

Impact of Age and Education on Gender Attitudes in the Arab World

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Research Questions

- ▶ How do attitudes towards gender equality vary in the Arab World?
- ▶ What does this variation depend on?
- ▶ Do Arab countries follow the global general trend of liberalization or they are getting more Islamic and conservative?



Why Are Gender Attitudes Important?

- ▶ Gender attitudes are very strong predictors of post-materialist values (R.Inglehart, Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World, 2003)
- ▶ Liberal gender attitudes correlate with support for democracy, especially in Muslim countries (Abdel-Latif, Rizzo, 2007)
- ▶ Modernization of women's attitude to their position in society leads to global transformations (Moghadam, Modernizing Women in the Middle East, 2003)
- ▶ Liberal gender attitudes correlate negatively with the level of religiosity (M.Tessler, Islam and Democracy in the Middle East, 2002)



Theory

- ▶ Modernization Theory (R.Inglehart, Ch.Welzel)
- ▶ Theory of stability of attitudes by Newcomb, Alwin and Cohen (Bennington College)
- ▶ Theories of nationalism and modernization (L.Greenfeld, D.Laitin, E.Gellner)
- ▶ Nationalism in the Arab World (Abd-al-Jabbar, Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East; Jankovsky, Rethinking Arab Nationalism in the Arab Middle East, 1997; Yakub)



Hypotheses

- ▶ Gender attitudes vary slightly across the countries of the Arab World
- ▶ The elderly are more conservative, younger generations are more liberal
- ▶ Men are more conservative in their gender attitudes than women
- ▶ More educated people are more liberal than those who lack formal education at all or received school education only
- ▶ Religious people are more conservative than non-religious



Data and Methods

1st wave of Arab Barometer Survey (released in 2009)

7 countries:

- ▶ - Algeria
- ▶ - Kuwait
- ▶ - Morocco
- ▶ - Lebanon
- ▶ - Palestine (West Bank and Gaza)
- ▶ - Jordan
- ▶ - Yemen



Data and Methods

Index of gender attitudes was created of the following questions (0 – liberal, 1 – conservative)

- ▶ A woman can be a president or prime minister of a Muslim country
- ▶ A married woman can work outside the home if she wishes
- ▶ On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do
- ▶ University education is more important for a boy than for a girl
- ▶ Men and women should have equal job opportunities
- ▶ Men and women should receive equal wages and salaries
- ▶ A woman can travel abroad by herself if she wishes



Data and Methods

Independent Variables:

- ▶ Age (recoded in 7 categories)
 - ▶ Gender
 - ▶ Country
 - ▶ Religion (Muslim – Sunni, Shia, Druze or Christian)
 - ▶ Reading Quran – How often?
 - ▶ Level of Education
 - ▶ ISEI
 - ▶ Marital Status
 - ▶ Level of Income
- (didn't fit in the model)



Model-Attitude towards Gender Equality

Dependent Variable: Attitude towards gender equality					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	39,016	26	1,501	78,051	0,000
Intercept	75,924	1	75,924	3948,966	0,000
Religion	3,611	3	1,204	62,608	0,000
Quran reading	0,756	4	0,189	9,829	0,000
Gender	6,563	1	6,563	341,361	0,000
Age (7 categ.)	0,772	6	0,129	6,695	0,000
Level of Educ.	3,367	6	0,561	29,186	0,000
Country	4,783	6	2,392	124,399	0,000
R Squared = ,322 (Adjusted R Squared = ,318)					

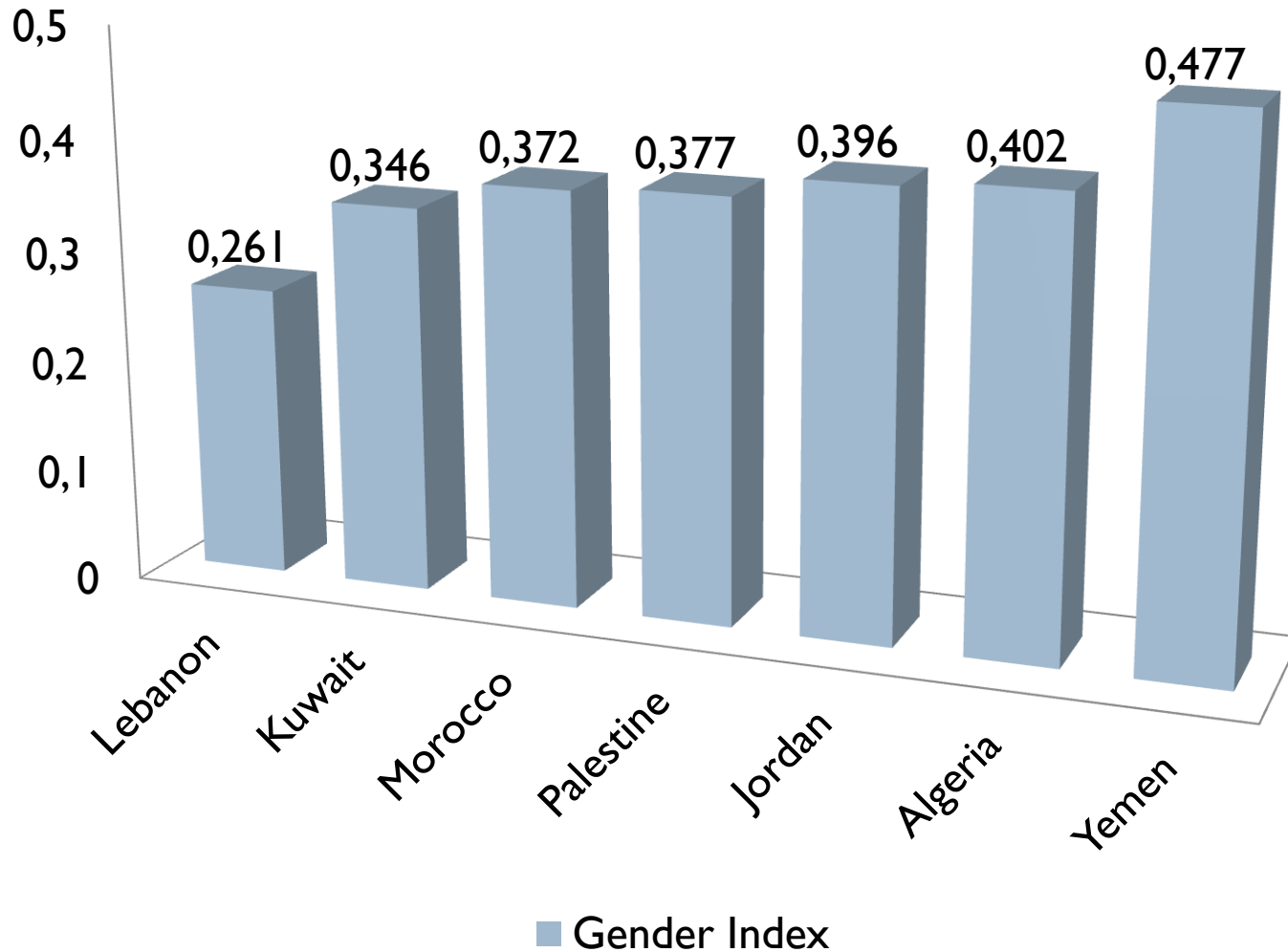


Results

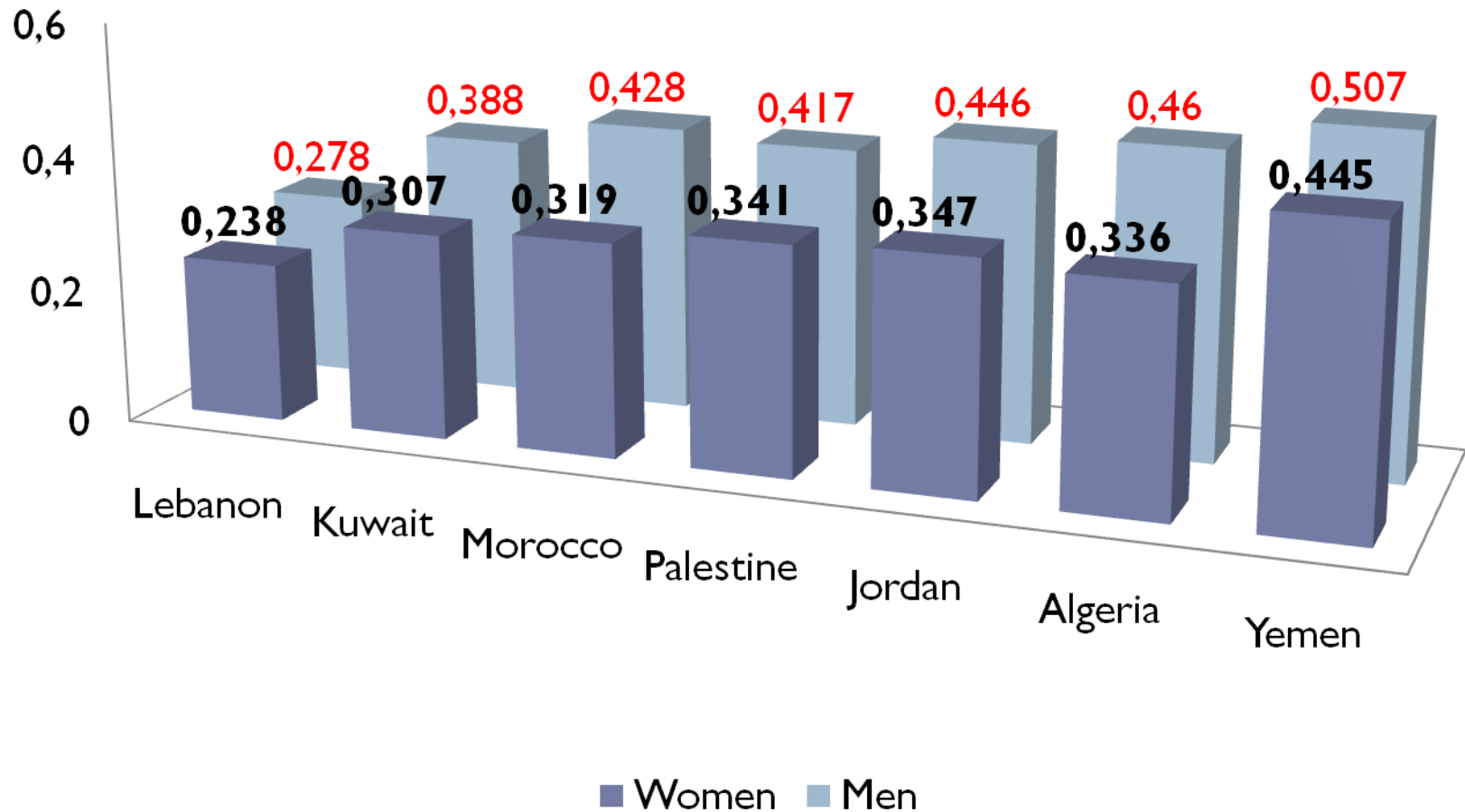
- ▶ The most liberal country is Lebanon, the most conservative is Yemen
 - ▶ Men are more conservative than women
 - ▶ Those Muslims who read Quran every day are the most conservative in gender attitudes, those who do not read it at all are the most liberal
 - ▶ Christians are the most liberal, Shia Muslims are the most conservative
 - ▶ The most educated people are the most liberal
 - ▶ People aged **75+** form the most liberal age group in the Middle East. People from 55 to 75 are also liberal. The most **conservative** age group are people of **25-34** years old.
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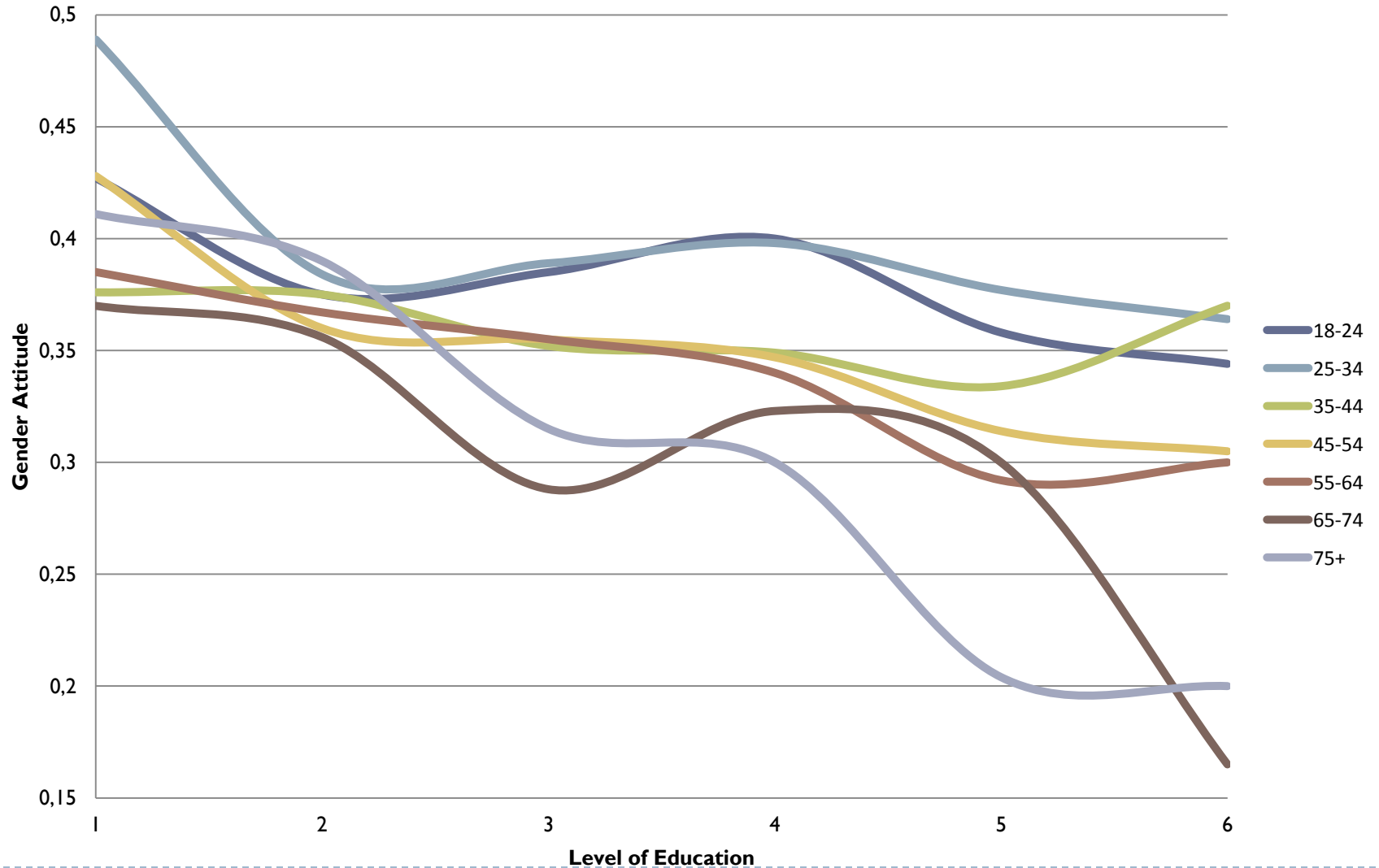
Mean Gender Index in 7 Countries



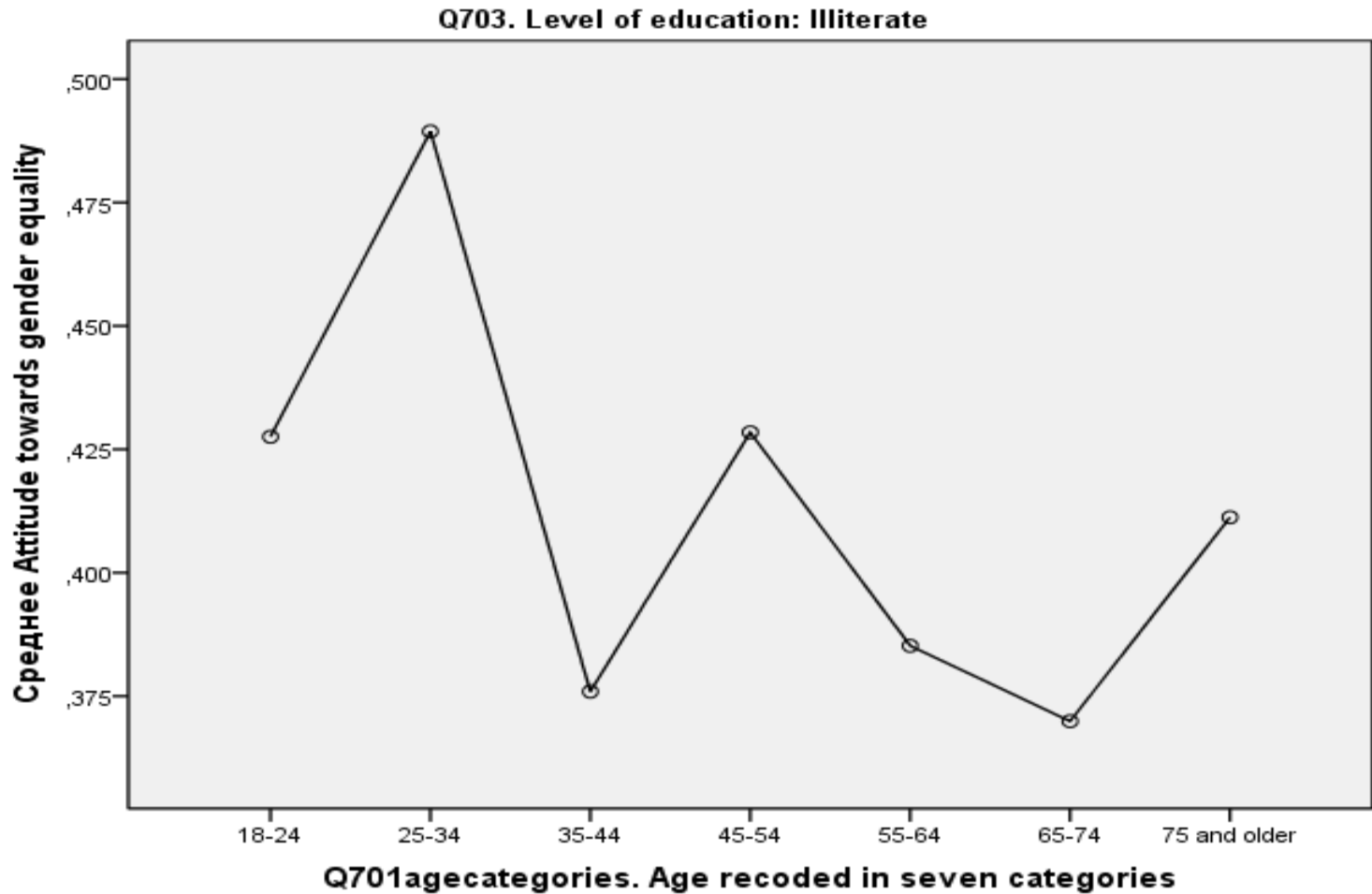
Gender Index for Women and Men



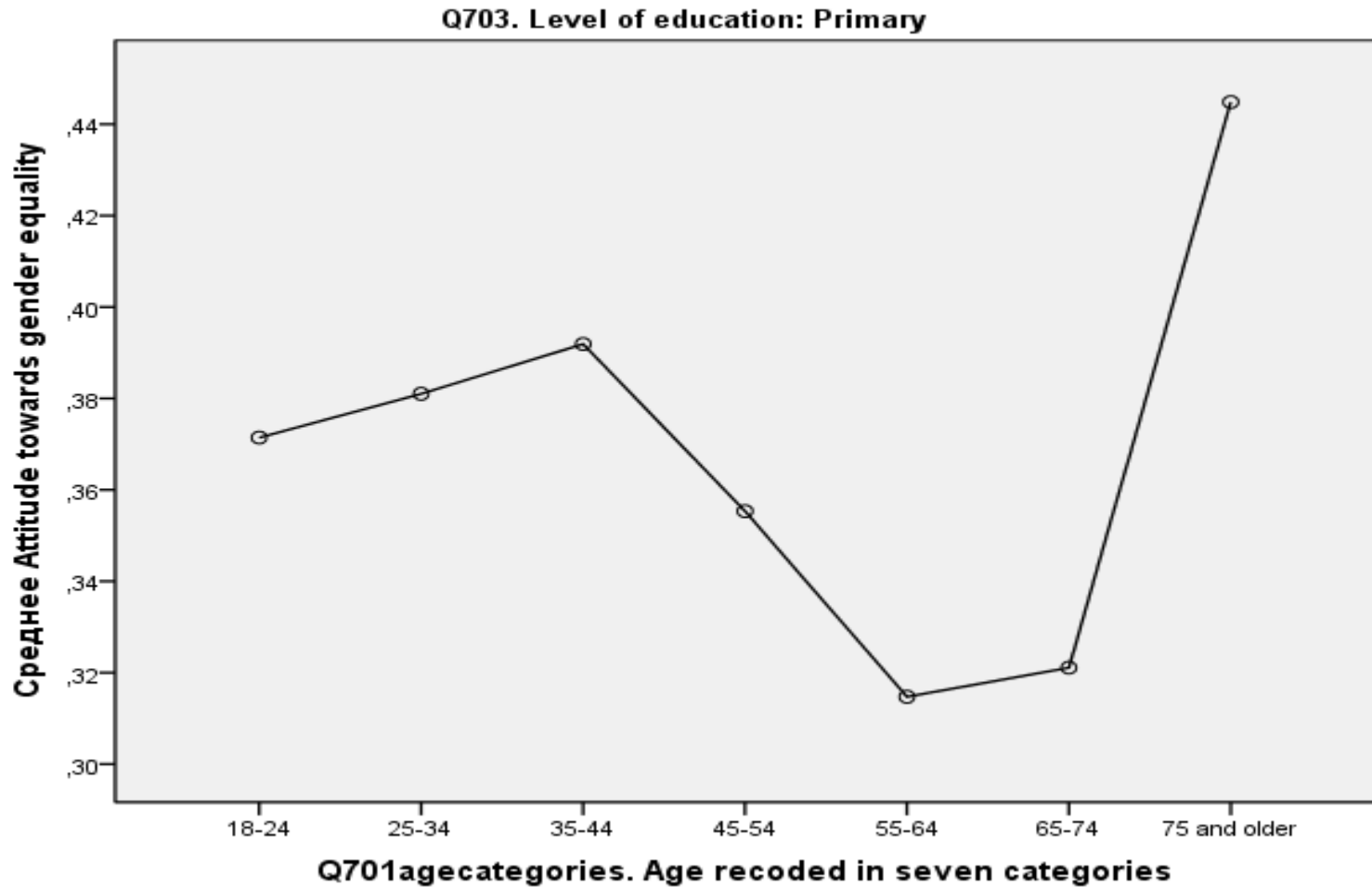
Gender Attitudes for Various Education Levels and Age Groups



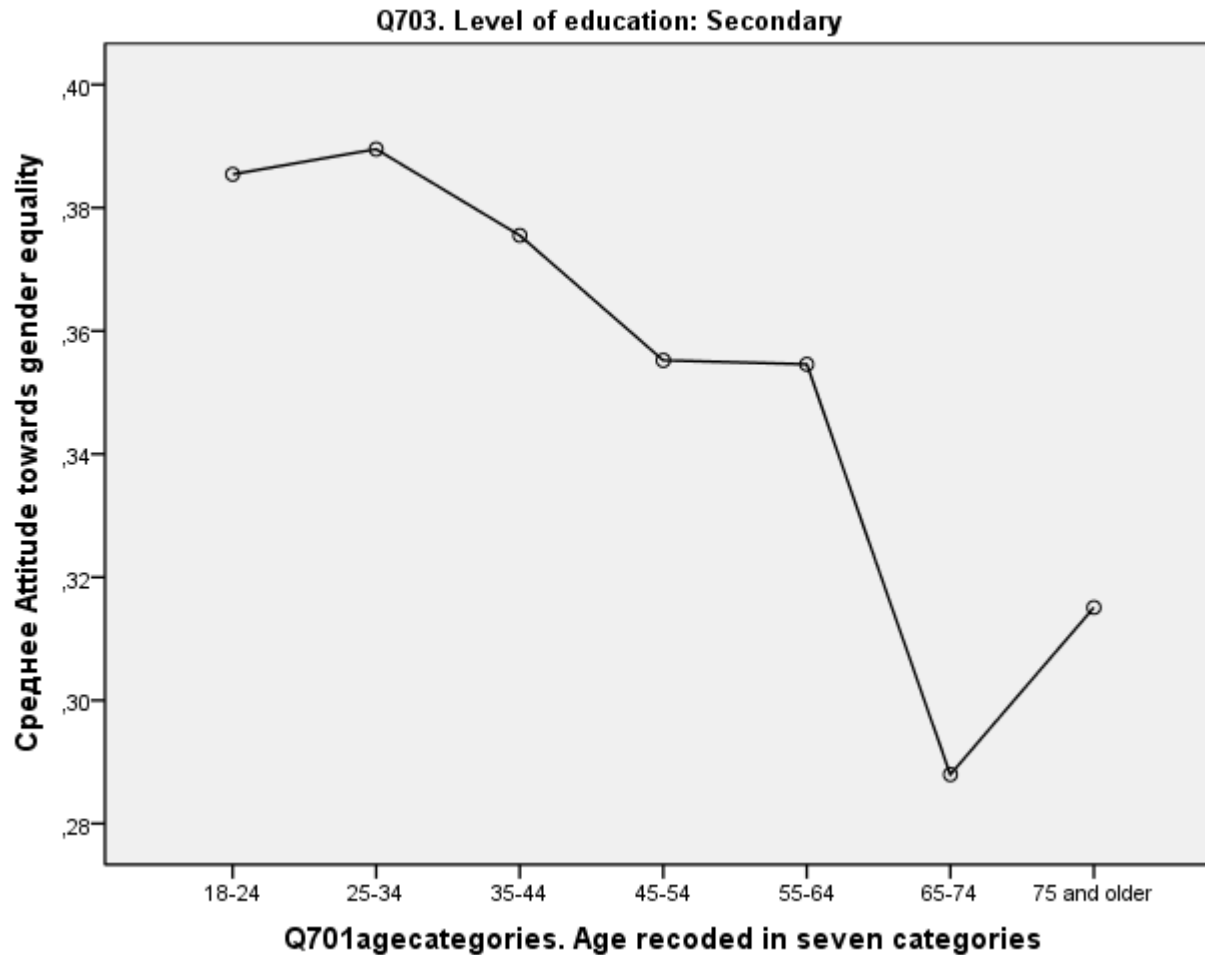
Illiterate – Gender Attitude/Age



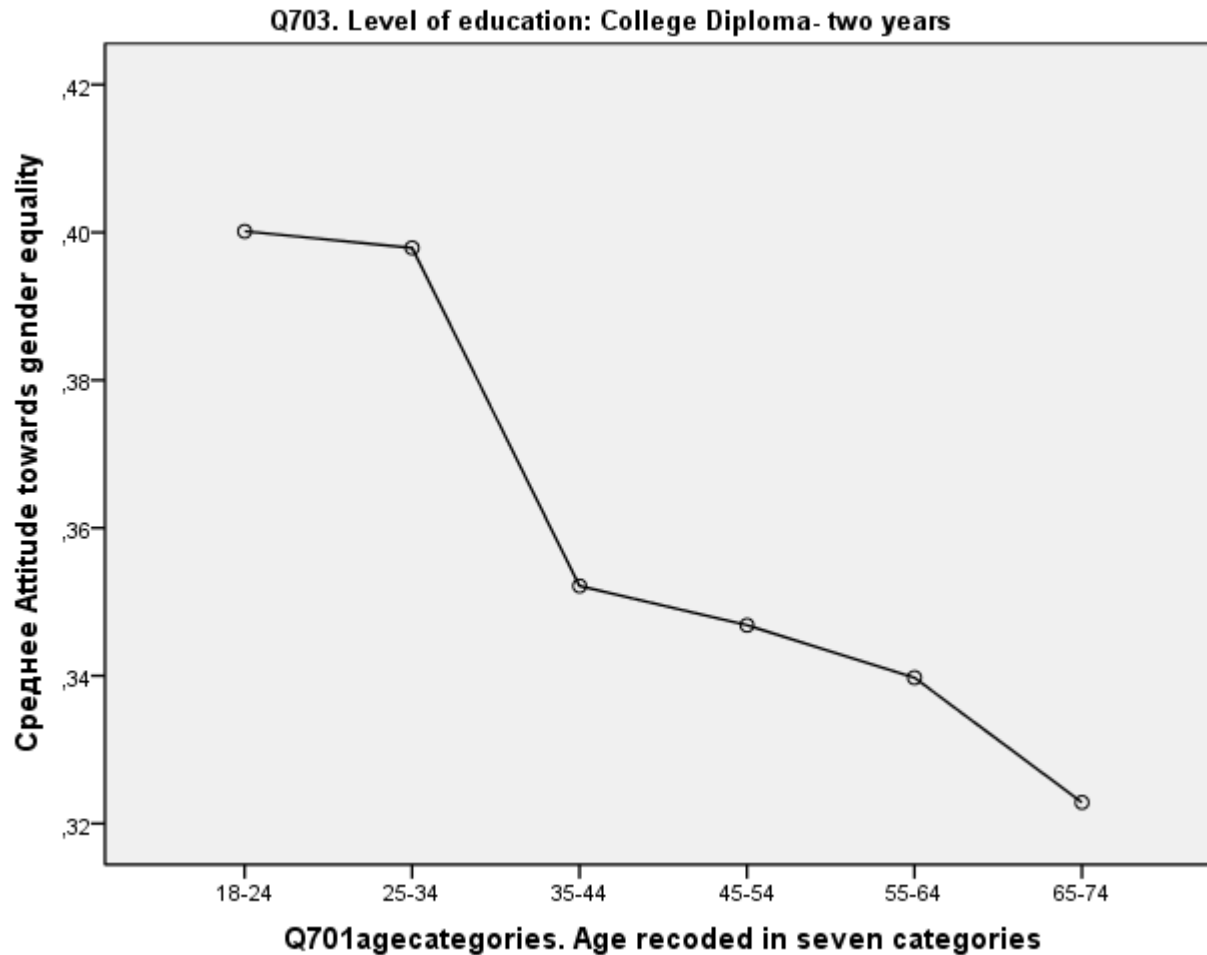
Primary Education – Gender Attitude/Age



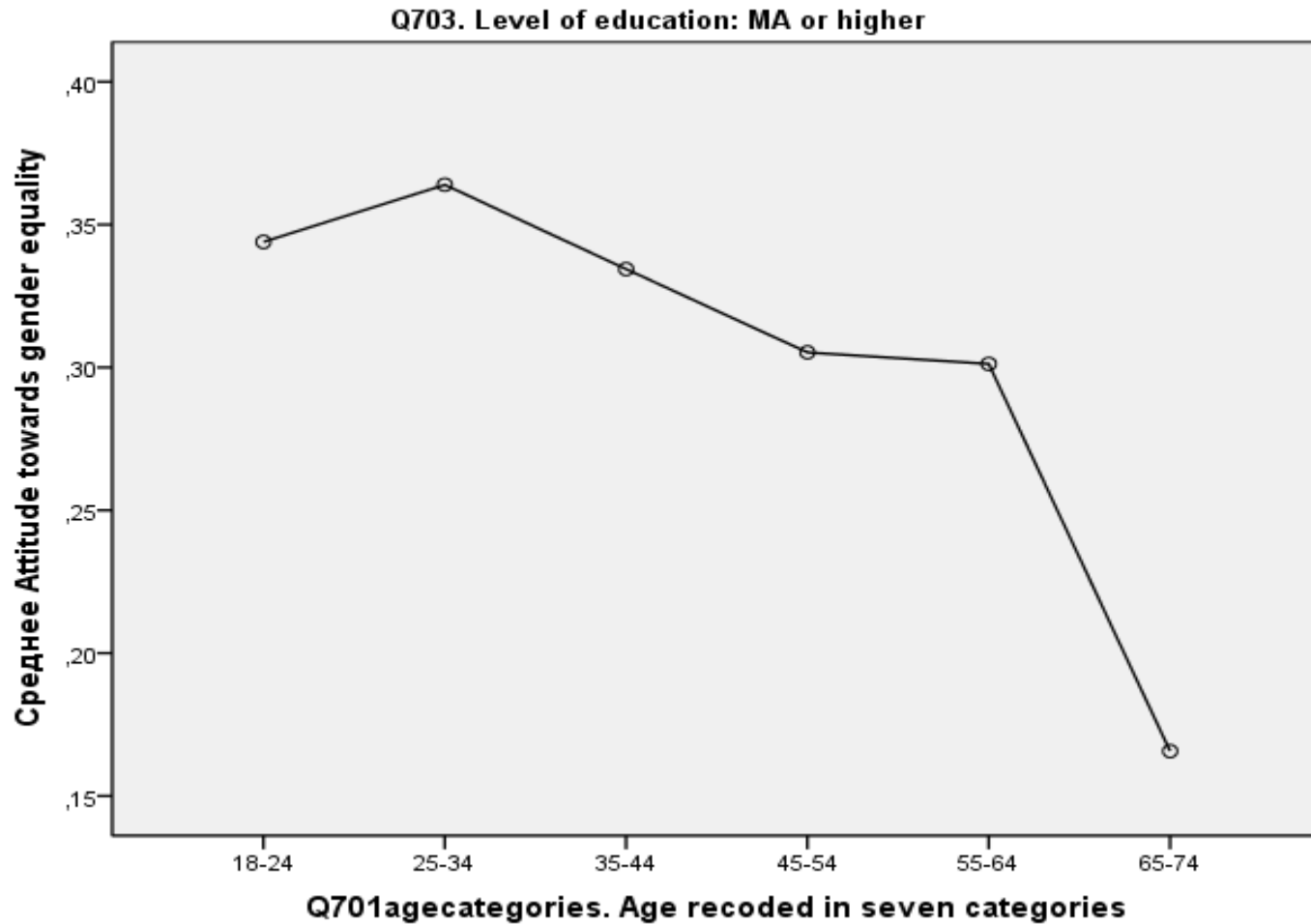
Secondary Education – Gender Attitude/Age



College Diploma – Gender Attitude/Age



MA or Higher – Gender Attitude/Age



Possible Explanations

- ▶ Wars for independence that happened in the 50s and 60s were mostly secular, Islam did not play a great role when the older generations were in their formation period.
- ▶ For some countries (especially for Yemen and Algeria) the collapse of the Soviet Union had anti-modernization effect.
- ▶ In the mid-80s – rise of Islamic fundamentalism all over the region – formation period of 25-34 years old.
- ▶ Modernization processes develop simultaneously with this archaization as inside the age groups more educated people are more liberal.



Further Steps

- ▶ Use the second wave of Arab Barometer that will be released in 2 months (it includes Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia + 7 from the first survey)
- ▶ Check the trends, construct a multilevel model with 13 countries



**Thank you for your
attention!**

