

Summary and Brief Outline of the Dissertation

Leunig, J. (2023). Gender-specific Differences in the Political Self-Concept of Adolescents – Facets and Influencing Factors. eDiss-Repositorium, SUB Göttingen.

Gender equality is a central element of our representative democracy (Bukow & Voß, 2018). However, with a female representation of about 35 % in the German Bundestag (Deutscher Bundestag, 2023), the current gender distribution in the political sector is quite disillusioning. Since politics shapes the framework of social coexistence, the existing gender inequality in politics appears particularly concerning (Oberle, 2013). Furthermore, the examination of the younger generation reveals gender-specific differences in the political dispositions of adolescents (e. g., Schneekloth, 2010; Cicognani et al., 2011; Oberle & Leunig, 2017; Weißeno et al., 2019). This applies specifically to the political self-concept (e. g., Weißeno & Landwehr, 2017; Arens & Watermann, 2017; Murphy, 2017; Oberle, 2018; Grobshäuser, 2022), which can be considered a relevant predictor of political participation and readiness (e. g., Oberle, 2018; Westle, 2006).

Overall, the definition and modeling of self-concept vary greatly in detail (Margerison, 2001). However, there is agreement regarding the multidimensionality of the concept. Additionally, the model proposed by Shavelson et al. (1976) suggests a hierarchical structure of the construct. In terms of modeling political self-concept, studies have mainly focused on facets such as subjective political knowledge and internal political efficacy (e. g., Oberle, 2018; Westle, 2006). Some studies have also examined domain-specific political self-concepts (e. g., Grobshäuser, 2022). However, there is currently limited knowledge about the causes of gender-specific differences in the political self-concept. Based on studies from other domains, it can be assumed that gender-specific (political) socialization experiences, along with their consequences (belief in gender stereotypes, development of gender role identity), influence gender differences in the political self-concept (e. g., Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Kessels, 2012; Jansen, 2015; Wolter & Hannover, 2016; Ertl et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the presence of a gender-specific stereotype is a premise for gender-specific mechanisms, which can be considered given in the political domain (Ihme & Tausendpfund, 2019; Sauer, 2010). Studies from other domains also suggest that positive role models can have a compensating effect on the impact of gender stereotypes (Ollrogge et al., 2022).

Within the framework of the G-PoliSk study, two central research questions were formulated: The first question focuses on the modeling of the political self-concept, while the second question investigates the gender-specific patterns in the influencing factors for the gender-based differentiation of the political self-concept.

The sample consisted of 714 female and male students from the 9th and 10th grades in 29 classes (mostly in Lower Saxony, Germany). Data was collected in 2013 and 2014 using standardized questionnaires. The measurement models and statistical analyses (CFA, LCA, SEM, MAG) were conducted using Mplus 8.8, with missing values replaced by multiple imputation.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the political self-concept was successfully modeled and validated through a second-order three-factor measurement model (internal efficacy, subjective knowledge, domain-specific self-concept) (adapted from Köller, Schnabel & Baumert, 2000; Westle, 2006; Schneekloth, 2010; Rost, Sparfeldt & Schilling, 2007; Goodness-of-fit indices: CFI/TLI = .97/.97; RMSEA = .06; $\chi^2 = 844.034 (249)^{***}$). Moreover, gender-specific patterns were identified in the factors influencing gender-based differentiation. It was found that an androgynous gender role identity (GRI), encompassing both feminine and masculine attributes, has a positive influence on the political self-concept for both genders. For girls, a negative influence of stereotype belief on their political self-concept was also observed, while for boys, despite their stronger belief in stereotypes, no advantage in terms of the stereotype lift effect could be identified. However, political socialization by mothers has a compensating effect on girls' stereotype belief, thereby enhancing the positive maternal influence on their political self-concept. In addition to the positive effect of androgynous GRI, the results of the G-PoliSk-study underscore the importance of positive female political role models for the development of the political self-concept of stigmatized girls.

Outline

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Structure and Genesis of Self-Concept in General and Political Self-Concept in Particular
 - 2.1 Definition of the self-concept and differentiation from related constructs
 - 2.2 The self-concept in general
 - 2.3 The political self-concept in particular
- 3 Gender in the Scientific Discourse
 - 3.1 Sex as a physical characteristic
 - 3.2 Gender as a social characteristic
 - 3.3 Gender as a psychological characteristic
 - 3.4 Gender stereotypes and their mechanisms of impact
- 4 Gender and Political Education
 - 4.1 Gender-specific inequalities in political representation and political dispositions in adolescence
 - 4.2 Explanatory approaches for the gender gap in political dispositions
 - 4.3 Gender-sensitive political education
 - 4.4 Approaches to implementing gender-responsive political education
- 5 Research on Gender-Specific Influencing Factors of Political Self-Concept
 - 5.1 The influence of a gender-related stereotype
 - 5.2 Relevant findings on the influences of gender role identity
 - 5.3 Influences of gender-specific socialization experiences in the parental home
 - 5.4 Influences of possible control variables
 - 5.5 Summary and starting point for the empirical investigation
- 6 Research Questions and Hypotheses
- 7 Design of the Empirical Study "Gender-Specific Differences in the Political Self-Concept of Adolescents - Facets and Influencing Factors" (G-PoliSC)
 - 7.1 Research design
 - 7.2 Methodological approach
 - 7.3 Description of the sample
 - 7.4 Operationalization of the employed measurement instruments
- 8 Results of the Investigation and Testing of Hypotheses
 - 8.1 Validation of the measurement instruments for political self-concept and gender role identity
 - 8.2 Descriptive and bivariate analysis steps
 - 8.3 Latent regression analyses and structural equations for hypothesis testing
 - 8.4 Summary and discussion of findings
- 9 Concluding Remarks on the G-PoliSC Study
 - 9.1 Limitations and research desiderata
 - 9.2 Practical implications for political education