference	Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Male	<i>Female</i>	-0.169*** (0.020)	-0.160 (0.167)	-0.166 (0.169)	-0.147 (0.172)	-0.113 (0.186)	-0.177 (0.184)	-0.200 (0.183)	-0.407*** (0.142)	-0.425*** (0.138)	-0.463*** (0.137)
	ln(GDP)		0.008 (0.048)	-0.007 (0.060)	-0.025 (0.058)	0.114** (0.053)	0.145** (0.069)	-0.059 (0.064)	-0.031 (0.057)	-0.044 (0.058)	-0.0031 (0.047)
	ln(GDP)* <i>female</i>		0.012 (0.014)	0.013 (0.014)	0.014 (0.014)	0.011 (0.016)	0.014 (0.016)	0.016 (0.016)	0.030** (0.013)	0.032** (0.014)	0.028** (0.013)
	<i>FamilyCode</i>		0.65 (0.529)								
	<i>FamilyCode</i> * <i>female</i>		-0.277*** (0.089)								
	<i>FamilyCode</i> ₁			0.059 (0.128)							
	<i>FamilyCode</i> ₁ * <i>female</i>			-0.294*** (0.100)							
	<i>FamilyCode</i> ₂				0.233* (0.126)						
	<i>FamilyCode</i> ₂ * <i>female</i>				-0.342*** (0.116)						
	<i>Physical Integrity</i>					1.127*** (0.431)					
	<i>Physical Integrity</i> * <i>female</i>					-0.401*** (0.097)					
	<i>Physical Integrity</i> ₁						0.180 (0.166)				

(Continued).

Table 7 Continued

Reference	Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
	<i>Physical Integrity</i> ₁ *female						- 0.350*** (0.098)				
	<i>Physical Integrity</i> ₂							0.207 (0.157)			
	<i>Physical Integrity</i> ₂ *female							- 0.345*** (0.101)			
	<i>Civil Liberties</i>								0.536 (0.405)		
	<i>Civil Liberties</i> *female								- 0.083 (0.066)		
	<i>Civil Liberties</i> ₁									0.121 (0.075)	
	<i>Civil Liberties</i> ₁ *female									- 0.127** (0.063)	
	<i>Civil Liberties</i> ₂										0.235*** (0.075)
	<i>Civil Liberties</i> ₂ *female										- 0.059 (0.06)
	Constant	1.266*** (0.081)	0.324 (0.584)	1.320** (0.528)	1.386*** (0.520)	0.324 (0.609)	- 0.021 (0.648)	1.680*** (0.590)	0.468 (0.531)	1.513*** (0.517)	1.626*** (0.518)
	Time effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	Country FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	No. obs.	67448	67,448	67,448	67,448	60,846	61,903	62,912	67,448	67,448	67,448
	No. countries	19	19	19	19	17	18	18	19	19	19

Notes: Table reports coefficients from the logit estimation, the dependent variable is support for democracy. All the additional variables reported in Table 1 are included in the estimations but are not reported. Standard errors are in parenthesis. ***, **, * denote statistical significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels, respectively.

Source: Afrobarometer rounds 4, 3, and 2 (2008–9).

Physical Integrity, and Civil Liberties, the gender difference in support for democracy becomes insignificant. Furthermore women who live in countries with a high level of discrimination are less likely to support democracy than women who live in countries with more equitable social institutions. This last point implies that gender attitudes and preferences in politics can be determined by the bias of laws and norms toward women, particularly norms regarding family life and women's autonomy. Indeed, women living in a country with more equitable laws and norms toward women are more supportive of democracy; this could indicate that women in these societies see the political system as a way to protect their autonomy and thus are more supportive of a democratic political system; conversely, in societies where discrimination in norms and social institutions are large, women may have less faith in the ability of a democratic system to serve their interests and needs.

Intertemporal sample

We combine round 4 with rounds 3 and 2 in order to take into account time and country fixed effects, but we will then have an unbalanced sample since some countries are missing in rounds 2 and 3.¹⁴ In the combined sample we observe that 61.2 percent of women favor democracy as the best political regime against 70.3 percent of men, yielding a gender gap of 9 points, one point higher than the value recorded when we only considered round 4.¹⁵

To shed light on the role of social institutions in the explanations of this significant gender difference, we use the two separate datasets on inequality in social institutions provided by the OECD Development Centre. The first dataset was presented in 2009; the second was launched recently in 2012 and significantly improves the quality of the previous data in 2009. To collect the information on the SIGI subindicators for 2012 for each country, the OECD Development Center took the most recent available information up to 2011 while most of the information dates from 2003–5. Since we believe that the level of gender discrimination embedded in social institutions may explain people's attitudes and their support for democracy, the measures of social institutions that we consider should be available before or at the starting date of the surveys. Given that, we propose to combine the data in 2009 and in 2012 following three different strategies. First, we simply use the values of 2012 for all three rounds. However, in this manner, we might be ignoring the variation in social institutions over time, even though we expect that these types of institution are persistent and do not vary a lot over time. In the second strategy, we propose to use the measure of 2012 for rounds 4 and 3, and the value in 2009 for round 2 – bearing in mind, however, that the two different versions of the SIGI are not fully comparable between 2009 and 2012. Finally, the

last strategy is to use data in 2012 for round 4 and the data in 2009 for rounds 3 and 2, again noting that there are comparability issues across the two rounds of the SIGI. We then denote the first possibility by *SI*, *SI1* denotes the second one and *SI2* for the last one, where *SI* stands for “social institutions.”

Table 7 presents the results where we first report the coefficient on *female* without controlling for social institutions in column 1; then we add the measures of social institutions, particularly those that were previously significant: inequality in Family Code, Physical Integrity, and Civil Liberties. In the different specifications, we have controlled for both time and country fixed effects, as well as for all the variables that have been already controlled in Table 4 but not reported here. The coefficient on *female* in column 1 remains negative and significant at the 1 percent level, and its magnitude is close to the results reported in our best specifications in Table 6, columns 5 and 6. We find that across rows 2–10, after controlling for the different measures of FC and PI, the coefficients on *female* become insignificant. However, the interaction terms between *female* and social institutions are significant in all of these columns, supporting the previous conclusion where we argued that women living in countries with high level of discrimination in social institutions are less likely to support democracy than other women. These various results fit well with the earlier results we got with the smaller sample, where we ignored any possible time variation. However, in the last three columns, where we controlled for the indicators of social institutions related to inequality in Civil Liberties, we find that the coefficient on gender remains negative and significant at the conventional level of 1 percent. In fact, adding the earlier waves, controlling for country and time fixed effects or using different versions of the SIGI index and its components have no impact of the results, which can therefore be considered fairly robust.

Here, we combined the three rounds of the Afrobarometer to be able to capture the time dimension. The results have shown that the gender difference in support for democracy holds in this larger sample and becomes insignificant once we control for discrimination in Family Code and Physical Integrity.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite the many desirable features of democracy and the prominent role of women’s attitudes in promoting development, a wide range of studies have recently highlighted that women are less likely than men to support democracy in SSA. This observed difference raises the question of whether women’s behavior may hinder the much-needed legitimacy of democracy in SSA, a region in which democracy has had a shorter history. Yet, little

effort has been made to address this issue, and at this stage we are still left wondering what really explains this difference between the genders.

This paper reexamines the link between the support for democracy and gender and adds a new, previously omitted variable – social institutions – to capture the extent to which women are discriminated against in a society. Social institutions related to gender inequality are long-lasting norms, traditions, and codes of conduct that deprive women of autonomy and bargaining power at home and limit their access to different types of resource. The recent literature has documented the importance of social institutions on several development strategies but so far, few studies have focused on the importance of these institutions for women’s behavior in politics.

This paper tries to incorporate gender discrimination in social institutions into this framework and addresses the question of whether this observed gender gap is due to the omission of social institutions related to gender inequality, something that affects women’s daily life and deprives them of social, economic, and political autonomy inside and outside the home. We follow the idea that the way women are treated in a society might also affect their attitudes toward the political process. Our analysis is conducted using three rounds of the Afrobarometer. To measure social institutions we use the recent OECD data on SIGI and its five subcomponents: Family Code, Civil Liberties, Physical Integrity, Son Preference, and restrictions on access to different forms of Resources.

The results show that there is a significant gender difference in the support for democracy in the sample, but this gap is no longer significant after we control for gender discrimination in the Family Code, Physical Integrity, and Civil Liberties components of the SIGI. The results are robust to the use of different Afrobarometer surveys and to the inclusion of time and country fixed effects. This study has also provided evidence that more egalitarian social institutions that do not support women’s early and forced marriages, make effective laws against different types of violence against women, and promote their freedom of movement and access to public space have the potential of increasing the degree of women’s support for democracy. Apparently, in these more egalitarian societies, women have more faith in democracy, arguably because the political system is one way to support their autonomy and rights.

While we are unable to prove causality in this empirical setup, these findings support the proposition that social institutions are important determinants of the gender gap in the political arena, reducing the level of democratic legitimacy in SSA countries, which may in turn hamper the amount of democracy in these countries. This paper constitutes therefore an additional confirmation of the importance of promoting policies that will have the potential to improve the quality of social institutions and promote women’s empowerment.

Maty Konte
United-Nations University - UNU-MERIT
Boschstraat 24, 6211 AX, Maastricht, Netherlands
e-mail: konte@merit.unu.edu

Stephan Klasen
Department of Economics, University of Göttingen
Platz der Göttinger Sieben 3, 37073 Göttingen, Germany
e-mail: sklasen@uni-goettingen.de

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Tony Addison, Cecilia Garcia-Peñalosa, Seif Dendir, and James Thurlow for their helpful comments. Maty Konte is grateful for financial support from UNU-MERIT and UNU-WIDER.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Maty Konte is Research Fellow on Governance and Development Economics at the United Nations University-MERIT in Maastricht, the Netherlands.

Stephan Klasen is Professor of Development Economics at the University of Göttingen, Germany.

NOTES

- ¹ The definition of legitimacy attitudes by Lipset (1963) is “Belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society” (Matthew D. Fails and Heather N. Pierce [2010]: 64). Larry Diamond (1999) argues that the stability of democratic systems requires a belief in the legitimacy of democracy by people. Moreover, Robert Mattes and Michael Bratton (2007) report that “No matter how well or badly international aid donors or academic think tanks rate the extent of democracy in a given country, this form of regime will only consolidate if ordinary people believe that democracy is being supplied” (192).
- ² Among the different dimensions of gender equality we can note economic participation, health and well-being, political empowerment, and education attainment.
- ³ Round 2 data for Zimbabwe is from 2004.
- ⁴ For the intertemporal sample we combine versions 2009 and 2012, noting that there are comparability issues across these two versions of the SIGI. See below for details.
- ⁵ Furthermore, Evans and Rose (2007a : iii) have figured out mechanisms through which education affects support for democracy and argued that “the mechanisms through which schooling influences democratic support relate to cognitive elements of political comprehension and involvement that are consistent with an intrinsic model of the effect of education on democratic values and outcomes rather than a view of education as a marker of resource inequalities.”

- ⁶ See also M. Najeeb Shafiq (2010) for further investigation of the impact of education on support for democracy in other developing countries. Using the Pew Global Attitudes Project surveys, Shafiq (2010) finds that education has a strong effect on support for democracy in Lebanon, Jordan, and Pakistan.
- ⁷ Using the World Value Surveys, Rowley and Smith (2009) find that predominantly Muslim countries have a higher degree of support for democracy than other countries. Maseland and van Hoorn (2011) challenge the paradoxical finding of high support yet little experience of democracy in Muslim countries, arguing that the positive attitudes of citizens in Muslim countries toward democracy are not limited to Muslim countries and can be explained by the theory of decreasing marginal utility, which suggests that people more highly value scarcer goods.
- ⁸ For example, one can note the analysis by Michelle J. Hindin (2000) for a case study in Zimbabwe, Anastasia J. Gage (1995) for Togo, Deborah Balk (1994) for a case study in Bangladesh, among others.
- ⁹ Further details on the data are available at: <http://www.afrobarometer.org/survey>.
- ¹⁰ It refers to question number 37 for round 3, and 38 for round 2.
- ¹¹ Similar results using the alternative proxies for support for democracy are found but not shown here because of space constraints. Readers are invited to refer to the working paper version, Maty Konte (2014) available at the UNU-MERIT Working Paper series.
- ¹² To look at whether the degree of support for democracy is associated with the people's experience, we group individuals into three different age categories: those who are between ages 18 and 25 (27 percent of the sample), people between ages 26 and 35 (29 percent), and people older than 35 (43 percent of the sample). For the place of residence we have distinguished between people living in rural areas (63 percent) versus urban areas (36 percent). Employment status has three categories: inactive, accounting for 31 percent of the sample, and active, sorted into unemployed (34 percent) and employed (33 percent). To measure access to media, we consider separately access to news from radio, from TV, and from newspapers. For each, the variable access to media is a dummy equal to 0 if the individual attests never having had access to media from the given source, and 1 otherwise. In the sample, almost 87 percent have access to news from radio, against 54 percent for TV. Indeed, access to TV remains costly in developing countries, especially for people living in rural areas. Finally, only 40.61 percent have access to news from newspapers, a number which is not surprising given the fact that reading newspapers requires some level of education, yet in this dataset 20 percent of the people do not have formal schooling, and 18 percent have not completed their primary degree.
- ¹³ Further details on the SIGI index can be found in Branisa, Klasen, and Ziegler (2009).
- ¹⁴ Round 3 contains only eighteen countries since it excludes Burkina Faso and Liberia, while round 2 includes neither these two countries nor Benin or Madagascar. In the combined data, 65.7 percent of the population support democracy against 34.26 percent who do not.
- ¹⁵ For round 3 the gender gap is equal to 12.84 points; it decreases to 7.4 in round 2.

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