

Values and Value Orientations in the Background of European Cultural Traditions

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POVZETEK

VREDNOTE IN VREDNOSTNE USMERITVE V EVROPSKI KULTURNI TRADICIJI

Velike socialne spremembe, preobrazbe in tudi konflikti so pogosto povezani s konfliktnostjo vrednotnih usmeritev skupin oziroma skupnosti, ki so vanje vključene (verske, etnične, nacionalne, socioekonomske in druge). Naše poznavanje vrednot, vrednotnih usmeritev, sistemov in hierarhij v našem kulturnem prostoru in njegovi pretekli zgodovini, pa je še vedno zelo skromno. V pričujočem prispevku želim prikazati rezultate naših psiholoških raziskav vrednot in z njihovo pomočjo odgovoriti na naslednja vprašanja:

- 1. Katere temeljne vrednotne usmeritve obstajajo pri slovenski populaciji,*
- 2. kako so te usmeritve in posamezne vrednote povezane, organizirane in strukturirane,*
- 3. kakšne razlike v vrednotnih sistemih in usmeritvah obstajajo med pomembnimi skupinami,*
- 4. kako se ti sistemi in usmeritve razvijajo in oblikujejo skozi življenje odraslih posameznikov in*
- 5. kakšne so implikacije poznavanja vrednotnih mehanizmov in procesov pri pojasnjevanju moralnih, socialnih in generacijskih konfliktov ter kriz, značilnih za naš čas in prostor.*

Introduction

Major social conflicts are often connected with conflicting value orientations of relevant groups or communities (religious, ethnic, national, socioeconomic, cultural). Unfortunately, our knowledge of the values, value orientations and hierarchies of values which are commonly shared in our culture in this time is still deficient.

In this presentation I will expose a summarized review of our investigations concerning the values and value orientations being rated by different samples of the Slovene population. Briefly, I will concentrate upon the following four issues:

1. the implicit structure of values,
2. the developmental hierarchy of values,
3. the relation of our results to the existing cultural tradition in Europe, and

4. the implications of our results for the solution for some puzzling problems (as for instance the value conflict between generations and the crisis of values).

Implicit structure of values

Some years ago, I suggested that values should be conceived as beliefs related to the motivational goals on a very high level of generality (Musek, 1982). This more general definition is in good accord with the more recent detailed definition of Schwartz and Bilsky (1987). Thus, the universe of human values is hierarchically structured. According to the majority of authors, who investigated the values by means of empirical methods, the structure of human values is hierarchically organised (Morris, 1956; Murray & Kluckhohn, 1951; Musek, 1993; Rokeach, 1973). Thus, the structure of the values could be modeled by a hierarchy reaching from the most specific level of single values or valuable goals to more and more general levels of value categories (see Figure 1).

According to the above mentioned theoretical assumption, several empirical analyses of the universe of human values have been carried out in order to reveal the implicit structure of values extending through the most general levels of the hierarchy. With these analyses we intended to clarify some fundamental issues related to the psychological theory of values. First, we intended to find the most general categories of values, which are based on empirical data and second, we intended to discover the inner structure of these most general categories of values. And finally, we intended to find the possible relationship of the established categories of values with the age of the subjects, for we have been curious to know if there exists also a developmental hierarchy of values.

In our empirical studies the list of 54 values was analysed by different methods commonly used in psychological research (Table 1). The list (survey) of values was presented to the various samples of subjects. The subjects have been asked to rate the importance of each value included in the list on a subjective rating scale extending from 1 to 100 points. The ratings of the subjects were then collected and put under various statistical analyses including the multivariate analyses that allow us to reveal the inner, implicit structure of the entire system of values being rated.

Table 1.

List of 54 values used in our studies.

HONESTY
SOCIABLE LIFE
LOVE FOR CHILDREN
BEING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE
KNOWLEDGE
GENEROSITY AND UNSELFISHNESS
DILIGENCE
LONGEVITY
REPUTATION IN SOCIETY
HARMONY WITH PARTNER
FREEDOM
MORAL PRINCIPLES

CONCORDANCE AND HARMONY BETWEEN PEOPLE
SUCCESSFUL CAREER
SPORTS AND RECREATION
FAITH IN GOD
COMFORTABLE LIFE
LOVE FOR HOMETLAND
RESPECT FOR LAWS
COMPANIONSHIP AND SOLIDARITY
BEAUTY (ENJOYING BEAUTY)
PEACE IN THE WORLD
CREATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS
FIDELITY
CULTURAL CONCERN
GOOD SEXUAL RELATIONS
POWER AND INFLUENCE
MONEY AND WEALTH
PROGRESS OF HUMANITY
SELF-FULFILMENT
HEALTH
LEISURE TIME
NATIONAL EQUITY
PERSONAL ATTRACTIVENESS
FULL AND EXCITING LIFE
SECURITY
FAMILY HAPPINESS
REST AND PEACE
JUSTICE
GOOD FOOD AND DRINKS
FRIENDSHIP
WISDOM
EQUALITY BETWEEN PEOPLE
NATIONAL PRIDE
GLORY AND ADMIRATION
FREE MOVEMENT
JOY AND ENTERTAINMENT
HOPE IN THE FUTURE
LOVE
DISCOVERING THE TRUTH
ORDER AND DISCIPLINE
ARTISTIC ENJOYMENT
POLITICAL SUCCESS
EXCEEDING AND SURPASSING OTHER PEOPLE

The overall results of our multivariate analyses (especially factor- and cluster analyses) showed very convincingly that the subjects' in their ratings unconsciously grouped different values into a number of categories. Moreover, these categories are still correlated, thus forming new categories of a higher order of generality. To be more precise, the results showed a well organized hierarchical structure of the universe of values being rated. This structure extends from the lowest, the most specific

level of single values, through the higher levels of value categories (middle range categories and value types) to the most general superdimensions of values (Figure 1).

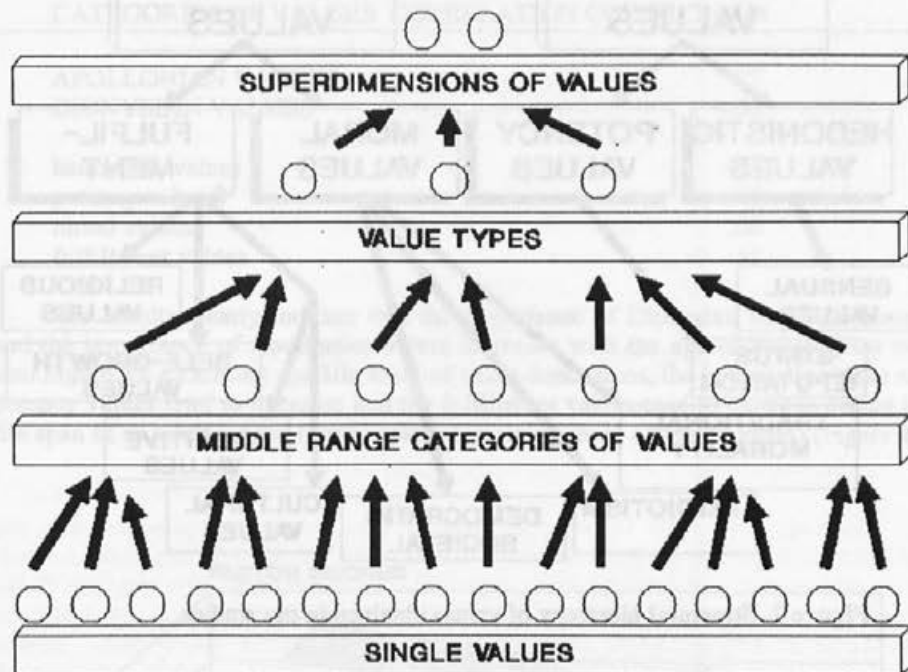


Figure 1. Structural hierarchy of values. It encompasses different levels of generality which extend from single values to value superdimensions.

From the results we can clearly identify the values that compose the categories of values on different levels of the entire value hierarchy and therefore we can interpret the implicit meaning of these categories (see Figure 2).

For instance, the results of factor analyses confirmed the existence of two very large dimensions or types of values (Dionysian and Apollonian) and four more specific but still very general categories: the hedonistic values concerning life pleasures, entertainment and sensuality, the potency values concerning the ideals of achievement, success and reputation, the moral values concerning the social and ethical ideals, the duties and responsibilities, and the fulfillment values concerning the self-actualizing goals, the sense of life, the spiritual and self-transcending ideals. Interestingly enough, the content of four subclusters resemble an ancient oriental classification of values. According to this classification, the values, emerging most early in the life of a 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 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.

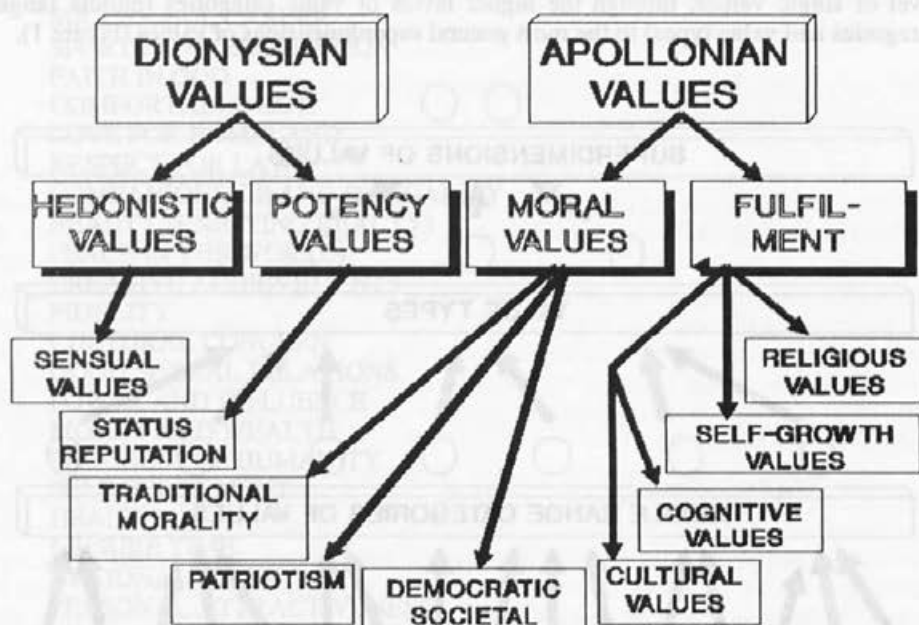


Figure 2. Structural hierarchy of values obtained in our studies.

Developmental hierarchy of values

In fact, the results of our investigation showed interesting connections between the age of the subjects and the rated importance of values. Confronted with these 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 the 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.

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. In that case the developmental changes in value orientations could be expected, reaching from orientation to hedonism and potency in earlier periods of life, to orientation to moral and spiritual values in the latter periods of life.

The results of our investigation definitely showed interesting 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 2.

Table 2.
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
fulfillment values	.41

The results clearly indicate that the importance of Dionysian values decreases, and the importance of Apollonian values increases with the age of our subjects (see also Figure 3). At a more specific level of value dimensions, the hedonistic values and potency values tend to decrease and the fulfillment values tend to increase during the life span of an adult person (moral values remaining more or less stagnant) (Figure 4).

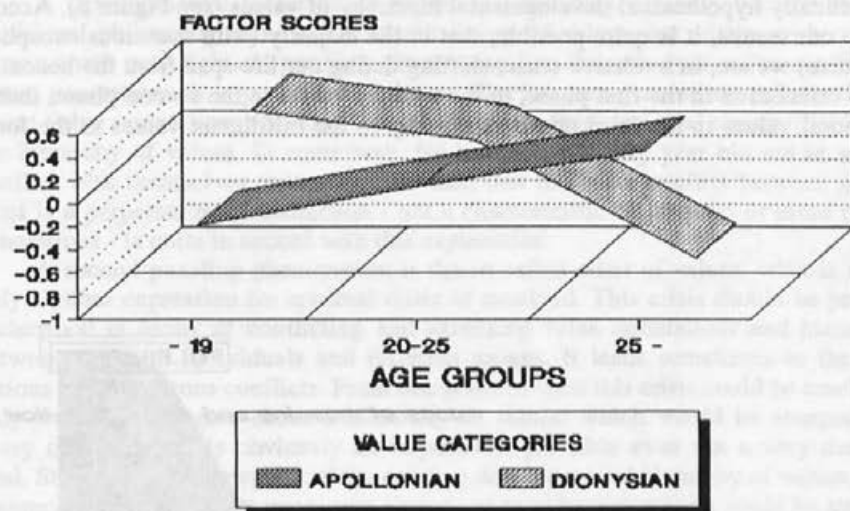


Figure 3. Factor scores for apollonian and dionysian values by three age groups.

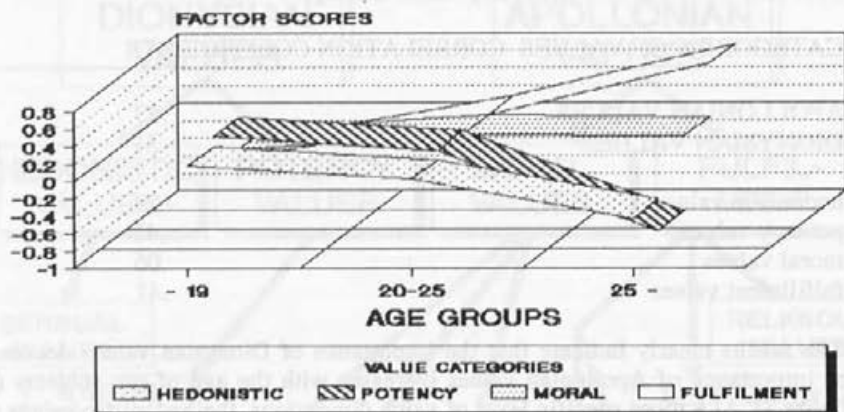


Figure 4. Factor scores for four value types related to age groups.

Certainly, our results are only preliminary ones, but they are in accord with our theoretically hypothesised developmental hierarchy of values (see Figure 5). According to our results, it is quite possible, that in the majority (with numerous exceptions of course) we are, in a relative sense, shifting during our life-span from the hedonistic value orientation in the first phase, to the potency values in the second phase, then to the moral values in the third phase and finally to the fulfillment values in the fourth phase.

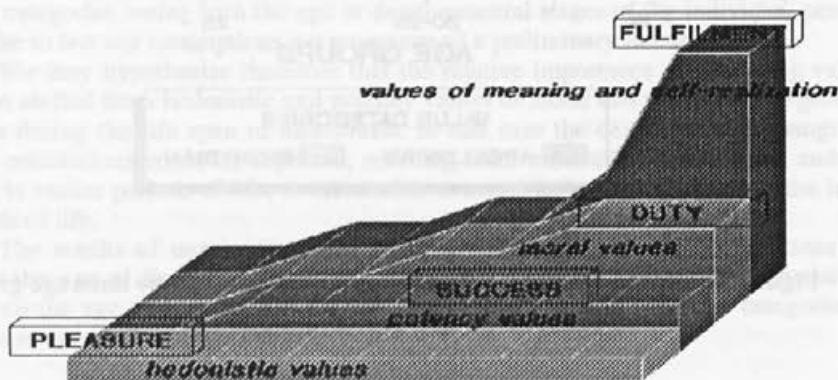


Figure 5. Developmental hierarchy of values.

The cultural space of Central Europe: Shared value system?

The results obtained from our studies show that implicit structure of values in the minds of Slovene subjects are in general agreement with many - if not all - value categories being traditionally highly credited (valuated) in Central, Western and Northern Europe. Unfortunately, we are lacking more precise empirical evidence which would allow exact comparison between the value systems of the adult population of Slovenia and other countries. By a rather rough inspection, the implicit values of our samples are closely shared with those parts of Europe, that belong to the so-called individualistic culture (Bond, 1988; Hofstede, 1980; Hui, 1986; Schwartz, 1990a, 1990b; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). On the other hand, they departed in many aspects from the value systems characteristic for the collectivist cultures, being more pronounced in some southern and eastern parts of Europe. This is not very surprising, considering the fact, that in past centuries the Slovenian region was dominantly influenced by the cultural impact from Central and Western Europe. Even the impact of the Protestant movement and consequently of Protestant ethics was significant in our country. It cannot be surprising therefore, that the value system of the people inhabiting Central Europe, including Slovenes, is quite similar.

The value conflicts and the crisis of values

A developmental hierarchy of values is interesting not only because it fits a traditional philosophy and even folklorist theory of values, but still more because it throws some new light on puzzling phenomena like the 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 way, for instance, the fifty year old are in a value conflict with themselves at twenty. 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.

A second puzzling phenomenon is the so-called crisis of values, what is maybe only another expression for spiritual crisis of mankind. This crisis should be properly understood in terms of conflicting and agonising value orientations and hierarchies between different individuals and different groups. It leads sometimes to the more serious and dangerous conflicts. From one point of view this crisis could be resolved if only we could to agree about a hierarchy of values, which would be acceptable to every one. But that is obviously an impossible, probably even not a very desirable goal. Still, from the viewpoint of the existing developmental hierarchy of values, some common basis for a more consensus agreement in value orientation could be attained, and, moreover this agreement would be founded on - let me say - natural psychological rule. If there is a developmental trend to shift from the hedonistic to the fulfillment values, why not accept this relative hierarchy as a leading principle in our life? Consequently, we can adopt the "natural" development of our value orientation as a leading principle in our life, that could enable us to cope with problems and avoid violent and extremely conflicting solutions. The developmental hierarchy teaches us simply - not to abandon our hedonistic and potency strivings, but to conform them to the moral, and especially to the fulfillment ideals - notably creativity, the meaning of life and love. We can seek pleasure, we can seek power, but we should do this in the service of our social concern and in the service of our personal growth in both the emotional and

spiritual sense. We can pursue our hedonistic and potency goals, but within the limits expressed by tolerance, concern for others, self-actualization and self-transcendence.

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