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***Traditionalism versus (post)modernism:
a study of student population on the territory
of former Yugoslavia – gender perspective****

Abstract

The contribution explores gender perspective in value comparison between male and female students on the territory of former Yugoslavia, taking into account the starting point of very intensive process of value change. Traditionalism in our discussion is considered as the concept of values and manners, which means that individuals live in accordance with traditional patterns and idealize the past (Shills 1981, Mannheim 1953). Weakening traditional practice, beliefs and values cause the existential and ontological crisis, and the late modernity comes into life (Giddens 1991, Beck 1992), where the traditions lose their impact, concerning the social and the individual aspect of life. The survey database of the research study entitled Value change in post-Yugoslav countries was employed for our discussion of this topic. All the data were collected surveying the student population in the study year 2008/09 at Universities in Maribor, Split, Novi Sad, Niš, Priština, Skopje, Podgorica, Sarajevo and Banja Luka. The quota sample of 2187 respondents was structured by country and gender; the questionnaires were operationalized for cross-cultural analysis. Comparing the answers of female and male students, all the items in the questionnaire were explored, but only some of them were analyzed for the present contribution. Here we have emphasized the items where one would, on the basis of previous theoretical and empirical research, expect to find statistically significant differences between male and female population. Gender differences

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were found regarding marriage and family values, as well as attitudes regarding the public sphere (work and politics). Male students had higher scores on the majority of aforementioned traditionalism constructs. Cross-cultural comparison in studied countries shows that the thesis about polarization of traditionalism versus (post)modernism is mostly supported by our survey data arguments.

Key words: development, values, attitudes, traditionalism, gender, comparison, ex-Yugoslav countries.

Introduction

Most advanced industrial societies have seen a change in their populations' gender attitudes, that is attitudes toward gender equality and gender relations in society, over the last 40–50 years. People have become more liberal with respect to gender relations and more accepting of gender equality. This trend is sometimes seen as part of a larger trend of modernization in western societies (Almond and Powell 1966; Bell 1974; Inglehart 1997; Kumar 1995; Wilensky 2002, Bergh 2006).

The database for this research was given by Center for the Study of Post-Yugoslav societies (CEPYUS at University of Maribor), which carried out a student survey entitled Value change in post-Yugoslav countries. We employ comparative analysis to test the predictive power of modernization theory. Post-Yugoslav entities are namely very diverse with regard to socio-economic development. Several categories can be established (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro could be placed into group with GDP higher than 10,000 USD, while BiH, Macedonia and Kosovo have GDP lower than 10,000 USD). Grouping of countries by GDP (by the data of IMF¹, WB², CIA³) makes also possible to differentiate among three groups of ex-Yugoslav countries: Slovenia, Croatia (GDP above 18,000 USD), Serbia, Montenegro (10,000 – 14,000 USD), and BiH, Macedonia, Kosovo (2,300 – 9,200 USD).

¹ Data refer to the year 2008. World Economic Outlook Database-October 2009, International Monetary Fund. Accessed on October 1, 2009.

² Data refer to the year 2008. PPP GDP 2008 & Population 2008, World Development Indicators database, World Bank,. Note: Per capita values were obtained by dividing the PPP GDP data by the Population data. Accessed on September 15, 2009.

³ GDP per capita, The world Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html?countryName=European%20Union&countryCode=ee®ionCode=eu&rank=38#ee>. Accessed on October 1, 2009.

Modernization theory would predict that socio-economic development conditions significant value changes, among others also the changes related to gender role attitudes. We thus predicted that more developed post-Yugoslav countries would have lower levels of gender inequality attitudes and that there would be significant gender differences with women being less traditionalist oriented. Traditionalism in our discussion is considered as the concept of values and manners, which means that individuals live in accordance with traditional patterns and idealize the past (Shills 1981, Mannheim 1953). Weakening traditional practice, believes and values cause the existential and ontological crisis, and the late modernity comes into life (Giddens 1991, Beck 1992), where the traditions lose their impact, concerning the social and the individual aspect of life.

Comparing the answers of female and male students, all the items in the questionnaire were explored, but only some of them were analyzed for the present contribution. Here we have emphasized the items where we would, on the basis of previous theoretical and empirical research, expect to find statistically significant differences between male and female population, both in private and public sphere: marriage and family, work and employment, attitudes to politics and political participation.

Method

All the discussed and presented data were collected by surveying the population of university students in the entities on the territory of former Yugoslavia during the spring in 2009. The questionnaire with 198 items was employed in quota sample with 2178 respondents, structured by country, faculty, age and gender.

The universities from all the territories and states of former Yugoslavia were included:

Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo), Croatia (Split), Kosovo (Priština), Macedonia (Skopje), Montenegro (Podgorica), Republic of Srpska (Banja Luka), Serbia (Niš, Novi Sad) and Slovenia (Maribor).

This study makes four hypotheses with regard to levels of three studies constructs in analyzed environments. In particular, we study the differences at the cross-cultural, as well as at the gender level.

H 1: Our first hypothesis was based on the modernization theory (Inglehart 1997), we predicted that socio-economic more developed countries will have lower levels of traditional values.

H 2: We also expected to find a gender gap. Specifically, women to be less traditionalist oriented. In addition, we predicted that the „gender gap” with regard to these values would be more pronounced in socio-economic more developed countries, owing to the modernization process and subsequent women emancipation.

H 3: We also expected lower level of traditionalism expressed in attitudes to gender roles in public sphere, and opposite, higher level expressed in attitudes to private life (marriage, family) in general, and especially in less developed ex-Yugoslav countries.

H 4: Finally, with regard to traditionalist-religious orientations it was expected that higher levels of religiosity would be found in less developed countries in comparison to less developed.

The hypotheses in this contribution were tested by analysis of two summation variables: traditionalism and (in)equalities of gender roles, and religiosity was included as the third variable since it was found to be closely related to traditionalism in previous research (Flere and Kirbiš 2009).

General traditionalism, observed as dependent variable, was constructed as a summation variable and was measured by three items (based on results of exploratory factor analysis, which yielded a one factor solution and calculations of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient):

(Q 30): *Tradition is a major guidance for me at the crossroads of my life.*

(Q 39): *Our ancestors may have been less knowledgeable in science, but they were wiser than most are today.*

(Q 40): *Customs observed by our ancestors should be practiced even when it's difficult to grasp their meaning.*

Traditionalism expressed in attitudes to **(in)equality of gender roles** was also a summation variable consisting of three items:

(Q 35): *When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to job than women.*

(Q 36): *On the whole, men are better leaders than women.*

(Q 37): *It is good to have equality within a marriage, although in principle it is better if a man has the final say.*

For both variables the respondents' attitudes were measured with 5-level scale (1-disagree, 5-agree). Higher measured scores express higher level of traditionalism.

The respondents' level of **religiosity** as the third dependent variable was measured by analysis of item (Q 4):

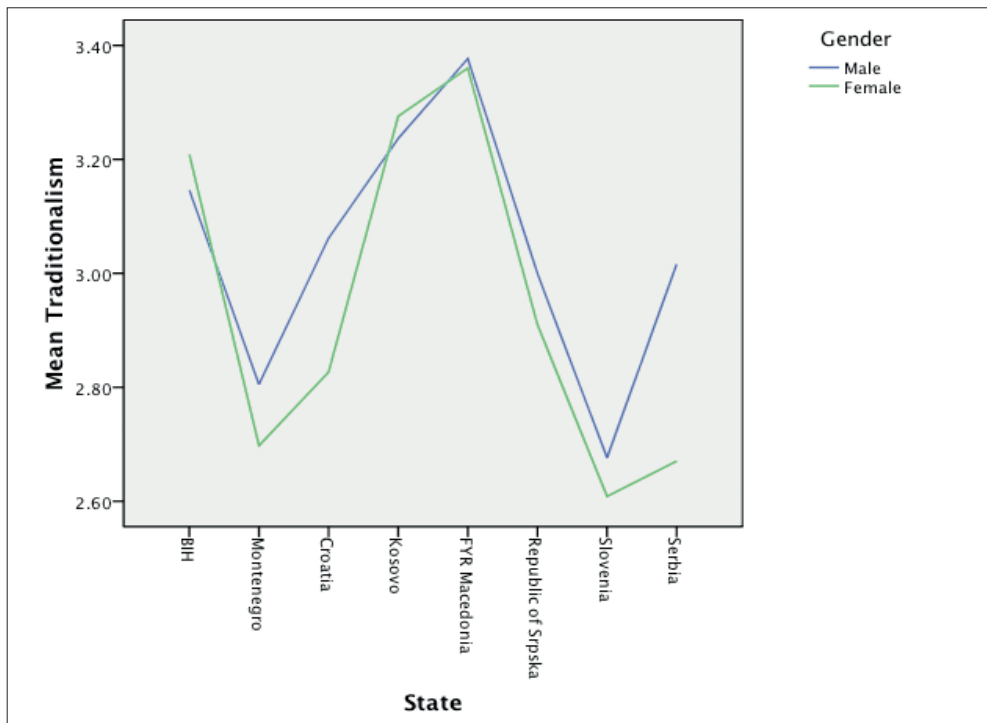
Would you say you are:

- 1 – a completely non-religious person*
- 2 – a predominantly non-religious person*
- 3 – a moderately religious person*
- 4 – a predominantly religious person*
- 5 – a very religious person.*

Results

Analysis of attitudes regarding traditionalism (Figure 1) confirmed Hypotheses 1 and 2. In other words, the results showed that socio-economic development was correlated with levels of traditionalism at the aggregate level. Also, gender differences were established regarding traditionalism and inequalities in gender roles (Hypothesis 3). Results regarding religiosity did not fully confirm Hypothesis 4.

Figure 1: Traditionalism by state and gender



Note: Score 1.00 signifies the lowest level and score 5.00 the highest level of traditionalism.

Hypothesis 1: The data mostly confirmed Hypothesis 1, since highest traditionalism levels were observed in economically least developed countries. The between-country differences were statistically significant.

Cross-cultural comparison showed that means on traditionalism measures were between values of 2.60 and 3.40, while individual items had minimum and maximum means of 1.97 (women in Montenegro on item Q 40) and 3.79 (men in Kosovo on item Q 30). The between-country differences were significant. Overall, relatively high levels of traditionalism scores were found in observed environments.

More in-depth analysis reveals that Slovenian sample attained lowest scores on traditionalism measure, followed by Croatian and Montenegrin sample (within the bi-polar categorization all three belong to the first group), especially first two countries have high GNP (both had GNP more than 18.000 in 2008). Highest levels of traditionalism can be seen in socio-economically least developed entities (FYR Macedonia, Kosovo and F BiH; GNP below 10.000 USD).

Hypothesis 2: The data again confirmed Hypothesis 2, since gender gap has been observed with regard to all three analyses measures – general traditionalism, gender role traditionalism and religiosity. Only in the case of religiosity comparison the gender differences were not established in all eight samples. Modernization theory was therefore confirmed within our dataset. For exact analyses of cases where the hypotheses were not fully confirmed, other cultural patterns and its determinants ought to be studied in the future.

The gender gap size with regard to traditionalism showed that the pattern is not uniform. The gap was largest in Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, all more economically developed countries. The gender gap was mostly not significant. Significant differences were only found with regard to item „*Customs observed by our ancestors should be practiced even when it's difficult to grasp their meaning*” in Serbia and Montenegro and with regard to item „*Tradition is a major guidance for me at the crossroads of my life*” in Croatia. In both cases women were less traditionalist oriented.

Gender role traditionalism was assessed with three items, which were combined in composite measure in subsequent analyses: „*When jobs are scarce, men should have more right for have them than women*”, „*On the whole, men are better leaders than women*” and „*It is good to have equality within a mar-*

riage, although in principle it is better if a man has the final say". Results of gender role traditionalism analysis are presented in Table 1. Internal consistency of this measure was satisfactory (C. Alpha > 0.6).

Table 1: (In)equality of gender roles by country

| <i>State/Country</i> | <i>Mean scores (Total/M + F)</i> |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Kosovo | 2.5927 |
| FYR Macedonia | 2.5000 |
| F BiH | 2.1265 |
| Republic of Srpska | 1.9694 |
| Montenegro | 1.9600 |
| Croatia | 1.8889 |
| Serbia | 1.8699 |
| Slovenia | 1.6301 |

All three items are sexist in its content, since they express hierarchical relationship between genders. Taking into account that student population is a cohort that is above average educated and more liberal than the rest of population (Flere and Lavriè 2008), we can speculate that the mean values would be higher for general populations.

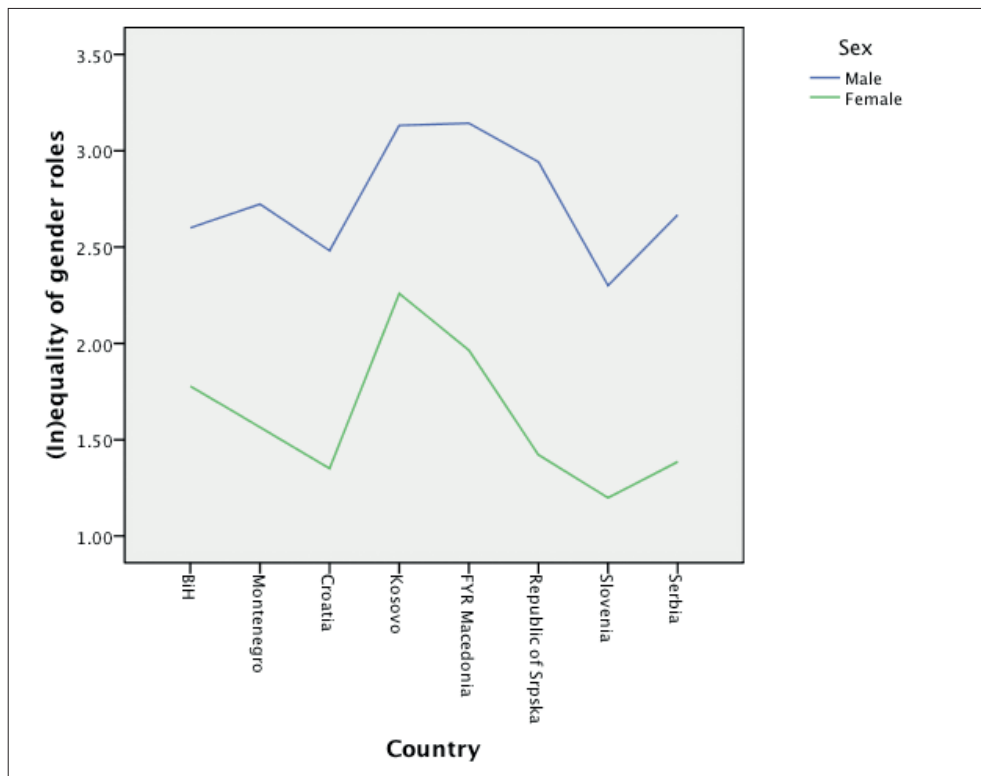
The gender role traditionalism shows that differences between entities of former Yugoslavia are significant. Traditional gender role mean values are lowest in Slovenia ($M = 1.63$) and Croatia ($M = 1.88$). Highest levels, on the other hand, can be seen in Kosovo ($M = 2.59$) and FYR Macedonia ($M = 2.50$). Both countries belong to the group with economically less developed countries (GDP below 10,000 USD). Mean values in F BiH follow (2.13). F BiH belong to the same group than previously mentioned countries with regard to GNP. High mean values thus express some agreement with traditional asymmetrical gender roles, though means values are lower, compared with other two concepts.

Hypothesis 3:

Analysis of individual items showed that work-related gender role traditionalism attained lowest mean scores (M men 2.12; M women = 1.41). Cross-national comparison showed that highest levels of gender role traditionalism were present in FYR Macedonia and Kosovo ($M^2.42/F$ 1.87) and in Republic

of Srpska (M².35/F 1.28), while lowest were found in Slovenia (M 1.61/F 1.07) and Croatia (M 1.92/F 1.24). These results also confirm the first hypothesis regarding the effect of country's economic development.

Figure 2: (In)equality of gender roles by gender and country



Note: Score 1.00 signifies the lowest level and score 5.00 the highest level of gender role traditionalism.

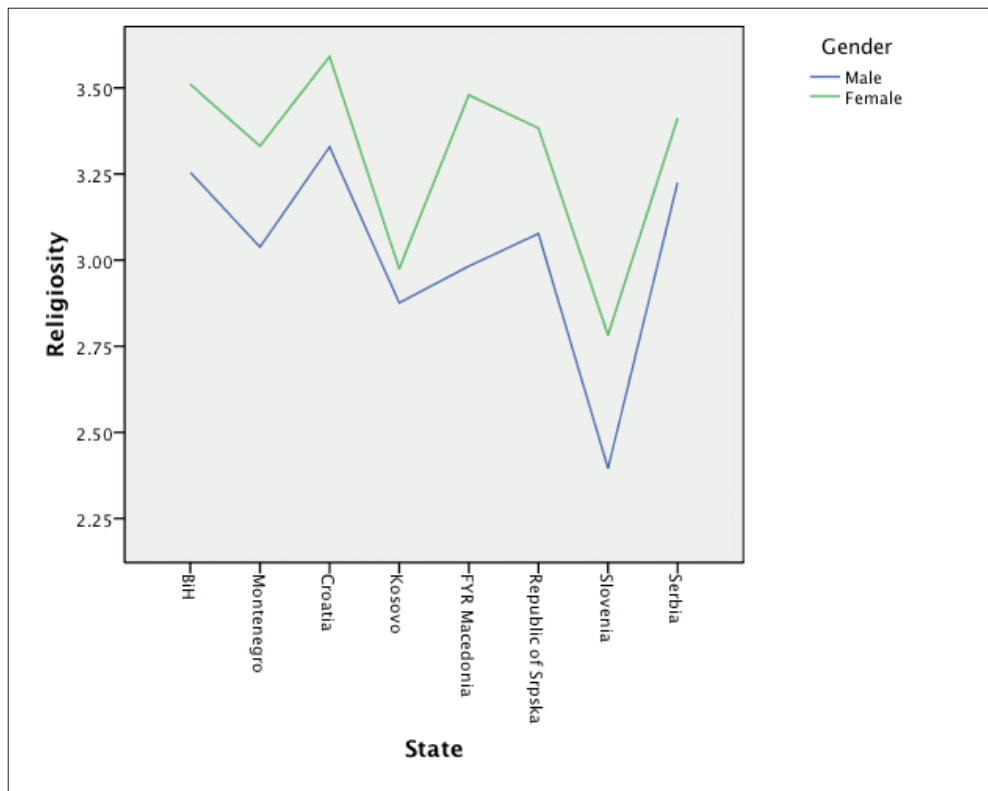
In all post-Yugoslav societies men showed higher levels of gender role traditionalism. Lower average values among women might point to high awareness of androcentrism in their environments.

Next we analyzed gender role traditionalism item „*When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to job than women*”, mean values were 2.12 for men and 1.41 for women. Relatively low levels with regard to this item could be attributed to relatively high employment levels among women in former Yugoslavia after WWII, which in this area in particular had an effect on decline in traditionalism. Also, gender gap is smallest with regard to this item. The

observed mean values are between 1.07 (women in Slovenia) and 2.60 (men in FYR Macedonia). On the other hand, highest mean values were obtained with regard to sphere of marriage and family. Mean values were between 1.24 (men in Slovenia) and 3.59 (men in FYR Macedonia). Gender gap was also smallest in FYR Macedonia and Kosovo.

It seems that detraditionalization in the private spheres is taking more time than other areas of gender roles. Again, highest mean values were observed in the group of countries with low economic development. The lowest mean values of traditionalism were obtained in F BiH. A special phenomenon, worthy of detailed analysis, are responses of male respondents in F BiH with mean value of 1.58, which is the lowest score among men in all analyzed environments. The low mean values in Slovenia (M².41/F 1.24) and Croatia (M².95/F 1.39) confirm our expectations. Interestingly, mean values for private sphere (marriage, family) in Montenegro among men are higher (M³.35/F 1.85).

Figure 3: Religiosity by state and gender



Note: Score 1.00 signifies the lowest level and score 5.00 the highest level of religiosity.

Hypothesis 4:

Cross-cultural comparison of religiosity levels showed relatively high values in all observed conservative attitudes. Slovenia is an exception with low values on religiosity item (2.63), where post-traditionalism is confirmed with the process of secularization indicated by survey data. Our research shows similar results with World Value Survey 1991–2008 (www.worldvaluessurvey.org 1. 12. 2009), which shows similar picture regarding religiosity.

Modernization/detraditionalization thesis cannot be fully corroborated with comparison study of diverse set of countries with regard to economic development. Highest levels are attained in Croatia (3.4406), which belongs together with Slovenia in a high-developed group and Serbia (3.3358), which belongs in the middle GNP group.

Table 2: Religiosity by country

| <i>State/Country</i> | <i>Mean scores (Total/M + F)</i> |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Croatia | 3.4406 |
| BiH | 3.4016 |
| Serbia | 3.3358 |
| Republic of Srpska | 3.2730 |
| FYR Macedonia | 3.2587 |
| Montenegro | 3.2387 |
| Kosovo | 2.9429 |
| Slovenia | 2.6288 |
| Total | 3.1949 |

It can be seen that economic development does not provide a wholesome explication of religiosity levels across post-Yugoslav entities. In future studies, cultural patterns should be included as direct measure in order to explain some exceptions. Differences in historical experience and development must also have an effect on decrease or increase in religiosity levels. In addition, Yugoslav wars and general insecurity because of socio-political instability. Moreover, different levels of intensity of association between religious institution and political structure might also increase religiosity levels.

To sum up, the data showed that gender gap in religiosity exists in majority of environments and measures, with significant gender gap in countries with low religiosity levels (Slovenia) and high religiosity levels (FYR Macedonia). Gender gap is significant also in Croatia (highest religiosity), Montenegro and Kosovo.

Data analysis showed that our hypothesis could be corroborated in a large degree. Only the fourth hypothesis regarding religiosity levels needs additional explanations and future studies ought to be directed at explaining high Croatian levels in religiosity.

Discussion

The transformation from state socialism to liberal democracy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe since 1989 has been accompanied by fundamental shifts in the material conditions of society and daily life. The political and economic changes also involved reworking the discourses and concepts used to make sense of the social, cultural and political landscape. Women in this process of transition have undeniably fared badly. The disproportionately high female share of unemployment, together with a widespread revival of nationalist and traditionalist ideologies, has had the effect of relegating women once more to the domestic sphere and has led to their growing desocialization (see, for example, Einhorn and Sever 2003). The finding of the present study may have relevance within the context of discourse regarding weakening of traditional value orientation in post-Yugoslav entities as a part of wide phenomenon – process of modernization and globalization.

The included societies represent an interesting area of sociological study for many reasons. The study of former Yugoslav societies keeps the variable of type of socialist regime controlled. This makes the comparison of post-socialist entities much more tangible and methodologically sound. Seventy years of joint history in the 20th century undoubtedly left a lasting social and even cultural imprint upon all post-Yugoslav societies. It is interesting to study how much of these common traits persist two decades after the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. These societies are all in various stages of post-socialist transition and it is interesting to see to what extent their development indicates uniform patterns and to what extent these patterns vary.

Discussing the hypotheses we have considered modernization theory, which predicts changes in advanced industrial societies, which in part deals with the issue of gender attitudes too. Other value orientations such as traditionalism and religiosity are also expected to decline with economic development. This trend has been noted by many authors (Inglehart 1997; Welzel et al. 2003, Welzel and Inglehart 2007). In addition, Wilensky (2002) in his theory also argues that a country's level of development affects gender attitudes. He considered the structural variables as the main influential factors that shape gender attitudes at the individual level, while development levels affect average gender attitudes at the national level. Inglehart (1990, 1997), though emphasizing the importance of socio-structural development (i. e. GNP), argues that values are the crucial link between economic development and gender attitudes. Furthermore, Inglehart argues that values become more important determinants of individual gender attitudes as countries gain in economic development (see also Bergh 2006). In our study we measured three value-dimensions (traditionalism, (non)egalitarianism of gender roles and religiosity).

The analyses of survey data suggested structure and values both account for people's gender attitudes. As it was reported by Bergh (2006), structural factors could have a stronger overall effect, and people's background and experiences are important determinants of their gender attitudes. At the national level evidence seems to support both theories suggesting that development, as measured by GDP per capita, correlates with average gender attitudes in a country.

The findings in this article complement those of Wilensky (2002) and Inglehart (1997) and their theories regarding gender attitude formation. Cross-cultural comparison in studied countries shows the thesis about polarization of traditionalism versus (post)modernism as mostly supported by survey data arguments. Analyzing the survey data, respondents in more developed ex-Yugoslav countries expressed lower level of traditionalism, religiosity and gender role traditionalism with significant gender differences found especially regarding marriage and family values, as well as attitudes regarding the public sphere (work and politics). Male students have higher scores on the majority of aforementioned traditionalism constructs.

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