



Abstract

GENDER INEQUALITY, HOMOPHOBIA AND VIOLENCE: THE THREE PILLARS OF PATRIARCHAL NORMS AND ATTITUDES AND THEIR RELATIONS

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This research studies how attitudes to gender (in)equality, heteronormativity and various types of violence are related to each other. Specific attention is given to the relations between patriarchal attitudes and violent conflict, next to the more often studied relations between patriarchy and violence against women and gay men. It also investigates possibilities to change patriarchal attitudes towards gender, heteronormativity and violence, making them more egalitarian. The results of the research are presented in three separate (journal) articles, each focusing on a specific theme: the first addresses relations between attitudes to gender (in)equality and violent conflict; the second addresses relations between homophobia and various types of violence, including armed conflict, and the third explores how attitudes to gender equality, homosexuality and various types of violence are related.

The first article, “Gender equality, attitudes to gender equality, and conflict”, builds on earlier research that found correlations between levels of gender equality and armed conflict by adding individuals’ attitudes to gender equality to the puzzle. The article thus looks at the relationships between attitudes to gender equality on the one hand, and the levels of gender equality in the political and socio-economic sphere, the presence or absence of (internal) armed conflict and general levels of violence, on the other. Data on attitudes to gender equality come from the World Values Surveys, the Global Gender Gap Index (on political and socio-economic gender equality), the Uppsala Conflict Data Base (on armed conflict) and the Global Peace Index (on general peacefulness).

The results show a significant association between attitudes toward gender equality and levels of political and socio-economic gender equality, absence or presence of armed conflict and general levels of violence. This means that in countries where the population is largely positive to gender equality there are also rather high levels of gender equality, low levels of armed conflict and generally low levels of other types of violence. It also means that in countries where the population’s *attitudes* are generally negative to gender equality there are low *levels* of gender equality, high levels of armed conflict and high general levels of violence.

The second article, “Don’t be gay: homophobia, violence and conflict”, builds on two bodies of research: on the relations between interpersonal violence and intolerance of homosexuality, and between different types of violence and gender inequality. This research suggests that such violence has the same roots: patriarchal norms and attitudes. Given this assumption the question here is whether intolerance of homosexuality could also be linked to other types of violence – for example armed conflict - just like gender inequality. I investigate it using a variety of sources: the World Values Survey, the Gay Happiness Index, the State Sponsored Homophobia report, the Global Peace Index, the Uppsala Conflict Data Base, the Human Development Index and the Global Gender Gap Index. The findings indicate that countries with low levels of tolerance of homosexuality tend to have high general levels of violence and high levels of armed conflict on their own territory, while countries with high levels of tolerance of homosexuality tend to have low levels of violence at home but intervene militarily abroad. These results show, on the one hand, the need to reflect on intolerance of homosexuality – and not just gender inequality - in policies addressing peace and violent conflict. On the other hand, they show a need for broader avenues of research

on patriarchal attitudes, gender, sexualities and violent conflict in the context of geo-political power relations and military interventions.

The third article, “Young men and gender trainings: What happens to attitudes to violence when attitudes to patriarchal norms on masculinity change?”, builds on the previous two articles by examining how attitudes to gender norms, including sexuality, and various types of violence are related to each other. In short: if attitudes to gender and sexuality change, do attitudes to violence change in the same direction? These relationships are investigated using a quasi-experimental setting, namely a gender training. Many organizations around the world today provide gender trainings in different settings with the aim to increase gender equality and sometimes also to reduce violence against women. Increasingly these trainings are targeting men. The quasi-experiment aims to provide a small piece to the complex puzzle of how attitudes to patriarchal norms on gender, sexuality and violence are related to each other by studying a gender training for young men in Mumbai, India, performed by a local NGO. It finds that the young men who had a training on gender/masculinities and sexuality changed a number of their attitudes to gender equality, gender based violence and homosexuality from more patriarchal to more egalitarian ones. Following the training, the participants also became less approving of both violence against women and violence against homosexuals. The most important finding, however, was that there also was a positive change of attitudes towards the types of violence that were *not* discussed during the training: that is, rejection of torture as well as collective and military violence. This indicates that attitudes to gender and sexuality are related to attitudes to violence, including both state violence and interpersonal violence. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that the changes might be sustainable only for those participants whose new, non-patriarchal attitudes were supported by family and friends, showing the limits of gender trainings as method for change.

Three findings of these articles should be highlighted: first, they show interconnectedness of gender, sexuality and violence and in doing so they contribute to the deeper understanding of their relationships. Second, they indicate that *attitudes* towards gender, sexuality and violence are related to *levels* of gender equality, sexual rights and violence in societies. The levels of, and the attitudes to those phenomena have not been often compared (i.e researchers compared, for example, levels of gender equality to levels of gendered violence, but not levels of equality to attitudes to violence, and vice versa). Finally, it is crucial to take patriarchal norms and attitudes towards gender, sexuality and violence in a society into account when addressing violent conflict. As noted earlier in reference to the second article, the relationship between the three is complicated by geo-political dynamics. On the one hand, governments, aid agencies, NGOs and others working on preventing conflict and building peace need to focus on improving gender equality and increasing tolerance of homosexuality in order to achieve a sustainable decrease in *internal* conflict levels and an improvement in general levels of violence in societies. On the other hand, there is a need to understand relationships between gender, sexuality, military interventions and geo-political domination. Studies going in that direction will also be important for critically rethinking meanings and practices of liberal peace and democracy.