European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 2026, No 5
ISSN 2414-2344

PREMIER Publishing
ppublishing.org

Section 6. Sociology

DOI:10.29013/EJHSS-26-5-36-42

CC BY

PERCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AMONG MIGRANTS AND CITIZENS IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Ganlé Adelaïde Gouzoua [1]***, Kando Serge Gbagbeu*** [2]

[1] Alassane Ouattara University, Côte d'Ivoire

[2] Peleforo Gon Coulibaly University, Côte d'Ivoire

Cite: *Ganlé Adelaïde Gouzoua, Kando Serge Gbagbeu. (2026). Perception of democracy and respect for human rights among migrants and citizens in Côte d'Ivoire. European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 2026, No 5.* https://doi.org/10.29013/EJHSS-26-5-36-42

Abstract

The aim of the study is to analyze the differences between migrants and citizens in terms of their perception of democracy and respect for human rights in Côte d'Ivoire. Using data from the Harmonized Household Survey 2021/2022 in Côte d'Ivoire, this study performs an analysis of variance (ANOVA) on a sample of 1620 randomly selected participants, including both migrants and citizens. The findings indicate a significant difference between migrants and citizens. Migrants in Côte d'Ivoire have a higher perception of democracy and respect for human rights than Ivoirian citizens. The outcome also shows the same pattern by sociodemographic characteristics, such as gender, age, education, quality of life, and area of residence. These findings call for peaceful democracy and human rights-friendly environment improvement, as it is a matter for all, regardless of their legal status.

Keywords: *perception, democracy, respect for human rights, analysis of variance, migrants, citizens*

Introduction

Democracy and human rights are among the most important interests for civil society organizations, researchers, and policymakers, as they can provide a better economic, social, and political environment (Acemoglu et al., 2019). Beyond economic factors in migration studies, democracy and human rights have been highlighted as influencing the decision to stay or migrate (Giménez-Gómez et al., 2019). For instance, most migrants have settled in countries with higher levels of development and higher levels of democratic performance (International IDEA, 2025). In Africa, Côte d'Ivoire is well-known as the top destination country with the largest migration corridor, Burkina Faso to Côte d'Ivoire (IOM, 2026). Despite this high migration inflow, the country is still struggling with performance in terms of democracy and respect for human

rights (Donner et al., 2026), and there are growing doubts about the government's democratization strategy (Welz, 2026). In light of this, the perception of democracy and human rights among migrants and citizens in Côte d'Ivoire remains a research gap.

The differences between sociodemographic groups in terms of their perceptions of democracy and respect for human rights have been extensively studied. Indeed, there is a significant difference between migrants and citizens' perceptions of democracy (Bilodeau, 2014; Chauvet et al., 2016). It has also been found that migrants and citizens' perceptions of human rights are significantly different (Voss et al., 2020; Bloemraad et al., 2024). On the one hand, migrants could have a higher or lower perception of democracy and respect for human rights than citizens (Zagrebina, 2024; Gülzau et al., 2026). However, empirical findings also show neutral results, meaning that there is no significant difference between migrants and citizens (Schildkraut, 2013). These mixed findings are due to the variety of survey questions, the countries' contexts, and the types of analyses used in the studies.

Empirical findings related to sociodemographic groups have also shown mixed results. The perception of democracy or respect for human rights is significantly different between men and women or between youth and adults (Barton et al., 2017; Yin, 2022). However, there is evidence of similarity among gender or age groups (Hali and Özyurt, 2019). Other findings revealed that the perception of democracy or respect for human rights may vary significantly or not according to education level (Anderson et al., 2005; Onder & Abduljaber, 2025), area of residence (Mubangizi, 2005; Lago, 2022), quality of life (Wang & Dai, 2024; Mamani-Flores et al., 2025), or other characteristics (Malafaia et al., 2021). In summary, regardless of the sociodemographic groups considered in a study, the findings are similar, controversial, or inconclusive compared to those of other studies.

Given the heterogeneity of the results, we attempt to address the following problem: Is there any difference in perception between migrants and citizens in Côte d'Ivoire? The aim of the study is to analyze the differences between migrants and citizens in terms of their perception of democracy and respect for human rights in Côte d'Ivoire. Specifically, it splits the investigation by performing the analysis of the perception of democracy on one side, and the respect for human rights on the other side. Based on the arguments discussed above, we formulate the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the perception of democracy and respect for human rights among migrants and citizens. While contributing to the literature, the study brings empirical insights of the matter of peaceful democracy and human rights-friendly environment improvement for all, regardless of citizen or foreign status. Therefore, this paper is structured by section. The remaining part provides the methods, the results, the discussion, and some concluding remarks.

Methods

The data used in this study were extracted from the Harmonized Household Survey 2021/2022 in Côte d' Ivoire from the World Bank's Microdata Library. This survey was nationally representative of households in Côte d'Ivoire. For the purpose of the study, our sample consists of 1620 randomly selected participants, of whom were migrants and citizens from sociodemographic groups, including gender, age, education, quality of life, and area of residence.

This research focus on two questions in the survey questionnaire. The question "*In general, are you satisfied with the way democracy functions in Côte d'Ivoire?*" was used to assess the perception of democracy rated on a four-point Likert scale (Not good at all / Not really good / Quite good / Very good). The question "*Are human rights respected in Côte d'Ivoire*?" was used to assess the extent of respect for human rights also rated on a four-point Likert scale (Not at all / Not really / Quite a bit / A lot).

The statistical analysis in this study considers a descriptive analysis, and an analysis of variance (ANOVA). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize the characteristics of the study population and to illustrate the patterns of responses to the questions. A one-way ANOVA, including the Tukey post hoc

test, was performed to evaluate discrepancies or differences in the perception of democracy and respect for human rights among the subgroups by sociodemographic characteristics for both migrants and citizens.

Results

The sociodemographic characteristics of the study population are presented in Table 1. In total, 1620 participants are considered in this study, of whom 50% are migrants and 50% are citizens. Among the participants, they are men (88%) and women (12%), youth (4%) and adults (96%), and low-educated (78%) and high-educated (22%) people. There are also those living in urban areas (39%) or rural areas (61%), and those with poor (83%) or good (17%) quality of life. This distribution follows the same patterns within each legal status. The population is mostly low-educated adult men living in rural areas with a poor quality of life.

Table 1. *Sociodemographic characteristics*

		Total		Migrants		Citizens	
		100%	(n=1620)	50%	(n=810)	50%	(n=810)
Residence	Urban	39%	(n=631)	18%	(n=290)	21%	(n=341)
	Rural	61%	(n=989)	32%	(n=520)	29%	(n=469)
Gender	Male	88%	(n=1425)	46%	(n=745)	42%	(n=680)
	Female	12%	(n=195)	4%	(n=65)	8%	(n=130)
Age	Youth	4%	(n=61)	2%	(n=35)	2%	(n=26)
	Adults	96%	(n=1559)	48%	(n=775)	48%	(n=784)
Education	Low	78%	(n=1258)	43%	(n=696)	35%	(n=562)
	High	22%	(n=362)	7%	(n=114)	15%	(n=248)
Quality of Life	Poor	83%	(n=1341)	41%	(n=659)	42%	(n=682)
	Good	17%	(n=279)	9%	(n=151)	8%	(n=128)

The patterns of responses to questions about democracy and human rights are displayed in Table 2. Most migrants are quite satisfied (21%) or very satisfied (15%) with democracy in Côte d'Ivoire, whereas citizens are quite satisfied (19%) or not really satisfied (14%) with the way democracy functions in their country. Concerning human rights, most migrants (36.6%) and citizens (30.7%) view them as being respected a lot or quite a bit.

Table 2. *Response Patterns*

		Total		Migrants		Citizens	
Democracy	Not good at all	9.8%	(n=158)	3.0%	(n=49)	6.7%	(n=109)
	Not really good	24.5%	(n=397)	10.5%	(n=170)	14.0%	(n=227)
	Quite good	40.9%	(n=661)	21.3%	(n=345)	19.5%	(n=316)
	Very good	24.8%	(n=402)	15.1%	(n=244)	9.8%	(n=158)
Human Rights	Not at all	10.4%	(n=169)	3.3%	(n=54)	7.1%	(n=115)
	Not really	22.3%	(n=362)	10.1%	(n=164)	12.2%	(n=198)
	Quite a bit	28.6%	(n=464)	14.4%	(n=233)	14.3%	(n=231)
	A lot	38.6%	(n=625)	22.2%	(n=359)	16.4%	(n=266)

The one-way ANOVA results presented in Table 3 indicate statistically significant differences in the perception of democracy and respect for human rights among migrants and citizens. Indeed, the analysis revealed significant differences in the perception of democracy by area of residence (F=19.97, p=0.000), by gender (F=17.69, p=0.000), by age (F=17.55, p=0.000), by education (F=25.14, p=0.000), and by quality of life

(F=21.79, p=0.000). There is also a significant difference in respect for human rights by area of residence (F=16.26, p=0.000), by gender (F=12.78, p=0.000), by age (F=13.06, p=0.000), by education (F=16.02, p=0.000), and by quality of life (F=12.93, p=0.000).

Table 3. *Analysis of variance (ANOVA)*

		SS	df	MS	F	p
		Democracy				
Status x Residence	Between Groups	49.07	3	16.36	19.97	0.000
Status x Gender	Between Groups	43.65	3	14.55	17.69	0.000
Status x Age	Between Groups	43.31	3	14.44	17.55	0.000
Status x Education	Between Groups	61.21	3	20.40	25.14	0.000
Status x Quality of life	Between Groups	53.38	3	17.79	21.79	0.000
		Human Rights				
Status x Residence	Between Groups	48.63	3	16.21	16.26	0.000
Status x Gender	Between Groups	38.46	3	12.82	12.78	0.000
Status x Age	Between Groups	39.29	3	13.10	13.06	0.000
Status x Education	Between Groups	47.94	3	15.98	16.02	0.000
Status x Quality of life	Between Groups	38.90	3	12.97	12.93	0.000

The results of the Tukey post hoc test presented in Table 4 indicate that migrants (except women and youth) have significantly better perceptions of democracy and respect for human rights than citizens (except women and youth). Migrants in urban areas have better views of democracy (MD=0.31, p=0.000) and human rights (MD=0.29, p=0.002) than citizens in urban areas. Migrants in rural areas have better views of democracy (MD=0.32, p=0.000) and human rights (MD=0.30, p=0.000) than citizens in rural areas. Male migrants have better views of democracy (MD=0.34, p=0.000) and human rights (MD=0.31, p=0.000) than male citizens. However, there is no significant difference between female migrants and female citizens' views of democracy or respect for human rights. Adult migrants have better views of democracy (MD=0.32, p=0.000) and human rights (MD=0.31, p=0.000) than adult citizens. However, there is no significant difference between young migrants and young citizens' views on democracy or respect for human rights. Low-educated migrants have better views of democracy (MD=0.25, p=0.000) and human rights (MD=0.24, p=0.000) than low-educated citizens. High-educated migrants have better views of democracy (MD=0.41, p=0.000) and human rights (MD=0.43, p=0.001) than high-educated citizens. Migrants with a poor quality of life have better views of democracy (MD=0.28, p=0.000) and human rights (MD=0.29, p=0.000) than citizens with a poor quality of life. Migrants with a good quality of life have better views of democracy (MD=0.50, p=0.000) and human rights (MD=0.37, p=0.012) than citizens with a good quality of life.

Table 4. *Tukey post hoc test*

		MD	p	MD	p
		Democracy		**Human Rights**	
Status x Residence					
migrant x urban	citizen x urban	0.31	0.000	0.29	0.002
migrant x rural	citizen x rural	0.32	0.000	0.30	0.000
Status x Gender					
migrant x male	citizen x male	0.34	0.000	0.31	0.000

		MD Democracy	p	MD Human Rights	p
migrant x female	citizen x female	0.19	0.537	0.25	0.369
Status x Age					
migrant x youth	citizen x youth	0.36	0.431	0.24	0.794
migrant x adults	citizen x adults	0.32	0.000	0.31	0.000
Status x Education					
migrant x low	citizen x low	0.25	0.000	0.24	0.000
migrant x high	citizen x high	0.41	0.000	0.43	0.001
Status x Quality of life					
migrant x poor	citizen x poor	0.28	0.000	0.29	0.000
migrant x good	citizen x good	0.50	0.000	0.37	0.012

Discussion

Perception of democracy

The results of our investigation indicate statistically significant differences in the perception of democracy between migrants and citizens. These findings are aligned with those of Chauvet et al. (2016). The results also indicate that migrants have a significantly better perception of democracy than citizens. This extends the findings of Gülzau et al. (2026) but mitigates those of Schildkraut (2013). Moreover, our results indicate that there is no significant difference between female migrants and female citizens' views of democracy. There is also no significant difference between young migrants and young citizens' views of democracy. These findings are consistent with Hali & Özyurt (2019), but they are not aligned with Yin (2022), who found gender and age differences.

Respect for human rights

The results of our study indicate statistically significant differences in respect for human rights among migrants and citizens. The study of Bloemraad et al. (2024) have previously reported such findings. The analysis also highlights that migrants have significantly better views of respect for human rights than citizens. This is consistent with the findings of Zagrebina (2024), but diverges slightly from other studies. Moreover, our results indicate that there is no significant difference between female migrants and female citizens' views on respect for human rights. There is also no significant difference between young migrants and young citizens' views on respect for human rights. These findings are misaligned with Barton et al. (2017) but could be related to Hali & Özyurt (2019), even though they are not exactly similar.

Conclusion

Our paper focuses on the perception of democracy and respect for human rights in Côte d'Ivoire. It analyzes the difference between migrants and citizens in terms of perception of democracy and respect for human rights in Côte d'Ivoire through an analysis of variance (ANOVA) applied to randomly selected participants from the Harmonized Household Survey 2021/2022 in Côte d'Ivoire. The findings indicate that migrants have a significantly better perception of democracy and respect for human rights than citizens. The study brings empirical insights that could be useful for governments seeking to improve the way democracy functions and the extent to which human rights are respected in their country. A peaceful democracy and human rights-friendly environment will motivate the foreign labor force to settle durably in Côte d'Ivoire and reduce the outflow of human capital.

Despite its contributions and recommendations, a limitation of this paper relies on the use of a one-item scales. There is also a limitation related to the predictors of the perception of democracy and the respect for human rights. These limitations frame future research. When using multiple item-scales to measure the way democracy functions and the extent to which human rights are respected, future research could analyze the determinants of such perceptions beyond the analysis of variance.

References

Acemoglu, D., Naidu, S., Restrepo, P., & Robinson, J. A. (2019). Democracy Does Cause Growth. *Journal of Political Economy*, – 127(1). – P. 47–100. URL: https://doi.org/10.1086/700936

Anderson, C. J., Paskeviciute, A., Sandovici, M. E., & Tverdova, Y. V. (2005). In the Eye of the Beholder?: The Foundations of Subjective Human Rights Conditions in East-Central Europe: The Foundations of Subjective Human Rights Conditions in East-Central Europe. *Comparative Political Studies*, – 38(7). – P. 771–798. URL: https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414004274399

Barton, D. G., Hillebrecht, C., & Wals, S. C. (2017). A neglected nexus: Human rights and public perceptions. *Journal of Human Rights*, – 16(3). – P. 293–313. URL: https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2016.1261013

Bilodeau, A. (2014). Is democracy the only game in town? Tension between immigrants' democratic desires and authoritarian imprints. *Democratization*, – 21(2). – P. 359–381. URL: https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2012.712515

Bloemraad, I., Harell, A., & Fraser, N. A. R. (2024). Categorical Inequalities and Canadian Attitudes toward Positive and Negative Rights. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, – *57*(2). – P. 231–253. URL: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423924000076

Chauvet, L., Gubert, F., & Mesplé-Somps, S. (2016). Do migrants adopt new political attitudes from abroad? Evidence using a multi-sited exit-poll survey during the 2013 Malian elections. *Comparative Migration Studies*, – 4(1). URL: https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-016-0033-z

Donner, S., Hartmann, H., & Plate, S. (2026). *Repression meets resistance – BTI 2026 global findings*. Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Giménez-Gómez, J.-M., Walle, Y. M., & Zergawu, Y. Z. (2019). Trends in African Migration to Europe: Drivers Beyond Economic Motivations. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, – 63(8). – P. 1797–1831. URL: https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002718823907

Gülzau, F., Helbling, M., & Morgenstern, S. (2026). Liberal democratic values among immigrants in Europe: Socialisation and adaptation processes. *European Journal of Political Research*, – 65(3). – P. 933–956. URL: https://doi.org/10.1017/S1475676525100285

Hali, S. & Özyurt, F. (2019). Perceptions of democracy of foreign students studying at Mustafa Kemal University. *Educational Research and Reviews*, – 14(3). – P. 114–120. URL: https://doi.org/10.5897/err2018.3640

International IDEA (2025). *The Global State of Democracy 2025: Democracy on the Move*. URL: https://doi.org/10.31752/idea.2025.53

IOM (2026). *World Migration Report 2026*. IOM World Migration Report. URL: https://doi.org/10.18356/9789292780647

Lago, I. (2022). Rural decline and satisfaction with democracy. *Acta Politica*, – 57(4). – P. 753–771. URL: https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-021-00221-8

Malafaia, C., Ferreira, P. D., & Menezes, I. (2021). Democratic Citizenship-in-the-Making: Dis/Engagement Profiles of Portuguese Youth. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 3. URL: https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2021.743428

Mamani-Flores, A., Apaza-Ticona, J., Inquilla-Mamani, J., Alanoca-Arocutipa, V., Apaza-Chino, J., Yapuchura-Saico, C. R., Calatayud-Mendoza, A. P., Villanueva-Alvaro, N. S., Calderon-Torres, A., & Maquera-Maquera, Y. (2025). Crisis of institutional confidence: the impact of economic characteristics on democratic perception and transparency in Peru. *European Public & Social Innovation Review*, – 11. – P. 1–28. URL: https://doi.org/10.31637/epsir-2026–2073

Mubangizi, J. C. (2005). The Protection of Human Rights in Uganda: Public Awareness and Perceptions. *African Journal of Legal Studies*, – 1(3). – P. 168–186. URL: https://doi.org/10.1163/221097312x13397499736228

Onder, M., & Abduljaber, M. F. (2025). Predicting Democracy Support in the Middle East and North Africa. *World Affairs*, – 188(3). – e70010. URL: https://doi.org/10.1002/waf2.70010

Schildkraut, D. J. (2013). The complicated constituency: a study of immigrant opinions about political representation. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, – 1(1). – P. 26–47. URL: https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2012.757445

Voss, K., Silva, F., & Bloemraad, I. (2020). The limits of rights: claims-making on behalf of immigrants. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, – 46(4). – P. 791–819. URL: https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1556463

Wang, N. C.-h., & Dai, S.-c. (2024). Where you stand depends on where you sit: The effect of status and evaluative identities on human rights perception. *Journal of Human Rights*, – 23(5). – P. 475–491. URL: https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2024.2385987

Welz, M. (2026). *Diverging paths: Between democratic consolidation and the entrenchment of autocracy – BTI 2026 regional report West and Central Africa*. Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Yin, Y. (2022). Understanding democratic perceptions and political participation among the younger generation in China's changing society: No news is good news for the Chinese government. *Social Science Quarterly*, – 103(5). – P. 1168–1189. URL: https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.13189

Zagrebina, A. (2024). Democracy, Free Elections, and Gender Equality as Perceived by Recent Immigrants. *Social Sciences*, – 13(11). – 578 p. URL: https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13110578

submitted 08.08.2026;
accepted for publication 22.08.2026;
published 30.09.2026
© Ganlé Adelaïde Gouzoua, Kando Serge Gbagbeu
Contact: ganleade@gmail.com; kandoserge@gmail.com