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COLLECTIVISTIC AND INDIVIDUALISTIC VALUES AS FACTORS AFFECTING SUBJECTIVE CONCEPTIONS AND EVALUATIONS OF STATE SOCIAL SUPPORT

1. Key Question

What is the way of influence of individualistic and collectivistic human values on ideas about the proper way of social policy directed on the support of vulnerable people and life-course risks reduction in Russia and other European countries?

This purpose is of practical importance. State social support deals not only with public provision of goods and services but also with attitudes of population to amount and way of distribution of this kind. And it became critical when sufficient demographical changes have place. Russia as other European countries faced the problem of aging, family and gender roles changes. So the present basic social institutes differ from that we saw ten or twenty years ago. And necessity of reforms in social policy is obvious and declared by politicians in all European countries. Everywhere we can see a gap between economic feasibility and public demand, but everywhere it is unlike. We need to know public welfare priority in Russia, in economically advanced and post-socialist countries, in order we could compare cases and determine factors having an impact on distribution type preferences.

Welfare policy is a kind of social help and collective action. So we suppose that welfare attitudes have a value basis. It means that individual presuppositions to others predict level of his social responsibility and demand for social protection: the more important collectivistic values, the more explicit a request for social guaranties.

2. Specific Contribution

There are a great number of works devoted to a problem of welfare state and social policy. Among them we can find both theoretical and empirical ones. The more significant are "The three worlds of welfare capitalism" (G. Esping-Andersen, 1990), "The personal and the political: how personal welfare state experiences affect political trust and ideology" (S. Kumlin, 2004), "The institutional logic of welfare attitudes: how welfare regimes influence public support" (C.A. Larsen, 2006), "Restructuring the Welfare State: Political Institutions and Policy Change" (B. Rothstein, S. Steinmo (Eds), 2002), "Welfare Regimes and Welfare Opinions: a Comparison of Eight Western Countries" (St. Svallfors, 2003). But there are few publications based on comparative, cross-cultural data, and especially focused on Russia.

In our research we try to analyze correlations of collectivistic / individualistic values and request for state social support in Russia in comparison with European countries. First of all it helps us clarify if there is any dependency, and in case there is, distinguish value patterns "working" in economically advanced countries and in countries, where we can see acute social problems. And the most important expected result is the description of welfare attitudes peculiarities in Russia, cultural "allies" and barriers of changes in social policy.

3. Theoretical Framework

Within our research we've got two principal theoretical frameworks. The first one is the tradition of basic human values analysis. We follow Sh. Schwartz in conceptualization of **values** "as desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people's lives" (Davidov, Schmidt, Schwartz, 2008, p. 423). Schwartz developed a theory of basic life values (Schwartz, 1992). After a number of empirical studies he suggested ten individual-level universal value types (Universalism, Benevolence, Tradition, Conformity, Security, Power, Achievement, Hedonism, Stimulation, Self-Direction) and two higher-order value axis ("openness to change versus conservation" and "self-enhancement versus self-transcendence"). At figure 1 we can see a dynamical Schwartz circle demonstrating close connected and opposing values.

At first stage of our work we are interested just in one value dimension - "self-enhancement versus self-transcendence". We suppose it might be considered as empirical model of individualistic - collectivistic antinomy.

**Figure 1. The structure of relations among the value types according to the Schwartz value theory.**
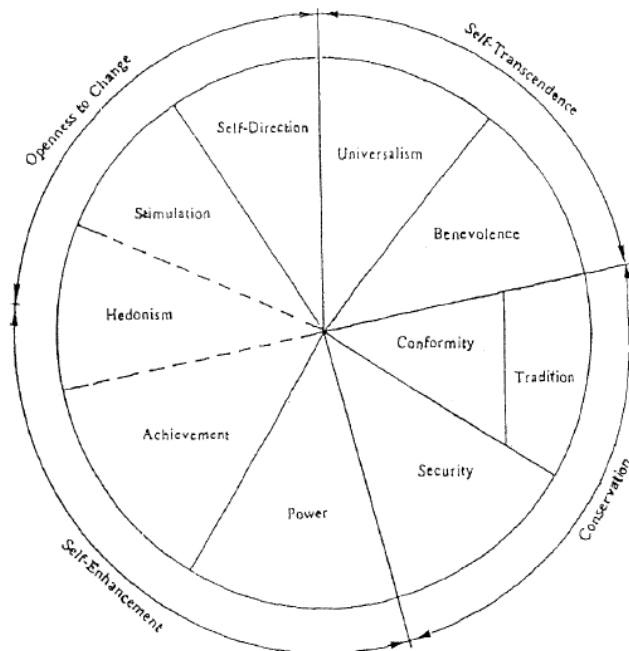
The second theoretical framework comes to the concepts of welfare state and social policy. There are a broad range of approaches concerning the problem: from macroeconomic issues to studies devoted to living conditions and life-course risks of specific social groups.

Our research is based on data of European Social Survey and particularly on the thematic module "Welfare attitudes in a changing Europe". That's why it is important to take into consideration elaborations of the authors of the project, their theoretical conceptualizations and paradigm they follow. Stefen Svallfors, Wim van Oorschot, Peter Taylor-Gooby and their colleagues designed a scheme for analyzing attitudes to welfare policies (see fig. 2). It is a principal layout of a great work done before. The main goal they followed in their activity is an analysis of institutional and cultural variation on attitudes to welfare policies.

According the theory there are two basic factors having an influence on individual's position: institutional framework and socio-demographic indicators. They are preliminary conditions of getting resources and risks exposing impacting in turn a complex of mental sets and attitudes – so called predispositions. And finally attitudes to welfare state and social policy depend on these predisposition and cross-correlation with acceptance of personal responsibility and institutional consequences. Among predispositions there are mentioned trust, risk perception, beliefs about the functioning and sustainability of welfare policies, social values and personal experiences – influence of all of them are studied by number of scholars (Rothstein, 2005; Staerklé et al., 2007; van Oorschot, 2006; Soss, 1999; Kumlin, 2004 and others).

Within our research we focus just on correlation of one predisposition – "values" with two elements of social policy – "welfare state scope and responsibilities" and "service delivery".

Figure 2. A conceptual framework for analyzing attitudes to welfare policies suggested by S. Svallfors
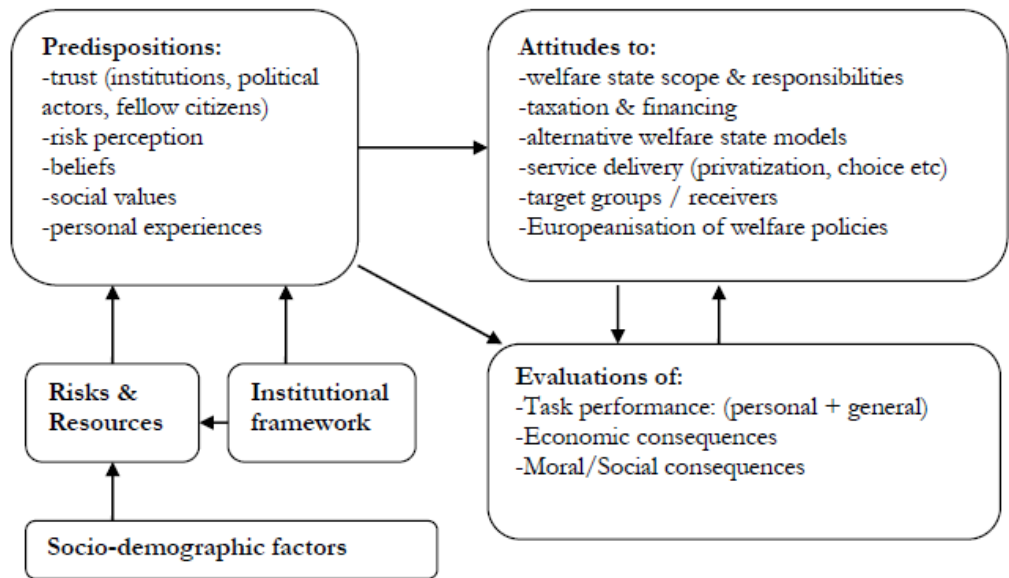
4. Core Variables and Hypotheses:

We've got three groups of core variables: values, ideas about proper social policy, social and demographical block.

1) **<u>Values</u>** are measured by means of question "Here we briefly describe some people. Please read each description and tick the box on each line that shows how much each person is or is not like you. How much like you is this person?". There were suggested 21 person descriptions and a six-box scale for evaluation. (see fig. 3)

For our work we selected just 9 form 21 variables (B, C, D, H, L, M, Q, R, S) valid for "self-enhancement" and "self-transcendence" indexes.

Figure 3: Portrait Value questionnaire suggested by Schwartz (ESS questionnaire)

2) Ideas about **proper social policy** we analyze through "welfare state scope and responsibilities" and "service delivery".

"Welfare state scope and responsibilities" is fixed by a question "People have different views on what the responsibilities of governments should or should not be. For each of the tasks I read out please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much responsibility you think governments should have". And there were suggested six statements referring to welfare: ensure a job for everyone who wants one, ensure adequate health care for the sick, ensure a reasonable standard of living for the old, ensure a reasonable standard of living for the unemployed, ensure sufficient child care services for working parents, provide paid leave from work for people who temporarily have to care for sick family members (see fig. 4).

Figure 4. Questions about welfare state scope and responsibilities (ESS questionnaire)

CARD 29 People have different views on what the responsibilities of governments[45] should or should not be. For each of the tasks I read out please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much responsibility you think governments should have. 0 means it should not be governments' responsibility at all and 10 means it should be entirely governments' responsibility. Firstly to…**READ OUT**…

		Should not be governments' responsibility at all									Should be entirely governments' responsibility		(Don't know)
D15	…ensure a job for everyone who wants one?	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	88
D16	…ensure adequate health care for the sick?	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	88
D17	…ensure a reasonable standard of living[46] for the old[47]?	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	88
D18	…ensure a reasonable standard of living for the unemployed[48]?	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	88
D19	…ensure sufficient child care services[49] for working parents?	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	88
D20	…provide paid leave from work for people who temporarily have to care for sick family members?	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	88

"Service delivery" is evaluated by means of several questions about social benefits and services (see fig. 5), and about subjective estimations of proper way of distribution (see fig. 6).

Figure 5. Questions about social benefits and services (ESS questionnaire)

CARD 30 Using this card please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree that social benefits and services in [country]….**READ OUT**…

		Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	(Don't know)
D21	…place too great a strain on the economy?	1	2	3	4	5	8
D22	…prevent widespread poverty?	1	2	3	4	5	8
D23	…lead to a more equal society?	1	2	3	4	5	8
D24	…encourage people from other countries to come and live here?	1	2	3	4	5	8
D25	…cost businesses too much in taxes and charges?	1	2	3	4	5	8
D26	…make it easier for people to combine work and family life?	1	2	3	4	5	8
D27	…make people lazy?	1	2	3	4	5	8
D28	…make people less willing to care for one another?	1	2	3	4	5	8
D29	…make people less willing to look after themselves and their family?	1	2	3	4	5	8

Figure 6. Questions about subjective estimations of proper way of distribution (ESS questionnaire)

3) The most important variables for us from **social and demographical block** are country, sex, age, educational and professional status, experience of unemployment, level of health.

Hypotheses

1. Collectivistic values agents are more likely than individualistic value agents consider the state responsible for life-course risks restriction.

2. Supporting of progressive taxation and the redistribution of goods and services for the benefit of vulnerable groups has a positive correlation with collectivistic values, and negative with individualistic.

3. Individualistic values agents take the view about negative consequences of social support for vulnerable people more often than collectivistic once.

4. Collectivistic values agents are more optimistic about the prospects of social policy in their country.

5. Collectivistic and individualistic values agents evaluate their own risks and risks of others differently.

6. The level of demands for the state welfare guaranties varies in different countries and depends on the type of economic culture actual for the population (i.e. on the proportions of collectivists and individualists in the country)

5. Analyses and Modelling:

The **object** of our study is a subsample of economically active (working and unemployed) population of European countries included in the European Social Survey.

The **subject** is the correlation of collectivistic and individualistic values with notions of European countries population about a proper role of the state in social protection of vulnerable people and restriction life-course risks effect.

At first we calculated (centralized mean) ten value indexes in accordance with the methodology of Schwartz (Security, Conformity, Tradition, Benevolence, Universalism, Self-Direction, Stimulation, Hedonism, Achievement, Power), and then four aggregated categories of values (higher-order value types): Openness to change, Conservation, Self-Transcendence and Self-Enhancement. In order to solve the main question of our study, we have selected just Self-Transcendence (the collectivistic values) and Self-Enhancement (individualist values).

Individualistic values are calculated on the respondent's answers to the questions of his/her similarity to the person having the following characteristics:
-   Being very successful is important to him. He hopes people will recognize his achievements.
-   It's important to him to show his abilities. He wants people to admire what he does.
-   It is important to him to be rich. He wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.
-   It is important to him to get respect from others. He wants people to do what he says.

Collectivistic values are calculated on the respondent's answer to the question of his/her likeness to a person having other set of characteristics:
-   It's very important to him to help the people around him. He wants to care for their well-being.
-   It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him.
-   He thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. He believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.
-   It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them.
-   He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him.

So here we have two variables: collectivistic value holders and individualistic value holders.

Questions about welfare state scope and responsibilities are reducible to an index State Welfare Activity (calculated as a mean). Questions about subjective estimations of proper way of distribution are supposed to be analyzed separately. Here we have four variables.

First of all we consider correlations between two value variables and four "proper social policy" variables.

Secondly we use a multiple regression analysis. We'll make several models for four "proper social policy" variables (independent variable). Social and demographical bloc and value variables are to be taken as dependent variables. Probably we'll make a regression for individualistic value holders and collectivistic value holders separately.

6. Targeted Data Base:

Empirical base of the research the fourth wave of the European Social Survey, conducted in 2008 in 29 countries. Within the study, we will analyze the data from the "rotating" thematic module "Welfare attitudes in a changing Europe", as well as the data from one of the "core" module "Moral and social values" and socio-demographic bloc of questions.

7. Roadmap:

1 April – 1 May. Work on the database: writing of syntax for filters and indexes – making a proper database for further analysis. Reading.

1 May – 1 June. Calculation of correlations and making regression models.

1 June – 1 July. Making a Power Point presentation of initial results. Writing analytical report in Russian.

1 July – 1 September. Verification of results. Reading.

1 September – 1 December. Writing a draft of article.

8. Literature to read (soon)

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9. Statistical techniques to learn or improve

- Neural Networks
- Regression analysis (all the types)
- Multidimensional scaling