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## Post-Socialist Dynamics of Value Patterns in Estonia

Maaris Raudsepp\*, Indrek Tart & Eda Heinla

### Abstract

The article focuses on the dynamics of value patterns in Estonia over a period spanning late socialism to liberal market capitalism. The research data is derived from five population surveys 'Work, family and leisure' (WFL), in which value orientations were measured on the basis of Clyde Kluckhohn's conception. The same instrument of life values was used in 1985 (just before the perestroika of Soviet socialist system), in 1993, 1998 and 2003 (during the transition period of post-socialism) and in 2008 (just before the economic crisis in capitalist society). The aim of the study is to differentiate value patterns and observe the trends of their change during this period. The results of hierarchical cluster analysis reveal a clear tendency of structural change: a dichotomy of value profiles on the ethno-linguistic basis in 1985 and 1993 was replaced by a dichotomy of value profiles on the basis of age in 2003 and 2008. The results of multidimensional analysis show a relative stability of the value structure and a change in the meaning of some life values (professional work, close friends). The results are discussed in the context of post-socialist societal transformation.

**Keywords:** value orientations, structure of values, value patterns, 1985-2008.

### Introduction

Values are a psychosocial link between individuals and society, being an aspect of both cultural and personality system (Schwartz, 2008), functioning as generalised regulators both on the level of personal life-worlds as well as on the societal/cultural or institutional level. They orient individuals and groups to meaningful goals and to socially acceptable means of attaining these goals. In times of the collapse of the established order of things in the political and social sphere, personal values act as a source of order inside the individual (Szakolczai & Füstös, 1998). Changes in value priorities accompany and reflect major socio-cultural changes, therefore, individual values can be used as markers of macro-social trends and ruptures. Cross-national comparisons of the transformations of dominant value hierarchies have been empirically recorded in the framework of democratisation, modernisation, secularisation, but also in the context of Eastern European post-socialist transition, mostly relying on Inglehart's (1997) or Schwartz's (1992) theoretical models. Our article focuses on value dynamics in a post-socialist context, using an alternative approach – Kluckhohn's conception of value orientations. Estonia is chosen as an exemplary case for observing long-term tendencies of value change, as there is comparable data from a relatively long tradition of empirical sociological studies. Since 1978 periodical sociological surveys embracing the adult population of Estonia have been carried out. The present article focuses on one stream of value measurements carried out by a team of researchers at the Institute of International and Social Studies (Hansson, 2009). To our knowledge, it is a unique research project, which has operationalised the idea of values as orientations to different life spheres developed by Clyde Kluckhohn (1962) in large-scale questionnaire studies. As there are no comparative data from other countries using this framework, we will contextualise the present

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study with the available data on post-socialist value change in Inglehart's and Schwartz's traditions. We suppose that comparing different streams of value studies will help to notice convergent and divergent aspects of this societal transition.

We focus on the dynamics of value patterns in Estonia over the period spanning late socialism (1985) to the first decade of early liberal capitalism (2008). This is a period of systemic societal transformations (see Lauristin, Vihalemm, Rosengren & Weibull, 1997). During these years, Estonia evolved from a country under a Soviet regime to an independent democratic nation state and EU member. Transition from socialist planned economy to liberal market economy took place, accompanied by marketisation of social relations and domination of consumerist lifestyle, essential changes in labour relations and employment, as well as in increasing socio-economic differentiation (Saar, 2011). Within the cultural dimension, openness to global influences has grown, and many regulative ideas have been replaced. Beside similarities with the development of all former socialist Eastern European countries, Estonia's specificity is cultural heterogeneity: one third of its population consists of soviet period immigrants with multiple cultural roots. Their integration into the Estonian society has remained an issue (see Vetik, 2012).

## Post-socialist value patterns in an international context

Empirical research of human values has proceeded in several streams, using different approaches to the conceptualisation and measurement of values. Several regular international surveys enable tracing the dynamics of value preferences and making cross-national comparisons.

In studies based on **Ronald Inglehart's** version of modernisation theory (Inglehart & Baker, 2000), values are grouped along two relevant dimensions: *traditionalism vs. rationalism/secularism* and *materialism vs. postmaterialism*. The first dimension is related to the process of modernisation through economic development; the other to the transition from industrial to post-industrial society – which creates polarisation between the weight accorded to survival and that given to self-expression. Self-expression values give high priority to freedom of speech, environmental protection, tolerance of diversity, trust, social participation, hedonism, self-realisation and quality of life, reflecting a cultural shift that is emerging among generations who have grown up in welfare societies taking survival for granted. At the same time, society's cultural heritage modifies the effects of economic development, producing specific trajectories of development. Inglehart's value model is hierarchical and developmental; it postulates the direction of value change in certain macro-societal conditions. The main determinant of postmaterialistic value change is a subjective sense of security, which depends on material well-being, social and political stability, high life expectancy and other macro-societal factors.

Western societies turned toward post-materialist values in the 1970s after they achieved a considerable welfare level. In Eastern Europe, the development was more ambiguous. Although economic development was not so rapid, certain post-materialist values – e.g. social solidarity, general self-development – were propagated as part of the hegemonic ideological system (Inglehart & Baker, 2000), and a sense of security as the basis for non-materialist values was supported by the system of social guarantees during socialism (minimal income, free education and medical service were available to everyone). The dominant value pattern of late socialism has been characterised as 'pseudo-postmaterialistic' – the majority of people were oriented to social and altruistic values instead of pragmatic and individualistic ones (Saarniit, 1995). Since 1990 Estonia has participated in World Value Surveys. Similarly to Protestant Western European countries and countries with the experience of Communist rule, Estonia is high up in the dimension of rationalism/secularism (opposed to traditionalism values) and, similar to other Eastern European post-socialist countries, low in the dimension of post-materialism, with a relatively high rating of scarcity values (Inglehart & Welzel,

2005). During the first period of post-socialist transition (1990-1996), the position of Estonia shifted even more in the direction of materialism, most remarkably among the middle-aged generation (Toomere, 2001). Such a shift backwards to survival values and the decreasing importance of post-materialist values reflects the growing sense of insecurity caused by the collapse of the previous political and economic system and growing economic hardships in all post-socialist societies (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Halman & Voicu, 2010).

Another widely used theoretical model and measurement instrument has been presented by **Shalom H. Schwartz** (1992). Two measurement techniques are applied: the Schwartz Value Survey in which abstract values (e.g. equality) are rated; and the Schwartz Portrait Questionnaire (SPQ) in which more concrete actualisations of values are rated. This measure is used in the European Social Survey (Estonia participates since 2004). Schwartz's model distinguishes ten value types, which may be organised into two higher-order dimensions: from Self-transcendence (embracing the welfare of others) to Self-enhancement (emphasising one's own interests) and from Openness to change (accepting change, risk and unpredictability) to Conservation (preservation of the status quo). Since values function as cultural devices aimed at control and social regulation – at the same time, providing a framework for making sense of individual lives (see Raudsepp, 2011) – they form distinct patterns in certain macro-social contexts. Competitive liberal capitalism promotes a high level of achievement, conformity and power values combined with the low importance of universalism and self-direction values (Schwartz, 2007). Transition from the Soviet era rhetoric to a post-Soviet frame of reference involves a shift in the normative hierarchy of values. Abstract notions of universal solidarity, cooperation, collective interests and other social values were replaced by the priority of individualistic values like individual interest, individual effectiveness, success, competition and particular group interests. Several empirical studies have confirmed this tendency in transitional Eastern European countries (Spini, 1997; Verkasalo, Daun & Niit, 1994). People faced with a post-socialist reality devalued former ideals (fraternity, solidarity, equality, etc.) and adopted a value pattern that is better suited to adaptation with the harsh reality of early capitalism.

One of the most important consequences of post-socialist societal transformation has been a differentiation of life conditions and opportunities, a growing gap between the 'winners' and 'losers' of transition (Lauristin, 2004; Saar, 2011). On the one hand, there is a society of scarcity (the older, rural, poor group), and on the other – the affluent society of security where survival is taken for granted and which is increasingly regulated by self-realisation values. In Estonia, significant differences in value assessments between people with different levels of material well-being have been recorded. There is a specific value gap between different income groups indicating that self-assertion values are important for the wealthy; whereas, universalist values (equality, faith) are more important for the poor (Kalmus & Vihalemm, 2008a, 2008b).

Latent class analysis of the results of European Social Survey in 2008 (Magun, Rudnev & Schmidt 2012) showed that Estonia shares a distinct distribution of value patterns of other post-communist countries in contrast to Western and Nordic old European democracies. In the global context, Estonia belongs to the Eastern-Central and Baltic European cultural region of value patterns (Schwartz, in press). In spite of value similarities, former socialist societies have divergent trajectories of change (Halman & Voicu, 2010).

## Values as life orientations

Besides Inglehart's and Schwartz's models, there are alternative conceptualisations of values. A longitudinal survey on the attitudes of the post-war generation carried out in 1966-1991 (e.g. Titma, 1999; Titma & Roots 2002, Titma, Silver, Vöörmann & Johnson, 1996) included questions, inspired

by the ideas of Clyde Kluckhohn (1956, 1962), who understood values as orientations to different behavioral spheres: “A value is a conception, explicit, or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action” (Kluckhohn, 1962, p. 395). Values may be measured in many ways, “by analysis of choices – which constitute a specific kind of evidence as to ‘directions of interest’” (Kluckhohn, 1962, p. 404). Value orientations are ordered according to the degree of interest a person invests in different spheres of his or her life (see Tsirogianni & Gaskell, 2011). In Titma’s studies, these life orientations were defined as cognitive, emotional and behavioral orientations to main life spheres – broadly classified as work, family and leisure. These basic life orientations are interpreted as values – explicit or implicit conceptions of the desirable that regulate human activities. Besides the relative importance or hierarchy of these values, people differ also in terms of the underlying meanings of these values (Titma & Paalandi, 2001).

Longitudinal studies among two birth cohorts in Estonia revealed high individual stability of the profile of these life values along the lifespan (Titma & Paalandi, 2001). However, a radical shift in group level value priorities was observed already before the perestroika period. In contrast to the 1960s and 1970s when value priorities were highly stable, in the beginning of the 1980s a significant inter-cohort shift in value priorities of young people was recorded: a decreasing orientation towards social altruism and general self-development with dramatically increasing orientation toward material well-being and high social position indicated profound transformations in value consciousness (Saarniit, 1995, p. 147). It was a shift from a socialist ‘pseudo-post-materialist’ orientation to a more pragmatic ‘neo-materialistic’ survival orientation (Saarniit, 1997). In a sense, young people were prepared for the radical system change.

Beside longitudinal cohort studies, the particular value instrument was used in consecutive representative surveys. The aim of the present study is to analyse values as life orientations in the general population of Estonia, focusing on their structural change during the period from 1985 to 2008. We expect that the profoundly and rapidly changing societal context would be reflected in structural changes of life values. As Kluckhohn has not specified a systemic nature of value orientations, we can not present more specific hypotheses but proceed with an explorative analysis.

## Data, measurements and methods

The data is based on five representative ‘Work, family and leisure’ (WFL) population surveys carried out by the Institute of International and Social Studies: 1985 (N=1720), 1993 (N=1650), 1998 (N=2159), 2003 (N=1417) and 2008 (N=1430). In these surveys, besides questions on attitudes and behaviour in a variety of life domains, identical sets of questions on value orientations were used. Respondents had to assess on a 5-point Likert scale (from *very important* to *not at all important*) the personal importance of the following spheres: *family, children, health, close friends, faith, love, professional work, varied life (new places, acquaintances, impressions, etc.), cultural interests (reading, going to the theater, etc.), economic well-being, keeping up-to-date with current affairs, creative activities, physical fitness, self-education, social participation and voluntary activity, high social position, clean environment (nature)*.

Previous analyses of the same data (Heinla, 2009; Raudsepp, Tart & Heinla, 2013) were focused on the changing hierarchy of life values. The present study applies two varieties of structural analysis in order to discern major structural changes in value orientations during the observed period. With the help of hierarchical cluster analysis, we are going to classify the patterns of value profiles in different ethnic and age groups. With the help of multidimensional scaling, we try to get an overall graphic representation of the structure of life values in different ethnic and gender groups.

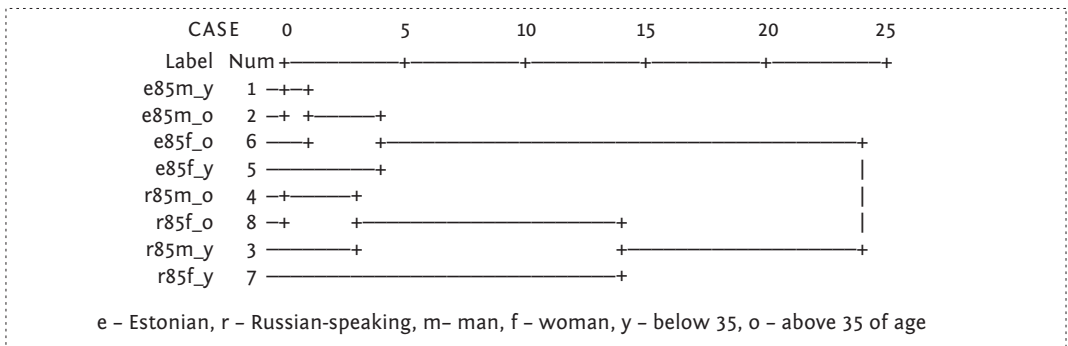
## Results

### Structural analysis

The following structural analysis enables us to distinguish patterns of life values and classes of respondents across five surveys with emphasis on their change. We will apply two different methods: classes of respondents are differentiated using hierarchical cluster analysis, and patterns of values are found with the help of multidimensional scaling.

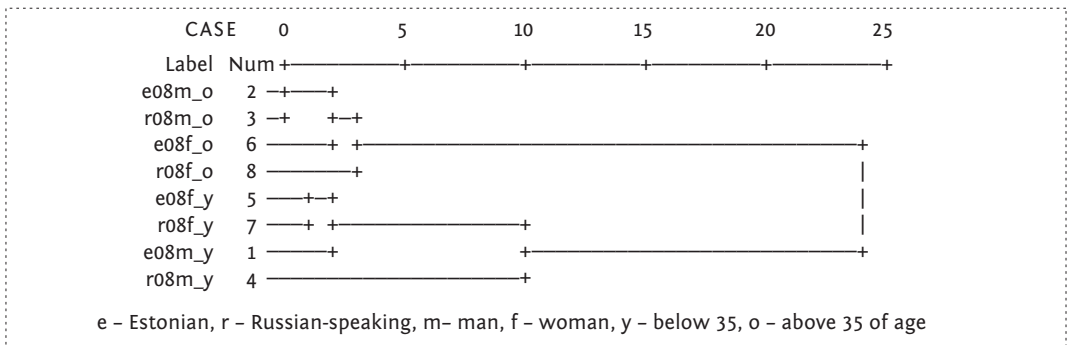
### Classes of respondents

We tried to distinguish distinct classes of respondents on the basis of their value profiles. Appendices 2-5 present the ranked order of life values separately for Estonian and Russian-speaking men and women of different age categories (below and above 35 years of age). These profiles of rank ordered values were used as input for a hierarchical cluster analysis (using the Ward method for clustering and squared Euclidean distances as a similarity measure) for grouping the categories of respondents.



**Figure 1:** Dendrogram of hierarchical cluster analysis of the value profiles of distinct population groups in 1985

Source: WFL 1985 survey.



**Figure 2:** Dendrogram of hierarchical cluster analysis of the value profiles of distinct population groups in 2008

Source: WFL 2008 survey.

Separate analysis of value profile clusters over the years reveals a very clear structural change. In 1985 value profiles of Estonians and Russian-speakers formed two separate clusters, in which Estonians were subdivided according to gender (men and women in different sub-clusters), and Russians were divided according to age (younger and older respondents in different sub-clusters) (Fig. 1).

In 1993 Estonians and Russians still formed separate value clusters, but Estonian subclusters were mixed in terms of age and gender. In 1998 the structure was less clear: young Russian women were positioned in the Estonian cluster, older Russian women remained in the Russian cluster. In 2003 a structural change occurred, which persisted also in 2008: again, two great clusters were formed, but now they were divided according to age, instead of ethnicity: younger and older respondents belonged to separate clusters, both consisting of Estonian and Russian men and women (Fig.2).

In the beginning of transition, Russian-speaking respondents differed from Estonians in terms of appreciating *professional work* and *varied life* more highly and assessing *nature* and *self-education* as less important.

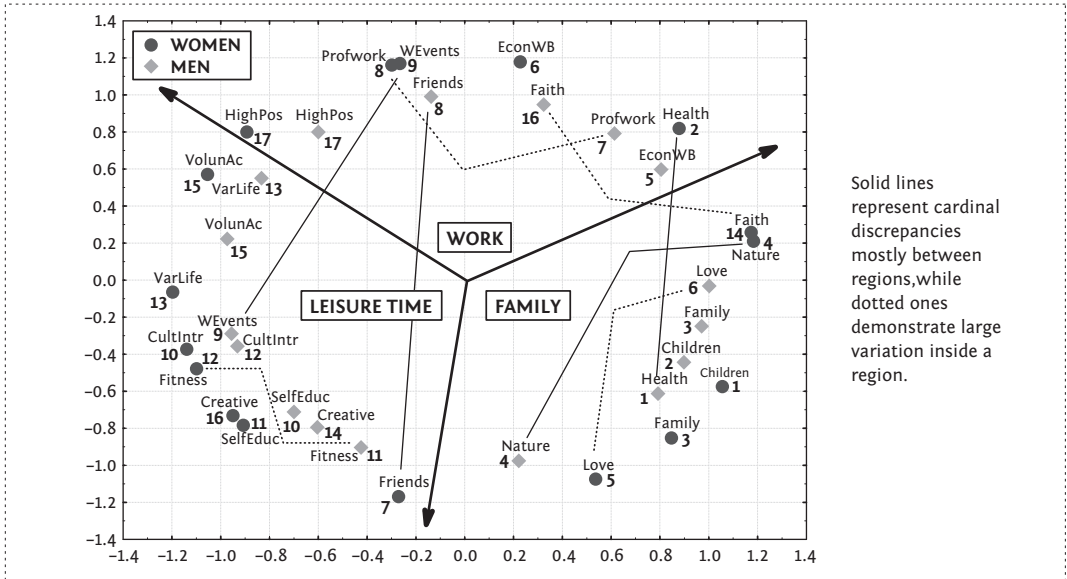
In the 2000s a characteristic of the pattern of value preferences of the young people compared to older ones is greater importance of *love* and *physical fitness*, on the one hand, and lesser importance of *clean nature*, *children* and *cultural interests*, on the other (see Appendices 2-5).

### Value patterns

#### Overall model

Multidimensional scaling (MDS) is a general term for techniques that construct measurements of similarity/dissimilarity between pairs of actors or events as the distances of representative points in a low-dimensional multidimensional space (Borg & Groenen, 2005). The results are represented as the configurations of points in a metric space and are formed from information about distances between points (proximities). Multidimensional scaling looks for overall similarities between value items. It places highly correlated items into a shared neighborhood on the graph, while non-correlated or negatively correlated ones fill more remote regions. We obtain a picture of quasi-circular arrangement, where we can separate regions of similarity and confrontation. Our input similarity matrix consists of the Pearson correlation coefficients for all involved value items.

In our case (see Figure 3), life values form quasi-circular structures where we can separate distinct value regions – FAMILY, WORK and LEISURE – along the circle. Such a structure suits our survey's aim perfectly. Family and work values ordinarily prevail, but both regions contain items with very low evaluation – *faith* and *high social position*. In the leisure time sector, *creativity* is rated quite low. *Cultural interests* and *social participation/voluntary activity* dominate in 1985, while most other items are suppressed. *Economic well-being* is highly appreciated (at the same level with love) after the fall of socialism. Discrepancies emerge when we disaggregate our samples by ethno-linguistic, gender, age, and other, grounds. For example, on Figure 3 women and men share *children-family*, *self-education-creativity* positions, but *friends*, *interest in world events* and *health* stay in remote positions along with *faith*. The first ones show stability and continuity, while the others demonstrate change, separating structural configurations, and distinct meaning structures. Thus, large stable parts of value structure scramble into interesting pieces of larger and smaller change. Additionally, we can note that ranking orders are not always determining similarity placement of values: all items in the FAMILY region stay high, but in women's case lowly rated *faith* comes into play. The WORK region contains modestly valued items, but the very last member of the rating scale – *high social position* – creeps in together with *faith* in the men's structure. The LEISURE region contains the mostly low-rated items, but among women *friends* also belong to this group. Thus, not only the evaluation of values but also the so-called 'similarity neighborhood' is important. Value migrations into another region in different survey years or for distinct subgroups indicate change and beg interpretation where great discrepancies may represent deep social rearrangements.



**Figure 3:** The MDS graph of gender value structures shows the main differences between and inside three regions

Source: The figure is based on correlation matrices of the aggregated data of WFL from 1985 to 2008 (17 value items).

**Table 1:** Membership of ideal model regions

FAMILY	WORK	LEISURE
Family	Professional work	Friends
Children	Economic well-being	Varied life
Faith	High social position	Cultural interests
Love	Keeping up-to-date with current events	Physical fitness
Health		Self-education
Nature		Voluntary activity
		Creative

Source: WFL 1985-2008 surveys.

Membership of three main regions – FAMILY, WORK and LEISURE – is given in Table 1. The only obstacle in forming this separation is the place of *friends* and *nature*, which may form an independent area or be added into any of the other areas. We chose them by their regional closeness on the overall MDS data plane to represent the LEISURE time and the FAMILY sections accordingly. The aggregated model seems quite logical and understandable in the context of surveys from which the data are taken. Surprisingly, it involves the quasi-circular structure (see the visualisation on Fig. 3) of items showing similarity with Schwartz’s model (Schwartz 1992).

If we compare ethno-linguistic and gender subgroups, then the ideal model still holds, but some value items will be placed out of their regions, when speaking of change. Quite surprisingly, the ethno-linguistic separation in Estonia is not as sensitive to change as the gender one, leaving main groupings untouched but showing reshuffling inside them (*nature* replacing *faith* from one border of the region



**Table 2:** Congruence coefficients for consecutive surveys in 1985-2008

	Compared pairs of survey years				
	1985-1993	1993-1998	1998-2003	2003-2008	2008-1985
Estonians	0.50	0.91	0.62	0.79	0.84
Russian-speakers	0.47	0.91	0.73	0.81	0.64
Estonian women	0.51	0.74	0.57	0.80	0.78
Estonian men	0.55	0.70	0.57	0.82	0.76
Russian-speakers women	0.50	0.66	0.88	0.86	0.56
Russian-speakers men	0.58	0.47	0.63	0.63	0.65

Source: WFL 1985-2008 surveys.

**Table 3:** Life-value items with the greatest structural changes in comparisons of consecutive surveys (the congruence coefficient below 0.40)

	Compared pairs of survey years				
	1985-1993	1993-1998	1998-2003	2003-2008	2008-1985
Russian-speakers	Profwork Cultint EconWB Fitness Creative	WEvents	Profwork VolunAc Nature	Friends	VarLife Cultint Fitness
Estonian women	Friends Love SelfEduc Nature	Faith Profwork	Friends Health VarLife Fitness Nature	Profwork Fitness	
Estonia men	Friends VarLife Nature	Faith EconWB	Faith VarLife EconWB Fitness	Profwork Fitness	Profwork
Russian-speakers women	Profwork VarLife EconWB Fitness Creative	Faith SelfEduc Nature	Profwork	Love	VarLife Cultint Fitness VolunAc
Russian-speakers men	Profwork Fitness VolunAc Nature	Faith Profwork EconWB SelfEduc HighPos WEvents	Friends VarLife Nature	Friends Children Fitness	Fitness VolunAc

Note: Abbreviations are given in Appendix 1.

Source: WFL 1985-2008 surveys.

to the other). There are no overwhelming discrepancies between individual value groups in Estonian and Russian-speaking communities. The shared value-space is largely the same with some minor differences in rankings but not in evaluation of items. At the same time, we can see from separate analysis that ranking and correlation based congruence are not linearly bound. *Faith*, which has a low ranking, is near to highly ranked *health* in the overall solution; *friends* in the ethno-linguistic solution and in gender solutions separates men and women, while being the neighbour of *professional work* in the first case and of *nature* in the second one.

In the gender comparison, there is more shuffling. On Figure 3, the MDS results of the cumulative gender data for both men and women are depicted, using two independent solutions (our structural analyses of the data were carried out via the statistical program *PROXSCAL*), and put together by a maximally overlapping solution through orthogonal rotation with the Procrustean analysis. On the Figure showing women's and men's similarity-dissimilarity structures, we can distinguish several similarity circles inside regions defined by the overall model: *children-health-family*; *high position-voluntary activity-varied life*; *cultural interests*; *self-education-creativity*.

Alongside the MDS solution that represents the similarities between value items, Figure 3 depicts their ranking order numbers from 1 (highest) to 17 (lowest) separately for women's and men's subgroups. While the overall structure of the regions remains, several substantial differences between women and men are visible:

- *faith* for women remains in the FAMILY region, but for men it shifts into the WORK region;
- *friends* remain for women in the LEISURE time region, but are situated in the WORK region for men;
- *keeping up-to-date with current events* changes its place for women into the LEISURE time region, remaining in the WORK region for men;
- *health* for men remains in the FAMILY region, while for women it is situated in the WORK region;
- *professional work, nature and love* separate genders in their normal regions more than in an ideal model.

We may conclude that these noted value items play a significant role and are responsible for a change of value structures from 1985 to 2008. The place of *faith* in women's life-world is naturally at odds, even in the formally highly secular Estonian society. *Friends* found in work situations and the work atmosphere dominates among men in the 1980s, and men are still spending much more time at work than at home in the post-socialist era. *Keeping up-to-date with current events* – discussions, reading newspapers and magazines, internet use for men is more work-related. The place of *professional work, nature and love* has not changed in importance as their ranks are close for men and women, but their position in relationships with other values has changed. Professional work remains close to economic well-being, but the other neighbour for men is *faith* and for women *high social position*. *Nature* borders with *faith* for women and is quite apart for men; *love* with *family* in both cases stay reversed in the family region. These are all reasonable changes arising from the changed social context. It seems that home and work relationships are gradually and partly interchanged and are giving way for leisure activities or have changed meanings. Women look at *economic success* as part of a career; *nature* has a more emotional meaning for women, while men associate work with *friends*.

#### Change of value structures in 1985-2008

As different numbers of values exist in distinct survey years, we have to adjust them in order to make a comparison. Putting the neighbouring years side by side, we will look for stability and change in main value domains as well as for a movement of values inside them. We use congruence of comparable value pairs to indicate the amount of change along with main transformations in values that take place on the MDS plane. MDS solutions are arbitrary in terms of their location, scale, and orientation of variables in geometric space. It is the distance relations between variables that are critical in MDS. Hence, there are extra transformations required prior to congruent rotation. If variables are centred (in deviation scores around their respective means), then the congruence coefficient is identical with the Pearson correlation coefficient. In both cases, the coefficient varies between  $-1.0$  and  $+1.0$ . A minimum factor congruence of 0.80 was suggested as indicative of conceptual similarity, with values above those indicating increasing similarity. In our yearly comparisons of the surveys, the outcome seldom oversteps this boundary but also does not drop below 0.40, which marks serious inappropriateness. Tables 2 and 3 represent results from 1985, along with closing the circle by comparing 2008 to 1985.

The intense change of values leaves only *family* without changed polarities for successive surveys. From Tables 2 and 3 it follows that there had been two agitated periods of profound change in the timeline and from the Soviet time to the restored Estonian Republic and from 1990s to 2000s up to five deep value changes have been involved. The most important changing factors have been the position of *professional work*, swinging between regions of WORK and LEISURE, and *close friends* shifting between WORK and FAMILY regions. Transformation times are giving a new value environment in both cases.

While the Soviet era workplace allowed leisure elements and strong friendships, these are gone in the capitalist mode of work. The workplace is not providing homelike elements any more. Also, the place of *physical fitness* changes and grows in importance, especially in the 2000s. Attitudes towards *nature* as a family sphere component are strengthened in the 2000s. In the stability of value configurations for Estonians in 1993-1998 and 2003-2008, transformations are not similar in the Russian-speaking community where more fluctuations emerge – even *children's* place in men's evaluations and the place of *love* among women become shaky.

Comparing the extreme ends of our timeline, we find unexpected similarity between the 1985 and 2008 results for Estonians, where only *professional work* has changed its place in value relationships. It may be the result of a shortened value list of only twelve shared items but, nevertheless, this speaks of a dreaded endgame of the political atmosphere of stagnation – similar then and now. For Russian-speakers, the greatest change had been in the position of *physical fitness* and *voluntary activity*. This may be explained through changed work conditions and basic needs for being healthy and sound – among Russian-speakers physical training may compensate for the feeling of political distress and voluntariness finds realisation in neighbourhood or religious activities instead of the quasi trade union activities of the Soviet period.

## Discussion

The same data collection instrument has been used in different sociopolitical contexts. The first survey was carried out in 1985, when Estonia was still a part of the Soviet Union. The period was characterised by relatively low personal freedom but secure employment and a low level of social inequality. It was the time of late socialism (Yurchak, 2005), when the soviet system was on its way to restructuring (perestroika). At that time, the first shifts in value profiles were observed, and the young generation was already moving in the direction of Western welfare society value patterns.

The next survey was carried out in 1993, soon after the fall of the Soviet regime and the subsequent re-establishment of Estonian independence in 1991. The early 1990s were characterised by radical political, economic and ownership reforms, and a destabilisation of the labor market. The survey carried out five years later (1998) fell on the time of a short economic recession. On the whole, the 1990s was a period of instability, political and economic restructuring. People were confronted with the insecure reality of liberal capitalism. The 2003 survey was carried out in a different social environment, one characterised by favorable economic trends and positive expectations in relation to EU membership among the majority of the population. The survey of 2008 was carried out in a period of increased stability and a significant improvement in the economic situation (although supported by a boom in bank loans), whereas the social impact of the world financial crisis and recession was not yet fully experienced in Estonia. So the 2000s brought some stabilisation and adaptation with the new societal reality. Society has transformed from late socialism to early capitalism. In the context of significant shifts in political, socio-economic and cultural spheres during 1985-2008, we expected to find profound changes in value patterns.

The relative importance of several life values – *family, friends, self-education, physical fitness, material well-being* – has steadily grown from 1985 to 2008 (Raudsepp et al. 2013). This result resonates with the results of studies in Schwartz's tradition, which have recorded the growing importance of hedonism, close relations and self-direction values during 1991-2003 (Kalmus & Vihalemm, 2004) as well as the trend towards individualisation (Halman & Voicu, 2010). Our study shows that transition from socialism to liberal capitalism has strengthened the orientation to the safety of close relationships (affiliation), on the one hand, and individual self-development towards competence and autonomy, related most probably to the growing motivation to increase one's competitive advantage, on the

other. In parallel, the increase of the importance of *economic well-being* reflects the overwhelming importance of financial success in the capitalist system and the expansion of consuming opportunities. This trend coincides with the general predictions on the psychological effects of a liberal capitalist system (Schwartz, 2007; Kasser, Cohn, Kanner & Ryan, 2007). *Cultural interests* and *faith* have steadily decreased in importance, reflecting the general trend of weakening ties with collective belief systems. Intensified work life in a market economy does not leave as much spare time for realising various cultural interests as it was possible during socialism. The result fits also with the general secularisation trend in a post-socialist world (Halman & Voicu, 2010).

Cluster analysis enabled to reveal a clear dynamic of distinct groups of respondents with similar value profiles. While in 1985 and 1993 groups of respondents were distinguished on the basis of ethnic background, then in 2003 and 2008 the dividing line went between the age groups (Estonians and Russian-speakers of similar age were more similar in terms of value profiles than younger and older respondents of a similar ethnic background). Thus, the societal and cultural transformation has led to the growing gap between the mentality of young and old generations, and at the same time the mentalities of Estonians and Russian-speakers have become more similar. This tendency fits well with the description of the post-communist transition as a traumatogenic social change with all the effects and coping strategies that are characteristic of cultural trauma.

Societal transition “empowers some, and disempowers others” (Kennedy, 2002, p. 300), produces new life opportunities for some, and loss and impoverishment for others. Previous analyses of life values as interpreted in the framework of materialism-postmaterialism, show growing gaps between different population groups in terms of deficit and postmaterialist values, differentiation between old people who live outside the capital (orientation to deficit values) and the young, educated urban affluent group, who are oriented towards postmaterialist values. During the period from 1985 to 2008, an increase of significance of post-materialist orientation has occurred only in the young and wealthy segments of the population (Heinla & Derman, 2010). Thus, during the observed period there was a mixture of various tendencies. For some groups, it was a transition from scarcity to security (with a focus on non-materialist, quality of life issues), and for other groups, a transition from relative security under socialism to scarcity and starvation.

Using multidimensional scaling analysis to find correspondence between value items in quite a long period allows us to mark the quasi-circular structure similar to Schwartz’s model. Thus, these surveys represent an opportunity to apply known methods to new data-sets, providing a model that expresses relationships between life values. It not only shows the differentiation of family, work and leisure time regions inside it but also demonstrates how the overall structure changes in cases of ethno-linguistic groups and by gender. Gender differences in Estonia seem to be even more profound than those between Estonians and Russian-speakers. It also depicts changes in the positioning of value items over time, bringing us to the conclusion that there are few items thrown into the wind of constant movement (*faith, professional work, friends*), while others stay in their place more predictably (mostly items within the family region). The most important changing factors have been the position of *professional work* alternating between regions of work and leisure, and *close friends* shifting between work and family regions. This tendency refers to the loss of the semi-private character of the work environment under capitalism (see Zdravomyslova & Voronkov, 2002).

Unexpectedly, there is less change when comparing 1985 and 2008 than between the 90’s and 00’s. Thus, we may conclude that the 90s and 00s are qualitatively distinct periods in terms of value consciousness, and the societal re-stabilisation in 2008 has revived the pattern of life values that was observed before the beginning of societal turmoil in 1985. Whether it is an indication of stabilisation or stagnation is worth discussing.

## Conclusion

Various approaches to the conceptualisation and measurement of human values – such as those by Shalom Schwartz, Ronald Inglehart, and the Kluckhohn's approach to values as orientations to different life spheres – reveal different and complementary aspects of value-based self-regulation and goal-setting on the societal and individual levels. In Inglehart's terms, post-socialist value orientation in general can be characterised as secular and survivalist. Only some groups of population (more young and wealthy) pursue a post-materialistic orientation. Studies based on Schwartz's conceptualisation of values have shown how transition from socialism to capitalism has favoured the pursuit of self-interest, competitiveness, materialistic values and goals (profit, wealth, possessions), and undermined concern for collectivist and universalist values (equality, solidarity, social altruism).

Value orientations analysed in the present article are more immune to macrosocial changes and the effect of social desirability. Orientations to family, work and leisure remain relatively stable in the context of turbulent societal changes. In times of a total collapse of the established order of things, including the political system and the social order of daily routine life, the system of values locates the source of order inside the individual.

The similarity of value patterns in 1985 and 2008 leads to a question: was it really a linearly progressive path back to normality and catching up with the Western standards or was it just recovering from the transition trauma, restoring the pre-transformation situation? Are we witnessing a spiral and not linear change in the sphere of life values? Post-socialist value differentiation can be described as a process in which former pseudo-postmaterialism has become genuine post-materialism for the winners of transformation and has transformed into survival values for the losers of transformation.

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**Appendix 1: Abbreviations**

How important are for you...	Abbreviation
Children, their welfare	Children
Family	Family
Health	Health
Clean, unpolluted nature	Nature
Love	Love
Economic well-being	EconWB
Close friends	Friends
Professional work	Profwork
Keeping up-to-date with current affairs (radio, TV, etc.)	WEvents
Self-education	SelfEduc
Physical fitness	Fitness
Cultural interests (reading, going to the theatre, movies, etc.)	CultIntr
Varied life	VarLife
Faith	Faith
Creative activities (technical, artistic, etc.)	Creative
Voluntary activity, social participation	VolunAc
High social position	HighPos

Source: WFL 1985–2008 surveys.

**Appendix 2: Rank order of values in Estonian men of different age groups in 1985-2008**

	1985		1993		1998		2003		2008	
	young	old	young	old	young	old	young	old	young	old
Children	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	4	1
Family	4	3	2	3	1	2	1	2	1	2
Nature	2	2	3	1	4	3	6	3	6	3
Love	5	5	4	5	3	4	3	5	2	5
Econ WB	3	4	5	4	6	5	4	4	5	4
Friends	7	7	6	7	5	7	5	7	3	6
Prof work	6	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	8	7
Self-education	10	10	8	8	8	8	8	8	9	8
Cultural int	9	8	10	9	11	10	11	10	11	10
Phys fitness	8	9	9	10	9	9	9	9	7	9
Varied life	11	12	11	11	10	11	10	11	10	11
Soc partic	12	11	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

Note: Young – below 35, old – above 35 years of age.

Source: WFL 1985–2008 surveys.



**Appendix 3:** Rank order of values in Russian speaking men of different age groups in 1985-2008

	1985		1993		1998		2003		2008	
	young	old	young	old	young	old	young	old	young	old
Children	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	3	1
Family	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Nature	7	5	4	3	7	5	6	4	5	3
Love	4	6	5	6	5	6	4	5	4	5
Econ WB	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	2	4
Friends	6	7	7	7	6	7	7	7	6	6
Prof work	5	3	6	5	4	3	5	6	7	8
Self-educ	11	12	10	10	11	10	9	9	10	9
Cult int	9	9	11	9	10	9	11	10	11	10
Phys fitness	10	10	9	8	9	8	8	8	8	7
Varied life	8	8	8	11	8	11	10	11	9	11
Soc particip	12	11	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

Note: Young – below 35, old – above 35 years of age.

Source: WFL 1985–2008 surveys.

**Appendix 4:** Rank order of values in Estonian women of different age groups in 1985-2008

	1985		1993		1998		2003		2008	
	young	old	young	old	young	old	young	old	young	old
Children	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	3	1
Family	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Nature	4	3	3	3	5	3	6	3	6	3
Love	3	5	4	4	3	4	2	4	2	4
Econ WB	5	4	6	5	6	5	5	5	5	6
Friends	6	8	5	6	4	6	4	6	4	5
Prof work	8	6	9	7	8	7	8	7	8	8
Self-educ	10	9	8	8	7	8	7	8	7	7
Cult int	7	7	7	9	9	9	10	9	10	10
Phys fitness	9	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	9	9
Varied life	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Soc particip	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

Note: Young – below 35, old – above 35 years of age.

Source: WFL 1985–2008 surveys.

**Appendix 5:** Rank order of values in Russian speaking women of different age groups 1985-2008

	1985		1993		1998		2003		2008	
	young	old	young	old	young	old	young	old	young	old
Children	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1
Family	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2
Nature	8	4	3	3	3	3	5	4	6	4
Love	3	6	5	6	4	5	4	5	2	5
Econ WB	4	3	4	4	5	6	3	3	4	3
Friends	5	7	6	7	7	7	6	7	5	6
Prof work	9	5	7	5	6	4	7	6	10	10
Self-educ	11	12	10	9	8	9	9	8	7	8
Cult int	7	8	8	8	10	8	11	9	11	9
Phys fitness	10	11	11	10	9	10	8	10	8	7
Varied life	6	9	9	11	11	11	10	11	9	11
Soc particip	12	10	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

Note: Young – below 35, old – above 35 years of age.

Source: WFL 1985–2008 surveys.