GERGŐ PRAZSÁK[1]

# Autonomy and Marginality

We have conducted several researches on values among different deviant groups with the students of Interdisciplinary Social Research Doctoral Program Faculty of Social Sciences of Eötvös Loránd University. Zsolt Nagy works with convalescent alcoholics, Marcell Miletics with homeless people, and Enikő Bódis with prostitutes. In this thesis we focus on the research we have conducted among prostitutes and homeless people.[2] We compare their values to the value system of homeless people. We consider it important, because according to our analysis the value ofself-direction (autonomy) isesteemed highly in both of these groups.

We used Schwartz's value test as a quantitative method. With the help of the test we compare the value systems – or as Schwartz puts it: the 'culture' – of different deviant (marginal) and non-deviant groups. First, we would like to interpret our hypothesis, the applied theories and methods, then, we will explain the results of the quantitative research.

## Hypothesis

The aim of the researches of our research group is to reveal and monitor individual and collective (society) actions determined by motivations, values, and culture.

The hypothesis of our research is that social deviances and deviant (marginal) groups differ from each other due to its motivations. Our approach is value-sociological; therefore it is elemental to define values. Values are used by several sciences; therefore the research of values is an interdisciplinary field.

In a harmonious relationship between society and the individual, the adaptability of both society and the individual is of crucial significance. The individual must accept the traditionally regulated set of rules, bequeathed through millennia of cultural coexistence, a 'product' of the previous and current generations' constructing activity (Berger, Luckmann 1991). Society, on the other hand, must be 'flexible', since a construction of social reality would be impossible without the individual playing his/her part. Social reality and the set of cultural rules bear heavily on the individual, who has to sacrifice the shaping of culture to fully fit his individual reality. The harmonious rapport between society and the individual gets disrupted when the rules

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[2] This research describes the conditions that had existed before the 4th amendment of the constitution in March 2013, in which the parliament empowered the municipalities to consider criminal offence residing in public properties.

of social coexistence require too much sacrifice from the individual, or when the individual does not want to adapt to the norms of social coexistence. This creates an anomic situation, in which both the individual and social norms become uncertain (Durkheim 1952, Freud 2005).

## Aboutthe values

In the aspect of both the individual psyche and social coexistence the key to harmony is a solid set of values. Dominant values link the individual with society almost like a chain, and these chains provide for the integrity of the personality and the society.

Values interconnect several research orientations: e.g. experimental psychology, aesthetics, language philosophy, etc. "In addition to the varied and shifting connotations of value in ordinary speech, the word is a technical term in philosophy, economics, the arts, and, increasingly, in sociology, psychology, and anthropology" (Kluckhohn 1951:389).

The question of right or wrong has been investigated for thousands of years, but it still has not come to an end. Philosophy is the source of social science researches. First, aesthetics had derived from philosophy with the interconnection of the good and virtuous at the ancient Greeks (καλοκἀγαθία)[3]. The value theory of economics cannot be independent of philosophical questions as well. Here value is 'usefulness' (Marx 1990). The research of values assumes the anthropological observation too, which concentrates on the realization of values in everyday life (Berger et al. 2010). This can be interpreted in social situations hence; in our research besides anthropology we applied social psychological and sociological value definitions as well. However, we are convinced that the nature of values is ontological. Several different answers exist for Nietzsche's question."How can anything pass away which has a right to be? Whence that restless, ceaseless coming-into-being and giving birth, whence that grimace of painful disfiguration on the countenance of nature, whence the never ending dirge in all the realms of existence?" (Nietzsche 1996:48)

## About the deviance and how did we measure it?

Social deviances have been determined theoretically and empirically by several definitions during the last century. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the theoretical approaches we used in our research.

We do not see social deviation and deviant behavior purely in the legal sense of the word. We accept Durkheim's thesis (1952) that rather than it being the essence of the given behavior deviation follows from the norms of the social environment, society

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[3] Kalokagathia (Καλοκαγαθια) composed two adjectives: καλός ("beautiful") and ἀγαθός ("good" or "virtuous") (Eco 2010: 48).

and culture in which we can observe it. We are considering using Merton's modification of the Durkheim theory as the theoretical background to our research.

Accepting Merton's theory of deviance our starting point is that manifest and latent functions of social acting can be differentiated from each other. Merton's ground-breaking world refers to researchers who have come to the same conclusion when trying to differentiate between latent and manifest functions of social acting, albeit in different fields of research: G. H. Mead (1918), Sumner (1906), MacIver (1948), Thomas and Znaniecki (Merton 1968: 115-116). Merton claims that social deviances have functions even if they are latent: „It is, indeed, my central hypothesis that aberrant behavior may be regarded sociologically as a symptom of dissociation between culturally prescribed aspirations and socially structured avenues for realizing these aspirations" (Merton 1968: 188). Marginal groups are characterized by handling conflicts between socially expected goals and the tools used to reach them in an untraditional way.

The symbolic interactionism approach goes even further: it regards deviance as entirely relative, inasmuch as it takes the burden of deviant behavior from the deviant person and puts it on majority society. Leaning on Mead social psychologist Becker's theory can be considered the starting point of the symbolic interactionism approach of deviance: "Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an „offender". The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is a behavior that people so label" (Becker 1963: 9). Like earlier approaches Becker returns to emphasizing the power situation in which what makes the deviant or deviant subculture deviant is being stigmatized as such by the majority society.

From among the theoretical approaches describing social deviation we shall mainly apply the postmodern one, whose eminent representative is Foucault. Foucault uses terms of discipline and punish in his historical research of qualifying deviance (Foucault 2006). We shall use the same approach in our research, i.e. that subcultures qualified deviant develop due to the power situations characteristic of the given society.

We used Schwartz's Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) in our research. Thanks to the data collection of the European Social Survey with the help of the test we have the chance to compare the value systems of the European and the Hungarian adult society. Schwartz elaborated a test that integrates the former value tests.

The PVQ includes short verbal portraits of 21 different people, gender-matched with the respondent (Schwartz 2005; Schwartz, et al. 2001). Each portrait describes a person's goals, aspirations, or wishes that point implicitly to the importance of a value. The PVQ asks about similarity to someone with particular goals and aspirations (values) rather than similarity to someone with particular traits. The same term can refer both to a value and a trait (e.g., ambition, wisdom, obedience). The task of the

questioned individuals is to tell how much they resemble to the portrait, where 1 means "not at all", and 6 means "fully"In order to interpret the table better we rotated the original scales. Schwartz differentiated 10 values along two major axles.

"Figure 1. Theoretical model of relations among ten motivational types of values"
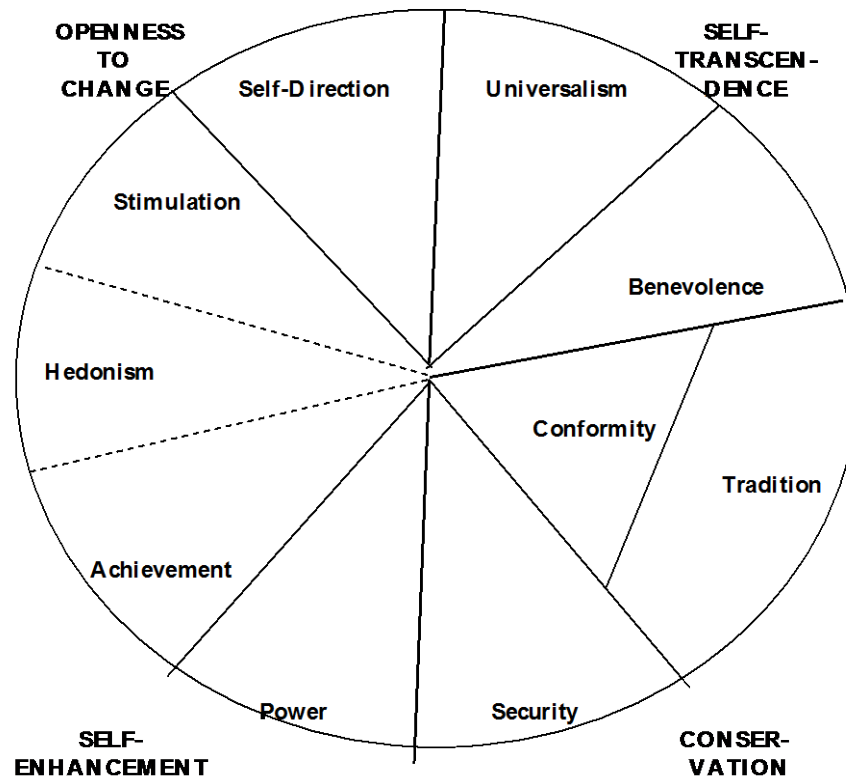


(Schwartz 2003:270)

OnFigure 1. it can be seen that one dimension contrasts 'openness to change' and 'conservation' values. This dimension captures the conflict between values that emphasize independence of thought, action, and feelings and readiness for change (self-direction, stimulation) and values that emphasize order, self-restriction, preservation of the past, and resistance to change (security, conformity, tradition). The second dimension contrasts 'self-enhancement' and 'self-transcendence' values. This dimension captures the conflict between values that emphasize concern for the welfare, and interests of others (universalism, benevolence) and values that emphasize pursuit of one's own interests and relative success and dominance over others (power,

achievement). Hedonism shares elements of both openness to change and self-enhancement. The differentiated values with this method are:

"Self-Direction. Defining goal: independent thought and action choosing, creating, exploring. Self-direction derives from organismic needs for control and mastery and interactional requirements of autonomy and independence (creativity, freedom, choosing own goals, curious, independent)…
Stimulation. Defining goal: excitement, novelty, and challenge in life. Stimulation values derive from the organismic need for variety and stimulation in order to maintain an optimal, positive, rather than threatening, level of activation…
Hedonism. Defining goal: pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself. Hedonism values derive from organismic needs and the pleasure associated with satisfying them.
Achievement. Defining goal: personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards. Competent performance that generates resources is necessary for individuals to survive and for groups and institutions to reach their objectives…
Power. Defining goal: social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources…
Security. Defining goal: safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self…
Conformity. Defining goal: restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms. Conformity values derive from the requirement that in dividuals inhibit inclinations that might disrupt and undermine smooth interaction and group functioning. As we define them, conformity values emphasize self-restraint in everyday interaction, usually with close others.
Tradition. Defining goal: respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides…
Benevolence. Defining goal: preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (the 'in-group').
Universalism. Defining goal: understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature. This contrasts with the in-group focus of benevolence values." (Schwartz 2012:5-7)
According to the theory and the test, every individual and every culture can be described by the rank of the preferred values. Schwartz's theory and test set contradictory values against each other. Both the theory and the test suppose a hierarchical arrangement among the 10 values, ranking from the most important to the less important ones. Schwartz suggests the method of centering.
Based on this method one can calculate the value preferences as the following:
1. First, we should compute the mean of the 21 items. This score indicates the individual's value possession.
2. Second, we should compute the means of the items belonging to the same value category.

3. Third, we should subtract the score we got during the second step from the individual score (the result we got during the first step). (Schwartz 2003)

With this method we can determine the preferred values in the value system of each questioned individual. The higher the score the more important is the value in the value system. If we compute the mean score of each value of the questioned individuals in every group and subculture, we will get the importance of the specific value in the value system of the group or subculture.

## Marginality and Values

These different value systems are shown on the table.

Table 1. Value systems in different cultures

| values | ESS (24) 2010 | Hungarian society 2010 | Utcafront Baptist Aid 2011 | Recovery room 2011 | Hungarian prostitutes 2012 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| benevolence | 0,74 (1.) | 0,46 (2.) | 0,41 (3.) | 0,29 (3.) | -0,04 (6.) |
| universalism | 0,59 (2.) | 0,43 (3.) | 0,68 (2.) | 0,51 (2.) | 0,22 (4.) |
| security | 0,45 (3.) | 0,72 (1.) | 0,4 (4.) | 0,23 (5.) | 0,14 (5.) |
| self-direction | 0,34 (4.) | 0,31 (4.) | 0,77 (1.) | 0,62 (1.) | 1,14 (1.) |
| tradition | 0,04 (5.) | -0,01 (6.) | -0,06 (7.) | -0,24 (7.) | -0,39 (8.) |
| conformity | -0,15 (6.) | -0,43 (8.) | -0,66 (9.) | -0,96 (10.) | -1,14 (10.) |
| hedonism | -0,27 (7.) | 0,12 (5.) | -0,01 (5.) | 0,25 (4.) | 0,49 (3.) |
| achievement | -0,46 (8.) | -0,19 (7.) | -0,01 (6.) | -0,04 (6.) | -0,16 (7.) |
| stimulation | -0,72 (9.) | -0,85 (10.) | -0,31 (8.) | -0,4 (8.) | 0,55 (2.) |
| power | -0,87 (10.) | -0,79 (9.) | -1,16 (10.) | -0,6 (9.) | -0,67 (9.) |
| N | 45892 | 1561 | 77 | 100 | 16 |

The second column of the table shows the data of the 2010 European Social Survey with 24 countries handled together (without Israel and Russia) based on approximately 46000 answers, this represents the European value system. Each column indicates the ranking of the values in brackets, besides the mean scores of

each value. We can conclude that for the Europeans the most important values are benevolence and universalism. Both communal values indicate the importance of equality, equal treatment and the equality of chances. The third most crucial element of the European value system is security, which means the avoidance of risk taking. Individual values are ranked after the three communal values: self-direction, hedonism, achievement, and stimulation. Power, as in the Baptist Aid sample, is the last value in the European sample as well, that means that power is a value that is refused by the Europeans. The third column shows the value system of the Hungarian society. This is the value system of that society where the prostitutes who participated in our research, belong to, and who are now in a Hungarian prison.

Primarily they were not sentenced because of their sex work activity, though they had used to work as prostitutes before their imprisonment. Their value system is shown in the last column of the table. The value system of the Hungarian society differs significantly from the European value system. Despite that on the first three places the same values are found, the ranking is not the same. The most important value of the Hungarian society is security. The endeavor to reach a secured life is coupled with strong paternalistic attitudes due to the present insecure economic situation, which characterizes Hungary more than the Western-European countries.

Hedonism is a more important value for the Hungarians than for the Europeans. Hedonism is mainly an individual value, and if individual values indicate the presence of deviance then we can conclude that the Hungarian society is more deviant than the European one. The value system of the Hungarian prostitutes differs from the Hungarian society and from the Europeans significantly. For them individual values are the most crucial ones: self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism. They like, and they would like to enjoy life. But they cannot do it easily in many circumstances. That is why the achievement score is high in their case (-0.16). It is still negative, which means that this value is less important comparing to other values. The prostitutes' value system cannot be independent of the fact that they are in prison at the moment, therefore, power has a totally different connotation for them. The theory and the test measure the value of power with two questions.  One of them asks about the importance of financial means (q2): "It is important to her/him to be rich. S/he wants to have a lot of money and expensive things." They feel that a person for whom it is more important to dominate other people's life is farther from them than from the Hungarians or from the Europeans. They don't feel close a person to themselves who can be described like this: "It is important to her/him to get respect from others. He wants people to do what s/he says." They would like to live a comfortable life, but they don't want to dominate others. In majority society the case is just the opposite. In majority society it is more important to have power over other people than to have more financial means. Tradition practically doesn't exist for prostitutes. They don't form a community. The level of benevolence indicates this phenomenon. We got similar results in our other researches among homeless persons and alcoholics. In order to lead an independent life the members of the deviant groups need to take risks. Their value systems are depressed by the majority society. Prostitutes are extreme in this respect as though they have interest groups but a worker's community

is not relevant in their life. They are extraordinarily individualist, their aim is to make both ends meat, they want to lead an exciting life, and they would like to have autonomy and independence. They are deviant, because they want to live their life according to different values than the majority society.

In the fourth and fifth columns of the table the results of two recorded samples of value tests of homeless people are shown. The results seen in the fourth column represent the results of the test recorded among those homeless people who live in the temporary accommodation of Utcafront Baptist Aid.

In this institution homeless people of the streets may even have the option to spend years, so they have a more secure housing situation in this respect, than those homeless people who stay at the recovery institution.

The fifth column shows the responses of this latter group. It is important to note that the survey was made in the winter crisis period. This home for the convalescent is a type of hospital, which is financed and sustained by a foundation. Here homeless people with health problems can stay for several weeks. In this institution very severe cases are treated: for example: cases of frostbite.

The value of self-direction (autonomy) must be highlighted in the fourth, fifth and sixth column, as this is the most important value of all three examined groups.

There is a crucial difference between the value systems of European cultures and Hungary.

In Schwartz's theory the value of openness to change is closely linked to the value of stimulation. The value of stimulation is much more important for those deviant groups which can be seen in the last three columns of the table comparing to the European or Hungarian representative samples, and it is significantly high in case of prostitutes is extremely high both its place in the order of values, both in absolute terms. In contrast, for deviant groups values in connection with conservation (conformity, security, tradition) are the last in the scale of values. The value of benevolence, which belongs to the self-transcendence, must be highlighted as this value is ranked low in all deviant samples.

We should also emphasize power as one of the most emblematic value of the individualism cluster of values. The value of power, which belongs to the value class headed by individualism, also must be highlighted. This value is very much rejected in all samples.  It is worth to mention that it is ranked last or next to last. In Europe or among the people living in Utcafront this value is the most rejected one.

In Hungary those residing in the convalescent institution and the imprisoned ex-prostitutes value power next to the last in the value scale. The situation is similar if we look at the absolute numbers. We can see the highest number in case of power in the last but one column (-0.6), and in the last column (-0.67). These results show and draw attention to the fact that these last two "culture" are the most savage ones.

The members of these "cultures" should take care of themselves the most. In many cases, they suppress others, or others suppress them. The homeless person who lives in the street will take off someone else's shoes, or his shoes will be taken off. From a moral point of view he is beyond good and evil. This type of deviance has clearly ontological nature.

## Wille zur Macht

In this sense it is impossible not taking into consideration Nietzsche's definition of values:

"The standpoint of "value" is the standpoint of conditions of preservation and enhancement for complex forms of relative life duration within the flux of becoming (Nietzsche WP715, 1968:380)."

It is important to highlight during interpretation that these are not moral categories in a phenomenological sense. Nietzsche's definition of values has mainly ontological aspect. It is much more connected with the nature of being than the nature of existing.

## Values and Marginality

Summarizing the results of the value tests we can conclude thatHungarian society and culture are in many aspects more deviant comparing to European societies.

- Autonomy is less important in Hungarian culture.
- Universalism and benevolence have less significance.
- Power and hedonism are more crucial.
- As universalism and benevolence are ranked low, and power is ranked high in the value system, we can draw the conclusion that Hungarian society and culture are in a marginal position in Europe.

The value systems of the deviant groups differ from the value system of the Hungarian society. In these groups self-direction has high priority. Hedonism is important for them: they want to feel themselves well. Achievement is also crucial for them, and they are more risk-taking (stimulation).

Each value system of the studied deviant groups (those, which could not be presented this time) clearly shows that values of individualism (self-direction, hedonism, stimulation) are more important than for majority culture. The benevolence value, which belongs to the self-transcendence value class, is less important.

In ontological uncertainty social control and controlling power trigger counter reactions among people who have economic difficulties.

Our investigation clearly shows that the stigmatization processes of majority society provoke autonomous reactions among the stigmatized. Marginal existence follows the logic of the repressive regime in extreme cases (such as homelessness). In these cases, struggle for life is the basic condition of existence and oppression is part of it. Thus, stigmatized personsoften also contribute to the continuation of their own stigmatizations and the survival of the power system in the society. However, this leads to the topic of system justification and social dominance orientation which can be the themes of a future paper.

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