Profiles of attitudes toward gender equality among youth. Comparisons across countries and over time.

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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 two cycles of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) (see Data) and apply person-centered approaches such as latent class analysis (see Methods) 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 and over time?
3. What individual and contextual factors are associated with profile membership? Do they vary depending on the context of the country or the cohort?

### Data

The ICCS provides comparative information regarding adolescents’ attitudes toward gender equality (see Appendix for item text). 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. Two waves of the study were used (2009 - 2016) with 21 countries in each year.

### 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. See Appendix for further details on methods.

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 countries and both cycles of ICCS. Moreover, results of MGLCA (partial homogeneity where conditional probabilities were restricted to be equal in all countries and cycles was achieved) showed that these profiles are comparable across countries and over time. 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.

## APPENDIX

In this appendix you may consult additional information regarding:

1. the wording of items used in the analysis,
2. a more elaborated description of the methods used and,
3. selective references for this research.
4. The items (see ICCS 2009 and 2016) originally had 4 response categories, these were categorized into two (Agree/Disagree), the followings are the items used:
5. Men and women should have equal opportunities to take part in government
6. Men and women should have the same rights in every way
7. **Women should stay out of politics[[1]](#footnote-1)**
8. **When not many jobs available, men should have more right to a job than women**
9. Men and women should get equal pay when they are doing the same jobs
10. **Men are better qualified to be political leaders than women**
11. Methods (further details)

#### Latent Class Analysis

The latent class model assumes the existence of a latent categorical variable such that the observed response variables are conditionally independent, given that variable. LCA treats a contingency table as a finite mixture of unobserved tables generated under a conditional independence structure of a latent variable.

#### Multigroup Latent Class Analysis

In LCA, studying measurement invariance is necessary to determine whether the number and nature of the latent classes are the same across the different observed groups. For this, multiple group LCA models are computed, and the relative fit of the unconstrained and semi-constrained models are compared using the LRT, AIC, BIC, and aBIC measures.

#### Confirmatory Latent Class Analysis

After obtaining the best model that allows the classification of the students into interpretable and relevant classes/profiles, the class-membership will be stored based on a confirmatory approach, indicating the expected probabilities of agreeing/disagreeing to specific items, by country and year.

#### Logistic regression

In order to identify factors that influence the profile membership, a logistic regression is performed, considering as response variable the class membership obtained by the 2-class model. With this, variables such as Gender, Socioeconomic background, Civic education score, Education of the parents will be tested among others. The complexity of the sample should be considered in this step as well, the nested nature of the data will be considered in this step with a multilevel model.

1. References (selective)

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1. Items in bold were inversely coded [↑](#footnote-ref-1)