

Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts: The Estonian Example

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Cultural Value Differences, Value Stereotypes, and Diverging Identities in Intergroup Conflicts: The Estonian Example

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An examination of the relationship between cultural values, value stereotypes and social identities in Estonia, where intergroup conflicts triggered riots in the capital Tallinn in April 2007, using data from the European Social Survey on cultural differences and value trends as the background to a survey exploring perceived group values and assessed social identities among ethnic Estonians and members of the Russian-speaking minority. The study, conducted in summer 2008, found agreement across both ethnic groups about the values of a typical group member, but no accuracy in their attribution. The Estonian students ($n = 152$) avoided Eastern-European identification, while the Russian-speaking students ($n = 54$) did not want to give up Estonia's Soviet past. We found that attributed rather than self-rated value differences between groups caused the conflicts, whilst diverging identities were found to make value stereotypes more extreme.

“In the former Soviet Union, communists can become democrats, the rich can become poor and the poor rich, but Russians cannot become Estonians and Azeris cannot become Armenians” (Huntington 1993, 26). This statement by political scientist Samuel P. Huntington shortly after Estonia regained its independence in 1991 offers a gloomy forecast for the integration of its sizable minority. People with Russian, Belorussian, or Ukrainian as mother tongue (hereafter the Russian-speaking minority), who have lived in Estonia since the time of the Soviet occupation, represent 28.9 per cent of the total population (Statistics Estonia 2008).

In April 2007, when a Soviet-era war memorial (a bronze statue of a soldier) was removed from the centre of Estonia's capital city Tallinn to a remote cemetery, an angry crowd of over one thousand, largely Russian-speakers, “started to attack property in the surrounding streets, breaking shop windows and smashing the interiors, looting, and turning over cars” (Ehala 2009, 142). Hundreds were detained in two nights of rioting; most were released shortly afterwards, but more than sixty individuals were charged with criminal offences. A foreign policy crisis between Russia and Estonia ensued as the issue of the “bronze soldier” became highly politicised (see Brüggemann and Kasekamp

2008 for details and diplomatic ramifications). For many members of the Russian-speaking minority, the statue commemorates liberation from the Nazis by the Red Army and over the years had become a valuable part of their social identity. From the perspective of a number of ethnic Estonians, the statue is a symbol of the occupation and oppression of their country by the Soviet Union (Ehala 2009).

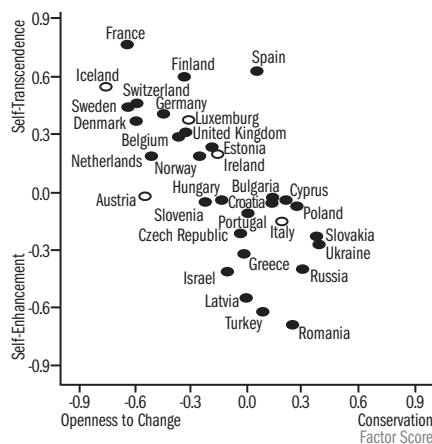
In times of conflict self-rated, as well as attributed, cultural differences between groups become more accentuated. We therefore set out to relate both real and attributed cultural differences in value preferences to the inter-group relationship in Estonia. Researchers repeatedly use values to describe cultures and many definitions for cultural values have been proposed (for example Hofstede 2001; Inglehart and Baker 2000; Schwartz 2006). Cultural values “evolve as preferences for resolving basic issues in managing life in society” (Schwartz 2006, 178), telling people what is appropriate in their social environment.

Our general thesis is that attributed rather than real value differences between groups caused the conflicts described above. Further, we propose that national character stereotypes are not independent of social identities (created by

accession to the European Union or pre-existing) and are therefore linked to them.

There is a body of research on cultural differences in value priorities in Estonia covering the period from 1991 (still under Soviet-era) to the present (Lauristin and Vihalemm 1997; Vihalemm and Kalmus 2009). However, these results have never been placed in a wider European context and therefore probably overestimate cultural value differences within the country. The appearance of representative, cross-cultural surveys like the European Social Survey (ESS) (Jowell and the Central Co-ordinating Team 2007) allows the development of values among the two major ethnic groups within Estonia to be analysed in the context of cultural values across Europe. Estonia participated in the second, third, and fourth rounds of the ESS (www.europeansocialsurvey.org). To be able to test whether value stereotypes are accurate, we next present representative average value preferences among ethnic Estonians and the Russian-speaking minority in Estonia. Europe's map of cultural values is shown in Figure 1. It displays the means of thirty-three European countries for the two value dimensions Self-Transcendence–Self-Enhancement and Openness to Change–Conservation.

Figure 1: Cultural map of value means from the European Social Survey 2004–2008

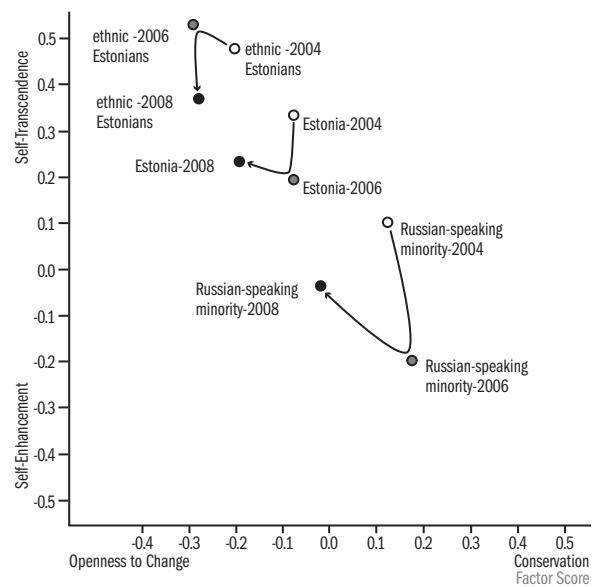


Note: Thirty-three countries (average per country $n = 1839$, $SD = 446$) participated in at least one of the four ESS rounds (2008; filled markers). The estimated European average is 0/0 (as overall $SD = 1.00$, effect sizes are visually derivable). Source: Norwegian Social Science Data Services. 2009. Data Archive and Distributor of the ESS Data. Round 4: third edition, production date Oct. 12, 2009.

The wealthy European countries were located close to the Self-Transcendence and Openness to Change poles, whilst the majority of countries in transition were near the Conservation and Self-Enhancement poles (Schwartz and Bardi 1997). Estonia was located at the centre (+0.23 for Self-Transcendence and -0.19 for Conservation).

Figure 2 presents trends for the two main ethnic groups in Estonia separately. The overall values for Estonia as a country changed only slightly. The observation that the values preferred by ethnic Estonians and the Russian-speaking minority were located in different quadrants suggests cultural differences between the groups.

Figure 2: Value development in Estonia from 2004 to 2008



Note: For sample sizes see text. The sample was categorised according to the languages spoken most often at home. Respondents who reported Estonian as the language most often spoken at home were categorised as ethnic Estonians. All respondents who marked Russian, Belorussian, or Ukrainian as either their first or second language at home were categorised as belonging to the Russian-speaking minority. In cases where a clear categorisation was not possible, the country of birth was used.

In the European context the differences between the ethnic groups were relatively small. In 2004 and 2008 the values for ethnic Estonians ($n = 1102$, $0.48/-0.20$; $n = 829$, $0.37/-0.28$) and the Russian-speaking minority ($n = 690$,

0.10/0.12; $n = 639$, $-0.04/-0.02$) were located at the same areas (as overall $SD = 1.0$, effect sizes of change: $d < .20$). By 2006 members of the Russian-speaking minority ($n = 621$, $-0.18/0.21$) were closer to the values of the Russians ($-0.38/0.31$), whilst ethnic Estonians ($n = 1314$, $0.53/-0.29$) were very close to the values of their Nordic neighbour Finland ($0.54/-0.33$). This inter-group polarisation may be the result of the dashing of hopes evoked by the accession to Western institutions for the ethnic minority, or may be caused by increased conflict between the two cultural groups, which made them describe themselves as more different than they normally would do. However, the values of the two ethnic groups have shifted before, during the period of rapid political and socioeconomic change after Estonia regained its independence (Lauristin and Vihalemm 1997, 257). Because culture is by definition relatively stable, these findings reveal values to be self-presentations of the ideal or desirable, rather than objective self-reports. To answer as to why the average reported values re-converge between the ethnic groups in 2008, although inter-group conflicts peaked in riots in 2007, is a subject for future work when more rounds of the ESS are available. For the purpose of our study it is most important to note that the increase in cultural differences between the major ethnic groups in Estonia was temporally linked to its accession to the European Union (see below). The relative small differences in mean value preferences between Estonia's ethnic groups provide evidence that attributed not self-rated cultural values cause the intergroup conflicts of the country in transition.

Why did the intergroup conflicts peak after accession to the European Union? Recently, Masso (2009) found Estonia to have the greatest differences in life satisfaction between the majority and minority groups in comparison to twenty-five other European countries, which was significantly related to the perception of discrimination. Furthermore, Estonia's ethnic minorities perceived discrimination more often than the minorities in European countries. Green and colleagues show that attitudes towards the presence of

immigrants vary depending on whether immigrants are seen as "culturally similar" or "culturally distant" (2010).

Perceived (or objective) discrimination and the perceived dissimilarity of immigrants or minorities may have been affected by Estonia's accession to the European Union in 2004. Superordinate categories that unite several social identities influence relationships at the group level (Turner et al. 1987). Joining Western institutions allows the creation of a shared identity at a superordinate European level and people can judge behaviour in relation to this higher level of norms. In their Ingroup Projection Model Mummendey and colleagues show that dual identification with national and superordinate categories (Europe) is not always beneficial for inter-group relationships (Mummendey and Wenzel 1999; Waldzus and Mummendey 2004)¹. We expect that the model will also apply to ethnic groups within a country, if members of one group also identify with a superordinate category.

Vihalemm and Kalmus (2009) recently conducted a closer investigation of mental structures in Estonia. They conclude that an inclusive mental structure including both main ethnic groups has not yet formed. Earlier studies found that the Russian-speaking minority adhered to Soviet as well as Baltic identities (Lauristin and Vihalemm 1997; Vihalemm and Masso 2007). On the other hand, the academic and political discourse emphasised Estonia's cultural and historical ties with its Nordic neighbours (Berg 2002; Lauristin and Vihalemm 1997). As we do not know the exact content of these possible projected European identities, we focus in the following on attributed value preferences and on identification with geographical and historical categories derived from the literature.

1. Assessing Value Stereotypes

Studying national character stereotypes has gained a lot of popularity since the groundbreaking studies of personality traits by Terracciano and colleagues (2005; Realo et al. 2009). Intergroup relations based on attributions of values have

¹ The belief of jointly belonging to the inclusive category can lead to discrimination, if attributes of a prototypical European, for example, are projected from the in-group to this super-ordinate category:

As a consequence the behaviour of the other included group automatically matches these attributes to a lesser extent. "If the out-group's difference is judged to be non-normative and inferior, devalu-

ation, discrimination, and hostility are likely responses toward the out-group" (Mummendey and Wenzel 1999, 158).

rarely been empirically tested (Austers 2002; Eicher and Wilhelm 2008; Lönnqvist et al. forthcoming). Thus little is known about the accuracy of attributions of value preferences and how these stereotypes are socially shared among different cultures. Additionally, only a handful of studies have used standardised, cross-culturally valid questionnaires to test stereotypes. Human values are a well-researched psychometric concept (Schwartz 1992, 2006), and we propose that it would be ideal for exploring national character stereotypes, which of course consist of more than just values.

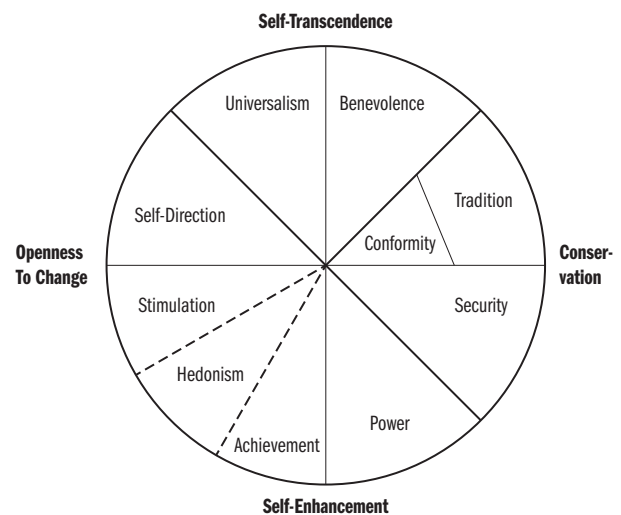
Now, we can move on to ask whether self-rated cultural differences in value preferences have anything in common with attributed value stereotypes. It is possible, but very unlikely, that the real and attributed cultural values are almost identical, which would mean that value differences between ethnic groups can be perceived accurately by individuals and therefore explain intergroup relationships or conflicts. It is also possible that stereotypes about value preferences are very similar on one value dimension but very different on the other, which could lead to the conclusion that stereotypes about a typical group member might share common elements independent of the target of these judgements, while the other dimension is used to differentiate between the groups. We expect contrast effects in attributed stereotypes, accentuating real differences in an accurate but exaggerated direction. However, there is also the possibility that value preferences are not perceived at all by the participants or that respondents are simply not able to make accurate judgements. In this case the attributed cultural values should be located in a different quadrant of the value circle than the respective ESS standard. If there is no accuracy in value stereotypes but they are shared by the two ethnic groups we can conclude that national character stereotypes fulfil the function of maintaining a national identity (Terracciano et al. 2005). Thus, whether values can predict conflicts can be better understood by an examination of similarities and differences in values attributed to the in-group and the out-group(s). Furthermore, we believe that national character stereotypes are not independent of social identities and therefore linked to them.

1.1. Schwartz Value Circle

Values are relatively stable, internal standards used to evaluate behaviours and events (Rokeach 1973). Schwartz and

Bardi define human values as “desirable, transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people’s lives” (2001, 269). The theory of human values (Schwartz 1992) describes values as a universal quasi-circular structure divided into ten value segments (see Figure 3). The two axes are Self-Transcendence–Self-Enhancement and Openness to Change–Conservation. The vertical dimension opposes universalism and benevolence values with achievement and power values. The horizontal dimension opposes hedonism, stimulation and self-direction values with conformity, tradition and security values. The value circle discloses compatibilities and conflicts while adjacent values are jointly preferred, values in the respective opposite quadrant of the circle are disliked. To give an example, self-direction values can serve to permit excitement (stimulation) or to discover and understand people who are different from oneself (universalism). On the contrary, it causes cognitive and sometimes social conflicts to desire individualism (self-direction) and at the same time give family the first priority (tradition). Thus, the structure of the universal value circle will help us to interpret attributions of the values of the in-group and the out-group.

Figure 3: The universal value structure



Source: Shalom H. Schwartz, “Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries”, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 25 (1992): 45. Copyright 1992 by Elsevier, adapted with permission.

1.2. National Character Stereotypes

Stereotypes comprise beliefs about attributes of a group of people that are attributed to all group members (Ashmore and DelBoca 1981). The term auto-stereotype (i.e. a self-attributed characteristic) is used for stereotypes about a person's own (ethnic) group and the term hetero-stereotype for stereotypes about other (ethnic) groups (that the subject does not feel he or she belongs to). Social psychological theories suggest that (positive) distinctiveness of the in-group can be achieved by social comparison between a person's own group and other groups (Tajfel 1981). Stereotypes create differentiation between in-groups and out-groups (Operario and Fiske 2001). The compatibilities and conflicts within the structure of values (Figure 3) may help to predict how groups achieve the necessary contrast for this differentiation.

We expect beliefs about value preferences to be part of the "national character" attributed to the group. But stereotypes are exaggerated descriptions, generalised conceptions or beliefs about a cultural group, and are not necessarily accurately attributed. Some studies find agreement on national character stereotypes across different samples (Realo et al. 2009; Lönnqvist et al. forthcoming). Eicher and Wilhelm (2008) find accurate attributions of value preferences on the Conservation dimension for three countries independently rated by students from two different ethnic groups. Lönnqvist and colleagues (forthcoming) show that their bi-cultural experts – who were immigrants – were partially accurate in their descriptions of the destination country, but their descriptions of their country of origin did not correspond to the inhabitants' self-ratings.

Stereotypes, like all judgments, compare a target (group) to a standard (group). The judgment about the target depends on the chosen comparison standard (Strack 2004; Operario and Fiske 2001). In their concept of collective identities, Ashmore and colleagues (2004) shift the focus from the situation (on which Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1981) and Self-Categorization Theory (Turner et al. 1987) concentrate) to the context, which is "the general and continuing multilayered and interwoven set of material realities, social structures, patterns of social relations, and

shared belief systems that surround any given situation" (Ashmore et al. 2004, 103). In the Estonian case, it would make a difference if we asked our respondents to attribute typical characteristics to an in-group member and at the same time a typical Russian or for example a typical American instead. Especially for the Russian-speaking minority, presetting a comparison standard is expected to change the attributions to (i.e. stereotypes about) their own group. If members of the minority identify as Russians, it makes a difference if they are being asked to rate this particular, personally meaningful group or an unrelated group instead. In countries that have a powerful neighbour like Russia, according to Realo and colleagues (2009), it is likely that the in-group member will be described as a mirror image of that comparison standard; thus the judgments of the ethnic Estonians are also expected to be affected.

The differences in value preferences between the majority group and the Russian-speaking minority described by the ESS data will serve as the background to our study on stereotypes.

2. Stereotypes and Social Identities among Estonian Students

Are cultural values accurately attributed, exaggerated or not noticed at all by members of the involved groups? First, we assess the content of auto- and hetero-stereotypes of students in Estonia. Then, we relate the stereotypes about value preferences to social identities.

2.1. Sample

The subjects were recruited at the University of Tartu. Participants were e-mailed through the faculty mailing list; 203 subjects answered the questionnaire online, 46 on paper. Age criteria (between 18 and 30), incorrect responses, or other nationality led to the exclusion of 43 respondents. A sample of 152 ethnic Estonian students and 54 Russian-speaking students remained. The survey was conducted between 23 May and 2 October 2008. According to official statistics, only about 11 percent of the students enrolled at the University of Tartu are Russian-speaking, whereas in our sample there were 26 percent Russian-speaking students, or more than double the proportion. The participants' average age was 22.0 ($SD = 2.6$); 78.3 per-

cent were female. Ethnic categorisation was specified by the respondent's own native language and their parents' native language using three questions: Respondents who reported that their own, their mother's, or their father's mother tongue is Russian or bilingual were categorised as Russian-speakers.

2.2. Value Measures

The Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) has been routinely used in the ESS, assessing values using twenty-one portrait items (Schwartz 2003). Each portrait describes the goals, hopes or desires of a person and thus implicitly expresses the importance of a specific value type. Respondents were asked to indicate the similarity between each portrait and themselves on a six-point scale (very much like me, like me, somewhat like me, not like me, or not at all like me). The wording of one achievement portrait serves as an example: *It's important to him (her) to show his (her) abilities. He (she) wants people to admire what he (she) does.* Stereotypes about three groups were measured with an enlarged version of the PVQ21. The respondents stated for each portrait whether this person *was like me / like typical Estonians / like typical Russian-speakers / like typical Russians.*² The subjects were instructed to rate the descriptions first for themselves, then for the group to which they felt they belonged to most and thereafter for the remaining two groups. For respondents who rated at least fifteen PVQ portraits we replaced missing values with the mean across all respondents.

The twenty-one value ratings were collapsed into the two main value dimensions using a factor analytic approach developed independently by Strack (2004; Strack, Gennrich and Hopf 2008) and Verkasalo (1996, Verkasalo et al. 2008). In this paper we use the former approach. See the appendix for the weights for the ipsatized items used to compute these dimensions and to plot group means in the value circle in Figure 3.

To assess the diverging identities reviewed above, we asked about Estonia's place in Europe. On a five-point scale form

“not at all connected” to “extremely connected”, respondents rated how they identified with the categories of *Central, Northern, Eastern, Southern, and Western Europe*. Respondents also rated their personal connection with five regional and historical categories: their *home town, home region, Estonia, Baltic States, and the former Soviet Union*. The questionnaire was provided in three languages (Estonian/Russian/English) and the language could be selected freely by the subject.

2.3. Hypotheses

To possess accuracy, national character stereotypes need to match the average value preferences found in the ESS data. Hypothesis 1a states that auto- and hetero-stereotypes about typical Estonians should be located in the Openness to Change and Self-Transcendence quadrant of the values circle, whereas stereotypes about typical Russians should be located in the Conservation and Self Enhancement quadrant. Stereotypes about typical Russian-speakers in Estonia should be located at an intermediate position. The participant's agreement about the same target across ethnic groups forms Hypothesis 1b, which will be accepted if the stereotypes can be grouped without them overlapping. As groups in conflict are expected to increasingly distinguish themselves on the value dimensions, Hypothesis 1c predicts contrast effects for the auto- and hetero-stereotypes.

Because Estonia's accession to the European Union had a strong impact on the value preferences discussed above, the strength of identification with complementary geographical and historical identities should enhance the accentuation of the in-group and out-groups (Hypothesis 2).

3. Results

The results of our study are split into three parts. First we examine the value stereotypes in the student sample, testing hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c. Then we investigate whether geographical and historical identities diverge. In the final step, we relate them and test hypothesis 2.

² The self-ratings (“like me”) were not used as a comparison standard in this study, because students were found to differ more strongly by their field of

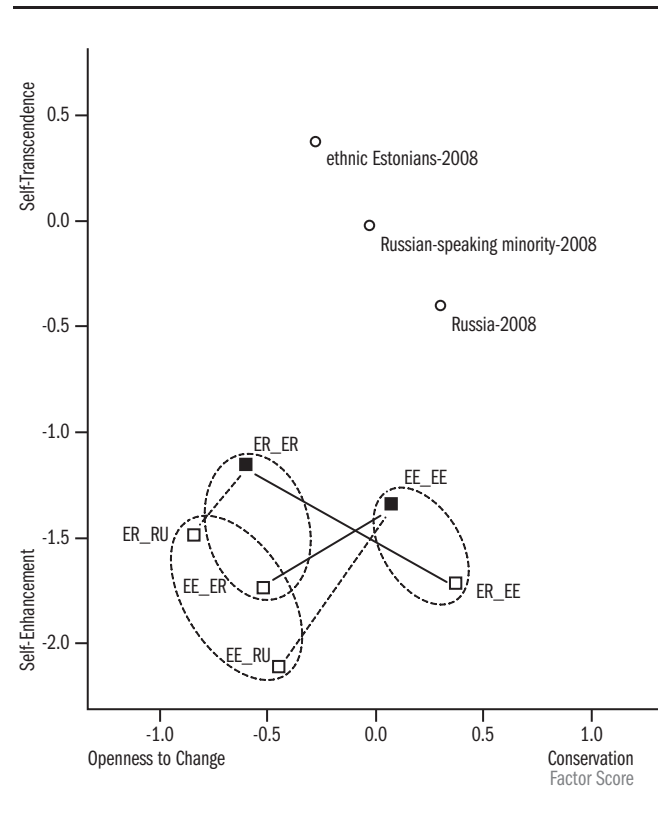
study than by their ethnic background (Verkasalo 1996).

3.1. Stereotypes about Value Preferences

Agreement and accuracy of the value stereotypes were tested by comparing average locations of auto- and hetero-stereotypes in the value circle with the representative means from the ESS 2008. The results are presented in Figure 4. Value stereotypes about “the Russian-speakers” and “the Russians” are located in the Self-Enhancement and Openness to Change quadrant. Ethnic Estonians rated “the Russians” (EE_RU, -2.12/-0.44) similarly to “the Russian-speakers” (EE_ER, -1.74/-0.52). The ethnic minority also perceived itself (ER_ER, -1.16/-0.60) as being in the same quadrant as “the Russians” (ER_RU, -1.49/-0.84), but differentiated between these two groups on the Conservation dimension. However, respondents more or less agreed in their stereotypes about “the Russians” and “the Russian-speakers”. Both ethnic Estonians and members of the Russian-speaking minority placed “the Estonians” in the quadrant with high Self-Enhancement and Conservation values (EE_EE, -1.34/0.07; ER_EE, -1.72/0.38). Therefore we accept Hypothesis 1b for all three targets. The auto-stereotypes as well as the hetero-stereotypes stand out because of the strongly emphasised Self-Enhancement values compared to the representative means from the ESS. Still, in both cases the average in-group member was perceived as higher in Self-Transcendence values than all other groups. It means that all targets had in common, that they were perceived as being extremely motivated in promoting their own personal interests even at the expense of others (Verkasalo et al. 2008, 789).

Both groups saw “the Estonians” as opposing change and emphasising self-restraint and order, while “the Russian-speakers” or “the Russians” were perceived as being open to new experiences and valuing independent action and thought. Compared to the representative means of the ESS, these attributions are inaccurate, so hypothesis 1a is incorrect. Neither the quadrant nor the relative positions of the three ethnic groups match the representative survey results. However, contrast effects between the groups of ethnic Estonians and Russian-speakers (hypothesis 1c) are clearly visible and indicated by the continuous lines in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Value stereotypes compared with the respective group means from European Social Survey 2008



ESS (2008) (circles): ethnic Estonians, $n = 928$; Russian-speaking minority, $n = 639$; Russians, $n = 2109$ (ESS 2008).

Auto-stereotypes (filled squares): EE_EE for ethnic Estonians on “the Estonians”; ER_ER for Russian-speaking minority on “the Russian-speakers”.

Hetero-stereotypes (unfilled squares): EE_ER for ethnic Estonians on “the Russian-speakers”; EE_RU for ethnic Estonians on “the Russians”; ER_EE for Russian-speaking minority on “the Estonians”; ER_RU for Russian-speaking minority on “the Russians”.

3.2. Geographical and Historical Identities

Social identities are psychologically defined by personal identification with a social category. After explorative analysis of the correlations between the identification ratings, two difference scores were computed: identification with Estonia versus identification with the former Soviet Union, and perception of Estonia as part of North Europe versus Estonia as part of East Europe. The former describes historical identity, the latter geographical identity in terms of Estonia’s place in Europe. Ethnic Estonian and Russian-speaking students varied in their historical and regional

identities. Figure 5 shows means with 90 percent confidence intervals for the two components of identity in Estonia. Ethnic Estonians (EE, $n = 149-150$) scored higher on the historical component (M 3.05, SD 1.07) and the geographical component (M 0.86, SD 1.60) than the Russian-speaking minority (ER, $n = 53-54$) (M 1.40, SD 1.71, Levene test significant, $t(69.3)=6.68 p<.001$; and M 0.24, SD 2.12, Levene test significant, $t(71.8)=1.98 p=.05$ two-tailed).

Figure 5: Identification with historical and geographical identities within Estonia

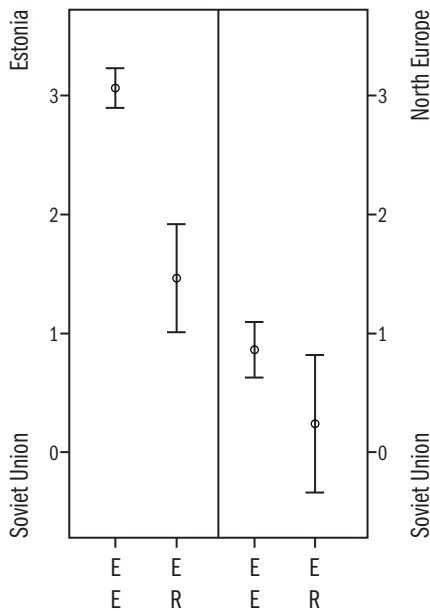


Table 1: Correlations between identities and value stereotypes

Sender about Targets	Historical identity: Estonia vs. former Soviet Union		Estonia's place in Europe: North vs. East	
	Self-Transcendence	Conservation	Self-Transcendence	Conservation
Ethnic Estonians				
Typical Estonians	.06	.02	-.20*	-.02
Typical Russian-speakers	-.09	-.14	-.27**	.03
Typical Russians	-.06	-.11	-.18*	.15
Russian-speaking minority				
Typical Estonians	.36**	-.36**	.23	-.40**
Typical Russian-speakers	-.06	-.04	.06	-.01
Typical Russians	-.17	.25	-.08	-.14

Note: Ethnic Estonians, $n = 143-145$. Russian-speaking minority, $n = 49-50$. ** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$.

3.3. Links between Social Identities and Stereotypes

The geographical and historical social identities of the participants may influence their perceptions of the in-group and out-groups. Among ethnic Estonians only regional identity correlates significantly with the value stereotypes. The closer Estonia was tied to Northern Europe, the more Self-Enhancement was attributed to “the Russian-speakers” ($r = -.18 p<.05$), “the Russians” ($r = -.27 p=.001$), and “the Estonians” ($r = -.20, p<.05$). Correlations were significant for the majority group, even though they did not follow our predictions. Among the Russian-speaking minority historical identity ($r = .36/-.36$, both $p<.01$) and Estonia’s place in Europe ($r = .23, n.s./-.41, p<.01$) correlated with the hetero-stereotype about “the Estonian” (Table 1). The more a member of the Russian-speaking minority identified with North Europe and Estonia, the less extreme the description of Estonians became. But the more closely they identified with East Europe and the former Soviet Union, the more conspicuously they contrasted Estonians to their own group and described them as being more conservative and self-enhancing people. The results for the Russian-speaking minority support hypothesis 2.

4. Discussion

We used Schwartz's human values (1992) to analyse agreement and accuracy in stereotypes about typical group members. For the comparison we used representative value preferences from the European Social Survey.

Even though there was no accuracy in stereotypes about value preferences of ethnic Estonians, the Russian-speaking minority, and the Russians, we found them to be socially shared across the students who were ethnic Estonians or belonged to the Russian-speaking minority, as both groups agreed on their location in the value circle. When geographical and historical social identities diverged this was associated with the strength and direction of the stereotypes of the minority group.

At the time of the survey, an environment of conflict between ethnic Estonians and the Russian-speaking minority was observable in Estonia. For people in Estonia the Russian neighbours represented a constantly accessible and meaningful comparison group. Consequently, the ethnic identities of the respondents were permanently salient.

We presented a standardised method which made statistical statements about agreement and accuracy of in-group- and out-group stereotypes possible. At the level of student groups we found agreement in the attributions about typical group members: ethnic Estonians were seen as being more conservative than the Russian-speaking minority and Russians. These locations, however, did not accurately correspond to the representative self-ratings from the ESS. Still, Eicher and Wilhelm (2008) as well as Lönnqvist and colleagues (forthcoming) found some accuracy of the attribution in their studies. In our data, the Conservation versus Openness to Change dimension was used to differentiate between the groups. It seems national character stereotypes fulfil the function of maintaining a national identity of self and other (Terracciano et al. 2005). Among the ethnic minority, the expected intergroup-contrast underlying value stereotypes was found by correlating stereotypes with different social identities. The more a member of the Russian-speaking minority identified with the former Soviet Union and tied Estonia to East Europe, the more accentuated the values he or she attributed to the Estonian majority

group; values attributed to typical members of the in-group were judged as not typical for an out-group member.

It seems that Estonia's accession to the European Union changed the relevant dimensions for comparison for the ethnic groups. Belonging to Europe – the main purpose of which is to bring people of different backgrounds closer together – firstly instead had the effect of dividing people within Estonia. The risks that Europe can create are often overlooked in politics. Although Vihalemm and Kalmus (2009) find a homogenisation of mental structures among the youngest generations in Estonia, we still found a dissensus for historic and geographical identities. While ethnic Estonians showed a strong identification with Estonia and North vs. East Europe, the Russian-speaking students did not want to give up Estonia's Soviet past and saw Estonia as more balanced in its geographical belonging. As contrast in stereotypes relates to the identification with East Europe and the Soviet Union, identities free of conflict for both ethnic groups have not yet been formed.

Globalisation and European Union enlargement have increased interest in other cultures and strengthened bonds with people living sometimes thousands of miles away. On the other hand, ethnic groups within the same country often see what they have in common only when they are confronted with people from other nations and cultures, for example on their vacations. Guiding principles in people's lives rated for social groups were not accurately attributed or simply exaggerated descriptions, they did not correspond to the self-reported cultural values of these groups. The representative national characteristics assessed in the ESS had nothing in common with the attribution of the students, which can mean that respondents were simply not able to make accurate judgments.

We found that Estonia's accession to the European Union may have had negative effects for inter-group relations within the own country. In moral terms, the majority and the minority within a country potentially perceive themselves as being the more prototypical group in terms of the superordinate category (Mummendey and Wenzel 1999; Waldzus and Mummendey 2004). For example, the removal of the monument by the majority in 2007 was judged as

un-European by the threatened minority. Whatever caused the April 2007 riots in Tallinn, it went hand in hand with increased self-reported cultural differences and took place after EU accession. If people belonging to different ethnic groups within a society start to describe themselves as increasingly divergent, it enables people to justify conflicts. The riots are an example for the relationship between cultural differences and inter-group behaviour.

Still, there is no proving that the described self-reported and attributed value differences lead to the riots or conflicts within the country. Nevertheless, our results suggest a positive influence on inter-group relationships, if social identities like the strong connection to North Europe among the ethnic Estonians and the maintenance of nostalgic historic identities among the Russian-speaking minority would be less emphasised.

The study shows that the social categories which unite us make us comparable and thus also can drive us further apart. Policy makers from other countries could learn from this Estonian example when they have to deal with identities designed to unite several ethnic groups.

An obvious limitation in our data is the small sample. In online surveys the participating subjects must have had ac-

cess to the internet and ability to use it. There is no control for the situational and personal conditions under which the questionnaire is filled out (Birnbbaum 2004). Additionally, voluntary response samples are always biased and the results need to be interpreted with regard to gender bias. The respondents were 78 percent females. Still, there is no reason to assume that women systematically differ from men in their value stereotypes about the in-group and out-groups.

Characteristics of stereotypes are dependent on their content and context (Operario and Fiske 2001). This study was conducted to make mechanisms of contrast visible. We presented the PVQ items together with a block of stereotype targets. The order of the targets was not randomised. It is therefore possible that the observed group attributes were partly an artefact of the order of the presented categories (Tversky and Gati 1978).

We conclude that social identities and value stereotypes rather than real cultural differences can account for current conflicts within Estonia. Although we consider the value theory (Schwartz 1992) a useful approach to the study of stereotypes, further research is needed.

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Appendix

Weights for the axes of the value circle, derived from the ESS (rounds 1–4).

(Ipsatized items of the Portrait Value Questionnaire PVQ21).

PVQ 21	Self-Transcendence (vs. Self-Enhancement)	Conservation (vs. Openness to Change)
Constant	-.975	-.245
ipctiv	-.056	.135
imprich	.178	-.030
ipeqopt	-.173	.026
ipshabt	.163	-.013
impsafe	.033	-.153
impdiff	-.024	.148
ipfrule	.048	-.137
ipudrst	-.216	.070
ipmodst	-.102	-.057
ipgdtim	.001	.138
impfree	-.081	.116
iphlppl	-.218	.045
ipsuces	.182	-.017
ipstrgv	.016	-.150
ipadvnt	.047	.113
ipbhprp	-.008	-.156
iprspt	.159	-.122
iplylfr	-.232	.053
impenv	-.179	-.015
imptrad	.011	-.134
impfun	.006	.132

Note: In social science there is an ongoing debate about the adequate level of analysis. We derived the axes of the values circle at the individual level, analysing overall correlations of the ESS multi-round multi-country sample (countries times rounds = 98). Recently Fischer, Vauclair, Fontaine, and Schwartz (2010) found a high level of equivalence in the structure of values at the individual and culture level, which may justify the use of “citizen scores” i.e., group averages on individual level constructs (Leung and Bond 2004). We merged the data files of all four rounds of the ESS and applied a multiplication of the design weights, the country weights per round, and a new round weight, which divides countries total N by the number of its round participations (e.g., Germany participated in all four rounds, so its product of design weight and country weight was multiplied by 0.25). To resolve the individual response tendency the Schwartz items were ipsatized in the following way: from each person's score on an item the average score that the person gave to all twenty-one value items was subtracted.

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