

Empowering Change

Assessing the Role of Democracy, Civil Society,
and Women's Rights Groups in Advancing Legal Gender Equality

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Abstract

This paper explores the role that a country's political economy, civil society organizations, and women's rights groups play in advancing legal gender equality. The paper draws on the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law time-series data, which assesses women's legal rights across eight domains of their lives, five decades, and 190 economies. The results reveal that higher levels of democracy and a more active civil society are positively associated with advances in legal equality between men and women. The analysis also reveals that, beyond an active civil society more broadly, women's rights groups specifically are a key ingredient for

successfully advancing legal gender reforms. The paper shows that both democracy and civil society play a more prominent role in removing legal restrictions that are placed on women than they do in ensuring rights to enabling provisions, such as the right to maternity leave, and that women's rights groups seem to be particularly important in this area. Moreover, an active civil society may be more effective in advancing reform in more democratic countries, suggesting that bottom-up and top-down channels are more impactful when operating in tandem.

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Empowering Change: Assessing the Role of Democracy, Civil Society, and Women's Rights Groups in Advancing Legal Gender Equality

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1. Introduction

In the pursuit of gender equality, countries worldwide have embarked on a transformative journey over the past five decades. In many countries, trailblazing women, women's rights groups, and civil society organizations play a key role in advocating for policy changes and legal reform advancing women's rights. Women's rights groups, specifically, take an active role in raising awareness and mobilizing public support for advancing women's rights. In October 2023, Narges Mohammadi, a jailed Iranian women's rights advocate, received the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize for her relentless fight against the oppression of women in the Islamic Republic of Iran and her global efforts for women's rights and social reform.

Despite progress and ongoing calls to remove existing restrictions on women's rights, discrimination remains entrenched in social norms and government policies in many countries. More strikingly, discrimination is also embedded in countries' legal frameworks, which in many countries still codify discrimination against women and girls, placing them in a subordinate position and constraining their ability to fully participate in society. Legal restrictions remain in all areas of life. For instance, in 42 countries, sons and daughters do not have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents; in 34 countries, women cannot choose where to live; and in 18 countries, women cannot get a job in the same way as a man (World Bank 2023).

Civil society organizations (CSOs) and women's rights groups emerge as key actors in dismantling gender inequality. They can exert pressure on lawmakers and institutions and can drive legal reform efforts. They also play a crucial role in shaping the discourse and creating legitimate space for requesting an effective legal framework to advance gender equality. Legal gender reform is key in promoting gender equality, empowering women, and challenging gender-based discrimination. We investigate under which conditions CSOs invested in women's economic empowerment demand equal rights for women and girls or advocate for the removal of discriminatory provisions in the laws of 190 countries. We further assess how the political environment within an economy shapes countries' willingness to remove legal barriers for women. In essence, this paper addresses two critical questions: To what extent do civil society organizations motivate legal gender reform, and what role does the political economy of a country play in this context?

The motivation for this paper is threefold. First, the paper is motivated by the empirical observation that points toward significant strides in legal gender equality over the past five decades. On a global level, women's legal rights have steadily expanded (World Bank 2023).

Yet, the timing, pace, and extent of legal reforms to promote legal gender equality have varied considerably across countries. While some countries have made significant progress in enshrining gender equality in their laws and regulations, others are still hesitant to remove all legal barriers for women.

Second, there is a persistent gap in the recent literature on legal gender reform. A plethora of articles have investigated the consequences of reforming gender discriminatory laws for socio-economic outcomes, including better labor market outcomes (e.g., Gonzales et al. 2015; Hyland et al. 2020, 2023; Hyland and Islam 2021), better access to finance (e.g., Demirgüç-Kunt et al. 2013; Perrin and Hyland 2023), or greater land and property ownership (Agarwal 1995, 2003; Deininger et al. 2021). By the same token, literature focused on the role of social or grassroots movements in shaping the political agenda has long been established (e.g., Baungartner and Leech 1998; Staggenborg 2016; Van Til et al. 2007). However, comprehensive cross-country studies offering an empirical analysis of drivers advancing women's legal rights are hitherto scarce. While literature has assessed drivers of reform efforts more broadly, i.e., in the area of labor or product market reforms (e.g., Duval 2008; Turrini et al. 2015), there remains limited systematic understanding of the preconditions that need to be in place for countries to remove the legal barriers that affect various aspects of women's lives. Comparative assessments on the question of what motivates countries to remove legal barriers faced by women have only recently begun (e.g., Tertilt et al. 2022). Data limitations may be one reason for the limited comparative research on the drivers of legal gender reform.

Third, shedding light on the fundamental prerequisites in place for removing legal barriers for women can guide policy interventions and accelerate the path toward legal gender equality. Advancing women's legal rights is not only a matter of justice and equality, but also has important economic implications (Amin and Islam 2022; Islam, Muzi and Amin 2019; Htun, Jensenius, and Nelson-Nuñez 2019).

Drawing on the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law (WBL) time-series database,¹ covering legal gender reforms from 1970 to 2023 across 190 countries and eight topic areas, we quantitatively assess the role of civic engagement, women's rights groups in particular, as well as a state's level of democracy for successful gender equality reform. By focusing on both the political economy and the actors involved in gender reform, we provide a holistic assessment of what drives the removal of existing legal barriers. We empirically show that a

¹ <https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/wbl-data>

country's level of democracy, an active civil society, and, specifically, active women's rights groups are significantly correlated with higher legal gender equality. While relevant for removing legal barriers in most aspects of the law, the drivers are seemingly playing a stronger role in ensuring the absence of legal restrictions on women, such as prohibitions on a woman's ability to travel or to become head of the household, than they are in delivering enabling provisions and benefits, such as equal pay or parental leave. In all areas, women's rights groups show a stronger association with increased legal gender equality compared to CSOs more broadly. We also find that an active civil society is more effective in more democratic states, suggesting gender equality can be advanced more effectively when top-down and bottom-up approaches are combined.

While the analysis presented cannot establish causal relationships, the policy implications of the research findings remain relevant. The links between democracy, active civil society, specifically women's rights groups and legal gender reform call for increased attention to support the women's rights movement at a cross-country level and to empower women's rights groups.

2. The Importance of a Country's Political Economy and an Active Civil Society for Legal Gender Equality

In the following section, we discuss existing literature and roll out our main theoretical argument, examining a country's political economy and CSOs as crucial factors for driving legal gender equality. Research consistently finds that both are key determinants in shaping the landscape of legal gender equality, underscoring their intertwined significance in fostering systemic change.

2.1 Do Democracies Facilitate Legal Gender Reform?

“The status of women is the status of democracy.”² The ability of women and girls to participate safely, freely, and equally in political life and in society is often considered a defining feature of a democracy. The link between democracy and women's rights has historically been established in several cross-national studies (Inglehart and Norris 2003; Htun and Weldon 2018; Tripp 2013). Broadly, democratic participation is perceived as fostering representative and

² U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris in a video message to UN Women (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/03/16/pre-taped-remarks-by-vice-president-kamala-harris-as-delivered-to-the-commission-on-the-status-of-women/>).

inclusive decision-making that allows diverse gender perspectives to be heard and considered. Democratic states' underlying principles of equality, freedom of expression, and the rule of law can further serve as a catalyst for accelerated human rights movements; they can facilitate reform and the expansion of women's rights, such as the right to vote (Lizzeri and Persico 2004). Promoting women's equality can be understood as a government's responsiveness to the enhancement of equal rights for all citizens, arguably an essential aspect of democracy itself (Blofield and Haas 2005). Democratic states can enable progressive legal gender reforms that challenge antiquated laws and discriminatory practices.

However, there is also a counter argument. Autocracies may employ "genderwashing", helping a regime appear progressive, liberal, and democratic, while drawing the focus away from authoritarian practices (Bjarnegård and Zetterberg 2022). In these states, autocratic parties may, in fact, possess official women's wings that closely follow the party line, focusing more on women's mobilization rather than on representing their rights (Bjarnegård and Donno 2023). Likewise, advancing women's rights may be less costly compared to providing coordination goods such as free speech or free elections which can pose a threat to the authoritarian regime (Bueno de Mesquita and Downs 2005; Dunno and Kreft 2018). Nondemocratic regimes have adopted varied legislation advancing women's rights, stiffening penalties for violence against women, or protecting women from sexual harassment. Afghanistan, in 2015, for instance adopted regulations prohibiting the harassment of women, Belarus enacted legislation protecting women from domestic violence in 2014 in its Law on Basic Activities Aimed at Offence Prevention, and Viet Nam introduced a Law on Gender Equality in 2006 (World Bank 2023). By the same token, in backsliding regimes governments may instrumentalize women's rights to help them stay in power (Arat 2021) or they may simply consider women's rights as "window dressing" (Law and Versteeg 2013). Hence, these regimes may act opportunistically when reforming legal barriers for women, maybe without the intent to necessarily implement these rights in practice. Advancing women's rights can signal liberalism to and can win praise from the international community including tangible benefits (Bush 2011).

In turn, recent legal restrictions on women's rights in authoritarian regimes offer powerful examples of the inextricable link between gender and regime type: In late 2022, the Taliban issued decrees denying women and girls the right to education and work and, in May 2023, Libya's Internal Security Agency began requiring Libyan women traveling without a male escort to complete a form declaring reasons for traveling alone (Human Rights Watch 2023).

In line with existing literature and recent empirical evidence, we, therefore, empirically test the following hypothesis:

H₁: The more democratic a state, the higher legal gender equality.

2.2 Civil Society Organizations and Women's Rights Groups as Agents of Legal Change

The importance of interest groups and social movements in shaping the political agenda and driving national discussions around critical issues has long been established in literature (e.g., Baumgartner and Mahoney 2005; Htun and Weldon 2012; McAdam and Su 2002; Weldon 2011). Social movements and CSOs are considered key in developing oppositional consciousness, envisioning alternate social structures, and mobilizing broad societal action to garner understanding and support for specific groups such as women (Mansbridge and Morris 2001; Weldon 2011).

In that vein, CSOs generally help to articulate specific groups' interests to policy makers and members of the public, cultivating a sense of group consciousness based on group members' identity (Grossman 2012; Kenney 2003; Weldon 2011; Woliver 2018). CSOs that are actively challenging societal order or mobilizing societal action could create the momentum needed for governments or law makers to act on discriminatory laws (Weldon 2002). CSOs can further motivate legal reforms by actively advocating for gender equality, raising awareness about discriminatory laws, and empowering women to share their experiences and perspectives on how laws affect their lives (Kubba 2000). CSOs further play a crucial role in pressuring governments to uphold their legal commitments, submit comments to draft laws in the law-making process, lobby policy makers to change existing rules, voice women's concerns on a specific policy issue, or assist women in claiming their rights (Furlong and Kerwin 2005; Golden 1998; Yackee and Yackee 2006; Wagner 2010). Through legal expertise, research, and monitoring, civil society organizations provide evidence-based arguments for the need to reform gender-biased laws and hold governments accountable for their implementation. Building coalitions and engaging with policy makers, civil society fosters public support for gender-sensitive legal changes, creating an enabling environment for reform. By collaborating with governments, civil society enhances the understanding of diverse gender-related challenges and draws from global experiences to promote gender equality (Williams 2018).

Despite the general acknowledgment of the importance of CSOs, insights into the motivations to eliminate legal gender discrimination are largely drawn from a small subset of countries (e.g.,

Blofield and Haas 2005; Braunmiller et al. 2023; Geddes and Lueck 2002; Githae et al. 2022). Few studies examine the link between the involvement of CSOs and women's rights in a systematic manner.

In the Pacific region, for instance, reacting to the increasing violence against women, a regional CSO, Regional Rights and Resources Team (RRRT), advocated for and provided technical guidance on family protection laws over almost two decades, which finally led to the enactment of several family protection laws between 2008 and 2017 (Pacific Women 2019). Likewise, India's journey of social and legal reforms to address domestic violence followed a unique path spanning nearly five decades of debate, starting from addressing dowry-related violence, then recognizing additional offenses in the criminal law, and finally enacting the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act in 2005, which for the first time accorded protective rights and welfare measures to survivors (Braunmiller et al. 2022). In Kenya, the Protection against Domestic Violence Bill of 2015 was the culmination of more than 20 years of research, advocacy, and lobbying by Kenyan civil society organizations as well as a significant achievement for Kenyan parliamentarians (Githae et al. 2022). In all these cases, CSOs and female advocacy champions played a pivotal role in driving the reform agenda.

Broadly, CSOs can exert pressure on governments to respect their legal commitments, and they perform the essential role of assisting women in claiming their rights (Medie 2020). A civil society that is actively challenging societal order or mobilizing societal action could create the momentum needed for governments to take action on discriminatory laws. Further, CSOs hold governments accountable for translating their commitments into laws and policies, and eventually into implementation and enforcement. Therefore, we test the following hypothesis:

H_{2a}: The more active a country's civil society, the higher legal gender equality.

More specifically, when female advocacy champions and women's rights organizations voice the concerns of women, lawmakers may be more receptive to understanding the full range of women's experiences and concerns (Mansbridge 1999). This may lead to improved policy outcomes (Mechkova and Carlitz 2021). Within this realm, women's rights organizations are essential change-makers as they have driven change in key areas that were previously seen as 'private' or 'cultural' matters, such as the right to a live free from violence or harassment or sexual and reproductive health and rights (Arutyunova 2017). As a result, women's rights organizations become key change makers and trailblazers to advocate and push for legal change and advanced protection. Recent evidence shows that countries with strong women's rights

groups tend to have more comprehensive policies in place that outlaw violence against women (Htun and Weldon 2012). In Nicaragua, for instance, women’s rights organizations contributed to the reduction of intimate partner violence by 63 percent (Ellsberg et al. 2022). Likewise, in Brazil, the legislative Women’s Caucus (Bancada Feminina) advocated for the recognition of facilities supporting women and girls experiencing violence as essential public services, eventually driving policy change (Prange de Oliveira 2021). Additionally, women’s rights organizations engage in community outreach and education efforts to challenge harmful gender norms and promote a culture of respect and equality. In contrast, countries with diminished presence of women’s rights groups exhibit more pronounced biases against gender equality and women’s empowerment, underscoring the critical role of women’s rights organizations in reshaping social norms and power dynamics (UNDP 2022). While there is country-specific evidence on the importance of women’s rights groups for policy change, cross-country evidence over a large sample is hitherto absent. Therefore, we test the following hypothesis:

H_{2b}: The more active women’s rights groups within a country, the higher legal gender equality.

3. Explaining Gendered Laws: Identification Strategy and Data

This paper aims to investigate the roles played by a country’s political economy and that of CSOs and women’s rights groups in advancing legal gender equality. To that end, we build a cross-sectional dataset that we describe in the following section. We also present descriptive statistics for the subset of 190 economies with data available for all variables from 1970 to 2022.

3.1 Identification Strategy

Assessing what explains the variation in gendered laws, we provide baseline estimations based on a fixed-effects panel regression model as follows:

$$WBL_{k,t} = \alpha + \beta * Driver\ of\ interest_{k,t} + \delta * Controls_{k,t} + \phi_t + \gamma_k + \varepsilon_{k,t}$$

WBL represents the WBL index measuring women’s legal rights or its composite indicators that capture legal rights in eight related areas: Mobility, Workplace, Pay, Marriage, Parenthood, Entrepreneurship, Assets, and Pension for country k at year t ; The *Driver of interest* variable includes a country’s political economy as well as variables measuring how active a country’s civil society or women’s rights groups are. *Controls_{k,t}* includes *GDP per Capita_{k,t}* capturing a country’s level of development that may affect gender legal equality as suggested by Tertilt et al. (2022), and also may be correlated with the explanatory variables of interest. Similarly,

we control for fertility rate ($Fertility_{k,t}$) to capture the channel that Doepke and Tertilt (2009) and Tertilt et al. (2022) coined as ‘parental altruism’. According to the authors, political preferences of parents for gender equality can be influenced by the fertility rate. Preferences may change to safeguard equality for their daughters, as well as to ensure better overall outcomes for their children as greater rights for women may lead to more investments in children’s human capital. However, the authors note that the strength of this channel will depend upon the returns to human capital. Finally, we control for $GDP\ Growth_{k,t}$ (Adascalitei and Pignatti Morano 2016). The term δt represents year fixed effects to capture time-specific shocks, and country-level fixed effects γ_k to control for country characteristics. Standard errors are clustered at the country level, following Abadie et al. (2023). The coefficient β is the main coefficient of interest denoting the relationship between the potential drivers of reform and the WBL index. All explanatory variables are centered and standardized³ to allow for magnitude comparison. Moreover, we lagged explanatory variables by three years to minimize potential endogeneity caused by reverse causality. The error term is $\varepsilon_{k,t}$. The following sections describe the data of these variables in more detail.

3.2 Dependent Variable: Gendered Laws

Data on gendered laws are obtained from the World Bank’s Women, Business and the Law (WBL) dataset, which measures legal barriers affecting women’s economic participation across 190 economies from 1970 to 2022. The dataset is structured around a woman’s working life and currently presents eight indicators: Mobility, Workplace, Pay, Parenthood, Marriage, Entrepreneurship, Assets, and Pensions. In total, the WBL dataset includes 35 binary (yes/no) questions which are aggregated across these eight indicators into a uniform index. The WBL index measures *de jure* rights and benefits for as well as discrimination against women. As pointed out by Hyland et al. (2020), the legislative context offers an objective and comparable measure of the legal environment in which women live and work.

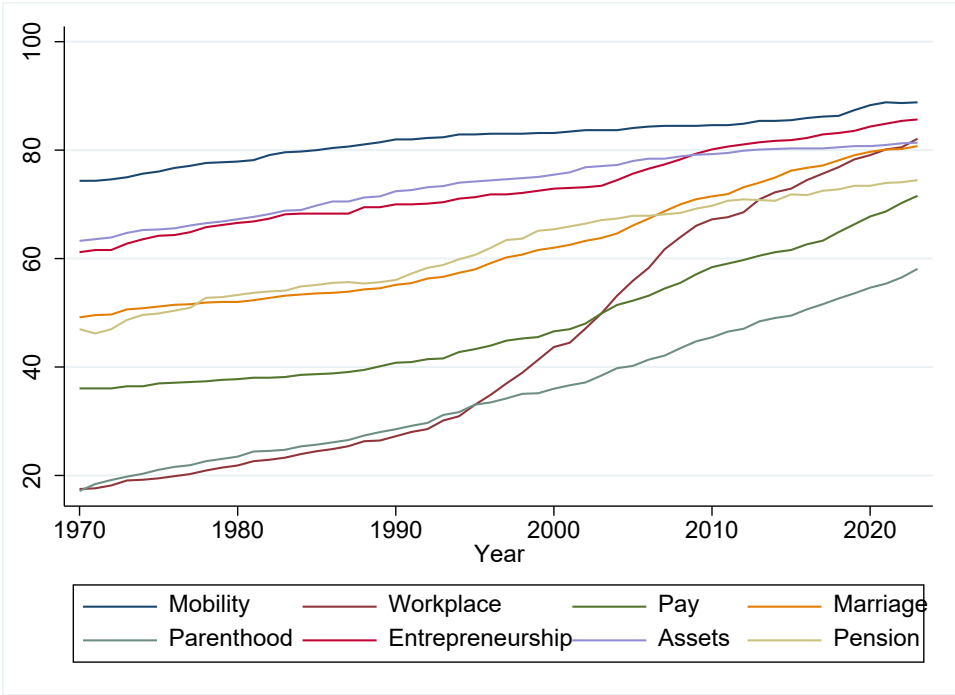
The WBL index is calculated for each year by taking the simple average of the eight indicators and is scaled between 0 and 100, with higher values denoting greater gender equality in the law (see World Bank 2023 data notes for more details). A score of 100 implies that there are no legal restrictions on women in the areas covered by the index. An in-depth discussion on the WBL database and methodology can be found in Hyland et al. (2020).

³ We operationalize centralization and standardization using respectively the *center* and *standardize* command in Stata which creates a variable containing the standardized values (zero sample mean and unit sample variance).

Across the world, women’s rights have expanded significantly over the past decades. In 1970, in 107 countries, women legally could not choose where to live in the same way as a man. Further, 184 countries did not prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender and only two countries legally mandated equal remuneration for work of equal value: the United Kingdom and Czechia. In 1970, not a single country had legislation in place regarding the protection of women against domestic violence. In contrast, today, 162 economies have such legislation in place.

Over the past five decades, the global Women, Business and the Law score has significantly improved across all indicators (Figure 1). Globally, the index score has increased by approximately two-thirds, driven by more than 2,000 reforms aimed at expanding women’s legal rights. These reforms have been implemented across all regions and in all of the 35 areas of measurement, leading to a remarkable increase in the average Women, Business and the Law score from 45.8 to 77.1 points.

Figure 1 - Average WBL indicator scores, 1970–2023



Source: Women, Business and the Law database.

3.3 Independent Variables: Political Economy, Civil Society Organizations, and Women’s Rights Groups

Our first main explanatory variable of interest is a country’s political economy, which we measure by drawing on the level of democracy using the polity combined score (*polity2*)

provided by the Polity V database (Marshall and Gurr 2020). This variable represents a country's level of democracy with a single numerical value that characterizes the political regime on a scale from -10 (full autocracy) to +10 (fully democracy). Further, the variable focuses on a broad definition of democracy, which includes electoral rules and various measures of openness of institutions, leaving aside aspects such as the rule of law, freedom of the press, or equality of representation (Marshall and Gurr 2020).

The calculation of the polity score involves a combination of two components: (a) *Autocracy Score (-10 to -6)*, which represents the extent of autocratic features in a country's political system, considering factors such as the concentration of power in the hands of the executive, the level of repression and political constraints, and the absence of competitive elections; and (b) *Democracy Score (6 to 10)*, which reflects the presence of democratic elements in a country's political system. It considers factors such as the existence of competitive elections, the protection of civil liberties and political rights, and the ability of citizens to participate in the political process. Countries falling between the two are considered *Anocracies (-5 to 5)*.

As for the second driver, we investigate the role of CSOs for legal gender equality. To assess the level of activity of a country's civil society, we draw on the civil society participation index (*v2x_cspart*) which reflects the level of engagement and influence of civil society organizations and citizens in the decision-making processes of a country's political system (Pemstein et al. 2021). Higher values of *v2x_cspart* indicate a more active and influential civil society participation in politics, suggesting that CSOs have significant opportunities to contribute to public debates and influence policy decisions. Conversely, lower values of *v2x_cspart* suggest a less participatory civil society environment, where CSOs may have limited access to political processes and fewer opportunities to engage with government institutions. The index is a composite measure, taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the four indicators (i) the decentralization of the selection process for political candidates, (ii) the degree to which the government consults with CSOs, (iii) the inclusiveness of the civil society space, and (iv) the extent to which women are actively involved in CSOs. Further details are provided in Appendix A.

As for the third driver, to understand the involvement of women's rights groups and female champions in CSOs, we analyze the role women's rights groups play in advancing legal gender equality. Data to specifically measure women's participation in civil society has been rather scarce, and typically limited to a select number of countries. We draw on the CSO women's

participation variable (*v2csgender*) of the V-Dem data set which specifically captures the engagement of women in CSOs (Bernhard et al. 2015; Pemstein et al. 2021). This variable differs from the fourth indicator within *v2x_cspart* (i.e., the variable measuring the level of activity of a country's civil society more broadly) in that, rather than capturing the extent to which women are involved in society, it measures specific obstacles and barriers faced by women in terms of participation in CSOs. It further assesses challenges that CSOs advocating for women's interests encounter in their engagement in associational life. In essence, the variable captures the extent to which women are prevented from participating in CSOs due to their gender and the extent to which CSOs pursuing women's interests are prevented from taking part in civic life.

Table 1 provides summary statistics of all dependent and independent variables. Regarding the explanatory variables of interest, the level of democracy and civil society participation variables suggest modest levels of political engagement and civic activism, respectively, with considerable variation among countries. Regarding the variable *CSO Women*, the higher mean indicates that, on average, women are actively involved in various civic activities. However, the substantial standard deviation suggests considerable variation, indicating that while some countries demonstrate robust participation of women in civil society, others exhibit lower levels, emphasizing the diverse roles and impact of women in shaping civic discourse and societal transformations.

4. Drivers of Women's Legal Rights: Empirical Results

This section presents the regression results of women's economic inclusion and empowerment on the Women, Business and the Law data. Overall, we show that a country's political economy, an active civil society, and active women's rights groups are positively and significantly associated with higher legal gender equality.

4.1 The Importance of a Country's Political Economy: Democracy

Regressions on the relationship between the level of democracy and gendered legal equality indicate a positive and significant relationship (**Table 2**). The primary results confirm our first hypothesis: More democratic states are associated with higher legal gender equality overall (column (1)). In democratic states, political leader's willingness and ability to implement legal reforms that promote gender equality and protect women's rights seems to be higher than in less democratic states.

However, the nuanced results for specific variables emphasize the need for a contextualized understanding of the intersections between a state's political economy and gendered laws. Across the eight indicators, no significant relationship could be detected between democracy and *Mobility*, *Parenthood*, and *Pension*. This suggests that the level of democracy is not a strong predictor for women's freedom of movement, parental leave policies, or a country's pension policies.

On the other hand, the highest coefficient, 7.071 ($p < 0.01$) between the level of democracy and *Workplace*, indicates a significant positive association between democratic governance and improved workplace environments for women. This suggests that as countries become more democratic, they tend to witness substantial advancements in the rights, treatment, and opportunities afforded to women in the workforce. The positive and significant coefficient of 3.364 for *Pay* underlines that the level of democracy is correlated with strides in achieving legal gender pay equality. The highly significant coefficient of 4.886 for *Entrepreneurship* signifies that more democratic countries provide a more conducive environment for women's entrepreneurial activities. Moreover, the positive and statistically significant relationship between level of democracy and *Assets* indicates that political level of democracy is associated with increased legal ownership rights of assets by women. Overall, this suggests that democracy may ensure strong rights to work and to entrepreneurial activity (including that of owning and managing assets), but that other levers may be needed to bring about equality in the personal sphere of women's lives and to ensure their financial security in old age.

The estimated coefficients on the control variable *GDP per Capita* are in the direction expected, although not statistically significant once other control variables and country fixed effects are included in the model. Tertilt et al. (2022) suggest that higher GDP per capita can create a conducive environment for gendered legal reforms. In countries with higher GDP per capita, there may be more opportunities for women to participate in the formal economy, which can lead to greater visibility and advocacy for legal reforms that support women's rights and economic empowerment. However, the commonly observed positive correlation between development and gender equality does not hold universally, especially when examining nations at different income levels, as exemplified by Högström (2015). This revelation underscores the idea that the path to gender equality is not solely determined by economic growth but is influenced by a range of socio-economic factors that vary across countries with distinct income levels. *GDP Growth* is not statistically significant across most models.

The coefficients on the *Fertility* variable, on the other hand, show mixed results across different estimations. The dependent variable, the aggregate WBL index, is comprised of a wide range of legislative issues and it appears that the impact of fertility varies across these issues. For the overall estimation (Table 2, column 1), the coefficient is positive and significant. Once specific areas of the law are considered, however, the coefficient turns negative and significant, pointing to the importance of the “parental altruism” channel proposed in Tertilt and Doepke (2009) and Tertilt et al. (2022) in some but not all areas of the law. Differences between our results and those of Tertilt et al. (2022) could potentially be attributed to running models on different samples, and to a different specification of the dependent variables. If we restrict our sample to country-year observations for which data on female labor supply are available,⁴ we find that the fertility rate is not a significant predictor of the aggregate WBL index. Further, in a parsimonious model that only controls for fertility, per capita GDP, and country and year fixed effects, and includes only those observations for which data on female labor supply are available, we find that the fertility rate is positively and significantly correlated with the Parenthood indicator, and negatively and significantly correlated to laws that fall under Mobility and Assets. Hence, we assume that the parental altruism that Tertilt and Doepke (2009) and Tertilt et al. (2022) discuss can work through different channels,⁵ with potentially different implications for the relationship between fertility rates and legal equality. While a more detailed understanding of how this relationship plays out in the wide array of laws captured by WBL merits further investigation, it is beyond the scope of the current research.

4.2 An Active Civil Society and Women’s Rights Groups Are Key for Gender Equal Laws

Having assessed the importance of a country’s political system for legal gender equality, we then proceed to assess the relationship between civil society participation and gendered legal equality (Table 3). Again, in addition to looking at the correlation with the aggregate WBL index, we assess the relationship with each of the eight WBL indicators.

On aggregate, *Civil Society Participation* is positively and significantly associated with higher legal gender equality (Table 3, column (1)), confirming hypothesis 2a. Across the eight indicators, the relationship is positive and statistically significant, except for *Marriage*,

⁴ This variable is included in the model of Tertilt et al. but, prior to 1990, these data are disproportionately available for high-income economies.

⁵ For other important contributions on the topic, see Washington (2008) and Fernandez (2013).

Parenthood and *Pension* (columns 5, 6, and 9), and only weakly significant for *Mobility* (columns 2).

Overall, we find that the more active a country's civil society, the higher legal gender equality. This suggests that an active civil society is pivotal in nudging governments to remove legal gender barriers. This is evident across various aspects of women's rights. The substantial positive correlation with *Workplace* (7.302, $p < 0.01$) implies that countries with higher levels of civic engagement are likely to witness significant improvements in women's conditions within the workforce. This aligns with the observed positive and statistically significant relationships between an active civil society and *Pay* (4.901, $p < 0.01$), as well as *Entrepreneurship* (5.220, $p < 0.01$), each highlighting different facets of women's societal engagement where active civic participation fosters positive change. These include promoting gender pay equality and supporting the involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities. Moreover, the relationship with *Assets* (4.784, $p < 0.01$) further emphasizes the role of civic engagement in enhancing women's legal rights and capacities, particularly concerning the ownership and inheritance of land and property, which may also facilitate women's entrepreneurial activity by ensuring they can access collateral to secure loans. Overall, the pattern of results that we see for civil society mirror those of democracy – the most robust relationships are between these potential drivers and laws in the areas of *Workplace*, *Pay*, *Entrepreneurship*, and *Assets*, but other forces may be needed to advance women's rights in their family lives and pension rights.

Assessing if women's rights groups are specifically important for driving legal gender equality, we assess their relationship with legal gender equality. As before, we test sequentially the WBL aggregated index followed by the eight WBL indicators. The results are displayed in **Table 4**.

Broadly, we find a strong and significant relationship between women's rights groups and legal gender equality, confirming our hypothesis 2b. The coefficient on "CSO Women" in column (1) of Table 4 suggests that women's involvement in civil society plays a stronger role in advancing equality relative to the other drivers we investigate. This finding suggests that the positive relationship between civil society participation and gendered legal equality is driven, at least in part, by women's involvement in civil society. In other words, in countries where women's rights groups, feminist movements as well as trailblazing women engaged in civil society are strong, there tends to be a greater focus on enacting and implementing laws that promote gender equality. The increased awareness and pressure from women's participation in civil society can lead to reforms in legal frameworks that address issues like gender

discrimination, domestic violence, equal pay, and other aspects of gendered legal equality. The only two indicators where we do not see a significant correlation with women's rights groups are *Parenthood* and *Pension*. Notably, *Parenthood* is the indicator with the lowest global aggregate score (*Pension* is the third lowest after *Pay*), which points to the difficulty of driving change in this area.

4.3 Examining the Interplay of Women's Civil Society Participation, Civil Society, and Democracy on Gender Equality

To better understand the interlinkages between a country's political economy and women's involvement in CSOs, we run a series of additional regressions (**Table 5**). First, we differentiate the 35 index data points assessing women's legal rights into laws that ensure the absence of a restriction and those that grant an enabling provision such as the provisions of benefits. We define restrictions on women's rights whether laws provide the same rights to men and women or whether women face legal barriers that men do not; these include, for instance, becoming head of the household or opening a bank account. Enabling provisions, on the other hand, include legal provisions that provide women with a certain benefit such as maternity leave or a specific law prohibiting discrimination of women (see Appendix B for differentiation of variables).

Overall, for all three drivers – democracy, active civil society, and women's participation in civil society, we find a stronger correlation with laws that ensure the absence of a restriction, such as that women can travel outside their homes and countries, or that they can inherit assets in the same way as men (**Table 5**). These results again emphasize the strong association between gender equality and women's participation in civil society, showing how women's rights groups can be effective in leveling the legal playing field between men and women. This indicates that trailblazing women, demanding governments to remove restrictions on the legal capacity of women, are pivotal. In contrast, while all three drivers are also positively associated with guaranteeing enabling provisions (such as enshrining equal remuneration or rights to maternity leave in the law), the weaker coefficients suggest that their role is not as strong. Moreover, in terms of their effectiveness in guaranteeing enabling provisions for women, the three drivers we investigate are all of a similar order of magnitude. We show that a country's level of democracy and civil society organizations play a more prominent role in removing legal restrictions that are placed upon women than they do in ensuring rights to enabling provisions such as the right to maternity leave. Specifically, women's rights groups seem particularly important in pushing the needle in this direction.

Having established that democracy and an active civil society—especially one in which women play a prominent role—are independently correlated, we go on to assess the interplay of democracy and civil society organizations by estimating models with an interaction effect (**Table 6**). The first model assesses the interaction between women’s involvement in CSOs and the level of democracy (*WCS x Polity*). The results reveal a statistically significant positive relationship between Women’s CSO and the level of democracy, with a coefficient of 1.827. This suggests that in countries where women’s rights groups are more active, the positive influence of democracy on gender equality is amplified. As Lamont has previously highlighted, formal institutions and grassroots organizations can play complementary roles; as she puts it, “Top-down and bottom-up strategies complement one another” (Lamont 2023). Our results imply that democratic systems can be particularly advantageous for gender equality when women’s civic engagement is robust.

In contrast, the interaction of a broader definition of civil societies and a country’s level of democracy, while positive (Table 6, column 2: coefficient of 1.473), is not statistically significant. To better understand the relationship between civil society and democracy, and their relation to gender equality, we run a split-sample regression, examining the correlation between an active civil society and gender equality in autocratic, anocratic, and democratic regimes (**Table 7**). This exercise reveals that an active civil society is only robustly correlated with gender equality in fully democratic states (Table 7, column 3: coefficient of 9.336). This result suggests the importance of formal institutions in ensuring the effectiveness of civil society in fully democratic states. In backsliding or non-democratic states, in turn, civil societies seem to not advance legal gender equality.

4.4 Robustness Checks

In order to test the robustness of our results, we run a series of alternate model specifications and robustness tests including adding additional control variables to the model and testing different operationalization of the main explanatory variables of interest.

Traditional gender norms and the relationship between democracy, civil society, and legal reform

In many religious communities, traditional gender roles are deeply ingrained, attributing specific roles and responsibilities to men and women. These roles are often justified or reinforced by religious teachings, leading to prescribed societal expectations regarding women's behavior, family roles, and social status. As a result, laws and policies may be shaped to align

with these traditional gender norms, potentially limiting women's access to education, employment opportunities, and leadership positions. As a result, laws and policies may be influenced by religious doctrines and interpretations (Boyle et al. 2015). Hence, following Tertilt et al. (2022), we rerun our estimations by including controls for a country's predominant religion (religion fixed effects) based on three religions: Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. The omitted category includes all other religions and non-religious majorities. Country fixed effects are removed from these models as they would be collinear with the time-invariant religion fixed effects. We rerun the results in the same order as the main estimations and provide results in **Tables 8, 9, and 10**. The results overall confirm our main results, i.e., the level of democracy, civil society participation, and involvement of women in civil society are associated with increased gender equality in the law.

Examining the coefficient of the religion variables, we consistently find that Islam is correlated with lower levels of gender equality in law, in line with Tertilt et al (2022). What is also interesting to note is the goodness-of-fit across the different indicators. For example, Table 8 shows that when our standard controls and religion fixed effects are included in the estimation, approximately 60 percent of the variation in the WBL index is explained. However, the explanatory power of the model varies notably between indicators. Approximately 53 percent of the variation in the *Workplace* indicator is explained, but only 7 percent of the *Pension* indicator. This suggests a much stronger role of norms, as broadly proxied by religion, in explaining the rights of women to engage in the workforce than in the laws that help ensure their economic independence upon retirement. Religion fixed effects also appear to play a relatively stronger role in, perhaps unsurprisingly, laws related to gender equality in marriage.

Alternate independent variables specification

As there are different specifications and data sources that measure democracy and civil society participation, we test the robustness of our results to using alternative explanatory variables. We find that our results remain stable when using these alternate specifications.

Firstly, as an alternative measure of the level of democracy, we use the *Alternative Democracy* variable, derived from Boix et al. (2013) and provided by V-DEM (*e_boix_regime*). This alternate measure of democracy emphasizes the core democratic principles, categorizing countries based on the existence of free and fair elections and minimal suffrage levels, providing a straightforward and simple framework for identifying democratic regimes.

The findings outlined in **Table 11** corroborate our primary conclusions concerning the link between the level of democracy and legal gender equality. An elevated degree of democracy is associated with significant improvements in gender equality laws. This relationship underscores the importance of democratic governance as a catalyst for enhancing legal rights and protections for women.

Next, we check if the positive effect of the aggregate CS variable on gender equality in law is driven by the women CS component of the variable. To proceed, we rebuilt the *Civil Society Participation* variable without the Women CS component using principal component analysis. This refined variable enables a focused investigation into the broader civil society's influence on gender equality in law, independent of the direct contribution of women CSOs.

We rerun our analysis using *CS without Women CSO* as explanatory variable of interest in **Table 12**. Interestingly, we find that civil society participation is still positively related to gender equality in law. The persistence of this positive correlation suggests that the mechanisms through which civil society influences gender equality in law are multifaceted. It indicates that broad-based civil society engagement—encompassing advocacy, lobbying, public campaigns, and awareness-raising activities—plays a crucial role in shaping legal reforms. This engagement facilitates a conducive environment for policy change by increasing public discourse on gender equality, pressuring policy makers, and contributing to a societal consensus on the importance of legal reforms.

Finally, instead of using one part of the compositive index on civil society only, we assess whether gender indicators or variables related to women's rights, gender representation, or gender-based policies can help verify whether the observed trends in our initial women's civil society participation variable align with broader measures of women's engagement in politics and civil society. Consistency across these indicators enhances the reliability of gender-related conclusions. Hence, following Mechkova and Carlitz (2021), we use the women civil society participation index (*v2x_gencs*) from V-DEM, which captures whether women have the ability to express themselves and to form and participate in groups (Sundström et al. 2017). The higher the index, the more a society facilitates women's open discussion of political issues, participation in civil society organizations, and representation in the ranks of journalists. The index is formed by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for:

- *Freedom of discussion for women*: it assesses the extent to which women are free to express themselves and engage in open discussions on various social, political, and economic issues. The indicator focuses on the level of freedom of speech, expression, and participation that women experience in a society.
- *CSO women's participation*: it captures the extent to which women are actively engaged and involved in civil society organizations, which are non-governmental entities that operate independently from the government and represent the interests of citizens.
- *Female journalists*: it measures the extent to which women are represented and involved in the field of journalism. The indicator focuses on the proportion of female journalists in the media industry, which includes newspapers, television, radio, online news outlets, and other forms of journalistic reporting.

The results presented in **Table 13** confirm our main results regarding the association of women's civil society participation on gender equality in law. An increase in women civil society participation typically indicates progress toward greater gender equality in various aspects of governance, and practices.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, in this paper, we shed light on a critical gap in understanding what drives legal gender reform across countries, focusing specifically on the role of a country's political system, civil society participation and women's rights groups. Our findings highlight a positive and significant relationship between the political system of an economy, the activism of civil societies, particularly women's rights groups, and a country's willingness and ability to reform gender-discriminatory laws. Notably, these results hold true across various specifications of democracy and degree of civil society activity.

Across the eight indicator areas, correlations are strongest for *Workplace* for the three identified drivers of legal gender equality. This suggests that a country's level of democracy, civil society organizations, and women's rights groups are important to increase the legal rights, treatment, and opportunities afforded to women in the workforce. We further show that women's rights groups have a stronger relationship with legal gender equality across all estimations, denoting that women's rights organizations are essential in driving legal change. In particular, the role

that women's rights groups play in removing restrictions seems to be relatively large, compared to the other two drivers we examine. While still important for advocating for laws that grant enabling provisions to women (such as maternity leave benefits), we find that the correlation across the three drivers is still significant, but of a smaller magnitude.

While we acknowledge the limitations inherent in our study, it is important to recognize that legal change represents just one facet of the broader journey toward achieving gender equality. Nonetheless, the enactment of laws can serve as a potent catalyst for societal transformation, signaling progress independently of their immediate implementation (Htun and Jensenius 2022). While our analysis may not be able to establish a causal relationship, it still offers valuable insights into the pivotal role played by women's rights groups and the political economy in driving legal reform.

In terms of policy implications, our study adds to the body of evidence stressing the importance of good institutions. Turning specifically to the importance of civil societies, our results underscore the critical importance of supporting women's rights groups and civil society organizations. These groups serve as vital catalysts for advancing gender equality by challenging discriminatory laws, amplifying marginalized voices, and advocating for policy reforms. By providing platforms for women to voice their concerns, monitoring government actions, and leveraging their expertise in community engagement, CSOs, women-focused CSOs in particular, play a crucial role in shaping policy debates and holding policy makers accountable. Further, providing an environment where a civil society can thrive has positive implications for legal change. This may include the reduction of burdensome registration and reporting requirements, which may hinder the work of CSOs, and scaling up the financial support that CSOs and women's rights groups receive. Despite their importance, CSOs and women's rights groups remain critically underfunded. Financially supporting and empowering women's rights groups and civil society organizations is not only a moral imperative, but also a strategic investment in building more equitable and inclusive societies, moving economies closer to achieving gender equality and fostering a more inclusive world for all.

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Table 1 - Descriptive statistics

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std Dev.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
<i>Dependent variables</i>					
WBL index	10,260	59.96	18.75	17.5	100
Mobility	10,260	82.11	25.63	0	100
Workplace	10,260	43.64	33.86	0	100
Pay	10,260	48.07	31.31	0	100
Marriage	10,260	62.13	29.95	0	100
Parenthood	10,260	35.21	30.83	0	100
Entrepreneurship	10,260	72.99	21.22	0	100
Assets	10,260	73.80	29.19	0	100
Pension	10,260	61.71	29.00	0	100
<i>Variables of interest</i>					
Polity V	6,985	1.57	7.35	-10	10
Civil Society Participation	8,635	0.58	0.29	0.013	0.988
CSO Women	8,635	0.98	1.07	-3.443	2.703
<i>Country-level controls</i>					
GDP per Capita	8,321	8.33	1.44	4.92	11.68
GDP Growth	8,300	3.58	6.28	-64.05	149.97
Fertility	9,449	3.74	1.96	0.772	8.86
<i>Alternative dependent variables</i>					
Laws ensuring absence of restriction	10,260	0.75	0.20	0.26	1
Law granting enabling provision	10,260	0.42	0.23	0.06	1
<i>Religion variables</i>					
Buddhism	9,720	0.04	0.21	0	1
Christianity	9,720	0.65	0.48	0	1
Islam	9,720	0.25	0.43	0	1
<i>Alternative independent variables</i>					
Alternative Democracy	7,925	0.47	0.50	0	1
CS without Women CSO	8,635	0.00	0.91	-2.20	2.13
Alternative Women CSO	8,635	0.58	0.25	0.01	0.95

Table 2 – Political Economy: Democracy

	(1) WBL	(2) Mobility	(3) Workplace	(4) Pay	(5) Marriage	(6) Parenthood	(7) Entrepreneurship	(8) Assets	(9) Pension
Democracy	2.612*** (0.631)	1.236* (0.750)	7.071*** (1.568)	3.364** (1.533)	2.108** (0.996)	0.0630 (1.004)	4.886*** (1.578)	3.241*** (1.221)	-1.077 (1.282)
GDP Per Capita	2.554 (2.222)	-0.416 (1.800)	4.934 (5.491)	4.368 (4.263)	3.956 (3.508)	10.84*** (4.162)	1.105 (3.456)	-1.285 (3.564)	-3.065 (4.576)
GDP Growth	-0.182 (0.160)	-0.139 (0.133)	0.00263 (0.397)	-0.0771 (0.333)	-0.391 (0.248)	-0.620** (0.261)	-0.218 (0.288)	0.101 (0.240)	-0.117 (0.402)
Fertility	2.391** (1.188)	-2.530** (1.111)	7.777*** (2.874)	4.995** (2.458)	0.0559 (1.839)	5.943*** (2.052)	3.797* (1.944)	-2.257 (2.067)	1.347 (2.861)
Constant	10.20** (5.162)	40.61*** (4.560)	11.63 (12.83)	-30.31*** (10.26)	-2.359 (8.111)	-7.908 (9.474)	50.62*** (8.377)	25.40*** (8.476)	-6.118 (10.05)
Observations	6,278	6,278	6,278	6,278	6,278	6,278	6,278	6,278	6,278
Number of countries	157	157	157	157	157	157	157	157	157
Cluster	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.902	0.939	0.771	0.808	0.902	0.867	0.700	0.871	0.774

This table reports the coefficients and standard errors (in brackets). All models are ordinary least squares regressions at the country level. All models have variance robust to heteroscedasticity and clustered at the country level. *, **, *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level respectively. See Appendix A for the definitions of the variables.

Table 3 – Civil society participation

	(1) WBL index	(2) Mobility	(3) Workplace	(4) Pay	(5) Marriage	(6) Parenthood	(7) Entrepreneurship	(8) Assets	(9) Pension
Civil Society Participation	3.302*** (0.714)	1.311* (0.794)	7.302*** (1.681)	4.901*** (1.696)	1.650 (1.148)	1.709 (1.126)	5.220*** (1.658)	4.784*** (1.311)	-0.464 (1.432)
GDP Per Capita	2.159 (2.035)	-0.706 (1.780)	4.900 (5.133)	3.561 (4.074)	4.140 (3.334)	11.44*** (3.906)	0.142 (3.300)	-0.721 (3.174)	-5.484 (4.308)
GDP Growth	-0.0864 (0.121)	-0.0631 (0.118)	-0.199 (0.356)	0.111 (0.296)	-0.233 (0.198)	-0.518** (0.208)	-0.111 (0.241)	0.202 (0.190)	0.121 (0.324)
Fertility	1.547 (1.150)	-3.144*** (1.121)	6.256** (2.736)	4.421* (2.338)	-0.557 (1.853)	5.500*** (2.022)	2.399 (1.877)	-2.355 (1.887)	-0.143 (2.891)
Constant	6.673 (5.100)	26.01*** (4.593)	-14.98 (12.93)	-27.98*** (10.16)	2.126 (8.223)	-1.622 (9.693)	49.57*** (8.580)	27.08*** (8.012)	-6.829 (10.15)
Observations	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116
Number of countries	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166
Cluster	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.898	0.930	0.768	0.800	0.898	0.866	0.687	0.872	0.758

This table reports the coefficients and standard errors (in brackets). All models are ordinary least squares regressions at the country level. All models have variance robust to heteroscedasticity and clustered at the country level. *, **, *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level respectively. See Appendix A for the definitions of the variables.

Table 4 – Women civil society participation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	WBL	Mobility	Workplace	Pay	Marriage	Parenthood	ntrepreneurship	Assets	Pension
CSO Women	4.537*** (0.909)	2.326*** (0.860)	7.785*** (2.031)	5.566*** (2.092)	5.333*** (1.276)	2.281 (1.566)	6.836*** (2.208)	7.100*** (1.589)	-0.928 (1.552)
GDP Per Capita	2.683 (1.960)	-0.394 (1.711)	5.612 (5.193)	4.106 (4.006)	5.011 (3.218)	11.70*** (3.941)	0.904 (3.170)	0.143 (3.069)	-5.616 (4.314)
GDP Growth	-0.118 (0.124)	-0.0813 (0.118)	-0.245 (0.368)	0.0765 (0.293)	-0.282 (0.198)	-0.534** (0.210)	-0.158 (0.241)	0.150 (0.178)	0.129 (0.322)
Fertility	1.484 (1.084)	-3.075*** (1.104)	5.714** (2.801)	4.118* (2.280)	-0.0402 (1.722)	5.455*** (1.964)	2.239 (1.796)	-2.352 (1.859)	-0.186 (2.815)
Constant	15.37*** (5.019)	30.55*** (4.560)	-0.396 (13.73)	-17.48 (10.98)	12.81 (7.987)	2.740 (10.33)	62.63*** (8.722)	40.76*** (8.306)	-8.652 (10.29)
Observations	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116
Number of countries	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166
Cluster	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.901	0.931	0.767	0.800	0.902	0.866	0.691	0.876	0.758

This table reports the coefficients and standard errors (in brackets). All models are ordinary least squares regressions at the country level. All models have variance robust to heteroscedasticity and clustered at the country level. *, **, *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level respectively. See Appendix A for the definitions of the variables.

Table 5 – Categories of law

	Laws ensuring absence of restriction			Law granting enabling provision		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Democracy	0.0344*** (0.00861)			0.0147** (0.00719)		
Civil Society Participation		0.0415*** (0.00884) (0.00891)			0.0218*** (0.00820)	
CSO Women			0.0622*** (0.0113)			0.0261*** (0.00974)
GDP Per Capita	0.00739 (0.0227)	0.00309 (0.0210)	0.0107 (0.0194)	0.0507* (0.0298)	0.0488* (0.0270)	0.0515* (0.0272)
GDP Growth	-0.000927 (0.00190)	0.000414 (0.00155)	-4.07e-05 (0.00153)	-0.00312 (0.00204)	-0.00256 (0.00161)	-0.00273* (0.00165)
Fertility	-0.00504 (0.0148)	-0.0116 (0.0137)	-0.0114 (0.0128)	0.0561*** (0.0150)	0.0463*** (0.0149)	0.0452*** (0.0147)
Constant	0.303*** (0.0579)	0.272*** (0.0585)	0.392*** (0.0548)	-0.146** (0.0690)	-0.173** (0.0671)	-0.123* (0.0711)
Observations	6,278	7,116	7,116	6,278	7,116	7,116
Number of countries	157	166	166	157	166	166
Cluster	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.890	0.883	0.889	0.873	0.872	0.872

This table reports the coefficients and standard errors (in brackets). All models are ordinary least squares regressions at the country level. All models have variance robust to heteroscedasticity and clustered at the country level. *, **, *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level respectively. See Appendix A for the definitions of the variables.

Table 6 – Interactions

	(1) WCS x Polity	(2) CS x Polity
Interaction	1.827** (0.736)	1.473 (0.945)
Civil Society Participation		3.536*** (1.108)
CSO Women	4.267*** (1.093)	
Polity V index	1.935*** (0.667)	0.904 (0.863)
GDP Per Capita	2.489 (1.996)	2.330 (2.104)
GDP Growth	-0.197 (0.155)	-0.164 (0.154)
Fertility	2.123* (1.107)	2.420** (1.146)
Constant	17.49*** (4.903)	9.307* (4.999)
Observations	6,278	6,278
Number of countries	157	157
Cluster	Country	Country
Country dummies	Yes	Yes
Year dummies	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.910	0.906

This table reports the coefficients and standard errors (in brackets). All models are ordinary least squares regressions at the country level. All models have variance robust to heteroscedasticity and clustered at the country level. In this estimation, explanatory variables are not standardized. *, **, *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level respectively. See Appendix A for the definitions of the variables.

Table 7 – Level of democratization

	(1) Autocracies (Polity score between -10 and -6)	(2) Anocracies (Polity score between -5 and 5)	(3) Democracies (Polity between 6 and 10)
Civil Society Participation	3.740 (2.811)	8.098 (4.939)	9.336*** (2.687)
GDP Per Capita	2.719** (1.228)	-0.0392 (2.017)	4.484** (2.131)
GDP Growth	0.0113 (0.0143)	0.00494 (0.0245)	-0.0520** (0.0249)
Fertility	0.393 (0.844)	0.599 (1.192)	-0.740 (0.836)
Constant	41.09*** (5.802)	2.173 (17.00)	-21.75 (13.38)
Observations	1,249	1,707	4,160
Number of countries	83	98	165
Cluster	Country	Country	Country
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.951	0.885	0.897

This table reports the coefficients and standard errors (in brackets). All models are ordinary least squares regressions at the country level. The dependent variable is *WBL index*. All models have variance robust to heteroscedasticity and clustered at the country level. *, **, *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level respectively. See Appendix A for the definitions of the variables.

Table 8 – Level of democracy with religion fixed effects

	(1) WBL	(2) Mobility	(3) Workplace	(4) Pay	(5) Marriage	(6) Parenthood	(7) Entrepreneurship	(8) Assets	(9) Pension
Polity V	2.653*** (0.607)	1.279* (0.739)	7.003*** (1.476)	3.526** (1.482)	2.022** (0.980)	-0.0136 (0.987)	4.814*** (1.516)	3.453*** (1.182)	-0.978 (1.266)
GDP Per Capita	3.249* (1.749)	-0.291 (1.660)	5.156* (3.072)	5.989* (3.373)	3.418 (2.729)	10.89*** (3.414)	3.027 (2.226)	0.419 (2.730)	-1.612 (3.703)
GDP Growth	-0.194 (0.156)	-0.160 (0.133)	-0.0329 (0.369)	-0.0920 (0.325)	-0.398* (0.240)	-0.644** (0.255)	-0.266 (0.277)	0.102 (0.232)	-0.0876 (0.396)
Fertility	1.667 (1.130)	-2.940*** (1.102)	6.183** (2.514)	4.151* (2.260)	-0.426 (1.749)	5.274*** (1.920)	2.565 (1.783)	-3.203 (2.019)	1.170 (2.770)
Buddhism	-0.542 (2.856)	-0.782 (3.433)	-2.822 (5.633)	16.54* (9.190)	5.591 (6.949)	-12.23 (10.07)	1.835 (3.374)	6.483 (9.572)	-18.16* (10.78)
Christianity	-0.131 (2.320)	-9.467*** (1.808)	-7.701* (4.011)	13.56* (7.178)	-1.710 (5.059)	0.971 (7.866)	-7.920*** (2.704)	0.955 (7.796)	10.48 (8.090)
Islam	-20.66*** (3.568)	-31.35*** (5.778)	-26.82*** (5.401)	-13.64* (7.885)	-38.26*** (7.208)	-15.73* (9.036)	-5.785* (3.364)	-28.16*** (9.216)	-4.616 (8.784)
Constant	51.42*** (2.246)	88.96*** (1.711)	27.33*** (3.579)	27.29*** (6.818)	58.79*** (4.993)	24.76*** (7.492)	67.58*** (3.144)	72.29*** (7.576)	44.69*** (7.790)
Observations	6,164	6,164	6,164	6,164	6,164	6,164	6,164	6,164	6,164
Number of countries	154	154	154	154	154	154	154	154	154
Cluster	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country
Country dummies	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Religion dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.601	0.313	0.530	0.356	0.510	0.250	0.207	0.471	0.0706

This table reports the coefficients and standard errors (in brackets). All models are ordinary least squares regressions at the country level. All models have variance robust to heteroscedasticity clustered at the country level. *, **, *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level respectively. See Appendix A for the definitions of the variables.

Table 9 – Civil society participation with religion fixed effects

	(1) WBL	(2) Mobility	(3) Workplace	(4) Pay	(5) Marriage	(6) Parenthood	(7) Entrepreneurship	(8) Assets	(9) Pension
Civil Society Participation	3.261*** (0.685)	1.277 (0.786)	7.038*** (1.556)	4.881*** (1.627)	1.545 (1.129)	1.478 (1.096)	5.073*** (1.587)	4.763*** (1.266)	-0.201 (1.408)
GDP Per Capita	2.937* (1.622)	-0.808 (1.653)	4.535 (2.936)	5.667* (3.329)	3.674 (2.651)	11.79*** (3.312)	1.690 (2.302)	0.751 (2.572)	-3.231 (3.502)
GDP Growth	-0.102 (0.120)	-0.0747 (0.118)	-0.151 (0.328)	0.0447 (0.288)	-0.254 (0.195)	-0.558*** (0.206)	-0.115 (0.234)	0.185 (0.186)	0.107 (0.320)
Fertility	0.825 (1.080)	-3.533*** (1.109)	4.568* (2.368)	3.668* (2.143)	-0.885 (1.761)	4.970*** (1.899)	1.228 (1.717)	-3.132* (1.846)	-0.312 (2.785)
Buddhism	0.591 (2.946)	-0.573 (3.440)	-1.056 (5.672)	18.34** (9.035)	5.977 (6.894)	-10.52 (10.11)	2.730 (3.400)	8.460 (9.491)	-18.48* (10.84)
Christianity	0.248 (2.206)	-9.038*** (1.648)	-6.815* (3.682)	13.55* (7.179)	-0.969 (4.932)	0.523 (7.622)	-6.606*** (2.065)	0.705 (7.387)	10.59 (8.056)
Islam	-19.26*** (3.453)	-30.14*** (5.566)	-25.26*** (5.166)	-10.85 (7.905)	-37.72*** (7.130)	-14.19 (8.772)	-4.558 (3.052)	-27.59*** (9.032)	-3.666 (8.680)
Constant	51.93*** (2.178)	88.77*** (1.595)	28.57*** (3.372)	28.73*** (6.877)	58.81*** (4.884)	26.26*** (7.289)	67.49*** (2.754)	73.48*** (7.132)	43.41*** (7.782)
Observations	6,945	6,945	6,945	6,945	6,945	6,945	6,945	6,945	6,945
Number of countries	162	162	162	162	162	162	162	162	162
Cluster	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country
Country dummies	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Religion dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.618	0.305	0.533	0.361	0.506	0.272	0.204	0.453	0.0634

This table reports the coefficients and standard errors (in brackets). All models are ordinary least squares regressions at the country level. All models have variance robust to heteroscedasticity and clustered at the country level. *, **, *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level respectively. See Appendix A for the definitions of the variables.

Table 10 – Women civil society participation with religion fixed effects

	(1) WBL	(2) Mobility	(3) Workplace	(4) Pay	(5) Marriage	(6) Parenthood	(7) Entrepreneurship	(8) Assets	(9) Pension
Women CSO	4.571*** (0.874)	2.317*** (0.852)	7.596*** (1.877)	5.461*** (1.998)	5.380*** (1.250)	2.295 (1.520)	6.721*** (2.091)	7.157*** (1.528)	-0.691 (1.522)
GDP Per Capita	3.235** (1.573)	-0.531 (1.602)	4.904 (3.009)	5.995* (3.264)	4.310* (2.608)	12.00*** (3.299)	2.067 (2.215)	1.313 (2.483)	-3.322 (3.514)
GDP Growth	-0.131 (0.122)	-0.0913 (0.117)	-0.195 (0.338)	0.0106 (0.285)	-0.294 (0.194)	-0.574*** (0.207)	-0.156 (0.233)	0.137 (0.175)	0.112 (0.318)
Fertility	0.975 (1.025)	-3.396*** (1.099)	4.543* (2.451)	3.512* (2.099)	-0.117 (1.641)	5.021*** (1.850)	1.405 (1.633)	-2.894 (1.800)	-0.404 (2.724)
Buddhism	-0.458 (2.872)	-0.695 (3.392)	-4.269 (6.535)	16.30* (8.671)	6.813 (7.285)	-10.86 (9.994)	0.900 (3.612)	7.195 (9.041)	-18.59* (10.79)
Christianity	0.237 (1.841)	-9.065*** (1.755)	-6.721 (4.102)	13.67** (6.855)	-1.219 (5.245)	0.532 (7.301)	-6.603*** (2.026)	0.691 (6.815)	10.62 (8.040)
Islam	-17.79*** (3.140)	-29.04*** (5.618)	-24.14*** (5.357)	-9.676 (7.611)	-34.35*** (7.212)	-13.25 (8.544)	-2.663 (3.227)	-24.93*** (8.565)	-4.110 (8.720)
Constant	52.66*** (1.848)	89.28*** (1.665)	29.29*** (3.934)	29.33*** (6.542)	60.37*** (5.194)	26.69*** (6.982)	68.46*** (2.673)	74.75*** (6.507)	43.20*** (7.792)
Observations	6,945	6,945	6,945	6,945	6,945	6,945	6,945	6,945	6,945
Number of countries	162	162	162	162	162	162	162	162	162
Cluster	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country
Country dummies	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Religion dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.648	0.318	0.540	0.354	0.540	0.290	0.222	0.477	0.0613

This table reports the coefficients and standard errors (in brackets). All models are ordinary least squares regressions at the country level. All models have variance robust to heteroscedasticity and clustered at the country level. *, **, *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level respectively. See Appendix A for the definitions of the variables.

Table 11 – Alternative measure of democracy

	(1) WBL	(2) Mobility	(3) Workplace	(4) Pay	(5) Marriage	(6) Parenthood	(7) Entrepreneurship	(8) Assets	(9) Pension
Alternative Democracy	4.363*** (1.124)	0.921 (1.188)	8.726*** (2.473)	5.839** (2.410)	4.164*** (1.512)	1.756 (1.707)	6.745** (2.898)	5.916*** (2.194)	0.837 (2.124)
GDP Per Capita	2.009 (2.065)	-1.049 (1.779)	3.530 (5.212)	3.493 (4.047)	4.052 (3.324)	11.62*** (4.000)	-0.348 (3.278)	-0.930 (3.265)	-4.292 (4.426)
GDP Growth	-0.151 (0.133)	-0.0697 (0.122)	-0.252 (0.372)	0.00206 (0.291)	-0.323 (0.211)	-0.564*** (0.213)	-0.188 (0.241)	0.124 (0.202)	0.0643 (0.325)
Fertility	1.310 (1.178)	-3.207*** (1.132)	5.148* (2.924)	3.816 (2.426)	-0.305 (1.799)	5.391*** (1.985)	2.002 (1.880)	-2.861 (2.010)	0.496 (2.761)
Constant	6.426 (5.105)	25.18*** (4.545)	-16.71 (13.23)	-28.11*** (10.12)	1.827 (8.153)	-2.020 (9.800)	48.93*** (8.344)	26.65*** (8.286)	-4.335 (10.37)
Observations	7,014	7,014	7,014	7,014	7,014	7,014	7,014	7,014	7,014
Number of countries	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165
Cluster	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.897	0.930	0.765	0.797	0.899	0.866	0.684	0.870	0.765

This table reports the coefficients and standard errors (in brackets). All models are linear probability models at the country level. All models have variance robust to heteroscedasticity and clustered at the country level. *, **, *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level respectively. See Appendix A for the definitions of the variables.

Table 12 – Civil Society without Women CSO

	(1) WBL	(2) Mobility	(3) Workplace	(4) Pay	(5) Marriage	(6) Parenthood	(7) Entrepreneurship	(8) Assets	(9) Pension
CS without Women CSO	3.422*** (0.806)	1.292 (0.918)	7.537*** (1.959)	5.417*** (1.966)	1.410 (1.342)	1.939 (1.247)	5.292*** (1.837)	4.923*** (1.461)	-0.432 (1.608)
GDP Per Capita	2.039 (2.055)	-0.759 (1.781)	4.632 (5.170)	3.408 (4.078)	4.057 (3.346)	11.39*** (3.900)	-0.0562 (3.328)	-0.897 (3.214)	-5.464 (4.306)
GDP Growth	-0.0763 (0.121)	-0.0589 (0.118)	-0.177 (0.356)	0.125 (0.298)	-0.227 (0.199)	-0.513** (0.208)	-0.0951 (0.239)	0.216 (0.193)	0.120 (0.325)
Fertility	1.353 (1.174)	-3.234*** (1.124)	5.821** (2.800)	4.200* (2.338)	-0.713 (1.856)	5.433*** (2.018)	2.069 (1.924)	-2.643 (1.940)	-0.106 (2.866)
Constant	6.191 (5.130)	25.82*** (4.591)	-16.05 (13.03)	-28.67*** (10.15)	1.868 (8.255)	-1.862 (9.689)	48.81*** (8.596)	26.38*** (8.043)	-6.759 (10.19)
Observations	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116
Number of countries	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166
Cluster	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.897	0.930	0.766	0.800	0.898	0.866	0.684	0.871	0.758

This table reports the coefficients and standard errors (in brackets). All models are linear probability models at the country level. All models have variance robust to heteroscedasticity and clustered at the country level. *, **, *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level respectively. See Appendix A for the definitions of the variables.

Table 13 – Alternative measure of Women Civil Society Participation

	(1) WBL	(2) Mobility	(3) Workplace	(4) Pay	(5) Marriage	(6) Parenthood	(7) Entrepreneurship	(8) Assets	(9) Pension
Ratio Women	5.802*** (0.909)	2.741*** (1.000)	10.84*** (2.013)	6.461*** (2.198)	6.322*** (1.400)	3.103* (1.636)	8.568*** (2.457)	8.502*** (1.768)	-0.117 (1.831)
GDP Per Capita	2.920 (1.969)	-0.318 (1.739)	6.191 (5.196)	4.268 (4.040)	5.191 (3.217)	11.85*** (3.930)	1.227 (3.166)	0.401 (3.019)	-5.454 (4.288)
GDP Growth	-0.143 (0.125)	-0.0910 (0.118)	-0.299 (0.364)	0.0545 (0.296)	-0.305 (0.199)	-0.549*** (0.209)	-0.193 (0.243)	0.119 (0.174)	0.120 (0.318)
Mortality	1.953* (1.066)	-2.886*** (1.110)	6.712** (2.687)	4.548** (2.307)	0.401 (1.696)	5.731*** (1.990)	2.906 (1.817)	-1.747 (1.788)	-0.0458 (2.850)
Constant	17.49*** (5.022)	31.18*** (4.668)	4.995 (13.69)	-16.18 (11.04)	14.32* (7.923)	4.176 (10.25)	65.48*** (8.643)	42.94*** (8.381)	-6.964 (10.18)
Observations	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116	7,116
Number of countries	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166
Cluster	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country	Country
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R2	0.904	0.931	0.771	0.801	0.903	0.866	0.695	0.878	0.758

This table reports the coefficients and standard errors (in brackets). All models are ordinary least squares regressions at the country level. All models have variance robust to heteroscedasticity clustered at the country level. *, **, *** denote statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level respectively. See Appendix A for the definitions of the variables.

Appendix A. Variable definitions

Variable name	Definition and source
<i>Dependent variables</i>	
WBL index	Index capturing the legal inequalities between men and women in terms of mobility, workplace, pay, marriage, parenthood, entrepreneurship, assets, and pension. The range is 0 to 100, the higher the index, the lower the legal inequalities. <i>Source: Women, Business and the Law.</i>
Workplace	Workplace index. <i>Source: Women, Business and the Law.</i>
Pay	Pay index. <i>Source: Women, Business and the Law.</i>
Marriage	Marriage index. <i>Source: Women, Business and the Law.</i>
Parenthood	Parenthood index. <i>Source: Women, Business and the Law.</i>
Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship index. <i>Source: Women, Business and the Law.</i>
Assets	Assets index. <i>Source: Women, Business and the Law.</i>
Pension	Pension index. <i>Source: Women, Business and the Law.</i>
<i>Independent variables</i>	
<i>Variables of interest</i>	
Polity V	This variable captures the spectrum of political systems, ranging from highly autocratic regimes (e.g., -10) to fully democratic ones (e.g., +10). <i>Source: Marshall and Gurr (2020).</i>
Civil Society Participation	<p>This variable reflects the level of engagement and influence of civil society organizations and citizens in the decision-making processes of a country's political system, from low to high (0-1). The index is a compositive measure of four indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Candidate selection — national/local: this variable captures the level of centralization in the candidate selection process for legislative elections within political parties at the national or central level. This variable assesses how candidate selection is conducted, whether centralized or decentralized, can influence the level of inclusivity and democratic practices within political parties. It is crucial to distinguish this indicator from the broader concepts covered by the polity score and democracy, as it hones in on the internal processes of political parties related to candidate selection, providing additional insights into the functioning of a country's political landscape. - CSO consultation: this variable reflects the degree to which the government or public authorities consult with civil society organizations when developing and implementing policies and laws. It reflects the level of openness and willingness of the government to seek input, feedback, and collaboration from CSOs in shaping public policies. - CSO participatory environment: this variable measures the inclusiveness of the civil society space and the opportunities available for CSOs to actively participate in public affairs and influence policy-making. It considers factors such as the legal and institutional framework for civil society activities, the level of government restrictions or facilitation of CSO activities, and the degree of protection of civil liberties and rights for CSOs.

- CSO women participation: this variable captures the extent to which women are actively involved in and represented within civil society organizations. It considers factors such as the proportion of women in leadership positions within CSOs, women's membership in various civil society groups, and the opportunities available for women to engage and participate in civil society activities.

Source: Pemstein et al. (2021).

Women Civil Society Participation This variable captures whether women have the ability to express themselves and to form and participate in groups. *Source: Pemstein et al. (2021).*

Control variables

GDP Per Capita	Logarithm of gross domestic product divided by midyear population. <i>Source: World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files.</i>
GDP Growth	Total of financial system deposits, as a share of GDP. <i>Source: World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files.</i>
Fertility	Fertility rate, total (births per woman). <i>Source: (1) United Nations Population Division. World Population Prospects: 2022 Revision. (2) Census reports and other statistical publications from national statistical offices, (3) Eurostat: Demographic Statistics, (4) United Nations Statistical Division. Population and Vital Statistics Report (various years), (5) U.S. Census Bureau: International Database, and (6) Secretariat of the Pacific Community: Statistics and Demography Programme.</i>

Alternative independent variable

Civil Society without Women CSO	<i>Civil Society Participation</i> variable, reconstructed through principal component analysis excluding the Women CS component. <i>Source: Authors' computation.</i>
Alternate CSO Women	This variable captures whether women are prevented from participating in civil society organizations. <i>Source: Bernhard et al. (2015).</i>
Alternate Democracy	This dummy equal to 1 if a country present free and fair elections and a minimum level of suffrage. <i>Source: Boix et al. (2013).</i>

Appendix B. Law classification

Absence of Restrictions

1. gr1_1passpmrd: Can women apply for a passport in the same way as men?
2. gr1_2trvlctrymrd: Can a woman travel outside the country in the same way as a man?
3. gr1_3trvlhmmrd: Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?
4. gr1_4whlivemrd: Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?
5. gr2_5profhmmrd: Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?
6. gr3_10nprgeqnight: Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man?
7. gr3_11jobshazard: Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man?
8. gr3_12industry: Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man?
9. gr4_13obeymrd: Is there any legal requirement for married women to obey their husbands?
10. gr4_14hhmrd: Can women be the head of household the same way as men?
11. gr4_15domleg: Are there laws specifically addressing domestic violence?
12. gr4_16dvrcjdmnt: Do women have the same rights to initiate divorce as men?
13. gr6_23cntrcthmrd: Can married women enter into a contract in the same way as men?
14. gr6_24regbusmrd: Can married women register a business in the same way as men?
15. gr6_25bnkacmrd: Can married women open a bank account in the same way as men?
16. gr7_27prtyeqownmrd: Do married women have equal ownership rights to property as men?
17. gr7_28prtyeqsondght: Do daughters have the same rights to inherit property as sons?
18. gr7_29prtyeqsuvrpspe: Do female spouses have the same rights to inherit as male spouses?
19. gr7_30prtylegadmin: Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?

Enabling Provision

1. gr2_6nondisempl: Are there laws mandating non-discrimination in employment based on gender?
2. gr2_7sexhrssemp: Are there laws against sexual harassment in employment?
3. gr2_8sexcomb: Are there laws mandating equal pay for equal work regardless of gender?
4. gr3_9eqremunval: Are there laws supporting equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal value?
5. gr4_17equalremarr: Do women have the same rights to remarry as men?
6. gr5_18wpdleave14: Is there provision for parental leave for both parents?
7. gr5_19govleaveprov: Are there government-supported maternity leave provisions?
8. gr5_20patleave: Is paternity leave equally available as maternity leave?
9. gr5_21paidprntl: Are there provisions for paid parental leave?
10. gr5_22pregdism: Are there protections against dismissal for pregnant employees?
11. gr6_26disgend: Are there laws against discrimination in access to credit based on gender?
12. gr7_31valnonmnty: Do laws recognize non-monetary contributions in property valuation during divorce?
13. gr8_32retagequal: Is the age at which women and men can retire with full pension benefits the same for both women and men?
14. gr8_33penagequal: Is the age at which women and men can retire with partial pension benefits the same for women and men?
15. gr8_34mandagequal: Is the mandatory retirement age for men and women the same?
16. gr8_35carecredit: Are periods of absence due to childcare accounted for in pension benefits?