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Introduction

We propose a theoretical model where the social dimension of political orientation (acceptance vs. rejection of social change) is represented as uncertainty avoidance, the economic dimension of uncertainty, and the economic dimension (acceptance vs. rejection of inequality) is represented as tough-mindedness vs. empathy (Figure 1).

The former axis corresponds to the conservation vs. openness to change dimension in the Schwartz’s (1992) value model, the latter axis corresponds to the self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence dimension. Two secondary axes represent the possible combinations of the variables defining the primary axes. Tough-mindedness in combination with uncertainty avoidance result in high system justification, whereas empathy in combination with uncertainty acceptance represents low system justification. This axis corresponds to the self-protection vs. growth dimension of the refined Schwartz et al. (2012) value model. Tough-mindedness in combination with uncertainty avoidance results in preference for self-reliance, whereas the opposite combination represents preference for dependence on others. This axis corresponds to the personal vs. social focus of the Schwartz et al. (2012) value model.

We tested the model in two samples, one representing an old democracy with an established political culture (Sweden), and the other a new democracy with still developing political culture and party system (Latvia).

Method

Sample. The participants in the study were Latvian (N = 264, 77% female, mean age = 23.9 years, SD = 5.8 years) and Swedish (N = 320, 67% female, mean age = 27.5 years, SD = 8.6 years) students.

Measures. The respondents indicated on separate scales their level of social conservatism (marked political_socioval in Figures 2 and 3) and rightist economic orientation (marked political_econ2) and completed measures of social dominance orientation (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), right wing authoritarianism (Zakrisson, 2005), system justification (Jost & Thompson, 2000), tolerance for ambiguity (Herman et al., 2010), humanism and normativism (Nilsson, 2014), and dependence on others. Based on the MFDQ data, we calculated indexes for the importance of individualizing moral foundations (including harm and fairness) and binding moral foundations (including in-group, authority, and purity).

The respondents also completed the 21-item version of Portrait Values Questionnaire (Schwartz, 2006), which includes measures of 10 basic values. Based on the PVQ data, we calculated indexes for conservation (including the values of conformity, tradition, and security, marked Cons in Figures 2 and 3), openness to change (including self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism, marked Change), self-enhancement (including achievement and power, marked Selfenh), and self-transcendence (including benevolence and universalism, marked Selftrans).

Data Analysis

The collected measures were subjected to multidimensional scaling (ALSCAL, using z-transformed values as input) separately in Figures 2 and 3, openness to change and readiness to alter the existing circumstances.

The results of multidimensional scaling (ALSCAL, using z-transformed values as input) are depicted in Figures 2 and 3).

The Schwartz value dimensions are more orthogonal in the Swedish sample than in the Latvian sample, whereas self-enhancement and change are more closely related.

Normativism predicts system justification negatively in the Latvian sample, but positively in the Swedish sample. The two primary axes of political orientation are orthogonal in both samples, but variables related to social conservatism (such as RWA and normativism) and economic rightist ideology (such as SDO and system justification) are more closely related in the Swedish sample than in the Latvian sample, replicating a pattern found in other studies comparing Western and post-Communist cultures.

Results and Discussion

The results of MDS analysis are depicted in Figures 2 and 3 for the Swedish and Latvian samples, respectively (note that in both figures the placement of the variables in the model has been rotated relative to Figure 1 and to each other). The results of the regression analyses are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

The results do not support the four-dimensional model: MDS analysis shows that system justification is closely related to tough-mindedness in both samples, and is mostly unrelated to uncertainty avoidance (except for regression analysis of the Swedish data, where conservation is related to system justification in Model 1).

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One notable result is that the openness to change value index positively predicts system justification in the Swedish sample; this relation remains marginally significant (p = .08) also in Model 2. One possible explanation for this result is that economic equality to a large extent is perceived as the status quo situation in Sweden, and support for the system justification items (which measure support for inequality) is related to openness to social change and readiness to alter the existing circumstances.

References


