

Female Representation in Kinship Groups across Sub-Saharan Africa

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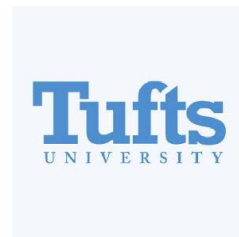
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1 Introduction

Despite substantial improvements, inequality between men and women remains important in most spheres of life around the world and particularly in developing countries. Women still have unequal: economic opportunities, access to education, inheritance rights, and rights over land. Women are also still primarily dependent on men financially and have limited rights to operate a business or manage property in many countries; see [Duflo \(2012\)](#) for a recent survey. An important dimension lagging is the relative position of women in positions of authority.

The representation of women in leadership positions is not only crucial to set up more inclusive societies, but help spur growth as well. For example, female political representation has been shown to affect the types of public goods and expenditures, to improve the aspirations and accomplishments of women, and to improve female access to justice through the legal system [Beaman et al. \(2009\)](#); [Chattopadhyay and Duflo \(2004\)](#); [Iyer et al. \(2012\)](#). This suggests that a critical factor in influencing the impact of growth on womens economic empowerment is the extent to which they are represented in modern political institutions. Yet this research is very incomplete when it comes to thinking about Africa.

In rural Africa, where most people live, the modern state is weak and ineffective and a vast amount of resources are controlled and allocated by traditional institutions, often greatly empowered by the legacy of colonial indirect rule. A great deal of evidence has accumulated to show the lingering impact of historical political institutions for current development outcomes. Within Africa, traditional institutions are very important, co-existing with formal institutions. Studies emphasized the importance of these traditional institutions to understand current development outcomes, see [Gennaioli and Rainer \(2007\)](#); [Bandyopadhyay and Green \(2013\)](#); [Michalopoulos and Papaioannou \(2013\)](#) and [Acemoglu et al. \(2014\)](#). To date, however, there is very little empirical research pertaining directly to womens' role in traditional positions of authority in developing countries.

African political systems are tightly linked to kin groups, see [Fortes and Evans-Pritchard \(2015\)](#) and [Brown \(1951\)](#). At the local level, kin groups rule over everyday matters, rights over farmland and its agricultural proceeds, dispute resolutions, or marriage decisions. Kinship groups include the lineages and the corporate clans. In many African societies, an important figure within these lineages is the lineage head. The lineage head often nominally control the lineage property, represents the lineage in the council of elders, act as arbitrator in intra-lineage disputes and represent the lineage in its external relations. Despite the importance of lineages in African societies, we know very little about the direct role women play in them as well as the prevalence of women as lineage heads.

In this project, we collected systematically data on the variation in female representation at the lineage/kinship level across Sub-Saharan Africa. To this end, we created a new data set to female representation in African lineages. Using the aforementioned dataset, we focus on the relation between the presence of gender inclusive kinship leadership institutions in African ethnic groups and how women fare in such groups.

2 Institutional Setting

Kinship groups are relevant in most African countries. African political systems and institutions were traditionally based on lineages and corporate clans, while state-level authority structures are more recent. In societies with the presence of the state, the head of kin-groups is often confirmed in office by a chief.

Lineages and clans are often complex socio-economic and political units, ruling over a variety of rights and obligations among members of kinship groups with respect to labor, production, access to land or insurance provision between kin members. These units are led nominally by one member, the designated head of the group. For instance, according to [Lystad \(1958\)](#), among the Ashanti:

“The extended family has been described as essentially a group of relatives in a single or in neighboring communities under the leadership of the elder men of the family, one of whom is popularly acknowledged as its ‘head.’ ”

Kinship groups vary in size, ranging from less than ten to more than a hundred members, as a function of a number of factors such as population density, labor organization, and specialization, the staple crops they grow, or land fragmentation, among others. It often includes the male members of a lineage three to five generations removed from the founding ancestor, the wives of these men, unmarried women, and other more distant cognatic or affinal members.

Kin group leaders play an important role in rural Africa, having authority over its members as well as representing the group in inter-group interactions. Lineage heads have a number of responsibilities, from managing the lineage properties to representing the lineage in inter-lineage affairs. The functions of the lineage head are divided into three broad groups:

1. *Distribution of the kin group’s common property:* In most African societies, the lineage is often the relevant unit of ownership. The head of a kin group is responsible for the allocation of the usage of the common kin group’s properties such as farmland.

For instance, among the Akan people, under customary law, property rights to land is assigned to chiefs and lineage heads. Lineage heads allocated to its group members rights to lineage land, see [Boni et al. \(1985\)](#); [Rattray \(1956\)](#); [Kobben \(1956\)](#). The lineage head's claim to the land was respected in exchange for the services offered such as disputes resolution between lineage members or insurance provision against illness and indebtedness.

Through this specific channel, lineage heads play a critical role when it comes to women welfare as well as economic growth more generally. In a seminal example of the economic consequence of exclusive traditional institutions, [Goldstein and Udry \(2008\)](#) showed that the lower productivity of women farmers in Ghana is because they are disempowered under the “traditional” institutions and thus face insecure property rights compared to men. Women are often allocated lower quality plots of land, generating a cost for society through lower productivity.

2. *Moral authority, legal authority and dispute resolutions:* Next to the allocation of the common kin group assets, the most important role of the lineage head is to enforce norms and arbitrate disputes within its members. Those who failed in kinship obligations or committed offenses against their kinsmen could be punished with moral-ritual, moral-legal or (although rarely) legal sanctions. Lineage heads settled disputes between members, mainly by arbitration. Although lineage heads can use small fines, and in some cases, have the right to pawn, enslave, expel, or dispossess members, the use of force against kinsmen was rare, while relying more upon their moral authority. In most cases, moral sanctions, with the threat of ritual or legal sanctions was enough to enforce “proper” behavior by its members.

Among the Tallensi, [Fortes and Evans-Pritchard \(2015\)](#) emphasized that “Ultimately, a *kpeem*'s authority rests on a moral basis – the bonds of mutual dependence and common interest which unite co-members of a lineage, accepted as axiomatic in virtue of community of descent and most explicitly conceptualized in the ancestor cult.”

The kin head often acted as ritual leaders, being the intermediary between living members and the lineage ancestors. This ritual source of authority could be used to sanction lineage members, by refusing to sacrifice on behalf of lineage members. In lineage segments (smaller kin groups where its members have closer kin relation), the moral authority of the lineage head is enough to maintain order without relying on any legal sanctions, while in localized clan or larger lineages (those including wives and other non-related members belong), lineage heads enjoy a weaker moral authority than the lineage segment head.

3. *Relation to other groups*: Finally, the head of a lineage segment is the representative of the lineage and its members in inter-lineages affairs. This is particularly relevant with lineage segments, which belong to a wider lineage or in more complex political systems as the head of the lineage often represents its members' interests in external relations.

Given the importance of kin groups and its leaders at the local level, a natural question is whether women could access position of authorities within kin groups. Although most societies are biased against women, when it comes to women representation as heads of kinship groups, anecdotal evidence suggests some societies are relatively more open than others, including women in these positions. For instance, in West Africa among the Ashanti, following up with [Lystad \(1958\)](#):

“Even a woman could succeed to the headship of a family if she possessed a personality forceful enough to dominate a family of unassertive males; this did not happen often, but it was quite possible.”

Thousands of kilometers away, among the Bemba (see [Lagacé and Skoggard \(1997\)](#)), “[women] may hold wield political authority as chieftainess or heads of villages or hereditary guardians of shrines. The custom of matrilocal marriage described in the next pages gives them a strong position in village life, and as they grow older they acquire great weight in family councils.”

In line with female political representation in formal political positions, female representation in these kin groups could be crucial for female empowerment and substantive representation. In fact, in some societies, a female head is named to explicitly deal with and represent the women of the lineage, see [Manoukian \(2017\)](#): “Although descent is matrilineal among the Akan, the lineage head is a male, in whom is vested political and legal authority. There is, however, always a female head also, who has high moral authority. every lineage has its own senior Woman, responsible for the women of the lineage and concerned with their marriages and divorces.”

However, despite these anecdotal pieces of evidence, we still lack a systematic view of the presence of gender inclusive lineage institutions as well as its consequences.

Data Collection

In order to gauge the role of women in African kin groups, we need to collect systematic information about women access to positions of authorities within them. We characterized traditional gender institutions and customs for a set of societies and ethnic groups indigenous to Sub-Saharan Africa drawn from [Murdock](#)

(1967)’s Ethnographic Atlas and Ethnolinguistic Map (Murdock et al. (1959)). To that end, we systematically encode qualitative information on traditional gender representation and participation in kin groups from anthropological literary sources.

Our preferred ethnographic coding process followed the methods outlined by Whyte (1978). We formed a gender-balanced team of 12 undergraduate research assistants¹. In an effort to mitigate bias associated with engendered interpretations of the primary literature, each research assistant has been paired with another team member of the opposite gender. The sample has been divided equally across each research assistant pair who, for each ethnic group assigned, were tasked with independently reading through the references listed in our bibliography and encoding a set of cultural characteristics on gender characteristics into standardized categorical variables. The research assistants in each pair then reconvened to resolve their independent codes into a single encoding. Where they were in agreement, that code became the final literature-based code. Where they disagreed, they tried to come to an agreement based on the information available. Where the pair could not agree, the code was set to “Ambiguous”.

A principal investigator and a lead research assistant (one female, one male) piloted the preliminary coding procedure and monitored the codings generated by the undergraduate research assistant team. Any codes needing review were identified and discussed with the undergraduate pair responsible. A final systematic review of all the literature-based codes was conducted to identify errors and maintain consistency.

In addition to encoding information from the literature, we developed a survey-based data collection approach to gather information on ethnic groups for which the literature is sparse.²

Of the 412 Sub-Saharan ethnic groups in our sample derived from Murdock (1967), 307 groups had some form of literary sources with information pertinent to the present study. To gather data for the remaining groups, we developed an electronic survey to mimic the variables coded in the literature-based phase. The remaining uncoded groups, along with a random 10% sub-sample of the groups already coded by our undergraduate research assistants as a quality check, constituted the “survey-based” sample.

We identified potential survey respondents as individuals who could credibly comment on pre-colonial characteristics, including academic researchers, members of the ethnic group itself, and other cultural experts. Potential respondents were approached through an outreach campaign to complete the electronic survey of their own volition. Survey responses were then cleaned for consistency with the literature-based data.

¹6 females and 6 males

²In the survey, we asked: For the ethnic groups in question, is there an individual who has traditionally authority over a lineage such as a lineage head? Note that this definition does not include individuals only in charge of single households. For the ethnic group in question, have women traditionally held leadership positions over a lineage? Note that this definition does not include individuals only in charge of single households. Which choice best describes the gender of lineage leaders?

One meaningful difference in the survey-based phase was that unlike the literature-based encoding, we could not feasibly train each potential survey respondent on each definition to the same level as we did for the undergraduate research assistant team tasked with literature-based coding. For example, as kin groups can include the nucleus family outside of the scope of our study, we were able to explain and ensure that our preferred definition of a kin group was completely understood among the undergraduate team³. We addressed this by including definitions and examples for each variable considered by the survey so that each respondent could better understand each specific question.

To encode the traditional gender distribution for leaders of familial lineages, clans, and other kinship groups, we defined a familial or kinship leader as an individual who has held some form of principal authority or control members of their familial lineage beyond the simple nuclear household. For example, the Serer people designate an elder male of a particular matrilineage as Tookor, a prominent member of the family with control over familial assets and marriage arrangements for nephews. The Serer also customarily regard the mother or sister of the king as Lingeer, a queen-mother with significant social and economic influence. Given that the Lingeer is a matrilineally inherited position, we would consider Serer familial leadership positions to be predominantly male with female participation to a lesser extent.

Notice that contrary to de facto women in lineage position of authorities in African societies, our measure will capture institutionalized exclusion of women in lineage position of authorities. For instance, in Sierra Leone, the Temne and the Mende are a clear example of this “institutional” heterogeneity, see [Hoffer \(1972\)](#). While women are excluded from these positions among the Temne, [Hoffer \(1972\)](#) highlighted, very early on, the presence of important female lineage head among the Mende and the Sherbro in Sierra Leone. The fact that women are potential “candidates” for these positions could have an impact on women well-being beyond the actual representation.

The final dataset includes categorically-encoded information for 160 societies. This enters in the tradition of Cross Cultural studies such as the Standard Cross Cultural Sample or Murdock Ethnographic Atlas. To the best of our knowledge, our dataset is the first study to extend the coverage of several key variables from the Standard Cross Cultural Sample to a more geographically-dense set of ethnic groups in Sub-Saharan Africa. Figure 1 provides a spatial visualization of our main variable of interest across the Ethnolinguistic Map of [Murdock et al. \(1959\)](#).

Out of the groups 160 we could retrieve systematic information, 31 groups give access to women to the leadership of their kinship groups. One interesting feature of the data in line with the anecdotal evidence in

³In addition to an initial research assistant training session, explanations and examples were often discussed in detail in person and via email exchanges.

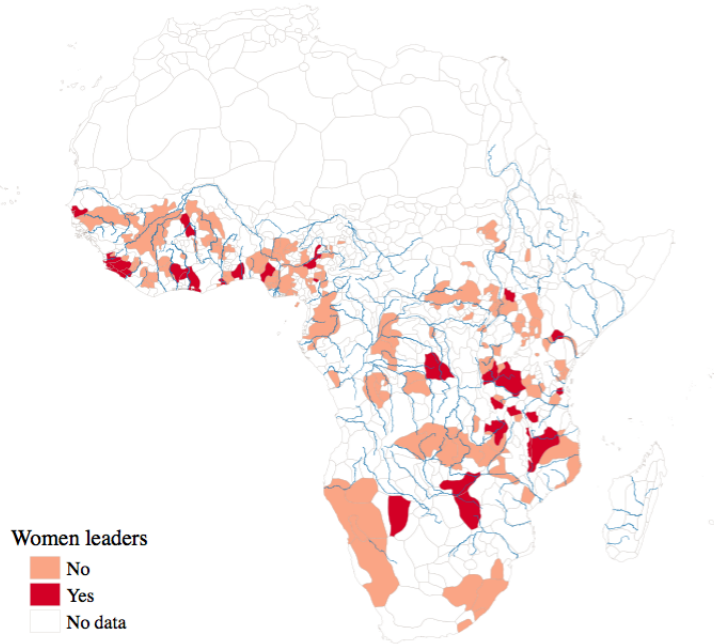


Figure 1. Kinship leadership

the previous section is that these groups are scattered in all regions of Africa, see Figure 1. One can also find a wide range heterogeneity within a country.

Figures 2-4 illustrate further the spatial distribution of these societies in our sample, by dividing these groups by state development, the presence of missions, and the spatial distribution of Islam.⁴ No specific patterns comes out of these maps along these three dimensions. In fact, the average number of missions is very similar in gender inclusive kinship societies and in male only kinship leaders societies. The same pattern holds for state development. However, when looking at the share of Islam between these two societies, 11% of the population in gender inclusive lineage societies adheres to Islam, while only 33% of the population in the male only kinship leaders societies.

⁴State development is measured using Murdock Atlas. There is a variable which asks about jurisdictional hierarchy beyond the local community. To capture pre-colonial political institutions, we use Murdock (1967)' "Jurisdictional Hierarchy beyond the Local Community Level" index. This variable ranges from 0 to 4, where a zero score indicates stateless societies "lacking any form of centralized political organization"; a score of 1 indicates petty chiefdoms; a score of 2 designates paramount chiefdoms; and 3 and 4 indicate groups that were part of large states. We divide our sample between high state development and low state development by group 0 and 1 on one hand in low state development societies, 2 to 4 in high state development societies. Information about the share of islam comes from the Joshua Project (2017). <https://joshuaproject.net/> Joshua Project data give estimates on the share Christian people and primary religion indicators for an ethnic group. We construct a measure estimating the share of adherents of Islam as follows. If the people group's primary religion is Islam, Percentage Islam = (1 - Percentage Christian), otherwise it is 0. We next merge the Joshua Project people groups (points in space) over the ethnic regions from Murdock's Ethnolinguistic Map (polygons in space) by a simple spatial overlay. Religious sub-population shares are estimated by taking the mean of the share estimates across all member people groups within the ethnic region. Finally, information about the mission stations comes from Roome (1924), digitized by Nathan Nunn. <https://scholar.harvard.edu/nunn/pages/data-0>. We count the number of mission stations (Catholic and Protestant) within an ethnic region.

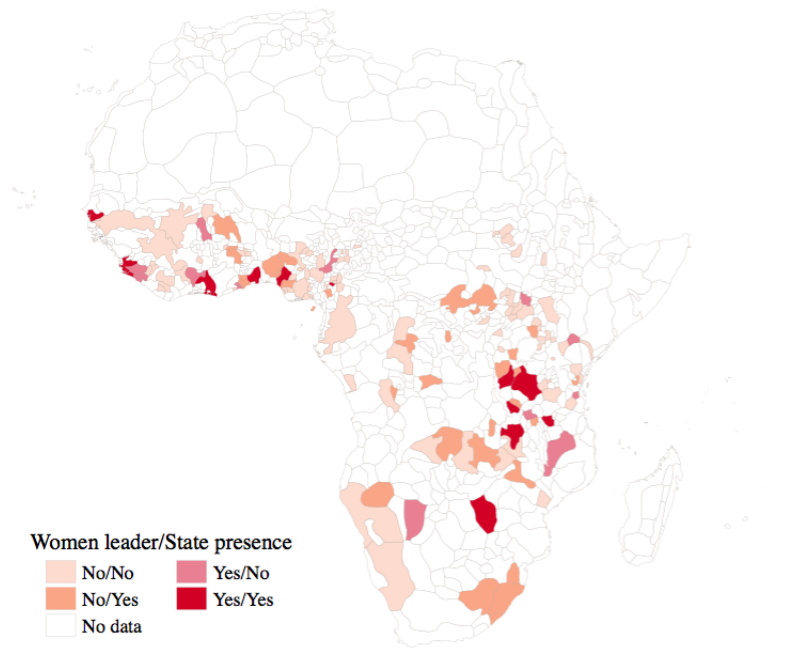


Figure 2. Kinship leadership and state capacity

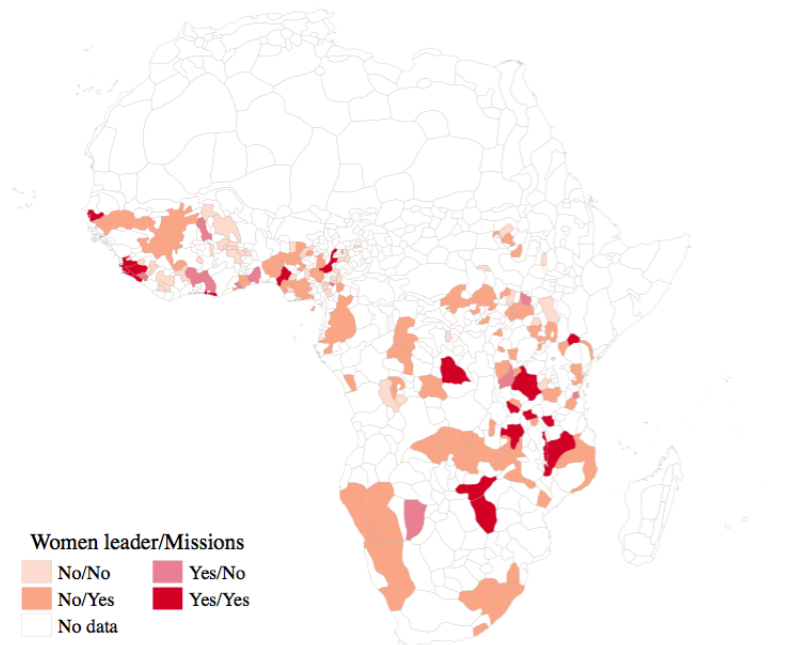


Figure 3. Kinship leadership and missions

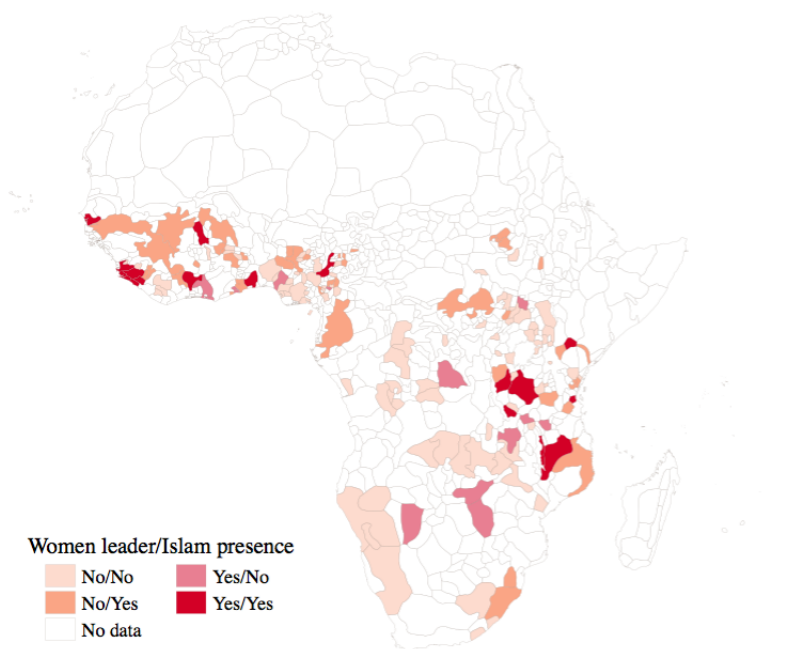


Figure 4. Kinship leadership and islam

Correlation with women outcomes at the household level

To document the correlation between gender inclusive lineages and female welfare, we use individual-level data from the Demographic Health Surveys (DHS). These are surveys which have been conducted in 45 countries in Africa since the 1990s. These surveys interview a national representative sample of between 10,000 and 20,000 women (aged 15-49) in each country. Table 1 reports (column 2) the difference between the average value for individual living within the boundaries of ethnic group with gender inclusive lineages and without gender inclusive lineages. We use an OLS regression with a set of *geographic controls* such as distance to nearest trade route, distance to nearest navigable river (km), distance to nearest colonial railway, the log of the minimum distance between the ethnic group centroid and a national border, cereal suitability, ruggedness, mean altitude, absolute latitude, longitude, and an agricultural suitability index. We also included a set of *historical controls* which include historical political centralization (jurisdictional hierarchy beyond the local community) and historical settlement pattern complexity. We also included region and year fixed effects.

In Table 1 we compared individual characteristics of women residing in an ethnic homeland where women historically had a leadership role in kin groups compared to residing in an ethnic homeland where historically only men could hold leadership positions. We document four categories of variables: (a) education, (b) labor force participation, (c) fertility patterns, and (d) relative bargaining positions.

Women's relative bargaining position in the household is captured by the module in the DHS about the relative decision making power within the household, where they ask women: "Who usually decides about X ?", where the possible responses are: "respondent"; "husband"; or "respondent and husband jointly"; and X refers to "major household purchases", "health care for the wife", "daily purchases", and "visits to the wife's family and relatives". We also kept the variable asking whether beating is justified.

From Table 1, we see that female inclusive kin groups is just weakly correlated along the four dimensions just mentioned. Most importantly, if any relation remains, it is a negative association. In particular traditional female leadership in kin groups is associated with higher illiteracy rates and lower education for women today.

Variable	(1) Mean	(2) Effect	(3) Observations
<i>A. Education</i>			
Any education	0.6446	-0.0824 (0.0289)***	391,723
At least secondary education	0.3218	-0.0877 (0.0315)***	391,723
Education in years	4.9955	-0.8608 (0.3491)**	391,433
Literacy	0.5037	-0.0389 (0.0320)	319,737
<i>B. Labor Force Participation</i>			
Currently working	0.6109	0.0139 (0.0213)	336,933
(1=Respondent employed all year 0=Seasonal)	0.5834	-0.0271 (0.0259)	190,136
<i>C. Fertility</i>			
Age of respondent at 1st birth	19.2636	-0.2540 (0.2077)	245,406
Total children ever born	2.8784	-0.0340 (0.0994)	391,088
Total daughters/Total children	0.4913	0.0037 (0.0016)**	281,568
<i>D. Relative bargaining positions</i>			
Decides on health care	0.4935	0.0237 (0.0251)	185,794
Decides on large household purchases	0.4591	0.0177 (0.0231)	187,310
Decides on purchases for daily needs	0.5407	0.0009 (0.0224)	99,309
Decides on visits to family	0.5623	0.0234 (0.0231)	187,296
Decides on food to be cooked	0.6245	-0.0077 (0.0266)	69,444
Decides what to do with money husband earns	0.4407	0.0640 (0.0201)***	120,944
Beating if wife goes out without telling husband	0.3459	-0.0231 (0.0352)	262,596
Beating if wife neglects the children	0.3873	-0.0239 (0.0348)	263,020
Beating if wife argues with husband	0.3392	-0.0162 (0.0342)	262,217
Beating if wife refuses to have sex with husband	0.2666	-0.0364 (0.0340)	259,007
Beating if wife burns the food	0.1693	-0.0361 (0.0235)	262,749
Agree with beating (average)	0.3024	-0.0276 (0.0310)	264,986
Beating always justified	0.0980	-0.0185 (0.0186)	264,986
Beating justified under any circumstance	0.5064	-0.0337 (0.0389)	264,986
Wealth index	0.4248	0.0124 (0.0398)	327,640

All regressions include **region** and **year** fixed effects, *Geographic controls* (distance to nearest trade route, distance to nearest navigable river (km), distance to nearest colonial railway, cereal suitability, ruggedness, the log of the minimum distance between the ethnic group centroid and a national border, mean altitude, absolute latitude, longitude, and an agricultural suitability index), *Historical controls* (historical political centralization and historical settlement pattern complexity). Robust standard errors at ethnic group level. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level.

Table 1. DHS outcomes, OLS

Heterogeneity by state development

It is well recognized that there are important heterogeneity in state development across African societies from acephalous societies to more complex centralized states, see [Murdock \(1967\)](#). In turn, anthropologists long noticed that the authority of the kin-group head depends on the character of the larger political unit. Such political unit could hinder or amplify the power and jurisdiction of the kinship leaders. The kinship leaders could also become a natural bridge between the constituents and the political leaders. In fact, in many instances the village head is the head of one of the “senior” kin-group. Alternatively, it has been noted that the kinship group leaders act as the representative of the group and were part of the local council in a variety of societies such as the Ibo, Mende, Dahomey, Ashanti, and Nupe. Kin leaders are also often confirmed in office by the chief.

One would expect the historical level of state development to be an important factor channelling the role of women in these kin leadership positions. There is a nascent and growing body of research suggesting that these pre-existing local political structures still matter today to understand both political and economic outcomes in Africa, see [Gennaioli and Rainer \(2007\)](#) and [Michalopoulos and Papaioannou \(2013\)](#). African historical state development varied from almost no state development to high state development. It is natural to look at the extent to which state development interacted with the impact of women in these positions.

To capture pre-colonial political institutions, we use [Murdock \(1967\)](#)’ “Jurisdictional Hierarchy beyond the Local Community Level” index. This variable ranges from 0 to 4, where a zero score indicates stateless societies “lacking any form of centralized political organization”; a score of 1 indicates petty chiefdoms; a score of 2 designates paramount chiefdoms; and 3 and 4 indicate groups that were part of large states. We divide our sample between high state development and low state development by group 0 and 1 on one hand in low state development societies, 2 to 4 in high state development societies.

We then explore the four dimensions above (education, labor force participation, fertility, relative bargaining positions) after dividing the sample between societies with low and high state development, see Tables [2-3](#). The most interesting feature comparing societies along state development is the tremendous heterogeneity between high and low state development. In particular, the negative association of inclusive lineages in Table [1](#) is channelled by societies with low state development, while societies with high state development are associated with better outcomes along most dimensions. In particular, women in high state development with gender inclusive lineages enjoy a better relative bargaining position compared to women in societies where women can’t hold kinship leadership positions. This heterogeneity explains the absence of effect in Table [1](#).

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Variable	Mean	Effect	Observations
<i>A. Education</i>			
Any education	0.6311	-0.1419 (0.0376)***	202,924
At least secondary education	0.3134	-0.1609 (0.0345)***	202,924
Education in years	4.9613	-1.6605 (0.3931)***	202,750
Literacy	0.4713	-0.0757 (0.0316)**	166,636
<i>B. Labor Force Participation</i>			
Currently working	0.6121	0.0099 (0.0211)	168,809
(1=Respondent employed all year 0=Seasonal)	0.5493	-0.0557 (0.0300)*	96,976
<i>C. Fertility</i>			
Age of respondent at 1st birth	18.9544	-0.5775 (0.1953)***	130,464
Total children ever born	3.0321	0.2603 (0.1221)**	202,567
Total daughters/Total children	0.4906	0.0050 (0.0025)**	150,637
<i>D. Relative bargaining positions</i>			
Decides on health care	0.4426	-0.0925 (0.0255)***	97,478
Decides on large household purchases	0.4241	-0.0717 (0.0263)***	99,004
Decides on purchases for daily needs	0.4880	-0.0780 (0.0310)**	56,207
Decides on visits to family	0.5296	-0.0614 (0.0259)**	99,001
Decides on food to be cooked	0.6186	-0.0017 (0.0427)	44,711
Decides what to do with money husband earns	0.4249	0.0039 (0.0261)	60,362
Beating if wife goes out without telling husband	0.3846	-0.0038 (0.0420)	131,520
Beating if wife neglects the children	0.4123	0.0029 (0.0422)	131,620
Beating if wife argues with husband	0.3598	-0.0094 (0.0367)	131,287
Beating if wife refuses to have sex with husband	0.3066	-0.0253 (0.0334)	130,076
Beating if wife burns the food	0.1847	-0.0395 (0.0289)	131,485
Agree with beating (average)	0.3302	-0.0156 (0.0359)	132,638
Beating always justified	0.1123	-0.0144 (0.0226)	132,638
Beating justified under any circumstance	0.5394	-0.0132 (0.0455)	132,638
Wealth index	0.4148	-0.0729 (0.0514)	166,742

All regressions include **region** and **year** fixed effects, *Geographic controls* (distance to nearest trade route, distance to nearest navigable river (km), distance to nearest colonial railway, cereal suitability, ruggedness, the log of the minimum distance between the ethnic group centroid and a national border, mean altitude, absolute latitude, longitude, and an agricultural suitability index), *Historical controls* (historical political centralization and historical settlement pattern complexity). Robust standard errors at ethnic group level. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level.

Table 2. DHS outcomes, OLS (Low state capacity)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Variable	Mean	Effect	Observations
<i>A. Education</i>			
Any education	0.6591	-0.0635 (0.0336)*	188,799
At least secondary education	0.3308	-0.0632 (0.0366)*	188,799
Education in years	5.0322	-0.5053 (0.4011)	188,683
Literacy	0.5388	-0.0415 (0.0327)	153,101
<i>B. Labor Force Participation</i>			
Currently working	0.6097	-0.0167 (0.0171)	168,124
(1=Respondent employed all year 0=Seasonal)	0.6189	-0.0660 (0.0331)*	93,160
<i>C. Fertility</i>			
Age of respondent at 1st birth	19.6145	-0.4725 (0.1685)***	114,942
Total children ever born	2.7134	0.0536 (0.1053)	188,521
Total daughters/Total children	0.4921	0.0010 (0.0023)	130,931
<i>D. Relative bargaining positions</i>			
Decides on health care	0.5498	0.1022 (0.0315)***	88,316
Decides on large household purchases	0.4984	0.0959 (0.0205)***	88,306
Decides on purchases for daily needs	0.6095	0.0682 (0.0229)***	43,102
Decides on visits to family	0.5989	0.0379 (0.0276)	88,295
Decides on food to be cooked	0.6353	0.0559 (0.0244)**	24,733
Decides what to do with money husband earns	0.4565	0.1483 (0.0229)***	60,582
Beating if wife goes out without telling husband	0.3072	0.0691 (0.0295)**	131,076
Beating if wife neglects the children	0.3623	0.0652 (0.0303)**	131,400
Beating if wife argues with husband	0.3186	0.0939 (0.0297)***	130,930
Beating if wife refuses to have sex with husband	0.2263	0.0669 (0.0258)**	128,931
Beating if wife burns the food	0.1539	0.0180 (0.0159)	131,264
Agree with beating (average)	0.2746	0.0614 (0.0243)**	132,348
Beating always justified	0.0837	0.0201 (0.0138)	132,348
Beating justified under any circumstance	0.4734	0.0838 (0.0326)**	132,348
Wealth index	0.4351	-0.0721 (0.0351)**	160,898

All regressions include **region** and **year** fixed effects, *Geographic controls* (distance to nearest trade route, distance to nearest navigable river (km), distance to nearest colonial railway, cereal suitability, ruggedness, the log of the minimum distance between the ethnic group centroid and a national border, mean altitude, absolute latitude, longitude, and an agricultural suitability index), *Historical controls* (historical political centralization and historical settlement pattern complexity). Robust standard errors at ethnic group level. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level.

Table 3. DHS outcomes, OLS (High state capacity)

Conclusion

In this paper, we collected systematically data on the variation in female representation at the lineage/kinship level across Sub-Saharan Africa. To this end, we created a new data set pertaining to female representation in African lineages. Using the aforementioned dataset, we focus on the interaction of gender inclusive lineages and household level female outcomes such as women's (a) education, (b) labor force participation, (c) fertility patterns, and (d) relative bargaining positions.

We do not report substantial differences between societies with and without gender inclusive kin groups. However, once we explore heterogeneity with the level of state development, we find a positive association of women in kinship leadership position in high state development societies. In fact, low state development societies with gender-inclusive kin groups are overall less empowered, measured by their the relative bargaining positions in the household. They are overall less likely to make independent decisions over a large set of dimensions such as their health, large household purchases, among others.

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