



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’

(Pfau-Effinger, 2004) lost some legitimacy, and equal rights discourse started to revolve around gender issues. This shift was embedded in a larger value change that occurred in practically all modern societies.¹

Sociological theory offers two main explanations for these processes. Theories in a first school of thought link value change to *endogenous* factors found within the countries being analysed. Modernization theory, for example, starts with the assumption that societies develop along roughly similar lines, which is characterized as the modernization syndrome: societies develop economically, improve medical care, citizens attain higher levels of education, etc. (for overviews, see Berger, 2000; Knoebl, 2003).² Ronald Inglehart and his collaborators (e.g. Inglehart, 1971, 1997; Inglehart and Welzel, 2004) have shown that with modernization, citizens' values shift from a materialist emphasis towards post-materialist values, such as the desire for self-fulfilment, tolerance, and ideas of equality. According to Inglehart and others, values concerning gender equality are 'a central component – arguably, the most central component – of value change in post-industrial societies' (Inglehart et al., 2002: 336). Apart from modernization theory, studies focusing on path-dependent national development and persistent cultural tradition have shown that other domestic factors influence citizens' attitudes (for an overview, see Pierson, 2000). The institutionalization of gender relations in the respective countries such an endogenous factor that may influence attitudes towards gender equality (e.g. Pfau-Effinger, 2004, 2005). The third endogenous factor is a society's religious composition, which has proven to be particularly influential on gender equality issues; for example, protestant countries tend to be more liberal than catholic countries (e.g. Norris and Inglehart, 2002).

Theorists in the second major school of thought claim that *exogenous* influences, i.e. factors external to particular countries, are becoming ever more important in light of transnationalization and globalization processes: the global reach of value shifts, their synchronized appearance, and their similar direction led neo-institutionalists to interpret them as results of a 'world polity' (e.g. Meyer, 2000; Meyer and Lepperson, 2000; Meyer et al., 1997a). This can be understood as a global cultural model spread by supranational organizations that formulate 'scripts' that are then enacted and may be reformulated by individuals, organizations such as NGOs, and, most importantly, nation-states. Empirical analyses show how world polities have influenced issues such as environmental protection (Meyer et al., 1997b), school curricula (Benavot et al., 1991), children's rights (Boli-Bennett and Meyer, 1978), and also women's rights (e.g. Ramirez et al., 1997) and gender relations (e.g. Wobbe and Biermann, 2007). In this theoretical tradition, world polities and citizens' values are seen as linked; while they may be 'de-coupled' at any given point in time, they are connected long term. Once a world polity has been implemented into national legislation, this will also influence citizens' attitudes (see Meyer et al., 1997a; Wobbe and Biermann, 2007).

Our article presents an empirical analysis of attitudes towards gender equality in current European Union member states and in the candidate country Turkey.

The article attempts to explain whether differences in citizens' value orientations can be traced back to endogenous or exogenous factors. The EU is an interesting case study for this analysis in that its member states and Turkey differ in their endogenous makeup – in their degrees of modernization, in their religious composition, and in their institutionalized gender regimes. Accordingly, we expect to find value differences between countries concerning gender issues.

The EU is also a remarkable case for neo-institutionalist theory, which emphasizes the importance of exogenous factors to explain value change. Applying this theory to the case at hand, the EU is a supranational actor bringing forward certain scripts (Meyer, 2001), and, as a 'value entrepreneur', is one of the largest and most influential of these actors (Gerhards, 2007, 2008). The EU puts forward a broad and diverse 'EU polity', which extends beyond the economic realm to include political, religious, environmental, family, gender, and other values (e.g. Gerhards, 2007). Particularly interesting is that the EU is both willing and able to minimize de-coupling processes between its script, the member states, and their citizens, as a congruence between the EU script and member states' citizens would improve social cohesion within the Union. The EU not only has an interest to further this congruence, but is also in a unique position to do so. Because its script is embedded in EU legislation, which supersedes national legislation, the EU polity can force member states to comply with the script. Examples of this forced compliance are manifold and include gender issues, such as when the EU forced the German government to allow women into the national army and to change its constitution accordingly (see Wobbe, 2001). The EU's power even transgresses its borders, as is evident by its ability to pressure candidate countries to comply with the EU script as a prerequisite for membership.

We use this theoretical framework as a backdrop and first reconstruct the EU script, demonstrating how it pertains mainly to gender equality. The second section analyses citizens' values in different countries and the extent to which they comply with the script. In the third section, we analyse which social contexts influence values concerning gender equality, i.e. how country differences might be explained, drawing from the theoretical traditions described above. Results are summarized and discussed in the final section.

The EU Script on Gender Relations

The EU script on gender relations is here defined as the ensemble of ideas that the European Union wants to promote. Portions of this script can be found in the EU's 'hard law', such as founding or supplementary treaties and EU regulations, directives, and decisions, which are legally binding for member states. Parts of the script are also found in non-binding 'soft law', which includes Commission recommendations, communications and action plans, or Council opinions and resolutions.

A reconstruction of the EU script on gender relations reveals that the EU's general goal is equality between women and men, labelled as a 'priority task of

the Union' (European Commission, 2006a: 3) and found prominently in 'hard law'. Article 2 of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty obliges the EU:

... to promote throughout the Community a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of economic activities, ... employment and ... social protection, *equality between men and women*, ... the raising of the standard of living and quality of life, and economic and social cohesion and solidarity among Member States. (European Commission, 2006a: 15, our emphasis)

The Charter of Fundamental Rights (European Union, 2000) states that '[a]ny discrimination based on any grounds such as sex ... shall be prohibited' (Chapter III, Art. 21) and that '[e]quality between men and women must be ensured in all areas' (Chapter III, Art. 23). Similar formulations can be found in the most recent Treaty of Lisbon (European Union, 2007: e.g. Art. 1a, 2).

Concrete EU regulations specify these rather abstract statements and show that gender questions in the EU pertain mostly to economic matters, in accordance with its history as an economic community (see Schmidt, 2005: 40). The major issue in EU legislation is gender equality in the workplace (Bergmann, 1999; Ostner, 1992; Watson, 2000). This has a long tradition in the EU, going back to the 1957 Treaties of Rome, which stated that 'men and women should receive equal pay for equal work' (European Union, 1957: Article 119). Subsequent EU directives again emphasized the importance of equal payment (1975) and treatment of both genders at the workplace (1976), as well as social security (1978, 1986) and maternity leave (1992) issues (see Schmidt, 2005: 42ff). Numerous regulations and directives have since supplemented these ideas, and decisions by the European Court of Justice created a legal anchor (Bergmann, 1999: 45ff.; Wobbe, 2001).

The EU began to extend this workplace-oriented approach in the mid-1990s after critics pointed out that household chores, mostly performed by women, were not viewed as employment by the EU, and that, therefore, employment remained structurally unequal (Ostner, 1992). In response, the EU tried to make employment more compatible with housework by calling for improvements in childcare and by encouraging more equal divisions of household chores between men and women (European Commission, 1994: 47).

Furthermore, the EU started to widen its gender equality script to other spheres, especially after the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam (see Wobbe and Biermann, 2007). In the political sphere, the intention was to further the participation of women, particularly in decision-making (e.g. European Commission, 2000). Article 3 of the Amsterdam Treaty obliged the European Commission to facilitate gender equality in all policy fields (Läuffer, 1999). This claim was backed by the European heads of state at their Lisbon meeting in 2000, and the Commission committed itself 'to gender balance in all expert groups and committees' (Schmidt, 2005: 44). With the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming by the European Commission, gender equality became generally applicable to all EU policy areas (Schmidt, 2005: 29ff).

A third sphere in which gender equality was targeted, albeit somewhat less markedly, was the educational sphere. Drawing from earlier, non-binding resolutions and action programs to create ‘equal opportunities for girls and boys in education’ (1985), the Council of the European Union recently declared its goals to further the participation of women in science (2001) and in the knowledge society in general (2003). This wider concept of gender equality was supported by three ‘Positive Action Programs’ between 1988 and 2001 (e.g. Schmidt, 2005: 46). Furthermore, gender equality in the economy, in politics, and in education remains a central EU goal, as stated in its *Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006–2010* (European Commission, 2006b).

To summarize, the EU script focuses on gender equality as an overarching objective. While certain aspects of gender relations still remain beyond the realm of EU politics (such as family matters, which are – with the exception of domestic violence – seen as private and/or national matters; see Ostner and Lewis, 1998: 218f), the script has expanded significantly to now include equality in the economic realm, the participation of women in political decision-making, and equality in education. In our subsequent analyses, we focus on those three aspects.

Attitudes of EU Citizens towards Gender Equality

The EU script on gender relations has, by and large, been adopted into member states’ legislation. That does not necessarily mean, however, that citizens’ attitudes towards gender equality are congruent with the EU script. We therefore analyse these attitudes in all 27 EU member states and Turkey,³ based on ‘Eurobarometer 63.1’, a representative survey conducted in 2005.

Attitudes towards gender equality were operationalized using survey questions that refer to the three major dimensions of the EU script: gender equality in the economic sphere, in political decision-making, and in education. These items were partially recoded so that higher scores represent strong agreement with the statement and strong support for gender equality, with lower scores representing the opposite (Appendix 1 provides detailed descriptions of all variables).

- a) With regard to *equality in the economic sphere*, the Eurobarometer asked to what extent respondents agree with the statement ‘If jobs are scarce, women have as much right to do a job as men’. Respondents could indicate on a four-point scale whether they ‘strongly agree’, ‘tend to agree’, ‘tend to disagree’, or ‘strongly disagree’.
- b) Using the same scale, *equality in political decision-making* was captured by asking whether participants agree with the statement ‘On the whole, men make better political leaders than women’.
- c) *Equality in education* was measured using the statement ‘A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl’. Again, the same scale was used.⁴

- d) In addition, we constructed a z-transformed additive *index* made up of all three items.⁵ This index measures general support for gender equality as envisaged by the EU.

Table 1 lists the support for gender equality in all three dimensions as well as for the combined index. The table shows a high level of support for gender equality in all countries. This is particularly true for gender equality in the economic dimension, i.e. in the job market. Respondents in every country agree or strongly agree that women have 'as much right' to do a job as do men, even when jobs are scarce. Although this may be due in part to the formulation of the question,⁶ it demonstrates a remarkable level of support for gender equality in the labour market, which corresponds with the EU script. For gender equality in political decision-making and in education, support is also high. The least amount of support is shown for the political dimension, which is the only question for which some countries rejected the equality principle (i.e. the national mean was below 2.5). Nevertheless, the high level of support in all dimensions shows that gender equality as measured by our index is generally favoured in every country analysed.

The second interesting finding are the clear differences between the countries. According to our index, Sweden and Denmark are the countries who show the strongest support for gender equality and correspond most closely to the EU script. They are followed by the Netherlands and Finland. Following the table down to Northern Ireland, we find almost exclusively (with the exception of Malta) the EU-15 countries, i.e. 'old' member states that joined the EU (or its predecessors) between the 1950s and 1995. Most of the countries that joined the EU in the 2004 and 2007 accession waves lag behind. Among these countries, Lithuania, Poland, and Estonia show the strongest support for the EU script, stronger even than some 'old' member states like Italy, Austria, and Greece. The lowest levels of support for gender equality and, thus, for the EU's script, are found in Turkey and in Slovakia.

As the standard deviations of the index indicate, a high degree of variance is found not only between countries, but also within certain countries. In countries such as Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, or Austria, opinions differ more strongly than they do in Sweden or Denmark.

Explaining Citizens' Attitudes towards Gender Equality

As outlined in the introduction, some scholars emphasize the importance of endogenous factors in explaining attitudes towards gender equality, whereas neo-institutionalists claim that gender relations are strongly influenced by an existing world polity. In the following section, we use multilevel analysis to assess the impact of both factors on attitudes towards gender equality. The two factors are operationalized both with macro-variables (which characterize entire countries) and micro-variables (which refer to characteristics of individual citizens), while the combined index consisting of all three dimensions of gender equality serves as the dependent variable.

Table 1 Attitudes towards gender equality: means by country

	<i>Equality in the job market^a</i>	<i>Equality in political decision-making^a</i>	<i>Equality in education^a</i>	<i>Index of gender equality^b</i>	<i>Standard Deviation for the index^b</i>
Sweden	3,761	3,499	3,753	1,518	1,471
Denmark	3,772	3,418	3,776	1,459	1,509
Netherlands	3,639	3,204	3,733	0,996	1,755
Finland	3,717	3,188	3,526	0,896	1,762
France	3,638	3,114	3,561	0,724	1,622
Spain	3,534	3,312	3,483	0,691	2,162
Belgium	3,613	3,041	3,520	0,681	1,855
Malta	3,462	3,149	3,493	0,598	1,876
United Kingdom	3,554	3,126	3,533	0,556	1,899
Luxembourg	3,550	3,059	3,456	0,396	2,033
Germany (East)	3,458	3,141	3,414	0,318	1,987
Germany (West)	3,436	3,130	3,258	0,317	1,971
Ireland	3,365	3,131	3,356	0,275	1,897
Portugal	3,578	2,796	3,382	0,163	1,930
Northern Ireland	3,561	2,937	3,320	0,125	1,881
Lithuania	3,519	2,550	3,316	-0,110	1,730
Poland	3,339	2,632	3,251	-0,240	1,906
Estonia	3,447	2,544	3,316	-0,252	1,816
Latvia	3,476	2,646	3,206	-0,274	1,876
Cyprus	3,328	2,608	3,375	-0,275	1,987
Italy	3,219	2,746	3,080	-0,349	2,124
Slovenia	2,937	2,722	3,468	-0,523	2,015
Bulgaria	3,414	2,381	3,090	-0,682	1,785
Austria	3,395	2,557	2,896	-0,705	2,238
Hungary	3,461	2,543	2,976	-0,751	2,070
Greece	3,021	2,717	3,150	-0,808	2,190
Czech Republic	3,032	2,480	3,164	-1,034	2,077
Romania	3,340	2,167	3,120	-1,055	2,012
Turkey	3,375	2,239	2,570	-1,608	2,450
Slovakia	2,803	2,407	2,705	-1,920	1,858

Notes:

^a = Answers could be given on a four-point scale reaching from 1 'strongly disagree' to 4 'strongly agree'. The scale was used as an interval scale here.

^b = We created a z-transformed additive index (Cronbach's Alpha 0,511) out of the three questions, ranging from -7,111 for respondents who strongly disagree with the three dimensions of gender equality to 2,508 for respondents who strongly agree with all three items.

We use the following three *endogenous* variables:

- 1 *degree of modernization;*
- 2 *institutionalization of gender equality;*
- 3 *religious composition.*

The first endogenous factor is the countries' *degree of modernization*. As Ronald Inglehart and others show, citizens of modernized countries are more likely to exhibit post-materialist values, which contain notions of tolerance and equality, including gender equality (e.g. Inglehart and Norris, 2003a, 2003b; Inglehart et al., 2002). Accordingly, we can expect that citizens from such countries will support gender equality more strongly than will respondents from less modernized countries. To measure modernization, we use the Human Development Index (HDI), provided annually by the United Nations Development Program (e.g. UNDP, 2007). The HDI consists of three measures: real GNP per capita, education levels (including enrolment ratios for primary, secondary, and tertiary education), and average life expectancy.

The second endogenous macro-factor we take into account is the level of *institutionalization of gender equality* in the respective countries. Institutionalists argue that the socio-political setting of a country has to be taken into account. The countries analysed here do indeed promote rather different gender role models (Benavot et al., 1991; Pfau-Effinger, 2004). Women with small children in Scandinavia, for example, are ideologically and structurally more encouraged to join the labour market than they are in (Western) Germany (Pfau-Effinger, 2005). We hypothesize that citizens in countries with a high degree of socio-politically established gender equality show strong support for gender equality. To assess established gender equality, we use the 'Gender Equality Index' (GEI) of the World Economic Forum (2007) that includes women's economic participation and opportunities (salaries, participation levels, access to highly skilled employment), educational attainment (access to and achievement in basic and higher level education), political empowerment (representation in decision-making structures), and 'health and survival' information (life expectancy, sex ratio).⁷

The third endogenous factor is the *religious composition* of the respective societies. Concerning gender issues, it could be shown that particular religious affiliations are an important factor moulding citizens' attitudes (e.g. Norris and Inglehart, 2002). Accordingly, we include the religious affiliation of the respondents in our analysis as a micro-variable. It is measured in two ways:

- 1 All major religions in the EU – Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodox Christianity⁸ – have legitimized the dominance of men over women, albeit to varying degrees, at some point in time (and some continue to do so). This can be shown in the representation of genders and gender relations in religious writings (e.g. Ahmed, 1996; Woodhead, 1996), religious codes of conduct (e.g. Waines, 2002), and followers' attitudes (e.g. Wilcox and Jelen, 1993). We therefore assume that a higher degree of integration into any religious denomination will result in lower levels of support for gender equality, regardless of the particular denomination to which an individual belongs. Integration into a denomination is measured with the question 'Apart from weddings or funerals, about how often do you attend religious services?'

- 2 We also assume that the influence of the four denominations on their followers' attitudes differs in strength according to the religions' specific views on gender relations.⁹ According to the literature, Islam most strongly advocates a traditional gender hierarchy in which women are responsible for children and the household, with education and employment as subordinate. In contrast, men earn money and maintain a position of power (e.g. Nauck and Klaus, 2005; Waines, 2002). Christianity has comparatively little to say about gender roles (Mitterauer, 1999: 325). We therefore expect that Muslims will support gender equality less strongly than will all Christian denominations. Of these, Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity seem more strongly oriented towards traditional role models and less supportive of gender equality, while Protestantism appears to deviate most strongly from a patriarchal model (Dülmen, 1990: 157ff).

In addition to these endogenous factors, we also measure an *exogenous* factor as regards attitudes towards gender equality: the *length of a country's exposure to the EU script*. In accordance with neo-institutionalist theory, we assume that the EU is a 'value entrepreneur', willing and able to enforce its script onto countries, which leads to a tighter coupling between the EU script and its member states and to changes in the citizens' attitudes in the long run. We can therefore hypothesize that the longer a country has been a member of the EU and the longer it has been exposed to the EU script, the more support its citizens will show for the gender equality script. We measure this factor using the length of a country's EU membership in years.

Furthermore, we included several *control variables* on the micro-level that may influence attitudes towards gender equality. These variables are the respondents' left-right political orientation, their gender, their education, and their age.¹⁰

To address the two-level (micro and macro) structure of our independent variables, we test our hypotheses by estimating hierarchical linear regression models, employing the HLM statistics software, version 6 (see Raudenbush et al., 2004). We use the maximum likelihood estimation procedure.

Table 2 contains the results of the hierarchical regression analysis, which was performed in several steps.¹¹ First, a model containing no explanatory variables (random intercept only model) is estimated, which defines a baseline for comparing the other models. From this model, the intraclass correlation coefficient – the variance component attributed to country differences – is computed, which shows that the probability of supporting gender equality varies significantly by country. In fact, the intraclass correlation indicates that almost 19 per cent of the variance can be attributed to the differences between countries.

Model 1 includes all control variables: left-right orientation, gender, age, and education.¹² Adding these variables improves the model as compared to the empty model.¹³ All coefficients are – apart from the respondents' age – significant at the 0.01 per cent level. The results show that citizens with leftist

Table 2 Multilevel analysis of attitudes towards gender equality

	<i>Empty model</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
Intercept	-0,095	-0,179	-9,093	-0,337	-7,054
Level-1 Variables					
Left-right		-0,062***	-0,044***	-0,062***	-0,044***
Gender		-0,651***	-0,674***	-0,651***	-0,675***
Education		0,330***	0,313***	0,330***	0,314***
Age		-0,004	0,086***	0,005	0,087***
Age*HDI			-0,098***		-0,099***
Church attendance			-0,057***		-0,057***
Protestant			-0,386***		-0,388***
Roman Catholic			-0,312***		-0,311***
Orthodox Christian			-0,568***		-0,574***
Muslim			-0,565***		-0,580***
Level-2 Variables					
HDI			7,528***		5,251***
GEI			3,729***		4,614***
Membership				0,005***	0,006*
Variance components					
Level-2 Variance	0,747***	1,216***	0,381***	1,084***	0,379***
Slope Left-right		0,002***	0,002***	0,002***	0,002***
Slope Gender		0,072***	0,059***	0,073***	0,059***
Slope Age		0,001***	0,001***	0,001***	0,001***
Slope Church attendance			0,003***		0,003***
Level-1 Variance	4,001	3,757	3,709	3,757	3,708
Intraclass Correlation	18,7 %				
Deviance	72362,410	71341,615	71087,533	71336,072	71083,673
Maddala R²	0,171	0,214	0,221	0,215	0,222

Notes:

Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. N1 = 17107; N2 = 30. *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01 (two-tailed tests). Weighting: variables at the individual level are weighted by socio-demographic factors. Contextual level variables are weighted by the country group weight EU25 + 4CC.

orientations, women, and respondents with higher education levels are significantly more likely to support gender equality than are other groups.

Model 2 adds in all endogenous variables, measured both on the individual level (such as religious affiliation) and on the country level (such as modernization as measured by the HDI and the institutionalization of gender equality as measured by the GEI). The inclusion of these variables again improves the fit of our calculation.¹⁴ As expected, a higher level of modernization and a higher degree of institutionalized gender equality both increase the

likelihood that citizens of a given country support gender equality. In contrast to our expectation, integration into any of the four religions, as measured by church attendance, does not have the same effect in all countries but a country-specific influence on support for gender equality. In most countries, frequent church attendance decreases support for gender equality, but in some countries church integration has the opposite effect. Affiliation with concrete religions, however, shows consistent effects in all countries: respondents' affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church, somewhat surprisingly, has the smallest negative impact on support for gender equality, while Orthodox Christians and Muslims reject gender equality the strongest. We also find a cross-level effect between age and HDI, indicating that the effect of the respondents' age depends on the country's HDI level (for similar findings, see Norris and Inglehart, 2002: 258f).

Model 3 includes the exogenous variable (length of membership in the EU) together with the control variables and the random slopes. Again, the fit of our model improves.¹⁵ It also shows that the influence of the EU script, as measured by the length of a country's membership in EU, has a significant influence on citizen's attitudes towards gender equality. As expected in light of neo-institutionalist theory, 'older' member states' citizens support gender equality more strongly than do 'new' European citizens, thereby corresponding more closely to the EU script.

Finally, in Model 4, we include all control variables, random slopes, and the cross-level effect between age and HDI, as well as other endogenous and exogenous variables. The results show that, in addition to the effects of all endogenous variables (which are similar to those described in Model 2), the length of EU membership still has an effect in the expected direction. Nevertheless, the fit of the model improves only slightly¹⁶ and the significance of the membership effect decreases. This may partially be due to multicollinearity between HDI and the length of EU membership (although it remains below the critical threshold of 0.8)¹⁷ and might also be attributed to the inexact measurement of the EU script's influence via years of membership.

Model 4 has the best fit with an explained variance (computed by Maddala R^2) of 22.2 per cent. We can thus satisfactorily explain citizens' attitudes towards gender equality with our independent variables. This holds especially true at the country level, for which we can explain 82 per cent of the variance (level-2 $R^2_{\text{Bryk/Raudenbush}}$), as compared to only 7 per cent at the individual level (level-1 $R^2_{\text{Bryk/Raudenbush}}$).

Conclusion

In this article, we first used EU law and policies to describe how EU institutions have emphasized the idea of gender equality in the workplace and in the economic realm from early on. This idea was then extended to the political decision-making and educational fields. Using Eurobarometer data, we found that the idea of gender equality in all three of these dimensions is strongly supported in

all of the countries analysed – the attitudes of EU and Turkish citizens largely correspond with the official EU script on gender equality. Compared to studies based on data from 1994 and 2000 (Gerhards, 2007), the level of support has increased (although this may be due in part to the (re)formulation of one of the survey questions). Levels of support vary by nation, with support being strongest among citizens of most ‘old’ member states, particularly in Scandinavia and the Netherlands. Support is lower in most recent accession countries. Turkey and Slovakia show the lowest degrees of support.

In a third step, we analysed which social contexts influence citizens’ attitudes towards gender equality. We referred to two approaches in social-scientific theory – one emphasizing the explanatory power of endogenous factors, the other one highlighting exogenous factors – and used these approaches to explain the differences in attitudes towards gender equality. The results of the multilevel analysis showed that endogenous factors can explain attitudes to some extent. The level of modernization in a particular country influences its citizens’ attitudes towards gender relations, a hypothesis which has already been proven and elaborated elsewhere (e.g. Inglehart and Norris, 2003a). In addition to modernization, we also took other endogenous factors into account. In doing so, we could show that the socio-political institutionalization of gender equality in a given country also contributes to explaining citizens’ attitudes, which is supported by institutionalist theory. In addition, the religious orientations of citizens helps explain their attitudes towards gender equality. Apart from that, neo-institutionalist theory suggests that exogenous variables, such as the influence of the EU script on gender relations, may impact citizens’ attitudes. We used the length of a country’s EU membership as a rough indicator to measure exposure to and influence of the EU script. Although different and potentially better measurements should be developed in the future (which might take the concrete, often financial, EU incentives or sanctions into account), we could demonstrate an influence even with this rough measure. When all endogenous factors, all control variables, and all country-specific and cross-level effects were included in the analysis, the exogenous factor still had an effect on attitudes towards gender equality.

What are the broader theoretical, and methodological outcomes of our analysis? We are aware that classifying countries and individuals with broad categories such as ‘modernized’ does not do justice to the particular historical developments of individual countries. Our analysis might therefore not meet demands made by historically oriented social scientists who advocate more specific case study analyses. We believe, however, that both methodologies are compatible. Analyses, like the one presented here, can develop a useful sketch of differences between countries, but cannot replace a historical approach complete with microanalyses of specific conditions.

Analyses such as ours should, however, broaden the analytical scope of theories and variables. For example, using modernization theory as the only explanatory factor is not sufficient. As we could show, other endogenous factors,

such as the institutionalization of gender regimes and citizens' religious orientations, must also be considered. As European nation-state societies become more and more embedded in an EU and world polity, these exogenous context variables must be systematically integrated into future analyses.

The results of this study are also useful when looking at EU integration and expansion, and might help draw political conclusions. All EU citizens support the idea of gender equality rather strongly, but it is obvious that recent EU enlargements have decreased the overall level of support. Adding Turkey to the EU would further diminish this support. This trend is also true for most other value spheres, such as religious values, family values or political values: the latest accession waves have generally decreased support for the EU script, and adding Turkey as a new EU member would further weaken it (Gerhards, 2007). Our results demonstrate, however, that citizens' attitudes are not immutable, but change according to social contexts. It seems, therefore, that the future inclusion of countries such as Turkey – which exhibit lower levels of support for gender equality – might not be as problematic as it seems. The combination of modernization, internal changes, and exposure to the EU script may lead to increased congruence between their citizens' attitudes and the script itself.

Appendix I Description of variables

Variable	Range	Description	Data-source
Attitudes towards labour market gender equality	1, 4	'If jobs are scarce, women have as much right to a job as men: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = tend to agree, 3 = tend to disagree, 4 = strongly disagree, 5 = dk.' Operationalization: recoded: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = tend to disagree, 3 = tend to agree, 4 = strongly agree & Category 5 recoded as missing.	EB 63.1
Attitudes towards political gender equality	1, 4	'On the whole, men make better political leaders than women: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = tend to agree, 3 = tend to disagree, 4 = strongly disagree, 5 = dk.' Operationalization: Category 5 recoded as missing.	EB 63.1
Attitudes towards educational gender equality	1, 4	'A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = tend to agree, 3 = tend to disagree, 4 = strongly disagree, 5 = dk.' Operationalization: Category 5 was recoded as missing.	EB 63.1
Index – Support for gender Equality	–7,111 – 2,508	Operationalization: addition of all three z-transformed dimensions for gender equality: –7,111 = no support for gender equality ... 2,508 = full support for gender equality.	Recoded EB 63.1

(Continued)

Appendix I (Continued)

Variable	Range	Description	Data-source
<i>Left-Right-orientation</i>	1, 10	'In political matters people talk of 'the left' and 'the right'. How would you place your views on this scale: 1 = left ... 10 = right, 11 = refusal, 12 = dk?' <i>Operationalization</i> : Category 11 and 12 recoded as missing.	EB 63.1
<i>Gender</i>	0, 1	1 = male, 2 = female <i>Operationalization</i> : recoded 0 = female, 1 = male.	EB 63.1
<i>Education</i>	1, 5	'How old were you when you stopped full-time education'. <i>Operationalization</i> : recoded 1 = no fulltime education, 2 = 15, 3 = 16–19, 4 = 20–24, 5 = over 25 & Category 6 recoded as missing	EB 63.1
<i>Age</i>	15, 96	'How old are you'.	EB 63.1
<i>Church attendance</i>	1, 8	'Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services: 1 = more than once a week, 2 = once a week, 3 = about once a month, 4 = About each two or three month, 5 = only on special holidays, 6 = about once a year, 7 = less often, 8 = never, 9 = dk?' <i>Operationalization</i> : recoded: 1 = never ... 8 = more than once a week & : Category 9 was recoded as missing.	EB 63.1
<i>Protestant/ Roman Catholic/ Orthodox/ Muslim</i>	0, 1	'Do you consider yourself to be...: 1 = Catholic, 2 = Orthodox, 3 = Protestant, 4 = Other Christian, 5 = Jewish, 6 = Muslim, 7 = Sikh, 8 = Buddhist, 9 = Hindu, 10 = Atheist, 11 = Non believer/ Agnostic, 12 = Other, 13 = dk.' <i>Operationalization</i> : recoded: dummy variables with reference group = 10 + 11 & Category 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12 & 13 recoded as missing	EB 63.1
<i>HDI</i>	0.742, 0.941	The HDI includes three indices: real GNP per capita, the average level of education, and average life expectancy.	United Nations Development Program
<i>Gender Equality Index</i>	0.5850, 0.8133	GEI includes women's economic participation and opportunities, educational achievement, political empowerment, and 'health and survival' information. 0 = no equality ... 1 = full equality	World Economic Forum
<i>EU membership</i>	0, 58	Length of the country's EU membership in years was coded.	European Union

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Notes

- 1 Changes in political values led to the emergence of new political organizations and to novel forms of political participation; religious values became less pronounced; the individual relevance of employed work decreased, and perceptions of the entire capitalist economy changed (for overviews, see Van Deth and Scarbrough, 1995).
- 2 It would exceed the scope of this analysis to reconstruct all facets of modernization theory. Our description refers mainly to its classical variant and, thereby, excludes prominent critics such as Shmuel Eisenstadt and others (e.g. Eisenstadt, 2002).
- 3 Participants from former East and West Germany and also from the UK and Northern Ireland were treated separately in the Eurobarometer. We adopted these separations.
- 4 The formulation of the latter questions may seem somewhat ambiguous. Nevertheless, we used the three questions because they had the highest factor scores in Inglehart and Norris' (2003a: 177) 'Gender Equality Scale'. Based on numerous empirical tests, the authors claim that this scale does not reflect 'the actual conditions of equality experienced in women's and men's lives' but is a 'reliable indicator ... of cultural attitudes toward gender equality'. The use of these three items alone was explicitly proposed by the authors because they correlate strongly ($R = 0.96, P.001$) with their larger 'Gender Equality Scale' and also correspond with several psychological measures of attitudes towards gender equality. That still does not guarantee, however, that the questions measure policy attitudes towards gender equality instead of moral positions. However, for attitudes on other issues such as abortion, it can be shown that moral and policy attitudes are linked: in the recent European Values Survey, respondents were asked whether they think abortion can always or never be justified, and also whether they approved the possibility of legalized abortion as a policy option. The Eta coefficient between the two items is 0.57 ($p < 0.001$), indicating a rather strong relationship which is in line, for example, with cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957).
- 5 The constructed index seems to be appropriate (instead e.g. of Rasch or Guttman modelling) because separate regressions for each item showed similar effects of the independent variables. Moreover, the analysis leads to similar results when factor scores are used instead of the additive index.
- 6 In the World and European Values Surveys, the question asked whether 'men should have more right to a job than women' if jobs are scarce. The Eurobarometer asked whether 'women have as much right to do a job as men'.
- 7 The GEI was also chosen because it includes more variables than does the 'Gender Empowerment Measure' of the UNDP. The GEI remains, however, a rough measure of institutionalized gender equality. Due to missing data, possible alternative measures such as the strength of domestic women's movements had to be discarded.
- 8 Other religions such as Jews, Hindus, or Sikhs were excluded because they are hardly represented in the EU and in the Eurobarometer (none of these religions accounts for more than 0.2% of all respondents).
- 9 We tap into this controversial topic only briefly here (for more detail see Gerhards, 2007). We rely on secondary literature, yet without judging its correctness and merely using it to formulate hypotheses.

- 10 These variables were included in the analysis because numerous studies have shown their effect on gender equality attitudes (e.g. Inglehart and Norris, 2003a; Jennings et al., 1990; Van Deth and Scarbrough, 1995).
- 11 In order to compute the Maddala R^2 for both levels combined, an empty model without random intercept was also estimated.
- 12 We tested whether the impact of the individual variables varies between countries and if so, whether cross-level effects exist. After calculating separate regressions for each country, we found that the impact of left-right placement, gender, age, and church attendance vary from country to country. These country-specific effects were then included in all models.
- 13 Deviance EM-Deviance M1 = 1020,797, $P < 0.001$
- 14 Deviance M1-Difference M2 = 254,082, $P < 0.001$
- 15 Deviance M1-Difference M3 = 5,543, $P < 0.05$
- 16 Deviance M2-Difference M4 = 3,86, $P < 0.05$
- 17 To further validate the assumption of an independent effect of EU membership, we calculated a separate model in which we only included countries with similar HDI (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, which all have a HDI above 0.94). For these countries, the length of EU membership also has a significant effect ($P < 0.01$) on attitudes towards gender equality.

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