



Article

# Does exposure to other cultures affect the impact of economic globalization on gender equality?

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## Abstract

An extensive literature shows that economic globalization has a positive effect on gender equality. However, the effect varies greatly across countries and time. This article argues that social globalization – individuals' exposure to external ideas, people, and information flows – and the changes in values associated with it – is a key boundary condition for the effect of economic globalization on women's rights. While economic globalization opens up new opportunities for women, policy adaptation to these changes requires a social demand for efforts for change. Social globalization contributes to policy adaptation by exposing the public to alternative gender-role models, setting off a shift in values, which underlies support for gender equality. Results emerging from a time-series-cross-sectional analysis of 152 nations for the period 1990–2003 confirm that the positive effect of economic globalization on gender equality wanes at lower levels of social globalization. Further, multilevel-path-analyses models demonstrate how changes to individual-level values mediate the effect of globalization on individuals' support for gender equality.

## Keywords

Democracy, economic globalization, gender equality, social globalization, values

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## Introduction

Gender equality is among the most pressing international and social concerns (cf. UNFPA, 2013). Consequently, in an era of international integration, the potential contributions of various aspects of globalization to improvements in women's status have attracted extensive academic debate. A significant body of literature suggests that economic globalization, and the economic development that is often associated with it, enhances women's fundamental rights by opening up new opportunities and choices for both men and women, due inter alia to the increase in women's participation in the labor force. However, these studies also reveal that the effect of economic globalization varies greatly across countries and time. This suggests that boundary conditions diminish and amplify the influence of economic globalization upon women's fundamental rights.

This study argues that 'social globalization', by which we mean individuals' daily exposure to external ideas, information flows, images, and people (Dreher, 2006: 1092), and the changes in values associated with it, is a key boundary condition for the effect of economic globalization on gender equality. We propose that, in the absence of encounters with alternative gender-role models, people's social imagination is restricted by existing, taken-for-granted norms and values. Consequently, women are unlikely to demand and men unlikely to accept women's right to make autonomous choices, notwithstanding economic and demographic changes that might otherwise facilitate increased women's rights.

Countries vary in the extent to which their populations' exposure to other cultures, via social globalization, matches their relative economic integration (Cho, 2013; Dreher et al., 2008). In many countries, despite high levels of international trade and/or foreign investment, the intensity of individuals' contacts with foreigners, and their exposure to global flows of information via media and the Internet, remain comparatively low. We suggest that under such limited exposure to other cultures, economic changes are less likely to translate into enhanced economic, social and political rights for women.

While several studies acknowledge the role of individuals' exposure to global norms in generating changes of gender status, we believe we are the first to demonstrate that such exposure conditions the effect of economic globalization. To examine this effect, we employ a Cross-Sectional Time-Series analysis (1990–2003) of large  $N$  country-level data. Our results demonstrate that the positive effect of economic globalization on gender equality wanes at lower levels of social globalization.

Moreover, our study is believed to be the first to demonstrate the micro-mechanisms underlying the effect of social globalization on gender equality at the individual level. We argue that social globalization facilitates the effect of economic conditions due to its shaping of individual values, involving a shift from an emphasis on tradition and respect for authority towards post-material concerns with individual autonomy, quality of life, and self-expression (Inglehart, 2008; Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Welzel, 2013). In turn, individuals' internalization of post-materialist values leads to their greater acceptance of otherness and more egalitarian conceptions of gender roles (Inglehart and Norris, 2003), which increases public demand for and acceptance of women's rights.

To scrutinize the workings of social globalization via its effects on individual values and support for gender equality, we use data from the Fifth Wave of the World Values Survey (WVS), and employ both random-intercept multilevel models and multilevel path analysis. These analyses show that a country's level of social globalization has the expected positive effect on individual support for gender equality, which is mediated by individuals' espousal of post-materialist orientations and self-expression values.

## **Economic globalization and gender status**

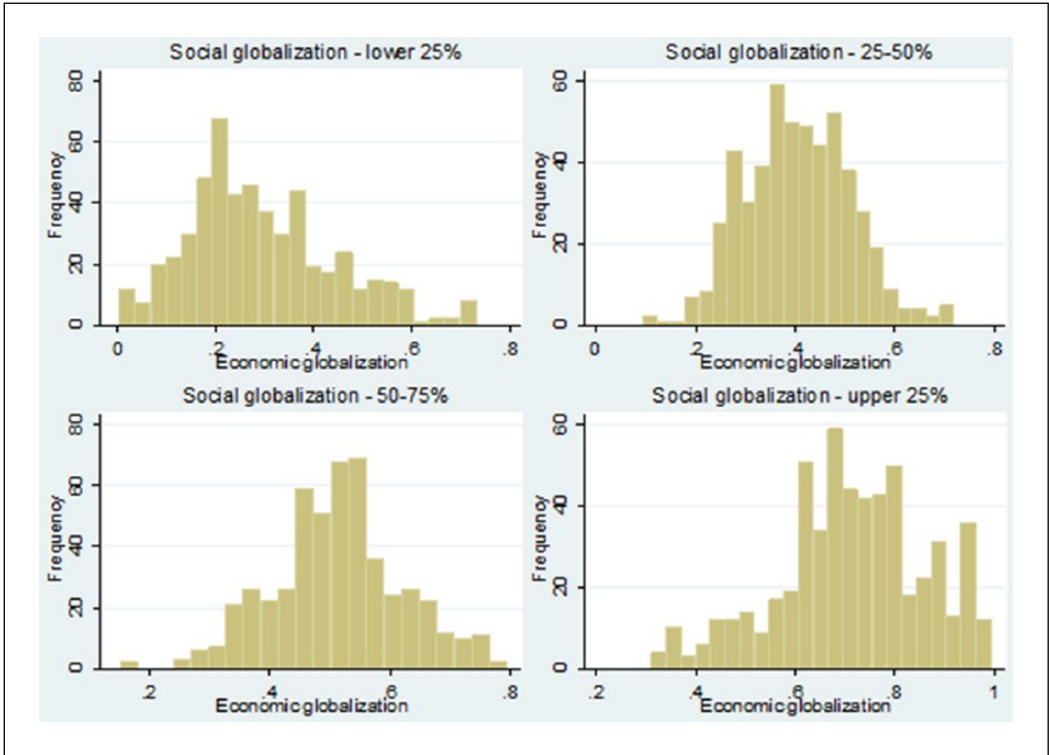
An established political economy literature documents an overall positive impact of economic globalization – trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) – on women’s fundamental rights (e.g., Bussmann, 2009; Meyer, 2003; Neumayer and de Soysa, 2011; Richards and Gelleny, 2007; but see Pettman, 1996, Seguino and Grown, 2006). When theorizing about the micro-mechanisms linking economic globalization and gender rights, the above studies emphasize structural changes to the economy and their creation of new employment opportunities for women. Typically, they suggest that economic globalization, due to its contribution to economic development, leads to an increase in female workforce participation. Having an independent salary empowers women and enables their pursuit of rights in the economic, social and political spheres (cf. Eastin and Prakash, 2013). Moreover, new economic opportunities provide families with the ability and incentive to invest in their daughters’ education (cf. Ganguly-Scrase, 2003). However, these studies demonstrate that the effects of economic globalization and growth are uneven and conditioned by the era (Richards and Gelleny, 2007), by the types of industry predominant in a country (Ross, 2008), and by its level of economic development (e.g., Eastin and Prakash, 2013; Meyer, 2003).

The overall positive effect of economic globalization on women’s status is further substantiated by the findings of Cultural Modernization Theory (CMT). In numerous studies, Inglehart and colleagues revealed the association between material processes of modernization and gender equality (e.g. Inglehart, 2008; Inglehart and Norris, 2003, 2004; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). The underlying micro-mechanisms suggested by CMT for the robust effect of modernization on gender equality involve changes to people’s belief systems, as a derivative of material change. Thus, this line of research suggests that as countries experience greater economic development and relative material security, due inter alia to economic globalization, they tend to undergo an intergenerational change in values. This change involves a shift from an emphasis on religiosity and respect for authority (in agrarian societies) to secularization, nationalism and pursuit of material security (in industrial economies) and towards post-material concerns with individual autonomy, quality of life and self-expression (in post-industrial economies). In turn, the expression of post-materialist values is manifested in greater acceptance of otherness, more egalitarian conceptions of gender roles, and greater gender equality in policy and practice (Ben-Nun Bloom, 2016; Inglehart and Norris, 2003). Alongside these overall trends, however, CMT theorists find that the effects of economic development, which globalization spurs, on a country’s level of gender equality vary greatly across nations. They attribute this variation to countries’ distinct cultural legacies, and their persistent impact on cultural values and social institutions (e.g., Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Potrafke, 2015; Steel and Kabashima, 2008).

Overall, while suggesting distinct causal chains, the political economy literature and CMT agree that economic globalization, and its intricate association with economic development and market expansion, enhances women’s status. However, they also find that similar levels of economic globalization, and of economic development, have a differential impact on gender equality across countries and time. These findings call for further exploration of the conditions and processes that enable and hinder the effects of the economic dimension of globalization.

## **Social globalization as a moderator of economic globalization**

We argue that the effect of economic globalization on gender equality is moderated by countries’ differential exposure to social globalization. While countries with higher levels of trade and FDI tend to have greater connectivity with foreign cultures, this is not universally the case. Figure 1 depicts the frequency of economic globalization in terms of level of social globalization. On the



**Figure 1.** The frequency of economic globalization by level of social globalization

x-axis in each of the panels is economic globalization, with 1 being the maximum on the scale (highest) and 0 being the minimum (lowest). Starting from the left-hand upper panel, and moving clockwise, the panels depict the variance in economic globalization when social globalization is at the lowest 25%, between 25 and 50%, between 50 and 75%, and the upper 25% of the scale. Although the correlation between the two dimensions is evident, economic globalization clearly shows substantial variation in all levels of social globalization. Thus, many countries have experienced long periods of substantial economic globalization alongside relatively low levels of exposure to other cultures. For instance, countries such as Yemen, Indonesia, Angola and Papua New Guinea enjoyed relatively vigorous flows of international trade, yet their population mostly remained socio-culturally isolated. Similarly, some more-developed economies, such as South Korea and Turkey, manifested moderate to high disparities between their economic integration with the world alongside relative cultural insularity during the research period.

Two studies have investigated the effects of social globalization on women’s rights. Potrafke and Ursprung (2012) found that both the social and economic dimensions of globalization were positively associated with women’s institutional rights. However, their study investigated the effects of social and economic globalization separately, thereby disregarding their mutual influence on gender equality. Filling this gap, Cho (2013) analyzes the effects of economic and social globalization, concluding that economic globalization does not have any effect on women’s rights when controlling for social globalization. Nevertheless, Cho (2013: 13) acknowledges that the questions of why and how social globalization shapes countries’ levels of gender equality, and how it interacts with economic globalization, remain theoretically under-developed and empirically

unspecified. Our paper develops a current understanding of this interaction at the country level and unravels its individual-level foundations.

How does the co-variation of the economic and social dimensions of globalization affect the potential for women's equality? Starting from the premises of political economy and CMT, we assume that economic globalization, due to its association with economic development, is a necessary condition for the enhancement of women's status in a country. In its absence, material conditions constrain men and women's choices in employment, education, leisure and political participation (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). Economic globalization, and the relative affluence that it engenders, opens up new opportunities for men and women, which pose further difficult lifestyle choices as to when to get married and have children, where to live, whether and what to study, and so forth. At the macro level, these changes create a discrepancy between women's needs (e.g. to gain an education or to have a bank account) and policy.

Without exposure to alternative gender-role models, women are less likely to demand the right to take advantage of these material opportunities, and men are likely to dictate family choices in response to changing socio-economic conditions. For example, without direct or indirect exposure to the phenomenon of men and women as dual and equal earners, women are less likely to aspire to equal economic rights and men are unlikely to perceive women as having the autonomy to make decisions about their employment. Congruently, market expansion, women's entry into the labor force, and relative affluence are less likely to translate into policymakers' recognition of women's legal subordination to men as a 'problem' (cf. Jones and Baumgartner, 2005).

We expect social globalization to moderate the effect of economic globalization by exposing members of a society that is undergoing economic change to alternative gender-role models. Such exposure, as proposed further below, stirs distinct processes of value change that enhance individuals' tolerance and support for gender equality. Social globalization also exposes the members of a society to various aspects of governance, such as the role of the state in providing education and welfare, which are associated with enhanced gender status. Ultimately, such exposure stimulates both women's expectations and men's support for greater gender equality.

There are multiple routes by which enhanced public support for gender equality may then materialize into policy change. As gender equality becomes a more salient issue for individual members of the public, politicians and other elites are likely to pay closer attention to gender issues (Jones and Baumgartner, 2005). At the same time, public support for gender equality may facilitate the efforts of international organizations to put pressure on political elites and of local women-rights movements to mobilize public and political support for their cause. Under these pressures, there is a greater chance that political elites will feel compelled to endorse more egalitarian gender policies. Moreover, elites' own exposure to other cultures (strengthened by their greater mobility and opportunities for consumption of foreign culture) may also render them supportive of gender-equal policies. No less important, administrative agencies are likely to experience external pressure and support to implement and enforce women's rights 'on the books'. In light of the above assumptions, our first hypothesis posits that an interaction with social globalization fosters the most fertile soil for the effect of economic globalization on women's rights. Thus:

*H<sub>1</sub>*: The positive effect of economic globalization on gender rights is conditioned by levels of social globalization.

### **The mediating role of individual-level attitudes and values**

The above hypothesis rests on the premise that social globalization stimulates bottom-up demand for gender equality, which generates a politically conducive environment for policy change in response

to material and economic transformations. This raises the question: what is the precise mechanism through which country-level social globalization stirs public demand for women's rights? Our answer is that a change in fundamental, overarching, value systems links social globalization and public opinion. We expect exposure to foreign cultures, due to social globalization, to evoke the espousal by individuals of more liberal values, which enhances individual and thus also public support for gender equality. This postulation draws upon scholarly work on 'cosmopolitanism' which posits that 'transnationalism' – that is, greater exposure to diverse cultures and worldviews – is likely to lead one to adopt a 'cosmopolitan orientation', whereby a person is more accepting of other cultures, and less likely to believe that one's culture is superior to others (Beck, 2002; Roudometof, 2005). Moreover, a cosmopolitan orientation is a dimension of what Inglehart (2008) terms post-materialist values and of self-expression values in particular. The latter, as elaborated above, involve an emphasis on individual choice and is associated with humanistic orientations, including support for gender equality. Indeed, a growing emphasis on post-materialist values has been established as a predictor of tolerance and trust (Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom, 2013; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005).

To date, despite an abundance of theoretical and normative writings on cosmopolitanization, very few studies have tested empirically the effect of transnationalism on the espousal of cosmopolitan orientations (see Mau et al., 2008; Norris and Inglehart, 2009; Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow, 2010; Pichler, 2011). While far from being conclusive, these studies tend to support the expectation that greater exposure to other cultures renders people more liberal and tolerant towards foreigners and other religious groups (but see Pichler, 2011). Most relevant for us, a comparative study by Norris and Inglehart (2009) analyzed the extent to which exposure to globalized media communications, in conjunction with other dimensions of globalization, inculcates cosmopolitan orientations. Specifically, they found that individuals who live in societies that are more globalized, economically developed, and have a free media (i.e. 'cosmopolitan') are more trusting and tolerant of outsiders, and that this effect is stronger in interaction with individual consumption of news media. Further, they found that more frequent users of news media and those living in cosmopolitan societies, as conceptualized above, tend to hold more liberal values (e.g., regarding the justifiability of abortion, divorce, homosexuality, and suicide) and to be egalitarian in their view of men's and women's political and social roles. However, their composite measure of 'cosmopolitanism' did not disaggregate the effects of economic and social dimensions of globalization, and did not assess the impact of social globalization on individuals' values.

Merging the insights of cosmopolitanism and CMT, we presume that as social globalization exposes people to diverse societal configurations their values tend to change such that they are more tolerant of others, concerned with individual autonomy and self-expression and, respectively, less supportive of traditional institutions and hierarchic authority. Consequently, they are also more likely to accept women's autonomy to make choices in relation to their role in the family, in society, and in the political sphere. Moreover, we assume that change to cultural values is not only an individual, but also a societal process; namely, the fact that one person consumes global media, travels abroad, and maintains international contacts is likely to have an effect on other people with whom the person interacts (Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow, 2010; Welzel, 2013: 16). Consequently, our additional hypotheses, which are intended to support and supplement our postulation of the micro-mechanisms underlying  $H_1$ , are that:

*H<sub>2a</sub>*: A country's level of social globalization has a positive effect on individual support for gender equality.

*H<sub>2b</sub>*: The positive effect of a country's level of social globalization on individual support for gender equality is mediated by individual espousal of post-materialist orientations and self-expression values.

Altogether, then, our theoretical framework proposes that the positive effect of economic globalization on a country's level of gender equality is conditional upon changes to values and attitudes via social globalization, which render both men and women more receptive to the new opportunities for women.

## Data and methods

To test hypothesis  $H_1$ , we used Time-Series Cross-Sectional (TSCS) Generalized Estimating Equation (GEE) models, and to test hypotheses  $H_{2a}$ – $H_{2b}$  we used random-intercept multilevel models and multilevel path analysis.

### TSCS analysis

The TSCS analysis encompasses the 152 states for which data were available for the period 1990–2003. We used a Generalized Estimating Equation (GEE) model (Zorn, 2001). GEE is a semi-parametric extension of GLM to longitudinal data analysis using quasi-likelihood estimation. As such, GEEs do not require distributional assumptions, and have consistent and asymptotically normal solutions even under misspecification of the correlation structure. Given our use of repeated measures over time, we define the correlational structure to be autoregressive with lag 1 (first order), and define robust standard errors clustered by country.

Our dependent variable, the Gender Equality Scale, is taken from the Cingranelli–Richards (CIRI) Human Rights project (Cingranelli and Richards, 2010), one of the largest human rights datasets. Providing information about government respect for women's rights in nearly all of the world's countries over three decades, it has the important advantage of providing for a relatively exhaustive analysis and is thus often used as a measure of gender equality (see, e.g., Cho, 2013; Neumayer and de Soysa, 2011; Richards and Gelleny, 2007). This continuous scale focuses on women's economic, political and social rights, documenting the extensiveness of laws pertaining to women-relevant sets of rights, their enforcement by the government, and government practices towards women in relation to these rights. The economic dimension measures rights such as equal pay for equal work, free choice of profession or employment without the need to obtain the consent of a husband or male relative, job security including maternity leave, and freedom from sexual harassment in the workplace. The social dimension measures rights such as entitlement to education and the freedom to choose a residence or domicile, initiate a divorce, and own property. The political dimension measures rights such as the right to vote, run for political office, and petition government officials. Each of the measures is on a four-point scale, with higher scores indicating a greater level of government respect for women's rights. Our gender-rights measure is an average of these three value measures, which has been shown to be an improvement over the UN indices for gender policy (Richards and Gelleny, 2007).

The key explanatory variables are the economic and social dimensions of globalization. 'Economic Globalization' (Dreher, 2006; Dreher et al., 2008; Potrafke, 2015) is measured in terms of openness to trade (restrictions on trade and capital, such as tariff rates), and by actual inflows of trade and foreign investment. The 'Social Globalization' measure (Dreher, 2006; Dreher et al., 2008, Potrafke, 2015) includes personal contacts (e.g., telephone traffic, tourism, presence of foreigners), information flows (e.g., number of Internet users, access to television, trade in newspapers), and exposure to foreign brands and goods (e.g., trade in books and number of IKEA warehouses per capita). These two variables were coded and tested both for the same year as the dependent variable and in a lag one version: that is, lagging one year behind the dependent variable.

Other controls, which were selected in line with prior studies regarding the effects of economic and/or social globalization on gender equality, are as follows:

- GDP per capita;
  - Democratic conditions;
  - Post-Communism dummy;
  - Denominational fractionalization;
  - Population size; and
  - Percentages of individuals from different religious denominations.
- Descriptive statistics are presented in Table A1 in the Online Appendix.

### *Multilevel models*

To test for the micro-mechanisms which mediate the effect of social globalization (hypotheses H2<sub>a</sub> and H2<sub>b</sub>), our individual-level supporting analysis draws on data for 42 countries from the Fifth Wave of the World Values Survey (WVS), which was collected between 2005 and 2008. These data contain rich information collected at the individual level by country, including items that measure people's values and support for gender equality. Random-intercept multilevel modeling and multi-level path analysis are used to account for the hierarchical nature of the data.

Support for Gender Equality, the dependent variable, is a combined index of seven survey items. The four items, on a 1–4 scale, with 1 = 'strongly agree' and 4 = 'strongly disagree' were:

- Men make better political leaders than women do;
- University is more important for a boy than for a girl;
- Being a housewife is just as fulfilling; and
- Men make better business executives than women do.

We also included three additional items:

- Jobs are scarce: men should have more of a right to a job than women (1 = 'agree', 3 = 'disagree');
- Women can have a child as a single parent (1 = 'approve', 2 = 'disapprove'); and
- It is justifiable for a man to beat his wife (1 = 'never justifiable', 10 = 'always justifiable').

The items were recoded and adjusted to vary from 0–1, with higher scores indicating higher support for gender equality.

Our key independent variable, for the individual-level model, is the country's level of social globalization. The model also includes country-level controls for Economic Globalization, Democratic Conditions, and GDP per Capita. The models further control for Political Ideology, Religious Attendance, Education, Income (1 = lowest, 10 = highest); Gender (0 – male, 1 – female); and Age.

Lastly, the models control for different dimensions of post-material values as operationalized by Inglehart and colleagues in previous studies. Self-expression (vs. Survival) Values measure the extent that one emphasizes subjective well-being and quality of life versus economic and physical security. The measure considers items such as one's feelings of happiness, trust of other people, and whether one believes a nation's key priorities should be keeping order and price stability or enhancing civic participation and rights. This measure was created using factor analysis, with higher values indicating support for more self-expressive values. Rational (vs. Traditional) Values measure the extent that one favors more rational or secular values over religious values. The measure considers items such as the importance of God in one's life and attitudes towards homosexuality and abortion. This measure is also created using factor analysis, with higher values indicating



**Table 1.** The effect of globalization on state-level gender equality.

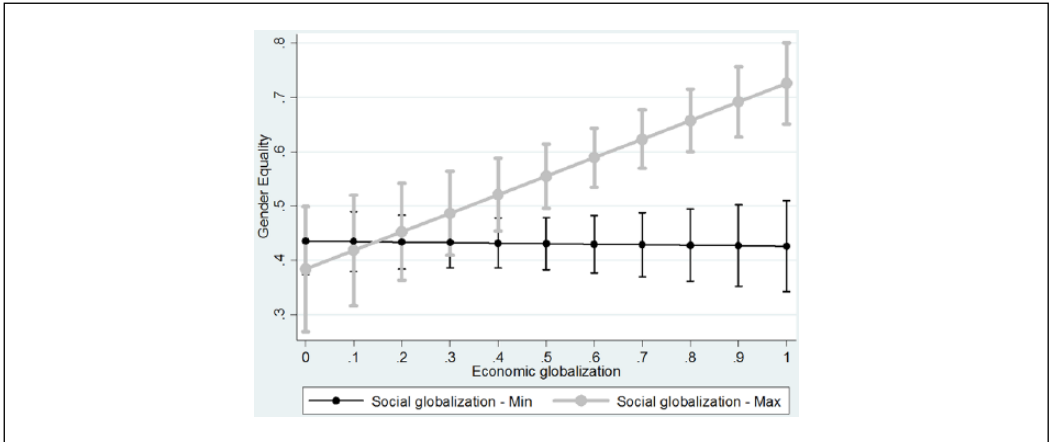
|                               | Model I                | Model II               | Model III              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Social globalization          | 0.187 (0.056)***       | -                      | -0.051 (0.096)         |
| Economic globalization        | -                      | 0.165 (0.044)***       | -0.009 (0.068)         |
| Economic*social globalization | -                      | -                      | 0.351 (0.128)***       |
| Democratic conditions         | 0.087 (.025)***        | 0.076 (0.023)***       | 0.077 (0.023)***       |
| GDP per capita – logged       | 0.010 (0.014)          | 0.037 (0.010)***       | 0.015 (0.014)          |
| Religious fractionalization   | 0.067 (0.045)          | 0.040 (0.044)          | 0.022 (0.043)          |
| Post communism                | 0.065 (0.025)***       | 0.077 (0.027)***       | 0.075 (0.026)***       |
| Population size – logged      | 0.005 (0.007)          | 0.006 (0.006)          | 0.006 (0.006)          |
| % Catholics                   | 0.001 (0.000)***       | 0.001 (0.000)*         | 0.001 (0.000)**        |
| % Orthodox                    | -0.000 (0.001)         | -0.000 (0.001)         | -0.000 (0.001)         |
| % Protestant                  | 0.003 (0.001)***       | 0.002 (0.000)***       | 0.002 (0.000)***       |
| % Muslim                      | -0.001 (0.000)*        | -0.001 (0.000)*        | -0.001 (0.000)         |
| % Buddhist                    | 0.001 (0.001)**        | 0.001 (0.001)          | 0.001 (0.001)          |
| % Hindu                       | 0.001 (0.002)          | 0.001 (0.002)          | 0.001 (0.001)          |
| % Jewish                      | 0.044 (0.059)          | 0.049 (0.059)          | 0.053 (0.055)          |
| % Confucians                  | 0.014 (0.003)***       | 0.011 (0.003)***       | 0.003 (0.004)          |
| % Sikhs                       | -0.058 (0.015)***      | -0.062 (0.016)***      | -0.067 (0.015)***      |
| % Baha'is                     | -0.030 (0.037)         | -0.026 (0.038)         | -0.016 (0.036)         |
| Constant                      | 0.139 (0.109)          | -0.066 (0.099)         | 0.146 (0.112)          |
| N                             | 1804                   | 1640                   | 1640                   |
| N groups                      | 152                    | 137                    | 137                    |
| Observations per group        | 2/11.9/13              | 2/12.0/13              | 2/12.0/13              |
| Minimum/Average/Maximum       |                        |                        |                        |
| Wald $\chi^2$                 | $\chi^2(16)=560.3$ *** | $\chi^2(16)=778.2$ *** | $\chi^2(18)=720.7$ *** |
| QIC                           | 297.833                | 283.633                | 286.435                |

Entries are unstandardized Generalized Estimating Equation (GEE) Model coefficients and robust standard errors; \* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

support for more rational values. Post-materialist (vs. Materialist) Values is on a scale of 0–5, with 0 = ‘materialist’ and 5 = ‘post-materialist’. This measure asks respondents to prioritize between a set of materialist concerns (such as maintaining order in the nation) and post-materialist concerns (such as protecting freedom of speech). Lastly, given that the three indices are strongly correlated, and are theoretically intended to capture more fundamental change to value systems, we also use a composite average of these three value measures. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table A2 in the Online Appendix.

## Results

Overall, the results of both the time-series cross-sectional GEE models and the multilevel path analyses corroborate our hypotheses. First, the time series analysis confirms that social globalization moderates the effect of economic globalization on gender equality over time, holding all else constant. Second, the multilevel analysis shows that a country’s level of social globalization has a positive effect on individual support for gender equality. Third, the multilevel path analysis shows that changes in individuals’ values mediate the effect of social globalization on individual-level support for gender equality.



**Figure 2.** The interactive effect of social and economic globalization on state-level gender equality

*Time-series cross-sectional analysis*

Table 1 presents the results of the cross-national time-series analysis examining the relation between gender equality and the social and economic dimensions of globalization, controlling for the effects of other independent variables.

In accordance with H<sub>1</sub>, social globalization moderates the positive effect of economic globalization on a country’s level of gender equality. First, results from Model I suggest that nations that experience higher levels of social globalization score higher on the gender equality scale, all else being equal. Second, in agreement with the economic literature, higher levels of economic globalization are also associated with a country’s higher scores on the gender equality scale (Model II). Third, and most importantly, to test the interactive effects of social and economic globalization, we specified an interaction term in the model (level of economic globalization x level of social globalization). Model III in Table 1 presents the findings.

The results confirm that the effect of economic globalization on state-level gender equality is conditional on the country’s level of social globalization, as indicated by the statistically significant interaction term. To facilitate interpretation of the conditional relationship, we present the predicted levels of gender equality according to the level of economic globalization for varying levels of social globalization (see Figure 2), and further calculate the coefficients and standard errors for the impact of economic globalization at different levels of social globalization (see analysis of “simple effects” below). In Figure 2 the thick gray line in the panels represents the highest level of social globalization, and the thin black line indicates the effect of economic globalization at low levels of social globalization (the scale’s minimum).

Starting with the highest level of social globalization, the thick gray line in Figure 2 indicates that as economic globalization increases a state’s level of gender equality is bound to increase as well, all else being equal. However, this effect wanes as the level of social globalization decreases, and is completely nullified where social globalization is at its minimum (see the black profile in Figure 2).

To test further the simple effects in this model – the coefficients and standard errors for the impact of economic globalization at different levels of social globalization – we divided the sample into lower, medium, and upper thirds of the social globalization scale, and re-ran Model II in Table 1 for each of these three subsamples. This yielded three coefficients for economic globalization.

Testing the simple effect of economic globalization among countries in the lower third of the social globalization scale suggests a mildly positive and statistically insignificant effect ( $b_{\text{economic}} =$

0.096,  $p = 0.151$ ). However, as social globalization increases, the regression line for economic globalization grows steeper and becomes statistically significant. Thus, in the middle third of the social globalization scale, the coefficient for economic globalization increases to 0.154 ( $p = 0.042$ ). Lastly, the coefficient for economic globalization increases to 0.255 in the upper third of the social globalization scale ( $p = 0.000$ ). Overall, these results strongly support  $H_1$ .

Moving to the control variables in the four models in Table 1, there is overall evidence that democracies, post-Communist countries, and increasing percentages of Catholics, Protestants, and Confucians in a country are all systematically associated with greater gender equality. Lower levels of gender equality typically emerge as the percentage of Muslims and Sikhs in a country increases. Moreover, while the effects of a country's wealth, population size and religious fractionalization all lie in the expected directions, their coefficients were not large enough to reject the null hypothesis (with the exception of a statistically significant positive effect for GDP per capita in Model II).

Finally, in the online appendix, we found that the results were robust when specifying the models to predict gender equality using one-year lagged social and economic globalization measures (Table A3) and were not being driven by a regional effect or Muslim countries (Table A4). We also conducted 'Granger causality' tests which seem to confirm the 'Granger causality' of social globalization.

### *Individual-level supporting analysis: multilevel models*

While the country level time-series analysis confirms that social globalization conditions the effect of economic globalization on state-level gender equality, this paper further sought to show how social globalization facilitates support for women's autonomy amidst economic globalization. This supporting analysis is thus added to more directly test the effects of state-level social globalization on support for gender equality at the individual level using survey data.

Model I in Table 2 presents the specific random-intercept multilevel model predicting individual level support for gender equality from country-level social globalization, with level-1 controls for key individual-level correlates. Results show that an increase in a country's level of social globalization is significantly associated with a person's preference for gender equality, holding constant the individual's ideology, religiosity, education, income, gender, and age. This is in accord with  $H_{2a}$ .

We examined further the effect of other country-level variables, which are likely to be associated with both social globalization and support for gender equality. We therefore re-specified the model by controlling for GDP per capita, democratization level, and economic globalization. Because the statistical power of the model is limited, due to the small level-2 sample, we started by integrating these country-level controls one-by-one. First, and as expected, as a country's affluence or GDP per capita (Model II) and level of democratic conditions (Model III) increase, individual-level attitudes are more supportive of gender equality. Second, and more importantly, Model IV examines the effect of social globalization when controlling for these two state-level alternative hypotheses. Results show that social globalization affects individual-level gender attitudes above and beyond the country's economic and democratic conditions. In fact, under this specification, social globalization *alone retains a significant unique contribution* to the explanation of individual-level preference for gender equality.

Next, we were interested in examining the extent to which the effects of social globalization stem from its association with economic globalization. We first started by testing the stand-alone effect of economic globalization (Model V). The findings confirm that, controlling for individual-level correlates, economic globalization is indeed associated with support for gender equality. However, when integrating social globalization into the model (Model VI), the effect of economic globalization disappears completely. This implies that the effect of economic globalization in Model V is entirely due to the association between economic and social globalization. Model VII

**Table 2.** The effect of country-level social globalization on individual-level support for gender equality: multilevel analysis.

|  | Model I                             | Model II                            | Model III                           | Model IV                            | Model V                             | Model VI                            | Model VII                            |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Level-1 (individual) effects</i>            |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                      |
| Ideology (right wing)                          | -0.059 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.059 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.060 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.060 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.059 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.059 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.060 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        |
| Religious attendance                           | -0.054 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.054 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.055 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.055 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.054 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.054 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.055 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        |
| Education                                      | 0.091 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.091 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.092 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.092 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.093 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.092 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.093 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>         |
| Income   | 0.033 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.033 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.033 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.033 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.033 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.033 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.033 (0.003) <sup>***</sup>         |
| Female   | 0.063 (0.002) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.063 (0.002) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.062 (0.002) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.062 (0.002) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.063 (0.002) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.063 (0.002) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.062 (0.002) <sup>***</sup>         |
| Age  | -0.001 (0.000) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.001 (0.000) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.001 (0.000) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.001 (0.000) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.001 (0.000) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.001 (0.000) <sup>***</sup>       | -0.001 (0.000) <sup>***</sup>        |
| Constant                                       | 0.425 (0.026) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.477 (0.017) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.428 (0.043) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.447 (0.041) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.427 (0.038) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.437 (0.036) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.453 (0.045) <sup>***</sup>         |
| <i>Level-2 (country) effects</i>               |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                      |
| Social globalization                           | 0.152 (0.041) <sup>***</sup>        | -                                   | -                                   | 0.154 (0.073) <sup>**</sup>         | -                                   | 0.167 (0.063) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.162 (0.097) <sup>*</sup>           |
| GDP per capita                                 | -                                   | 0.000 (0.000) <sup>***</sup>        | -                                   | 0.000 (0.000)                       | -                                   | -                                   | 0.000 (0.000)                        |
| Democratic conditions                          | -                                   | -                                   | 0.098 (0.050) <sup>**</sup>         | -0.045 (0.064)                      | -                                   | -                                   | -0.046 (0.065)                       |
| Economic globalization                         | -                                   | -                                   | -                                   | -                                   | 0.129 (0.058) <sup>**</sup>         | -0.036 (0.082)                      | -0.018 (0.091)                       |
| <i>Random-effects parameters</i>               |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                     |                                      |
| Standard deviation, country level              | 0.075 (0.008) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.079 (0.009) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.083 (0.009) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.075 (0.008) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.081 (0.009) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.075 (0.008) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.074 (0.008) <sup>***</sup>         |
| Standard deviation, individual level           | 0.148 (0.001) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.148 (0.001) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.147 (0.001) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.147 (0.001) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.149 (0.001) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.149 (0.001) <sup>***</sup>        | 0.148 (0.001) <sup>***</sup>         |
| N level-1/level 2                              | 363/12/42                           | 363/12/42                           | 3503/1/40                           | 3503/1/40                           | 35489/4/1                           | 35489/4/1                           | 34208/39                             |
| Observations per group minimum/average/maximum | 305/864.6/2077                      | 305/864.6/2077                      | 305/875.8/2077                      | 305/875.8/2077                      | 305/865.6/2077                      | 305/865.6/2077                      | 305/877.1/2077                       |
| Wald $\chi^2$                                  | $\chi^2(7) = 4812.9$ <sup>***</sup> | $\chi^2(7) = 4806.0$ <sup>***</sup> | $\chi^2(7) = 4691.3$ <sup>***</sup> | $\chi^2(9) = 4703.4$ <sup>***</sup> | $\chi^2(7) = 4704.6$ <sup>***</sup> | $\chi^2(8) = 4713.4$ <sup>***</sup> | $\chi^2(10) = 4603.2$ <sup>***</sup> |
| LR test versus linear regression               | $\chi^2 = 7781.1$ <sup>***</sup>    | $\chi^2 = 8280.8$ <sup>***</sup>    | $\chi^2 = 9158.1$ <sup>***</sup>    | $\chi^2 = 7346.1$ <sup>***</sup>    | $\chi^2 = 8856.9$ <sup>***</sup>    | $\chi^2 = 7340.1$ <sup>***</sup>    | $\chi^2 = 6985.8$ <sup>***</sup>     |

Entries are coefficients from random-intercept multilevel models and their standard errors; \* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

then integrates the four state-level predictors. Under this specification, social globalization is the only country-level correlate that retains its statistically significant effect on individual support for gender equality.

While the findings presented in Table 2 confirm that social globalization stimulates bottom-up demand, or support, for gender equality, we were further interested in showing the micro-foundations of this effect on individual-level values (see  $H_{2b}$ ). To test for this additional mediation hypothesis, we specified several multilevel path models, holding countries' GDPs and democratization levels constant.

In Figure 3, Model I, we constructed a multilevel model testing for the effect of state-level social globalization on the individual-level preference for gender equality, holding individual-level values constant, but without specifying the mediation paths between the two variables. Model II in Figure 3 shows the results from multilevel path analysis for the proposed mediation model, in which the individual-level composite values scale is specified as a mediator. This model therefore tests for the extent to which the country's social globalization level influences a person's values, which in turn influences his or her preference for gender equality. Next, we tested for the superiority of the hypothesized mediation model when disaggregating the values index into its three components. Model III in Figure 3 shows the baseline model for this specification, and Model IV depicts the disaggregated mediation model.

The results shown in Figure 3 confirm the effect of social globalization on people's espousal of post-materialist values, which underlie more egalitarian conception of women's roles. For example, the Model II results suggest that the effect of lagged social globalization on preference for gender equality is fully mediated by the values index (globalization  $\rightarrow$  values:  $b = 0.198, p = 0.03$ ; values  $\rightarrow$  gender equality:  $b = 0.345, p = 0.007$ ).

The online appendix includes a more extensive discussion of the Figure 3 results, including the goodness of fit measures.

**Robust analysis.** To test further the mediation hypothesis, we re-specified the random-intercept multilevel models in Table 2 such that the values measures were integrated separately and their individual impacts on the coefficient for social globalization could be assessed (see Table A5 in the Online Appendix).

The results indicate that the composite values scale and each of its components partially mediate the effect of social globalization on preference for gender equality, when holding constant both individual level and state level controls. Thus, when integrated separately, self-expression (vs. survival) values mediate 28% of the effect of social globalization (the coefficient of social globalization is reduced from 0.152 to 0.110 upon entering this variable); rational (vs. traditional) values mediate 11 percent of the effect of social globalization (0.152 to 0.136); and post-materialist (vs. materialist) values mediate 6 % of the effect of social globalization (0.152 to 0.143). Overall, introducing the composite values index into the hierarchical models reduced the effect of social globalization by 25% (from 0.152 to 0.114). Nevertheless, social globalization retains a unique direct effect on gender equality preferences in these models, *ceteris paribus*. This indicates that social globalization has an impact on gender equality in two distinct ways: through its direct impact and through its mediating impact on people's values.

## Conclusions

In general, societies that undergo economic globalization tend to have greater exposure to other cultures; but this is not universally the case. Many countries remain culturally insular despite their relatively high flows of trade and foreign direct investment. This paper suggests that under these

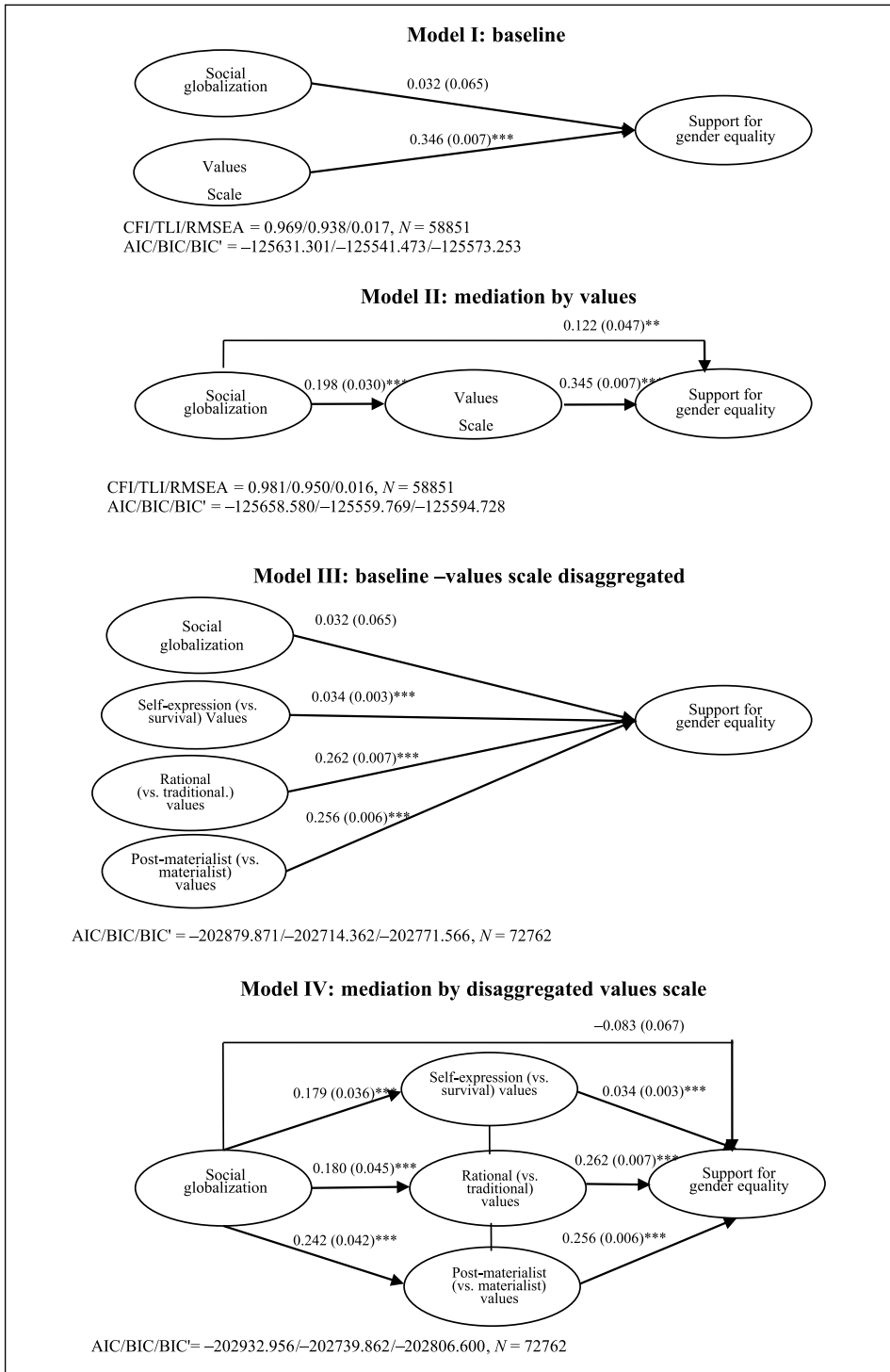


Figure 3. Multilevel path models

conditions economic globalization is unlikely to translate into improvement in women's status. Diverse examples from our database illustrate the consequences of such disparity between levels of economic and social globalization across different cultural zones and stages of economic development. During the research period, some of the world's less developed economies, such as Yemen and Papua New Guinea, enjoyed relatively vigorous flows of international trade, but their population mostly remained socio-culturally isolated. The status of women and gender biases in education and health in these countries continued to be among the worst in the world (Gibson and Rozelle, 2004; World Economic Forum, 2006). Moreover, some of the world's comparatively developed economies, such as South Korea and Turkey, manifested moderate to high disparities between their economic integration with the world alongside relative cultural insularity. In these cases, too, preference for male offspring and gender discrimination remained entrenched during the research period (Lee Cooke, 2010).

More generally, our country-level analysis demonstrates that in the absence of social exposure to other nations, economic globalization fails to boost levels of gender equality in a country, whereas the interaction between the economic and social dimensions of globalization facilitates the exploitation of 'windows of opportunities' (Kingdon, 1984) for policy change. We argue that economic globalization, and the relative development and growth that are associated with it, open up new opportunities and choices for both men and women. However, in the absence of encounters with alternative gender-role models, people's social imagination is restricted by existing, taken-for-granted social arrangements. Consequently, women are less likely to demand, and men unlikely to accept, women's right to make autonomous choices, despite the society's economic and demographic changes that would otherwise favor such freedoms. Moreover, our individual-level path analysis shows that this effect of social globalization is due to its stimulation of post-materialist values and concerns for individual autonomy. Overall then, we suggest that social globalization, by way of its effect on public orientations and values, generates a fertile political soil for policy adaptation to economic globalization.

The above findings present several contributions to diverse literatures. First, we would argue that our findings provide a novel answer within an open research agenda. Several studies have documented the differential effect of economic globalization on gender equality across countries and time. Our analysis contributes to this research by demonstrating that the variable effect of economic globalization, which others have documented, is at least partially explained by different degrees of socio-cultural connectivity to the rest of the world.

Second, recent studies demonstrating the independent effect of social globalization on a country's levels of gender equality have not investigated its micro-level workings. Our analysis contributes to these studies by showing how social globalization disrupts entrenched gender-role models via its effect on individual values that engender support for gender equality. Moreover, whereas other scholars have documented the significance of international organizations and transnational networks of women activists in the diffusion of global norms, our findings provide a complementary angle by focusing on the consequences of individuals' commonplace, often inadvertent exposure to other cultures.

Third, we argue that our findings make an important contribution to Cultural Modernization Theory, providing new empirical evidence and a theoretical foundation for the effect of social globalization on societies' espousal of post-materialist values, holding constant economic development and democratization. The significance of this particular finding extends well beyond the context of gender rights. It calls for further research on the effect of social globalization on a host of other individualist orientations (e.g., mistrust in government) and their macro effect (e.g., on compliance with tax law).

## Limitations and future research

Several caveats and avenues for future research should be considered with respect to our analysis. First, our theoretical argumentation proposes a political process, wherein change to individual values and perceptions, due to social globalization, contributes to policy change at the national policy and implementation level. However, while important facets of this model have been empirically tested and reported in this article, others have only been theoretically developed.

Second, our analysis treats social globalization as a one-dimensional scale of exposure with a linear effect. Future research should depict further the content of global messages to which individuals are exposed, and take account of potential non-linear effects (Eastin and Prakash, 2013).

Third, whereas this study theorizes and tests the interaction between the economic and social dimensions of globalization, we have not given equal attention to the diffusion of global norms due to the purposive action of international organizations and the transnational women's movement (cf. Elkink, 2011).

Nevertheless, we believe our results hold significant policy implications. The analysis stipulates that international organizations which pursue the enhancement of gender status should combine incentives for economic globalization with opportunities for greater social connectivity. In particular, while it is important to fund programs that boost economic productivity in isolated rural areas, it is crucial simultaneously to enhance the social connectivity of these communities, because gender discrimination is otherwise likely to persist even alongside economic improvement. Overall, our findings, and the theoretical underpinning that they confirm, suggest that, for gender equality to be enhanced, openness to trade and/or foreign direct investment should be supplemented by transnational interpersonal interactions that generate a supportive public opinion, which provides a political impetus and lubricant for policy change.

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