Profiles of attitudes toward gender equality among youth. Comparison across countries.

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Summary

Over the years, a lot of progress has been made in women's social, economic and political rights. Nevertheless, the goal of gender equality remains a topic of constant concern in national and international policies. Research into young people attitudes toward gender equality can provide a crucial perspective into future trends in gender equality. However, such empirical studies among youth are scarce and are often concerned with average endorsement of a range of egalitarian beliefs rather that an in-depth account of individual differences on separate items.

Therefore, in the current research, I aim to tap deeper into adolescents' endorsement of different types of attitudes toward gender equality (encompassing gender equality support and sexism). To this end, I make use of data from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) and apply person-centered approaches such as latent class analysis to address the following research questions:

1. What profiles of attitudes toward gender equality can be empirically distinguished among adolescents in different countries?
2. Are these profiles comparable across countries?
3. What individual and contextual factors are associated with profile membership? Do they vary depending on the context of the country?

Data

The ICCS provides comparative information regarding adolescents' attitudes toward gender equality. ICCS is a large-scale assessment (survey) applied in several educational systems and focused on secondary education (representative samples of 8th graders, 14-year-olds). It relays on a complex sampling design which must be considered in the analysis.

Methods

To answer the research questions 1 and 2, I applied latent class analysis (LCA) and tested for measurement invariance in a multigroup latent class analysis (MGLCA) framework. In a subsequent step, logistic regression will be applied to answer the 3rd research question.

The analysis was implemented in MPLUS and outputs were automatized in R using MplusAutomation, descriptions and main reports were performed in R as well.

Results

Results of LCA indicated that two profiles of students can be distinguished in all selected countries. Moreover, results of MGLCA (partial homogeneity where conditional probabilities were restricted to be equal in all countries) showed that these profiles are comparable across countries. Youth in the first profile (labelled "Fully egalitarian", around 75% of the sample) showed agreement with all items. Youth in the second profile (labelled "Competition-driven sexism", around 25% of the sample) distinguished themselves by endorsing sexist items when confronted with a choice between men and women regarding political and economic rights. Subsequent analyses will be directed at investigating individual (e.g., gender) and contextual factors predicting class membership.