



Gender Equality in the European Union: The EU Script and its Support by European Citizens

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ABSTRACT

The article analyses attitudes of European citizens towards gender equality. It describes how the EU script on gender relations emphasizes gender equality. Subsequently, the article analyses the extent to which citizens of different European countries agree with this idea, based on Eurobarometer data. The analyses show a strong overall support for gender equality in the economic, political, and educational realms, but also differences between countries. In explaining these differences, we go beyond other studies not only by concentrating on endogenous characteristics of the analysed countries, but also by taking into account their levels of modernization, institutionalized gender regimes, and religious composition. Moreover, following neo-institutionalist theory, we include an exogenous variable – the influence of the EU – in multi-level analyses and can show that, in addition to all endogenous variables, it also has an effect on attitudes towards gender relations.

KEYWORDS

Europeanization / gender equality / modernization / multi-level analysis / neo-institutionalism

Uiews on gender relations in many countries have changed over recent decades. The concept of a hierarchical relation between women and men was increasingly questioned, the ‘housewife model in a male breadwinner marriage’