
GENDER NORMATIVITY, SEXUAL CONSERVATISM, AND HOMOPHOBIC TEASING: FINDINGS AMONG VERY YOUNG ADOLESCENTS IN KINSHASA, DRC

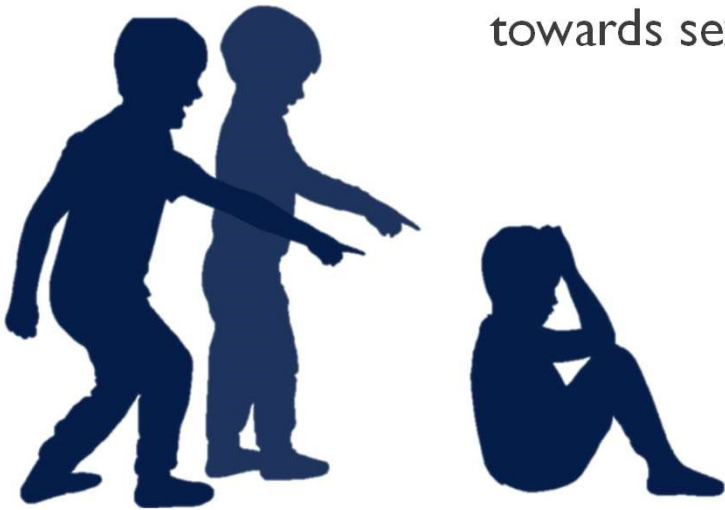
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BACKGROUND

- Homophobic teasing – a form of school-related gender-based violence – refers to the use of derogatory language or actions towards sexual- or gender-nonconforming individuals (Meyer, 2008).



- Can also be directed at heterosexual youth to reinforce traditional gender norms (Tucker et al., 2016) and/or promote heterosexual masculinity (Herek, 2000).
- Homophobic teasing/bullying tends to emerge during early adolescence (Espelage, Basile, De La Rue, & Hamburger, 2015).

RESEARCH GAPS & STUDY AIMS

- Gap: limited empirical evidence examining the link between gender and sexual norms and homophobic teasing – especially among VYA populations in sub-Saharan Africa
- Aims:
 - 1) Establish age-appropriate measure of sexual conservatism for VYAs (ages 10-14)
 - 2) Use a joint framework to examine adolescent profiles regarding gender norms perceptions and sexual conservatism
 - 3) Examine whether these profiles at time one predict acceptance of homophobic teasing at time two.

METHODS: SAMPLE



- Longitudinal data from the Global Early Adolescent Study (GEAS) – Kinshasa
- Wave 1 – 2017 – adolescents ages 10-14 years
 - n=2,832
- Wave 2 – 2018 – adolescents ages 11-15 years
 - n=2,519 (89% retention)

METHODS: MEASURES

- Outcome (Assessed at Wave 2): Acceptance of homophobic teasing (binary)
 - It is okay to tease a girl {boy} who acts like a boy {girl}. Do you agree or disagree?
- Independent Variables (Assessed at Wave 1)
 - Score on three scales. (range 1-5, higher scores reflect more inequitable/conservative attitudes)
 - Gender Stereotypical Roles (GSR) – the duties or functions typical of males and females (*Moreau et al., 2021*)
 - Gender Stereotypical Traits (GST) – the personality characteristics typical of males and females (*Ibid.*)
 - Sexual Conservatism (SC) – traditional or gendered views of sexual behavior and contraceptive use
- Covariates (Assessed at Wave 1)
 - Adolescent age and literacy
 - Household-level food insecurity and wealth tertile

METHODS: ANALYSIS

Three steps:

- 1) Factor analysis
 - Sexual Conservatism (SC) Scale
- 2) Latent Profile Analysis – identify sub-groups of adolescents based on gender equity and sexual conservatism attitudes
- 3) Logistic Regression – assess whether these Wave 1 profiles predict acceptance of homophobic teasing at Wave 2



GENDER STEREOTYPICAL ROLES (GSR) SCALE

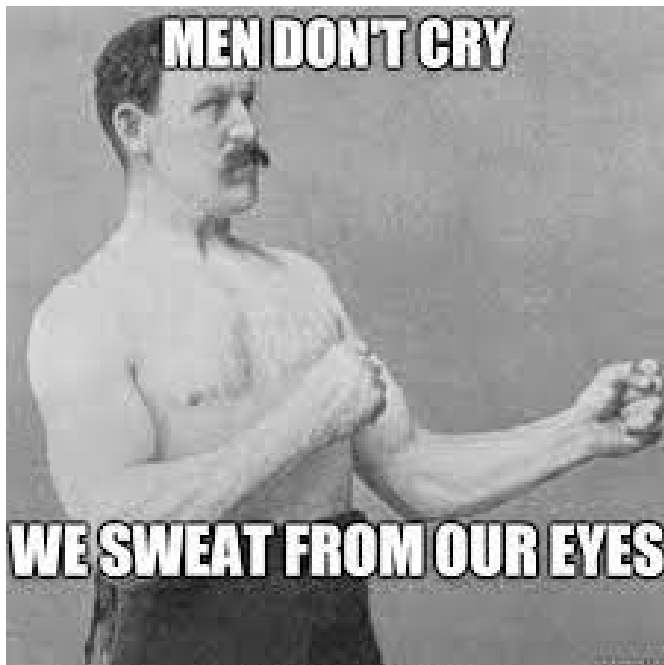
- 1) A woman's role is taking care of her home and family.
- 2) A man should have the final word about decisions in the home.
- 3) A woman should obey her husband in all matters.
- 4) Men should be the ones who bring money home for the family, not women.

Cronbach's alpha = 0.72



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GENDER STEREOTYPICAL TRAITS (GST) SCALE



- 1) Boys should be raised tough so they can overcome any difficulty in life.
- 2) Girls should avoid raising their voice to be lady like.
- 3) Boys should always defend themselves even if it means fighting.
- 4) Girls are expected to be humble.
- 5) Girls need their parents' protection more than boys.
- 6) Boys who behave like girls are considered weak.
- 7) It's important for boys to show they are tough even if they are nervous inside.

Cronbach's alpha = 0.80

RESULTS

FACTOR ANALYSIS | SEXUAL CONSERVATISM

Item	Factor 1 Loadings	Factor 2 Loadings
1) It is ok for an adolescent girl to have sex as long as she avoids getting pregnant.	0.6602	0.2663
2) It is ok for an adolescent boy to have sex as long as he avoids getting a girl pregnant.	0.7847	0.4061
3) In general, a girl should only have sex with someone she loves.	0.7888	-0.3030
4) In general, a boy should only have sex with someone he loves.	0.7728	-0.3954
5) It's the girl's responsibility to prevent pregnancy, not the boy's.	0.5258	0.0653
6) Women who carry condoms on them are easy.	0.4157	0.0378
Eigenvalue	2.7203	0.4896

Cronbach's alpha (all six items): 0.7285
Cronbach's alpha (remove item 6): 0.7289

RESULTS

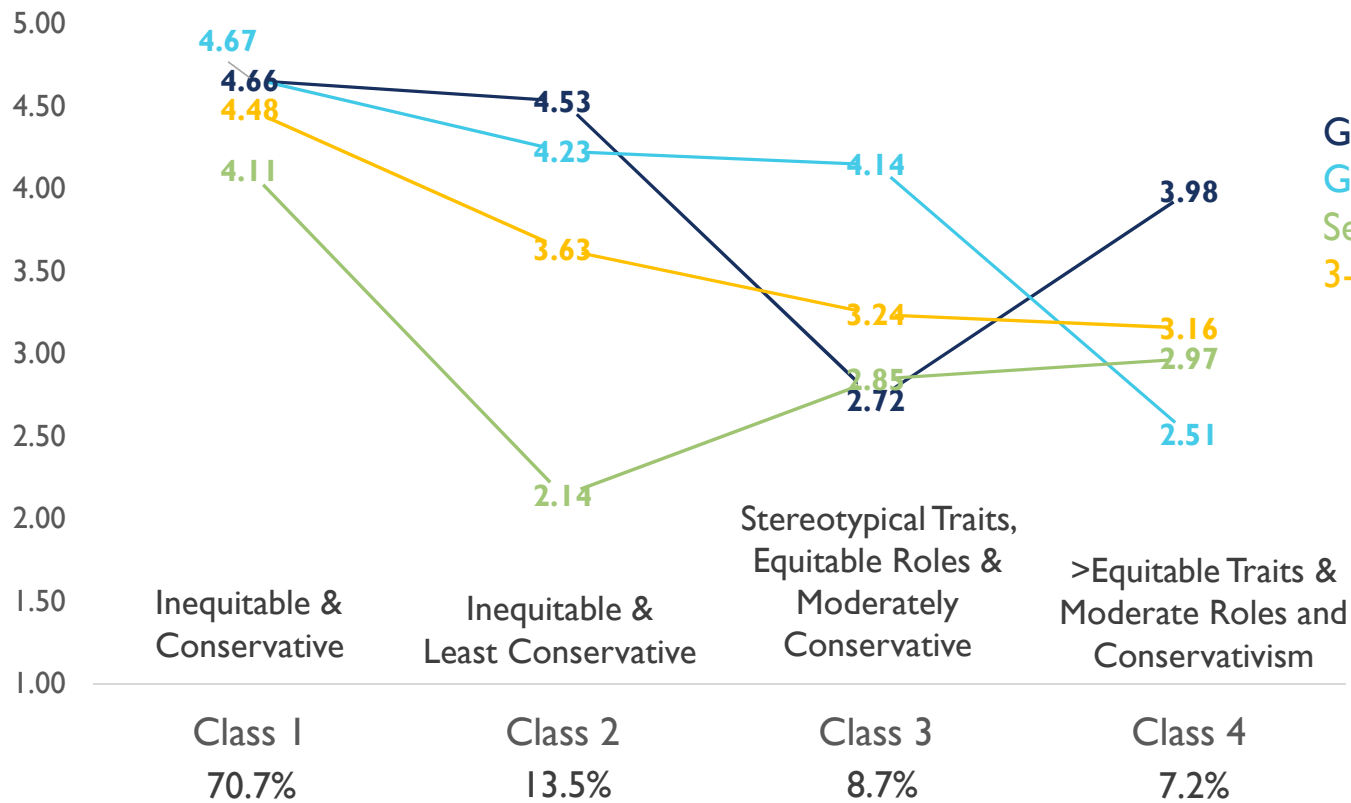
LATENT CLASS PROFILE

Number of Classes	Log likelihood	Degrees of freedom	AIC	BIC
1-class	-10203.23	6	20418.47	20454.18
2-classes	-9574.44	13	19174.88	19252.26
3-classes	-9279.23	14	18586.47	18669.80
4-classes	-9183.29	18	18402.58	18509.72
5-classes	-9183.29	22	18410.58	18541.53

Lower values of AIC and BIC better

RESULTS

LATENT CLASS PROFILE



Gender Stereotypical Roles (GSR)
 Gender Stereotypical Traits (GST)
 Sexual Conservatism (SC)
 3-scale average

Higher scores (range: 1-5) reflect perceptions of more unequal gender norms & more conservative sexual norms

RESULTS

LOGISTIC REGRESSION | TEASING GENDER-ATYPICAL GIRLS

	Null Model		Adjusted Model*	
	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	p-value	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	p-value
Class 1	<i>reference</i>		<i>reference</i>	
Class 2	1.40 (1.11, 1.76)	p=0.004	1.38 (1.10, 1.75)	p=0.006
Class 3	1.44 (1.09, 1.89)	p=0.010	1.40 (1.06, 1.86)	p=0.017
Class 4	1.62 (1.18, 2.12)	p=0.003	1.46 (1.00, 2.12)	p=0.048

As compared to Class 1, adolescents with more equitable/less conservative attitudes were 1.4-1.6 times more likely to think it is *not ok* to tease a girl who acts like a boy.

*Covariates: age, literacy, food insecurity, wealth tertile

Interaction terms for gender were not significant (i.e., no differences in findings between boys and girls)

RESULTS

LOGISTIC REGRESSION | TEASING GENDER-ATYPICAL BOYS

	Null Model		Adjusted Model*	
	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	p-value	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	p-value
Class 1	<i>reference</i>		<i>reference</i>	
Class 2	1.44 (1.14, 1.82)	p=0.002	1.44 (1.14, 1.81)	p=0.002
Class 3	1.21 (0.91, 1.60)	p=0.187	1.16 (0.88, 1.54)	p=0.297
Class 4	1.15 (0.84, 1.58)	p=0.393	1.09 (0.74, 1.59)	p=0.671

As compared to Class 1, only adolescents with less sexually conservative attitudes (Class 2) were more likely to think it is *not ok* to tease a boy who acts like a girl.

*Covariates: age, literacy, food insecurity, wealth tertile

Interaction terms for gender were not significant (i.e., no differences in findings between boys and girls)

KEY FINDINGS

- 3 distinct scales – meaningful to look gender roles, gender traits, and sexual norms separately
- New sexual conservatism scale reliable among very young adolescents
- Acceptability of teasing of gender-atypical peers differs by sex of peer
 - For gender atypical girls: Less traditional/conservative attitudes about gender roles, traits, and sexuality at Wave 1 associated with views that it's *not ok* to tease
 - For gender atypical boys: Only Class 2 – lowest of levels of sexual conservatism – associated with views that it's *not ok* to tease

DISCUSSION

- Less restrictive norms surrounding gender and sexuality *protective* against homophobic teasing – but more so for gender-atypical girls than boys
- Implications:
 - Area for prevention of homophobic teasing: Gender equity/sexual liberalism
 - Gender equity: creating a more expansive view of what's available to women – but have we done the same for men?
 - How can we ensure that 'gender transformative' programming promotes increased range of masculinity?

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*thank
you*