

Public Gender Egalitarianism: A Dataset of Dynamic Comparative Public Opinion Toward Egalitarian Gender Roles in the Public Sphere*

Introduction

Multi-Dimensionality in Gender Egalitarianism

Gender egalitarianism does not have only one dimension but a multi-dimension. Generating a measure of egalitarian gender roles without the classification may cause multidimensionality problem since people might have different opinions about gender roles by the dimensions. For instance, some people have a more egalitarian view about the gender role in public sector rather than in private sector, while others do not. To be specific, some might think that men and women should be treated and promoted equally at work, but that women should be in charge of housework. Also, others may argue that both men and women can succeed as politicians, while saying that women are responsible for parenting. The multi-dimensionality problem is relatively not salient if people in a society have an egalitarian view of all dimensions. However, if we disregard this kind of multi-dimensionality given that there are some variations of gender egalitarian opinions by dimensions, we will not be able to measure gender egalitarianism properly in the various dimensions that people have.

We classified the available survey items on gender egalitarian attitudes into four categories. The first of these categories consists of questions asking respondents' views of gender equality in the traditionally masculine public sphere of education, paid work, and politics. The second category, in turn, encompasses questions focusing on gender equality in the traditionally feminine private sphere of housework and childcare. A third category we identified comprises questions asking respondents how women should balance opportunities in the public sphere with their traditional duties in the private sphere, such as whether mothers in the workforce can have similarly warm relationships with their children as mothers who are not; it is telling, though not surprising, that the

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complementary set of questions, on how *men* should balance responsibilities in the private sphere with their traditional roles in the public sphere, is only rarely included in surveys.¹ The fourth and final category includes respondents’ views on various forms of women’s domination by men, from whether wives should adopt their husbands’ surnames through the recognition that various forms of sexual harassment are not “flattering” to the justifiability of intimate partner violence committed by husbands.

To avoid any potential multidimensionality in the Public Gender Egalitarianism index, we include only survey items corresponding to the first category, gender egalitarianism in the public sphere.² Thus, the “Public” in the name of the index does double duty, referring both to the fact that it measures the *public’s* attitudes on gender equality and to specifically its attitudes on this *public* aspect of gender egalitarianism. In all, we identified 49 of these survey items that were asked in no fewer than five country-years; these items were drawn from 85 different survey datasets. We describe these source data in detail in the next section.

The Source Data on Gender Egalitarian Attitudes

Together, these survey items were asked in 123 different countries in at least two time points over 48 years, from 1972 to 2020, yielding a total of 2,913 country-year-item observations. Considering that observations for every year in each country surveyed would number 5,904 and so a complete set of country-year-items would encompass 289,296 observations, the available data is clearly very, very sparse.

Figure 1 displays in how many country-years each of the twelve most-commonly asked items are available. The `polileader4` item, which asks respondents whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement “On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do,” was the most frequently asked question in the data we collected. Employed by the Americas Barometer, the Arab Barometer, the Eurobarometer, the Latinobarómetro, the Pew

¹One laudable example of this mostly unasked sort of question, apparently first included in Australia’s 1989 National Social Science Survey and slowly becoming more common, is the item querying respondents the extent to which they agree with the statement, “Family life often suffers when men concentrate too much on their work.”

²Items that fell into both the first category and another, such as “A man’s job is to earn money; a woman’s job is to look after the home and family,” which by explicitly counterposing the traditional gender roles suggests women unlike men should not earn money in the public sphere (while also suggesting that men unlike women should not look after home and family in the private sphere) were included in the PGE index. The complete list of gender egalitarianism items is included in the Appendix.

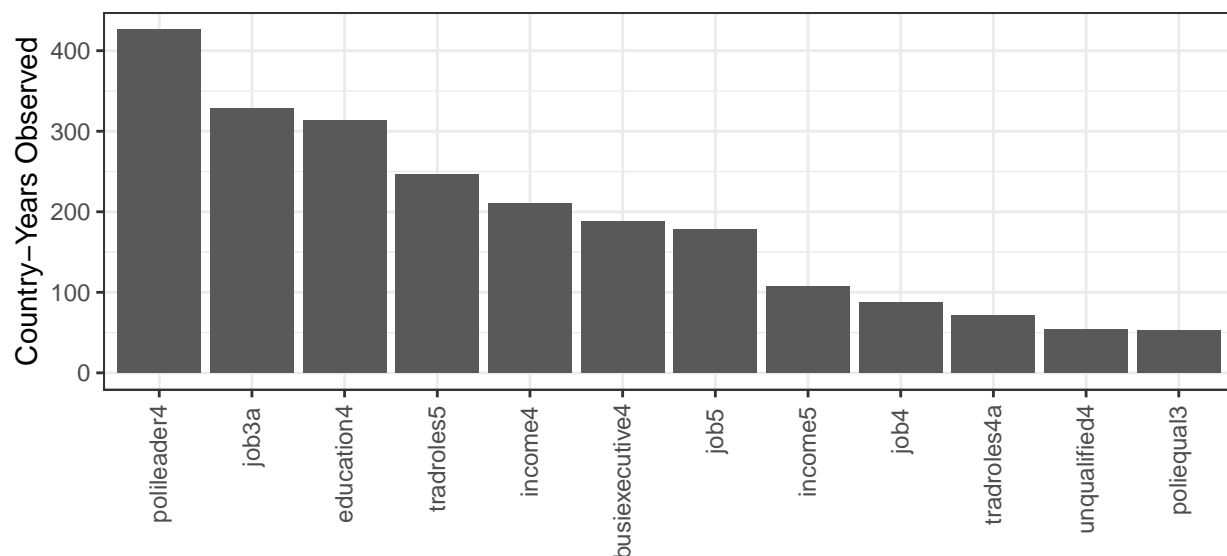


Figure 1: Items with the Most Observations in the Source Data

Research Center, and the World Values Survey, this question was asked in a total of 426 different country-years. That this constitutes only 17% of the 2,528 country-years spanned by our data—and remember, `polileader4` is the *most common* survey item—again underscores just how sparse the available public opinion data is on this topic.

Which countries are the most data-rich? Figure 2 below shows the dozen countries with the highest count of country-year-item observations.

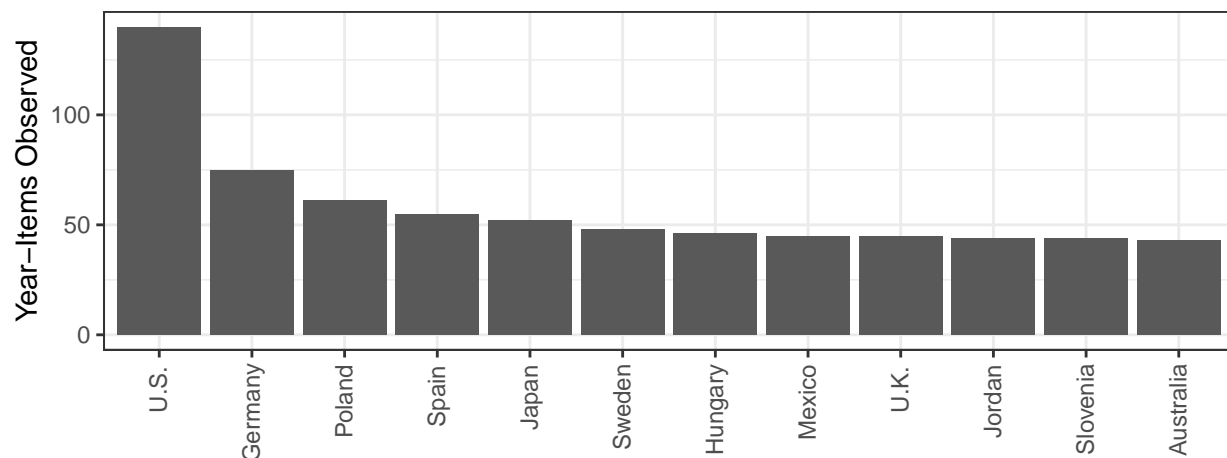


Figure 2: Countries with the Most Observations in the Source Data

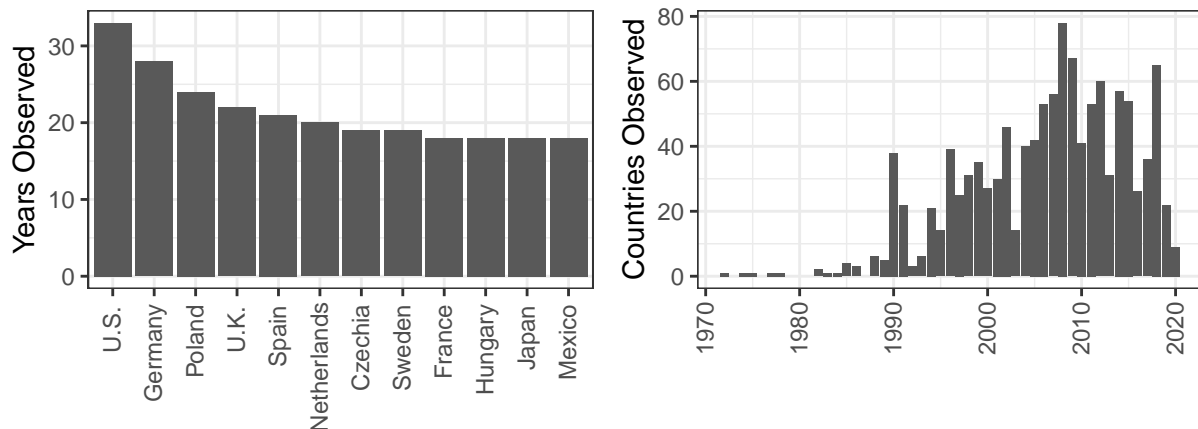


Figure 3: Country-Year Coverage in the Source Data

Estimating Public Gender Egalitarianism

The DCPO model is estimated using the `DCPO` package for R (Solt 2020), which is written in the Stan probabilistic programming language (Stan Development Team 2019a,b).

Validating Public Gender Egalitarianism

Using the Public Gender Egalitarianism Index

One aspect of latent-variable estimates of public opinion like the PGE that is easy for researchers to overlook is the uncertainty in the estimates. But neglecting to incorporate this uncertainty by using only the mean estimate for each country-year in an analysis can lead one to mistakenly conclude that the analysis supports the hypothesis (see ?) as well as to mistakenly conclude that it does *not* support the hypothesis (see Crabtree and Fariss 2015). Therefore, taking the uncertainty in the PGE index into account is crucial to reaching well-grounded conclusions.

The PGE download includes pre-formatted data to facilitate incorporating the uncertainty in the index. In R, the functions of the `purrr` package (Henry and Wickham 2019, also included in the widely-used `tidyverse` package (Wickham 2017)) make it entirely straightforward to incorporate the uncertainty of the PGE estimates. In Stata, the `mi estimate:` command prefix originally developed for analyzing multiply imputed data can be used to automate the process of building uncertainty into nearly any analysis. Step-by-step instructions on how to use these tools, complete



Figure 4: Public Gender Egalitarianism, Most Recent Available Year

with examples, are included in the data download.

Conclusion

References

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