

The universe of human values: a structural, developmental and sociopolitical view

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General introduction

Toward a redefinition of the concept of values

In the philosophical as well as in the psychological or sociological axiology a number of definitions and conceptions of values could be found (Musek, 1982; Musek, 1993a). As examples, two broadly accepted definitions could be mentioned here. Clyde Kluckhohn (1951; Musek, 1993a) defines values as concepts of the desirable, which influence how people decide for actions and how they evaluate events. And in terms of English and English (1972; Musek, 1993a) "the values are abstract, often implicit conceptions, which define to the individual the goals or means for attaining the goals he considers as desirable". Very often cited characteristics of values are the evaluative note, abstractness, cultural sharing and obligatory personal involvement.

Some years ago I proposed somewhat different model of values (Musek, 1982). According to this proposition the values could be understood as motives or motivational goals on the very high level of generality (see also Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987). They could be conceived as general and relatively consistent ideations about goals and events, which we highly estimate, which refer to broad classes of subordinated objects, actions and relations, and which direct our interests, attitudes and our behavior. The values then can be viewed as the most general motivational goals occupying the top of hierarchy of such goals.

If the values can be conceived as generalised and structuralised motivational forces we can also better understand their role in the life of individuals and in the societies. Further, we can hypothesize that organised value systems and orientations should reflect the life span differences (differences between generations) as well as the differences between cultural, socioeconomic and sociopolitical systems in society. In the present study, an attempt has been made to examine three levels of modelind the existing universe of human values by means of psychological approach: the structure of the universe of values, the life span development of values and the relationship between sociopolitical changes and values.

Study 1

The structure of values

Method used in our studies of values

Subjects and design

198 subjects of both sexes (111 females and 87 males) participated in the study. The mean age of the subjects was about 23 years (22.88; standard deviation 7.95). The investigation was designed as multivariate correlational study of 54 variables represented by ratings of importance of respective values on 1 to 100 rating scale continuum.

Instruments

A list of values containing 54 different values has been used in the study. The values have been selected on the grounds of our previous research data. The complete list of values is shown on appendix A.

Procedure

Each subject rated 54 values one after one on a 1 to 100 graded importance - nonimportance rating scale. The ratings have been alleviated by using a value as an anchoring standard assigning the rating 50 to it.

Subjects received the lists of values with detailed instructions how to complete them. The values were listed one by one in the same order. The subjects rated them one after one using a rating scale continuum from the grade 1 (the minimum of importance) to the grade 100 (the maximum of importance). They were asked to rate the importance of the values presented in the list as they feel personally. The first value on the list (the self-knowledge) was already assigned to the rating 50. This value served only as the anchoring standard for further ratings and was not used in the subsequent analyses.

The analysis of results

The value ratings of subjects were collected, correlated and entered into the correlational matrix disposed for further statistical analyses. Various multivariate analyses, especially cluster and factor analyses were then performed in order to reveal the structure of relationships between different values.

The hierarchical structure of values

The values can be classified into a number of categories occupying different levels in the hierarchical structure of human goals. Numerous categories of values at different levels of hierarchy have been identified in the theoretical and empirical investigations. In our own research, a clear hierarchy of the categories of values emerged as a result of performed factor-, cluster- and other multivariate analyses (Musek, 1993a; Musek, 1993b; Musek, 1994).

As we can see from the Figure 1, the results of factor and other multivariate analyses confirmed the hierarchical structure of the values. According to this structure, the values can be classified at different levels of generality, from the most general at the top to the most specific in the bottom. At the most general level of the

entire structural hierarchy, there are only two very large categories (macrocategories) of values (Dionysian and Apollonian macrocategory). On the next level, each of these two categories splits into two further subcategories, which could be called the value types. Dionysian values could be subdivided into two groups, hedonistic values and potency values. The first group (hedonistic values) contains the values, connected with sensual and material pleasures, while the second group (potency values) includes the values, which have to do with achievement, success and reputation, but also with patriotism. At the next level, each of the value types could be further divided into the middle-range categories of values. Thus, the hedonistic type disjoin into sensual and health category, the potency type into the status and patriotism category, the moral type into the traditional, democratic (or societal) and social values and the fulfilment type into the cognitive, cultural, self-actualising and spiritual values. Finally, at the most specific level of hierarchy, we can find different single values, which can be derived from the middle-range categories of values.

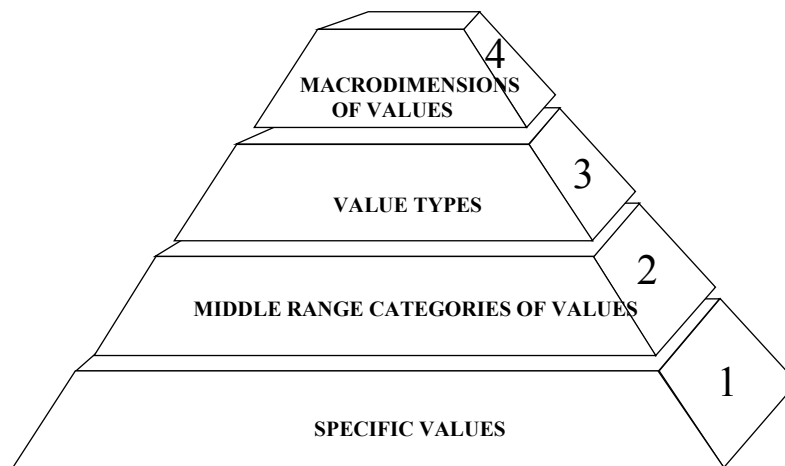


Figure 1. The four-level hierarchy of values. It includes the level of macrodimensions, the level of value types, the level of middle-range value categories and the level of specific values.

Study 2

The life-span development of value system

Confronted with our results and associations we hypothesised that they may reflect not only a structural, but also a developmental hierarchy. We assumed, that the rated importance of main value categories varies with the age or developmental stages of the individual person. In order to test our assumptions we programmed a preliminary investigation.

Interestingly enough, the content of four value types resemble an ancient oriental classification of values. According to this classification, the values, emerging most early in the life of human being, have to do with life pleasures and satisfaction of sensual and physical needs. At the next stage, the values connected with success, achievement and reputation take the place. In the next phase, the individual becomes more and more occupied with the values, regulating his duties and responsibilities. And finally, he achieves the level of progressive orientation toward the values of inner life, of spiritual life and self-transcendence. Indeed, these four categories of values very well correspond to our four types of values: the hedonistic values, the potency values, the moral values and the fulfilment values.

We may hypothesise therefore that the relative importance of clustering values will be shifted from hedonistic and potency values to moral and spiritual (self-growth) values during the life span of individuals. The results of our investigation indeed confirmed connections between the age of the subjects and the rated importance of values. The correlations between the age and the ratings for two largest and four more specific categories of values are presented in the Table 1.

*Table 1.
Correlation between categories of values and age.*

CATEGORIES OF VALUES	CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS
APOLLONIAN VALUES	.27
DIONYSIAN VALUES	-.51
hedonistic values	-.24
potency values	-.41
moral values	.06
fulfilment values	.41

The results clearly show that the importance of Dionysian values decreases, and the importance of Apollonian values increases with the age of our subjects. At more specific level of value dimensions, the hedonistic values and potency values tend to decrease and the fulfilment values tend to increase during the life span of adult person (moral values remaining more or less stagnant).

A developmental hierarchy of values is interesting not only because it fits a traditional philosophy and even folkloristic theory of values, but still more because it throw some new light on puzzling phenomena like notorious value conflict between generations. It is possible that the conflict between generations reflects the different

value orientations resulting from the normal, developmental change (or shift) in the hierarchy of values. In some surrealistic way, for instance, the fifty years old person is in the value conflict with him- or herself at twenties. The fact, that the value conflict between generations is a perpetuating phenomenon - not a characteristic of just two or more present generations - is quite in accord with this explanation.

Study 3

The sociopolitical context of values

The connection with political and religious adherence

Since the beginning of the organized religious and political life, the value orientations have been an integral part of the programs of the religious and political movements or leaders. The differences in value orientations have been traditionally reported for religious people and atheists, conservatives and liberals (radicals), rightists and leftists, democratic and authoritarian political movements. Thus, a question might be raised whether the political and religious preferences of the individuals are substantially related to their value orientations. In the literature we can find an abundance of research concentrating on relationship between attitudes and political orientation (Eysenck, 1954) or attitudes and religious commitment (). Despite the growing interest in the study of values, from the pioneering work of Spranger (1930), Allport, Vernon & Lindzey (1951), Murray & Kluckhohn (1953) and Rokeach (1973, 1979), to the more recent cross-cultural (Bond, 1988; Hofstede, 1980; Hui & Triandis, 1986; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, 1990) and developmental research of values (Musek, 1993) no great attention in psychological research has been devoted to the individual values in relation to the political and religious orientation. Thus, as an extension of my research of the values in the transition processes in post-communist countries (Musek, 1995; Musek, 1996, 1997) I also planned to investigate the relationship between the values and political as well as religious adherence more thoroughly. In this presentation, I will briefly report the main result of the research on that topic.

The case of transitional changes in value system in Post-communist European countries

Transition processes in former socialist societies in Europe are still the matter of intensive conceptual debate in many fields and disciplines. Beside some common factors influencing the transitional changes we can also find obvious differences and dissimilarities between ex-socialist countries in political, economic and psychosocial domain.

The changes in psychological and psychosocial domain have been detected in post-communist countries even before the very beginning of political and economic transition. They included the disintegration of socialist ideology and value-system (vastly supported by previous political regime), accompanied with the invigoration of political autonomism and the simultaneous increase of pro-individual, entrepreneurial, pro-democratic, pro-religious and pro-nationalist orientation. There is a common

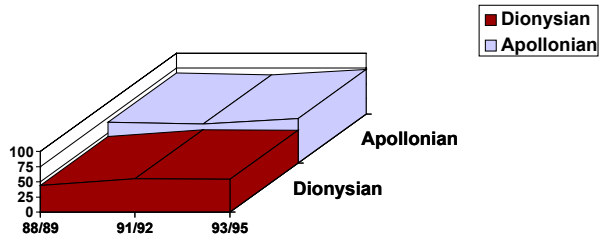
observation that the intensity of these changes correlated with the cultural and historical factors including the closeness to the western or central-European tradition (with the historical passages through Reformation, Anti-Reformation and Enlightenment phases), the commitment to catholic rather than orthodox religion, the adherence to the individualistic rather than collectivistic culture etc. For instance, Slovenia, the most western of all these countries, differs from the others in many respects on the ground of its specific pre-transition conditions. Slovenia has been more pro-western in orientation, strongly adherent to the central European cultural tradition and had more improved economy. Slovenia shows therefore comparatively more indications of stable and accelerated economic development in transition period and has gained some strategic goals of post-socialist development more rapidly (Orazem and Vodopivec, 1994; Pleskovic and Sachs, 1994; Vodopivec and Hribar-Milic, 1993).

Considering the fundamental role of value system in each society, possible changes in value orientation period deserve a special attention in analysing transitional processes in Central and East Europe. Despite the fact, that the value systems are by definition rather stable and resistant to change, we may expect that they cannot remain unchanged in confrontation with a large societal transition occurring in Post-communist countries in Europe.

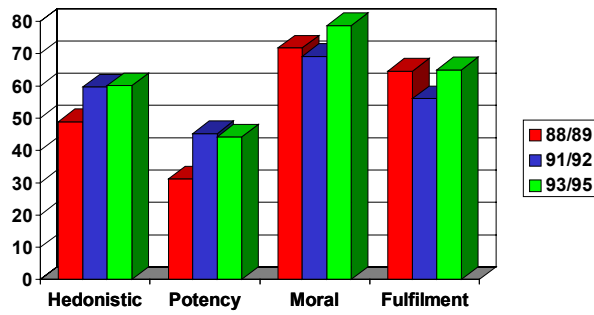
The major change in value orientation observed in Slovenia (with similar trends elsewhere in former socialist countries, especially in Central Europe) during the period from 1988 to 1994 is the significant increase of the rated importance of dionysian values (see Figure 2a). Dionysian values increased constantly while the apollonian values remained approximately at the same level. We can see that the raise of dionysian values is due to the increments in both hedonistic and potency value types (see Figure 2b). The moral value type remained more or less stagnant during the period of measurement, while the fulfilment values showed a significant fall-down in the 1991 and then raised again in the next years.

The value types could be further divided into different middle-range categories of values. As shown in Figure 2c, the most significant changes have been recorded for patriotic, status and sensual values which consistently increased. Social and security values also increased, but only in the period after 1991. The other categories remain mostly at the same level (democratic, cognitive and traditional values) or even decreased in the period from 1988 to 1991 (cultural and religious values).

a



b



c

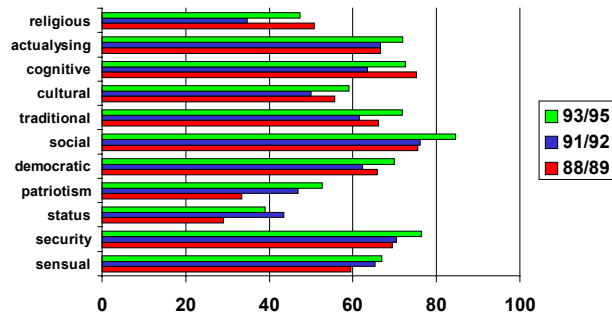


Figure 2. The observed shifts in the ratings of the importance of values in the period 1988 to 1994 in Slovenia: (a) the macrocategories (Dionysian and Apollonian values), (b) the value types and (c) middle-range categories.

The observed changes and shifts in value orientation are congruent with political, social and economic changes in pre-transition and transition period in Slovenia. The changes in value orientation indicate the rise of individualism, competitiveness and nationalism, all embodied in dionysian values, in hedonistic and potency value types and particularly in status, sensual, security and patriotic values. This picture can easily be associated with the dominant changes on the political and economic scene: the transformation of totalitarian system to the pluralistic democracy and the progression from the socialist to the market economy. The rise of patriotism and nationalism in transition period is very understandable for the situation of Slovenia, which struggle for independence culminated successfully in 1991.

Nevertheless, the changes in value system - although significant - are not very dramatic and they could even be appeased soon in the future. The observed modifications in value orientation reflect probably not only the realm of transitory processes, but also the specific situation of Slovenia with its historical, cultural and geographical inclinations.

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