Explaining Egalitarianism in Gender-Role Attitudes: The Impact of Sex, Sexual Orientation, and Background Variables

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Abstract

The present study examined differences in egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes in Israel according to participants' sex, sexual orientation, and background variables. Egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes was examined in three domains: work, family, and interpersonal relations. Matching the homosexual to the heterosexual participants according to basic demographic variables yielded a final sample of 228 (97 men and 131 women). Of these, 114 were homosexual and 114 were heterosexual. The findings indicated that women's gender-role attitudes were more egalitarian than those of men and that the attitudes of homosexuals were more egalitarian than those of heterosexuals in all three domains. It was further found that differences between men and women were smaller among the homosexuals than among the heterosexuals in the work domain. The contribution of most of the background variables, except for the variables age and status of intimate relationships (living or not living with a partner), to explaining egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes was similar among homosexuals and heterosexuals as well as among men and women.

Key words

homosexuals, heterosexuals, religiosity, gays, lesbians

Introduction

The main aim of the present study was to examine differences in egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes in Israel by two major social categories: sex and sexual orientation. Gender-role attitudes are defined as perceptions and beliefs regarding the unique roles of men and women, and ranges on a continuum where traditional perceptions regarding gender roles are found at one end, and liberal perceptions are found at the other end (Korabik, McElwain, & Chappell, 2008). Traditional gender-role attitudes reflect per-

ceptions regarding distinctive roles for women and men (Krais, 2006). According to traditional gender-role attitudes, men fulfill their role through instrumental, breadwinning activities and women fulfill their roles through nurturing, homemaking, and parenting activities. In contradistinction, according to liberal gender-role attitudes, men and women may successfully fulfill the same social roles (Lindsey, 2015). Egalitarian gender-role attitudes can be seen as a more advanced stage of liberal gender attitudes, because they endorse and value men's and women's equal and shared breadwinning and nurturing family roles (Lorber, 1994). Moreover, egalitarian gender roles refer to the idea that individuals should have access to the same rights and opportunities irrespective of their sex, and should be treated according to the same principles, norms, and standards (Walby, 2005).

The basic assumption of scholars who tested gender-role attitudes based on the traditional sexist view (Glick et al., 2000) was that of gender polarization, according to which behaviors and attitudes that are acceptable for females are not seen as appropriate for males, and vice versa (Bem, 1985). The application of this perception in research methods for assessing gender-role attitudes was usually expressed by evaluating the participants' agreement with social norms as *masculine* roles (e.g., breadwinner and protector) or as *feminine* roles (e.g., caregivers for the family and carrying the responsibility of the household) (for a review, see Davis & Greenstein, 2009). In these studies, the participants' agreement with customary norms was interpreted as holding traditional gender-role attitudes, and disagreement was interpreted as holding liberal gender-role attitudes. However, owing to changes in men's and women's roles in different life domains, it appears that assessing the attitudes of individuals via agreement or disagreement with customary stereotypes and norms regarding gender roles is no longer compatible with today's reality. Today, the social construction of gender roles has gradually become more flexible. The changes in gender roles are today evident for both sexes in diverse life domains, including family (Lamb, 2010), work (Lamb, 2010), and interpersonal relationships (Serewicz & Gale, 2008). The developments in gender roles today therefore call for changes in the methods used to assess gender-role attitudes. Following this argumentation, it is more appropriate to relate to the extent of agreement with egalitarian perspectives regarding gender roles, rather than adopting a measurement for evaluating individuals' gender-role attitudes by testing their agreement with gender-role stereotypes.

However, a review of the methods for studying gender-role attitudes indicates that except for a few studies (e.g., King & King, 1990), egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes was not tested, and even in cases where investigators used the term *egalitarian attitudes*, they examined actual attitudes that expressed disagreement with gender-role stereotypes. In contrast to previous methods of evaluating gender-role attitudes, this study reflects aspects of modern sexism (Becker & Swim, 2015) through its methods of measurement, which may recognize the need for gender equality, but deny the idea that equality has yet to be achieved. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in examining the participants' agreement with the degree of egalitarianism in gender roles rather than using the traditional method for evaluating agreement with normative-stereotypes regarding gender roles. Moreover, the study uses a comparative perspective for examining differences in egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes according to the participants' sex (men vs. women) and sexual orientation (heterosexuals vs. homosexuals).

Gender and Gender-Role Attitudes: Theoretical Framework

The meaning of the gender-roles' attitudes concept is derived from the meaning of the gender construct, which has undergone changes and transformations over the course of time, and which has diverse definitions. The essentialist perception according to which gender differences depend on biological sex has been undermined, and has made room for the social constructivism approach, which postulates that human development is socially situated and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others (for a review, see Bohan, 1993). In this vein, feminist theories have modified perceptions of gender consistent with a social constructionist view and argued that men and women are differentially placed, categorized, and stratified in the social structure. This view is regarded as resulting in different perceptions and expectations that may be reflected in attitudes regarding diverse social issues, and particularly in attitudes toward gender roles (Ferree, 1990; Mednick, 1989). According to the gender perspective, individual behavior and roles have gendered meanings (Free, 1990) reflecting the ways people conceptualize gender. Thus, this perspective claims that it is necessary to examine structure and symbols, resources and beliefs, institutions, and interactions to understand differences in the experiences of women and men (Smith, 1987).

Following this argumentation, scholars from the constructivist approach argue that men and women create gender in their social interactions (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Gender is thus not an individual property, but a fundamental basis of social order (Ferree, 1990). Moreover, the basic assumption of the constructivist approach is that gender is an analytical construct that affords meaning to relations between men and women, including power relations, and contributes to the shaping of their gender identity according to the culture and the context in which they act (for a review, see Ferree, Lorber, & Hess, 1999). The construct of gender therefore expresses a comprehensive category of historical and cultural observations of masculinity and femininity and institutionalizes a social, economic, political, and cultural order that affords superiority to men and masculinity and, concomitantly, discriminates against women. According to the above-mentioned constructionist approach to gender, different social categories may differ in their detection of gender roles and consequently in the extent of their egalitarian attitudes regarding gender. We therefore aimed to examine whether, in an era of accelerated changes in gender roles, differences in egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes would be found between two of the main social categories: sex and sexual orientation. We therefore examined differences in egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes among men versus women and among heterosexuals versus homosexuals in three domains: family, work, and interpersonal relations.

Egalitarianism in Gender-Role Attitudes by Sex and Sexual Orientation

Studies that compared the gender-role attitudes of women versus men and of heterosexuals versus homosexuals demonstrated that women hold more liberal attitudes than men. This was revealed in earlier studies conducted in the United States (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004), as well as in a recent study based on a large Israeli sample (Kulik, Shilo-Levin, & Liberman, 2016). It was also found that homosexuals hold more liberal attitudes than heterosexuals (for a review, see Downing & Goldberg, 2010). Some of the explanations for these differences are based on essentialist definitions of gender, while other explanations reflect the social construction of gender. For example, Bakan (1966) attributed the differences between men and women in attitudes toward gender to the unique essence of women and claimed that contrary to men, women focus less on the achievement

of agency goals and more on communion processes than men in their interpersonal relations, and stress harmony, solidarity, and containment of the other's needs. In continuation of this line of thought, other scholars explained the differences in gender-role attitudes between men and women through the feminist ethic that characterizes women (Ruddick, 1989) by their maternal thinking (Rich, 1976), their morality, and their tendency to cooperate (Gilligan, 1982). According to these approaches, the basic differences between the sexes are reflected in adoption of more liberal gender roles by women compared to men. Another explanation for women's more liberal gender-role attitudes stems from women's resistance to messages that are transmitted by both traditional (Glick et al., 2000) and modern sexism (Becker & Swim, 2015; Ungaretti, Etchezahar, & Simkin, 2013). The direct implications of the two types of sexist perceptions are that women are discriminated against by men in diverse social contexts. Based on the above empirical background, we hypothesized:

Hypothesis 1: Women's gender-role attitudes will be more egalitarian than men's gender-role attitudes.

When considering gender-role attitudes according to sexual orientation, it was claimed that because the sexual orientation of homosexuals is characterized by greater gender-role flexibility compared to that of heterosexuals (Lippa, 2010), the homosexual population is also characterized by an egalitarian ethic (Downing & Goldberg, 2010) which generally leads to more liberal attitudes in diverse life domains, including gender roles, as reflected in an Israeli study (Shechory & Ziv, 2007). Another explanation for the more egalitarian attitudes of the homosexual population is related to prejudices against them, as revealed by two Israeli studies (Ben-Ari, 2002; Shilo, 2009). According to research conducted in the United States, these prejudices are based on the perception that homosexuals, because of their sexual orientation, seemingly violate accepted behavior norms, a perception that leads to their discrimination in different life domains (Herek & Garnets, 2007). It was further found, in the United States, that people who hold traditional gender-role attitudes usually also adopt negative attitudes toward homosexuals, because according to their viewpoint, both gender-role egalitarianism and homosexuality threaten the common social construction of gender and of sexual orientation (Dunkle & Francis, 1990). Regardless of

the explanation for the discrimination against homosexuals in practice, and because of the deprivation that sexual minorities experience from a young age as revealed by Israeli studies (Ben-Ari, 2002; Shilo & Mor, 2014), it may be expected that gay men and lesbians will develop greater egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes out of identification with women, who like them are discriminated against in different life domains (Shechory & Ziv, 2007). Based on the above empirical background, we hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2: Homosexuals' gender-role attitudes will be more egalitarian than heterosexuals' gender-role attitudes.

Because of the dual sense of discrimination experienced by lesbians (as women and as a sexual minority), it may be expected that they will adopt greater egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes compared to the other research groups (heterosexual women, heterosexual men, gays). Indeed, studies (in the United States: Rose, 2015; in Israel: Shechory & Ziv, 2007) showed that lesbians are characterized by placing greater emphasis on egalitarianism in intimate relationships. Furthermore, American lesbians do not encourage hierarchy in interpersonal relations, even when the relationships are based on a resource advantage of one of the women (Sullivan, 2004). Based on these findings, we hypothesized:

Hypothesis 3: Gender-role attitudes of lesbians will be more egalitarian than gender-role attitudes of the other research groups (heterosexual men, heterosexual women, gays).

After examining the differences in egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes by the participants' sex and sexual orientation, we will focus on the relationship between background variables and egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes and will examine whether this relationship is different for men than women and for heterosexuals than homosexuals. We based this examination on a postmodern feminist approach (Harding, 1987), which argues that factors in addition to gender, such as background variables, impact individuals' understanding of reality. Moreover, the structural approach argues that individuals' social background shapes their attitudes toward gender roles (Bergh, 2006). Based on these approaches, we examined the contribution of the participants' background variables in explaining egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes.

Background Variables and Egalitarianism in Gender-Role Attitudes

Scholars commonly assume that background variables may shape individuals' attitudes in general (Guo, Marsh, Parker, Morin, & Yeung, 2015), and their gender-role attitudes in particular (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). According to the approach currently prevalent, egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes is constructed through socialization processes that begin in early childhood and continue throughout the individual's entire lifecycle (Gibbons, Hamby, & Dennis, 1997). We therefore tested the contribution of several major background variables, which are indicators of the socialization process, to explain egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes: Age, education, degree of religiosity, and status of intimate relationship (living or not living with a partner).

Age. The literature revealed a complex and inconsistent relation between age and the extent of liberalism in gender-role attitudes. In this vein, an earlier study based on a Canadian sample found that attitudes become more traditional with age (Brayfield, 1992). However, more recent studies have undermined this perception. For example, focusing on ages 18‒35, McDermott and Schwartz (2013) found that traditional beliefs regarding gender roles were continually undermined with an increase in age, and people experienced doubts regarding these beliefs. In a recent study based on a large Israeli sample, Kulik et al. (2016) found a relationship between men's age and liberal gender-role attitudes. However, this relationship was not found among women.

Education. Studies generally revealed a relationship between high levels of education and liberal gender-role attitudes (e.g., in the U.S., Parboteeah, Hoegl, & Cullen, 2008). According to one explanation, individuals are exposed to debates regarding men and women's roles during the course of acquiring education that cast doubt on gender stereotypes. Furthermore, the educated individual may work in an environment that employs educated workers where he or she is exposed to successful and influential women. Consequently, these models may shape liberal perceptions regarding the social roles of women and men as reflected in a study conducted in Italy (Romano & Bruzzese, 2007). In a study conducted in Israel, Kulik et al. (2016) found a relationship between education level and a liberal gender-role ideology among men but not among women.

Religiosity. Owing to the clear distinction between gender roles in differ-

ent religions, studies have shown that a high degree of religiosity is related to a traditional gender-role (in the United States: Hayford & Morgan, 2008; Hertel & Hughes, 1987). However, this perception was challenged by a recent Israeli study that revealed greater involvement in raising their children among religious than among secular fathers (Erenthal, 2011).

Intimate relationships. Unlike in the past, when people tended to choose marriage as a permanent intimate relationship, today diverse alternative intimate relationships have arisen following accelerated individuation processes, such as cohabitation, that may be temporary or permanent and may continue for long periods of time, or even turn into a permanent intimate relationship (Cherlin, 2010). Although this type of relationship is more widespread among homosexual couples than among heterosexual couples, an earlier study conducted in the United States found that men who are in an intimate relationship (marriage or cohabitation) have a more traditional approach to gender roles (Gupta, 1999) compared to men who are not in a relationship. However, based on an American sample, Fan and Marini (2000) revealed that the attitudes of young married men become more liberal, albeit to a moderate extent, whereas the attitudes of young married women become less liberal compared to their attitudes prior to marriage. Furthermore, Moore and Vanneman (2003) found more traditional gender-role attitudes among divorced or separated people who are not in an intimate relationship compared to those in an intimate relationship.

In conclusion, contrary to past studies that exposed consistent relations between the individual's background variables and gender-role attitudes, current studies indicate less clear and consistent relations between these factors, as shown above. It may be assumed that the changes in the relations between background variables and gender-role attitudes stem from normative changes, from an increase in education, and from the fact that the general atmosphere of the current cohort is more liberal than in the past. Owing to the inconsistency in the research findings, testing the relation between background variables and the individual's egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes will be explorative in nature and will be carried out without prior hypotheses. Moreover, in light of research findings which revealed that the relationship between background variables and gender-role attitudes is not consistent, but is rather dependent on the characteristics of the target population (Kulik, 2002), we examined whether the relationship

between background variables and egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes will be different among men versus women and among heterosexuals versus homosexuals. The nature of this examination will also be explorative and will be carried out without prior hypotheses.

Method

Research Sample

Participants' sexual orientation was determined by their reply to a question in which they were specifically asked to pick one of three options for identification: 1) heterosexual, 2) homosexual, or 3) other. The present study included only those participants who indicated their sexual orientation as either heterosexual or homosexual. This screening process yielded a total of 789 participants, with a significantly higher number of heterosexuals than homosexuals (639 heterosexuals and 150 homosexuals). A comparison between the heterosexual and the homosexual participants indicated significant differences between the two groups in their sex, education, age, and religiosity. We therefore performed a match of the background variables that differentiated between the homosexual and heterosexual participants, to achieve a similar sample in terms of basic background variables. However, owing to the small number of participants who defined themselves as religious among the homosexual group, we did not perform a match between the research groups according to this variable. After the matching procedure, we were left with a sample of 228 participants (97 men and 131 women), of whom 114 were homosexuals and 114 were heterosexuals. The distribution of the research sample according to participants' sex and sexual orientation was as follows: 46 heterosexual men, 68 heterosexual women, 51 gay men, and 63 lesbians (see Table 1).

Table 1.
Distribution of the Sample According to the Major Background Variables (N=228)

Variable	Value	Sexual orientation		x^2
		Heterosexual(%)	Homosexual(%)	
Sex	Men	46(40.3%)	51(44.7%)	$x^2 = .44$
	Women	68(59.7%)	63(55.3%)	
Education	Partial secondary	11(9.6%)	14(12.3%)	$x^2 = 2.40$
	Full secondary	32(28.1%)	26(22.8%)	
	Post-secondary	47(41.2%)	42(36.8%)	
	Academic	24(21.1%)	32(28.1%)	
Intimate relationship	In an intimate relationship	55(48.2%)	62(54.4%)	$x^2 = .46$
	Not in an intimate relationship	59(51.8%)	52(45.6%)	
Religiosity	Secular	62(54.9%)	89(78.1%)	$x^2 = 13.72^{***}$
	Traditional	28(24.8%)	14(12.3%)	
	Religious	23(20.2%)	11(9.6%)	
Age		40.8(M) 3.8(SD)	40.2(M) 3.5(SD)	t = n.s.

Note. $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$.

Research Instruments

Egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes. The questionnaire included 24 items and was based on a 53-item questionnaire developed by Kulik and Katz (2016) that tests gender-role attitudes. Questions whose formulation expresses different aspects of egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes were extracted from this questionnaire (see Appendix 1). Thus, the uniqueness of the questionnaire, as opposed to other questionnaires on the subject, was that all of its items were phrased in a way that compared men to women. VARIMAX factor analysis yielded three distinct content dimensions that explained 60% of the variance (Eigenvalue > 1): *egalitarianism*

in family-role attitudes (for example, "In my opinion, men should take part in housework just as women do"), *egalitarianism in work-role attitudes* (for example, "In my opinion, a business initiative is suitable for men and for women to the same extent"), and *egalitarianism in interpersonal relations attitudes* (for example, "In my opinion, it is OK for women to court men, just as men court women"). One score was calculated for each factor, by averaging its items. A higher score indicated a more egalitarian attitude. Cronbach's alpha internal reliability values for the three factors were as follows: in the family domain $a = 0.85$, in the work domain $a = 0.86$, and in the interpersonal relations domain $a = 0.84$.

Background variables. This questionnaire collected information on a broad range of variables, including sex, age, marital status, number of children, and children's age.

Data Collection

The research sample was a convenience sample and the data were collected using three main methods. The questionnaires were distributed in different parts of the country in urban and community settings among diverse populations (workers, students, and patients waiting for medical treatment in public clinics, people in sports classes, and in other social activities in community centers). After the questionnaires were completed, they were collected immediately on location. Questionnaires were directed specifically to the homosexual population at meeting places and in various centers hosting activities for the gay and lesbian population in Israel. Another part of the questionnaires for the gay and lesbian group was administrated using the snowball sampling method, and was passed by members of this community to their friends and acquaintances. Some of the questionnaires were distributed via a link to a website established for the purposes of this study. The link to the questionnaire was distributed in various professional or social sites. Overall, about 70% of the questionnaires were collected using a face-to-face distribution method, while 30% were distributed via the Internet. The time required for answering the questionnaires was about 15 minutes.

Results

Differences in Egalitarianism in Gender-Role Attitudes by Sex and Sexual Orientation

It should be noted that the average score across all participant groups (mostly above the value 4) was well above the midpoint of the scale (value 3), indicating fairly strong egalitarian attitudes among all groups of participants (see Table 2).

A two-way MANOVA (2×2; sex×sexual orientation) indicated significant effects for sex ($F_{(3, 222)} = 7.70$, $p < .001$, $Eta^2 = .09$) and for sexual orientation ($F_{(3,222)} = 13.46$, $p < .001$, $Eta^2 = .54$). Two-way ANOVAs (2×2; sex×sexual orientation) that were performed separately for each of the three domains showed that the women's attitudes were more egalitarian than those of the men, and the attitudes of homosexuals were more egalitarian than those of the heterosexuals in all three tested domains (see Table 2). A significant sex×sexual orientation interaction for egalitarianism in attitudes was also found in the work domain. The source for the interaction stems from the fact that the differences between men and women were lower among the homosexuals than among the heterosexuals (among gays: $M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.74$; among lesbians: $M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.61$; among heterosexual men: $M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.94$; and among heterosexual women: $M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.61$).

Table 2.
Egalitarianism in Gender-Role Attitudes by Gender and Sexual Orientation

Gender attitudes	Sexual orientation		Sex		F Sexual orientation	F Sex	F Sexual orientation×Sex
	Homosexual	Heterosexual	Men	Women			
Family							
M	4.41	4.15	4.18	4.37	22.13***	9.34**	3.52
(SD)	(.42)	(.59)	(.58)	(.48)	($Eta^2 = .09$)	($Eta^2 = .04$)	($Eta^2 = .01$)
Work							
M	4.31	3.79	4.16	4.34	34.47***	22.9***	3.84*
(SD)	(.68)	(.82)	(.74)	(.61)	($Eta^2 = .13$)	($Eta^2 = .09$)	($Eta^2 = .01$)
Interpersonal relations							
M	4.41	3.97	4.29	4.51	33.12***	13.25***	1.57
(SD)	(.60)	(.80)	(.64)	(.54)	($Eta^2 = .13$)	($Eta^2 = .05$)	($Eta^2 = .00$)

Note. $^*p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$.

Background Variables and Egalitarianism in Gender-Role Attitudes

Pearson correlations performed separately for the heterosexual participants (men versus women) and for the homosexual participants (gays versus lesbians, see Table 3), revealed that age was related positively to egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes among gays in the work domain and the interpersonal relations domain. A negative correlation was found between the degree of religiosity and the extent of egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes in all three domains among gays and in the interpersonal relations domain among heterosexual men. Among heterosexual women, the degree of religiosity was also negatively correlated with the extent of egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes in the work and in the interpersonal relations domains. Among lesbians, this correlation was found in all three tested domains, such that a lower extent of religiosity was correlated with more egalitarian attitudes. A positive correlation was found between education and egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes among heterosexual men and women in the work and the interpersonal relations domains. No significant correlations were found between economic status, employment status, and fulfillment of managerial roles and egalitarianism in attitudes in any of the four research groups.

Intimate relationship: A three-way MANOVA (2×2×2; sexual orientation×sex×intimate relationship) yielded significant effects for sex and sexual orientation, which was identical to those found in the earlier analyses (see Table 2), and a main effect for the intimate relationship ($F_{(3,218)} = 7.59$, $p < .001$, $Eta^2 = .09$). A three-way ANOVA (2×2×2; sexual orientation×sex×intimate relationship) that was performed separately for each of the three tested life domains showed that the attitudes of participants who were living with a partner were less egalitarian in all three domains compared to the attitudes of participants who were not living with a partner. In the family domain, among those living with a partner $M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.54$; among those not living with a partner $M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.52$ ($F = 10.09$, $p < .01$, $Eta^2 = .04$). In the work domain, among those living with a partner M = 3.84, $SD = 0.85$; among those not living with a partner $M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.70$ ($F = 21.42$, $p < .01$, $Eta^2 = .08$). In the interpersonal relations domain, among those living with a partner $M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.70$; among those not living with a partner: $M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.76$ ($F = 14.66$, $p < .01$, $Eta^2 = .06$).

Table 3.

Correlations Between Background Variables and Egalitarianism in Gender-Role Attitudes by Sex and Sexual Orientation (N=228)

Background variables	Family attitudes		Work attitudes		Interpersonal relations attitudes	
	Heterosexual	Homosexual	Heterosexual	Homosexual	Heterosexual	Homosexual
			Men			
Age	.09	.20	.26*	.31*	.22	.32*
Religiosity	-.18	-.44***	-.22	-.35***	-.28*	-.59***
Education	.22	.02	.34*	-.03	.39**	-.01
			Women			
Age	-.03	.10	.02	.08	.10	.07
Religiosity	-.18	-.44***	-.26*	-.38***	-.33**	-.36***
Education	.24*	.04	.26*	.08	.27*	.13

Note. $^*p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$.

Explaining Egalitarianism in Gender-Role Attitudes

Stepwise regression analyses were performed to test the contribution of all research variables (participants' sex, sexual orientation, background variables) to explaining egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes. The order of introducing the variables into the regression equations was identical for all three attitudes' domains (see Table 4). The background variables introduced in the first step were participants' sex (men=0, women=1), age, religiosity, intimate relationship (not living with a partner=0, living with a partner=1), and education. The variable sexual orientation was introduced in the second step (homosexual=1, heterosexual=0). The sex×sexual orientation interaction was introduced in the third step to test whether the contribution of participants' sex to explaining the variance in egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes is dependent on the participants' sexual orientation. Finally, in order to test whether the contribution of the background variables to explaining egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes is dependent on the participants' sexual orientation and sex, the background variables×sexual orientation interaction and the background variables×sex interaction were entered in the fourth step.

Table 4.

Stepwise Regression Coefficients for Explaining Egalitarianism in Gender-Role Attitudes (N = 228)

	Family attitudes		Work attitudes		Interpersonal relations attitudes	
	$\triangle R^2$	β	$\triangle R^2$	β	$\triangle R^2$	β
Step 1	.18		.26		.27	
Sex		.16**		.26***		.18**
Age		-.01		.05		.00
Religiosity		-.31***		-.34***		-.38***
Intimate relationship		-.16**		-.23***		-.19***
Education		.12		.08		.15**
Step 2	.04		.08		.07	
Sexual orientation		.21***		.27***		.26***
Sex		.14**		.23***		.18***
Age		-.01		.13		.02
Religiosity		-.21**		-.29***		-.32***
Intimate relationship		-.17**		-.22***		-.20***
Education		.10		.10		.16**
Sexual orientation		.18**		.24***		.25***
Total F	11.36***		19.84***		17.07***	
Total R^2	.22		.34		.34	

Note. $^*p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$.

The total research variables explained 22% of the variance in egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes in the family domain, 34% of the variance in the work domain, and 34% of the variance in the interpersonal relations domain (see Table 4). The background variables, including participants' sex, explained the main variance in each of the three attitude domains: 18% of the variance in the family domain, 26% of the variance in the work domain, and 27% of the variance in the interpersonal relations domain. Regarding the contribution of participants' sex, the directions of the b indicated that women's attitudes were more egalitarian in all three domains compared to those of men, and that the attitudes of people in an intimate relationship were less egalitarian in all three domains compared to the attitudes of people not in an intimate relationship. It was further found that

a higher level of religiosity was correlated with less egalitarian attitudes in all three domains. Education contributed to explaining the variance in attitudes only in the interpersonal relations domain, such that the higher the participant's education, the more egalitarian are his or her attitudes in this domain. The sexual orientation that was introduced in the second step was found to make a significant contribution to explaining gender-role attitudes in the three tested domains, such that gender-role attitudes among participants with a heterosexual orientation are less egalitarian compared to the attitudes of participants with a homosexual orientation. The sexual orientation explained the following percentage of variance in each of the three attitude domains: 4% in family domain, 8% in work domain, and 7% in interpersonal relations domain. It should be mentioned that no significant interaction was found between sex×sexual orientation for explaining egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes for any of the three tested domains, indicating that the contribution of the participants' sex to explaining egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes was not dependent on their sexual orientation. Furthermore, no significant interactions were found between background variables×sexual orientation or between background variables×sex. These last findings indicated that the sources for egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes that were derived from the individual's background were similar for both sexes and for people with both types of sexual orientation.

Discussion

Similar to the findings of previous studies (see review in Davis & Greenstein, 2009), the present study revealed that the gender-role attitudes of women are more egalitarian than those of men in the three tested domains (confirmation of hypothesis 1), regardless of their sexual orientation. This finding indicates that in spite of the numerous ethical, normative, and technological changes that have taken place in the present era, which have led to greater equality between men and women in the fulfillment of roles in various life domains compared to the past, women still aspire to a more balanced gender-role division than men and this aspiration shapes their gender-role attitudes. Moreover, like the findings of previous studies that pointed to an egalitarian ethic that characterizes the homosexual population (Downing & Goldberg, 2010), the present research revealed that both gays

and lesbians tend to adopt more egalitarian attitudes compared to the heterosexual population in all tested domains (confirmation of hypothesis 2). The finding of differences according to the participants' sex and according to sexual orientation indicates that the gaps between the different research groups in gender-role attitudes extend to all life domains.

Contrary to the expectation that gender-role attitudes of lesbians would be more egalitarian compared to the other research groups, the finding indicated a different situation (rejection of hypothesis 3). It was found that lesbians do not adopt more egalitarian attitudes compared to their heterosexual counterparts, nor to men, regardless of sexual orientation. Contrary to expectations, the differences between lesbians and gays in their gender-role attitudes in the work domain are lower than the differences between heterosexual men and women. According to one explanation, this finding can be attributed to differences in the reference groups of lesbians compared to heterosexual women. It may be assumed that the reference group of heterosexual women is the men around them in different social situations and contexts. Thus, owing to the prominent discrimination against women in the work domain, heterosexual women express a desire for change and for equality in their status in this domain. However, the reference group of lesbians who maintain intimate and social reciprocal activity in diverse situations with women is not necessarily composed of men, but to a large extent of women who have an equal social status. Thus, because of the higher sense of discrimination among heterosexual women, which is derived from their comparison to men, they express a greater desire to correct the situation in the work domain through adoption of gender-role attitudes that are characterized by greater egalitarianism than their lesbian counterparts. According to another explanation, heterosexual men hold less egalitarian gender-role attitudes in the work domain than heterosexual women, whereas gays adopt particularly egalitarian gender-role attitudes in the work domain out of identification with the discrimination experienced by women. The gap between gays and lesbians in the extent of egalitarian attitudes is therefore much smaller than between heterosexual men and women. However, because of the non-empirical and tentative nature of these two explanations, they should be investigated in future studies.

Background and Egalitarian Gender-Role Attitudes

As in previous studies, the findings of the present study highlight the impact of religiosity (Hayford & Morgan, 2008; Hertel & Hughes, 1987) and intimate relationships (Gupta, 1999) in explaining egalitarian gender-role attitudes. The higher the degree of the participants' religiosity, the less egalitarian are their gender-role attitudes, in all tested domains. It was further found that gender-role attitudes among participants who are in an intimate relationship are less egalitarian compared to the attitudes of participants who are not in an intimate relationship, in all tested domains: family, work, and interpersonal relations. Thus, the findings indicate that less egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes characterizes people who are in an intimate relationship, both among those with a heterosexual orientation and among those with a homosexual orientation. This finding can probably be attributed to heterosexual socialization processes regarding the division of labor in the homes of the participants' parents, regardless of their sexual orientation (Kimmel & Mahalik, 2005).

In contrast to past research findings (Brayfield, 1992; Parboteeah et al., 2008), after controlling for other variables in the regression equations, the education and age variables do not contribute to explaining egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes. Apparently, because of the greater importance, which is today accorded to gender equality, the general population, regardless of the level of education and age, is exposed to social messages and to public debates on the importance of flexibility in gender roles and to models of men and women who have burst the boundaries of gender roles at work, in the family, and in society. The effect of education and age on shaping the attitudes of the individual is therefore decreasing. In addition to these explanations, it is possible that the inconsistencies in the research findings regarding the relationship between the background variables and egalitarian gender-role attitudes are due to the measurement methods. In the present study, we examined the relationships between background variables and egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes, whereas most of the past studies aimed to examine the impact of background on gender-role attitudes (as mentioned in the Introduction), by the participants' agreement with gender-role stereotypes. Moreover, most of the studies carried out in the field of gender attitudes regarded the attitudes as a general construct. However, in a recent Israeli study, Kulik (2016), who distinguished between

attitudes toward masculine roles and feminine roles, found a different pattern of relationships between participants' background variables and their attitudes toward men and women's roles. Therefore, it seems that to better understand the relationship between background variables and equality in gender-role attitudes, it is recommended that future studies upgrade the methods of measuring the construct.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

One of the limitations of the study is due to the use of a convenience sample, which does not represent the entire population in Israel. Moreover, owing to the traditional, family-oriented nature of Israeli society that shapes the participants' gender perceptions, it would be worthwhile to extend the examination of this issue to less traditional societies in an attempt to obtain a deeper understanding of gender-role attitudes in different social contexts. Furthermore, although the sources of the explanatory variables were varied (level of religiosity, participant's sex, sexual orientation, age), it is recommended that future studies include variables representing other personal experiences that are part of socialization processes, such as exposure to egalitarian parenting in childhood or models of successful men and women who have crossed the boundaries of gender roles and filled roles that are not explicitly associated with their gender. Implementation of these recommendations in future studies will elucidate the issues discussed in this study.

Conclusions

Understanding the differences between dominant and disadvantaged social categories in attitudes toward equality in gender roles is the first step in exposing the mechanism that discriminates against women and prevents them from achieving key social roles. Thus, the main goal of the present study was to examine whether in an age of accelerated changes in gender roles in central areas of life (family, work, interpersonal relationships), there are differences in egalitarian gender-role attitudes between the main social categories: men versus women and heterosexuals versus homosexuals.

This study adds to our knowledge on differences in egalitarian gender-role attitudes according to participants' sex and sexual orientation from several perspectives. First, the findings show that attitudes toward gender

roles in Israel today are, generally speaking, fairly egalitarian, beyond the social category to which the participants belong (men and women, heterosexuals, and homosexuals). This conclusion is true for the attitudes in the three areas tested in this research: family, work, and interpersonal relationships. However, the conclusion should be somewhat restricted regarding the work domain and interpersonal relationships, in which attitudes of heterosexuals are less egalitarian than in other domains and among other research groups. In the general frame of egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles among the study participants, it was found that men hold less egalitarian gender-role attitudes than women. As documented in a large body of research, less liberal gender-role attitudes lead to less liberal social practices, and are transcribed from generation to generation, in particular when those holding these attitudes belong to the dominant social group (heterosexual men) and shape the reality of gender roles through various social mechanisms that they control. Because less egalitarian gender-role attitudes held by the dominant social categories lead to social discrimination against women, the circles of gender inequality may be perpetuated in all life domains. Moreover, less liberal gender-role attitudes among men were found to have negative effects on their own function (Mahalik et al., 2003). Thus, assuming that egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes is a desired goal that promotes wellbeing among women and men regardless of their sexual orientation or their social background, some practical recommendations derived from the findings are presented.

Practical Recommendations

As gender is one of the most important bases underlying social structure, professionals should be aware of the differences in gender-role attitudes between men and women and between heterosexuals and homosexuals, due to the potential of these differences to create tension in interpersonal relations. Thus, the source of tension in the workplace is often the result of the distinct viewpoint of workers regarding the degree of equality in the roles of men and women. Unequal views about the roles of men and women in the workplace may be reflected in discrimination against women in terms of promotion, responsibility, and salary. Despite the changes that have taken place in gender roles, men still occupy most senior positions in management, politics, and academia, and their different viewpoints on

equality concerning women in the workplace, which differ from those of women, may create disappointment and frustration among women and, in turn, harm the quality of collegial relations at work. That being the case, when the source of tension at the workplace is deemed to be rooted in gender differences between men and women, a fundamental change must be made in the values of organizational culture that relate to the degree of equality between men and women. Moreover, interventions along the different stages of the education system should emphasize the high value of egalitarianism in gender-role attitudes among the young generation for promoting gender equality and fairness in each of the main life domains: family, work, and interpersonal relations.

At the level of the marital unit, considering the findings of the study, according to which life in partnership contributes to the formation of un-equal attitudes, one can expect that these attitudes will probably influence an unequal division of housework, with the burden falling almost entirely on women. Therefore, in the context of professional counseling for the management of couples' lives, one must be aware of the harmful impact of adopting non-egalitarian attitudes, which lead to unequal distribution of the household burden that may cause conflicts and tension in the marital unit, and damage the quality of the marital relationship.

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Appendix 1: Egalitarianism in Gender-Role Attitudes Questionnaire

The answers are on a scale from 1 = disagree to 5 = agree to a great extent. Items which were formulated inversely to the scale (marked with an asterisk) were reversed.

1) In my opinion, fathers should be involved in raising the chil dren to the same extent as mothers.
2) In my opinion, it is OK for women to court men, just as men court women.
3) In my opinion, women can serve in the army in masculine fields with the same degree of success as men.
4) In my opinion, a man can succeed in the role of a kindergarten teach-er to the same extent as women.
5) In my opinion, women can be managers of men with the same degree of success as men who are managers of women.
6) In my opinion, women should use more assertiveness in everyday life than men.
7) *In my opinion, a real man does not tend to express his feelings as do women.
8) In my opinion, technical skills are developed among women and men to the same extent.
9) *In my opinion, in a family in which there are boys and girls, it is the girls' responsibility to care for elderly parents more than the boys' responsibility.
10) In my opinion, men can express tenderness toward their children as do women.
11) In my opinion, the responsibility for earning a livelihood for the fam-ily is levied to the same extent on men and on women.
12) *In my opinion, when a child is ill, the mother should stay at home and care for him more often than the father.
13) *In my opinion, if a child has a psychological problem that bothers him, mothers are more successful in calming him and promoting his wellbeing than fathers.
14) In my opinion, men and women should decide together on the issues that are important to the family.
15) In my opinion, women are able to perform all the roles that men

perform, with the same degree of success.

16) In my opinion, business initiatives are suitable for men and for women to the same extent.

17) In my opinion, among people who tend to tell jokes of a sexual nature, it is as OK for women to tell such jokes as it is for men.

18) *In my opinion, in order to maintain an intimate relationship, it is expected that the woman relinquish her wishes more than the man.

19) In my opinion, boys and girls should be educated according to the same criteria.

20) In my opinion, during divorce agreements, the possibility for custody of the children should be identical for the father and the mother.

21) In my opinion, women can compete with men in every field.

22) *In my opinion, a man can delay giving a divorce more than a woman.

23) In my opinion, the retirement age for men and women should legally be the same.

24) In my opinion, men should take part in housework just as women do.

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