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Evaluating Cohabitation: Analysis of Value-Framing in Opinion Articles on the  
Cohabitation Act

Bachelor Thesis

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## Introduction

On October 9th, 2014 the Estonian parliament passed the Cohabitation Act, providing non-married couples with an accessible formal outlet for the regulation of their legal relations via a notarized co-habitation agreement. In terms of its legal functionality, entering a formal co-habitation agreement in Estonia is largely analogous to marrying, as the regulatory ambit of both formalizations covers a similar spectrum of property-, inheritance- and adoption-related rights and obligations. In the case of property relations, entering a cohabitation agreement is the functional equivalent of marrying, as both formalizations are based on the same norms stipulated in the Estonian Family Law Act. A salient feature of the Cohabitation Act is its gender-neutral wording, providing implicit state recognition to families based on same-sex relationships and, more importantly, allowing those families to avail themselves of the regulative opportunities provided by the new legislation.

The foundational texts of the Cohabitation Act (2012; 2014)<sup>1</sup> reveal that it was designed to fill a lacuna in Estonian law where the regulative opportunities available to non-married couples were extremely limited considering the prevalence of non-married cohabitation and the fact that most children in Estonia are born outside of marriage. While general partnership agreements existed under Estonian law prior to the Cohabitation Act, they were deemed impractical for the regulation of cohabitation due to their legal complexity. Hence, prior to the adoption of the Cohabitation Act, most unmarried couples did not opt to formalize their relationship and thus faced various legal issues such as not being able to give

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this work, the Conception of the Draft Act of the Cohabitation Law published by the Estonian Ministry of Justice in 2012 and the Explanatory Note on the Draft Act of the Cohabitation Law published in 2014 are regarded as the foundational documents of the Cohabitation Act.

permission to perform medical procedures in cases where their partner is incapacitated or not being able to delineate ownership of property acquired during cohabitation (Seletuskiri, 2014).

The draft act of the Cohabitation Act, submitted to Riigikogu in April 2014, sparked an intense public debate on the merits of the Cohabitation Act. The contrast between the foundational and public discourses of the cohabitation act was stark – a functionally majority-oriented law intended to facilitate the legal dealings of the many was publicly framed almost exclusively as a gay-rights issue. This overarching frame, while parochial in essence, molded the nature of the discourse in ways that opened up exciting avenues for political science research. Framing the issue in terms of gay rights proved to be extremely polarizing in the Estonian social context – according to a 2014 public opinion survey (TNS Emor, 2014), only 33% of Estonians supported state recognition of same-sex couples as families which meant that the parliament was going against the social grain by considering progressive legislation amidst conservative sentiment. This galvanized activists on both sides to publish a flurry of opinion articles, providing ample content for scientific analysis. The highly publicized nature of the debate incentivized writers on both sides of the issue to use value-frames due to their strength and broad appeal, which allows for the application of value theory in examining both the nature of the discourse and how it relates to the society in which it occurs (Hoffman and Slater, 2007, 60).

In this thesis, I will provide a values-based account of the public discourse that preceded the adoption of the Cohabitation Act and examine the symmetry between public values and values expressed in public discourse. In broad terms, the research consists of two parts. Firstly, I will apply S.H. Schwartz's (1992; 2010) theory of basic values to conduct a content analysis that characterizes the value structure of opinion articles on the Cohabitation Act that were published

before its adoption. Secondly, I will use data from the seventh round of the European Social Survey (ESS7, 2014)) to compare the values expressed in opinion pieces to the values held by the society at large. In doing so, I will attempt to answer two main research questions:

**Research Question 1 (RQ1): Which value frames were used in public discourse on the Cohabitation Act?**

**Research Question 2 (RQ2): To what extent did the value frames used in discussing the Cohabitation Act reflect the values held by Estonians according to ESS7?**

While the study of human values based on Schwartz's theory has been of central interest to political scientists since the theory was first published (e.g. Bilsky and Schwartz, 1994; Barnea and Schwartz, 1998; Schwartz et al, 2001; Smith, Peterson, and Schwartz, 2002), the vast majority of research published so far is based on surveys. Attempts to utilize Schwartz's theory of values in content analysis have been extremely limited (Hoffmann and Slater, 2007). This work contributes to the study of values by examining to what extent the analytical constructs developed by Schwartz retain their validity when applied in a different analytical context.

In terms of methodological and theoretical groundwork, this work leans heavily on the works of Krippendorff (2012) and Schwartz (1992; 2010), while also foraying into the realm of framing theory (e.g., Chong and Druckman, 2007). The research process is guided by several hypotheses grounded in the aforementioned theory. For the sake of reader comprehension, these hypotheses will be introduced alongside relevant theory in the following sections of the work. The overall structure of this thesis is as follows. I will begin by giving an overview of two key theories used in this work: S.H. Schwartz's theory of values and the theory of

framing in public communication. Secondly, I will introduce the methodology applied to analyzing opinion pieces and comparing them to data from ESS7. Finally, I will discuss the results of the analysis, particularly in terms of how they relate to the theoretical hypotheses deployed in the earlier sections of the thesis.

# Values – Theory and Practice

## Shalom H. Schwartz's Theory of Basic Human Values

First published in 1992, Shalom H. Schwartz's theory of basic human values quickly became a dominant theory in the study of values<sup>2</sup>. Early research on values had suffered from the lack of a unifying framework for values (Hitlin, 2004) and a drought of instruments to measure values empirically (Rohan, 2000). Schwartz's theory sought to rectify those deficiencies by developing firstly, a model that explains how values relate to one another and secondly, a universal methodology for the cross-cultural measurement of values (Schwartz, 1992).

In the simplest terms, values are abstract representations of what a person considers important in life. Every person holds a certain set of values and the importance of a particular values varies from person to person. Schwartz (2012, 3-4) specifies six defining characteristics of values:

1. "Values are beliefs linked inextricably to affect. When values are activated they become infused with feeling." Arguably, it is precisely the affective aspect of values that underlies their motivational potency (Sheth, 1970; Bushman, Baumeister, and Phillips, 2001; Svenson, 2003).
2. "Values refer to desirable goals that motivate action." For example, people who value security are likely to act in a way that is conducive to them feeling secure.

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<sup>2</sup> As of April 2016, Schwartz's seminal work is cited over 9700 times according to Google Scholar.

3. “Values transcend specific actions and situations.” According to Schwartz, the trans-situational nature of values sets them apart from norms and attitudes that are thought to pertain to particular situations. For example, we stop following workplace rules when we step out of the office, but we value security around-the-clock, regardless of the social context.
4. “Values serve as standards or criteria.” In addition to guiding individual action, values are used as social benchmarks to evaluate events, policies, people, et cetera.
5. “Values are ordered by importance relative to another.” Thus, any individual or society is characterized by the structure of their value hierarchy.
6. “The relative importance of multiple values guides action.” Corollary to the last point, in cases where an attitude or a behavior has implications on multiple values, it’s the relative importance of those values that determines what action is taken.

The characteristics described above apply to all values. Values are distinguished from one another by the “motivations that they express” (Schwartz, 2012, 4). In his theory, Schwartz (1992; 1994; 2012) outlines ten broad values along with motivations that they hinge on. These values are thought to be universal because they are “grounded in [the] universal requirements of human existence”: “[...] needs of individuals as biological organisms, requisites of coordinated social interaction and survival and welfare needs of groups” (Schwartz, 2012, 4).

Schwartz’s ten basic values and their corresponding motivational goals are outlined in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Ten Basic Human Values**

| <b>Value</b>   | <b>Defining Goal</b>  |
|----------------|---|
| Self-Direction | Independent thought and action  |
| Stimulation    | Excitement, novelty and challenge   |
| Hedonism       | Pleasure, i.e. sensuous gratification of oneself  |
| Achievement    | Demonstrating competence according to social standards  |
| Power          | Social status and prestige, control over people and resources                                     |
| Security       | Safety and stability of society, relationships and self   |
| Conformity     | Restraint of actions likely to upset or harm other and violate social norms                       |
| Tradition      | Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas of one’s culture or religion          |
| Benevolence    | Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact       |
| Universalism   | Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection of the welfare of all people and of nature |

(Schwartz, 2012, 5-7)

Perhaps the most important contribution of Schwartz’s theory (1992; 1994; 2012) is the idea that values don’t exist in isolation, but are interrelated as parts of a dynamic structure that is based on the notion that congruity between values varies. Pursuing a particular value is bound to be compatible with some values and in conflict with others. For example, seeking out power is likely to be compatible with achievement and stimulation, but at odds with conformity and



dynamic as “reliance upon one's own judgment and comfort with the diversity of existence”. In rare cases, adjacent values could also be in direct conflict. For example, in the case of security and conformity, conforming to the tenets of a violent ideology could be at odds with the security of a group. On a broader scale, Schwartz (2012, 9) grouped oppositional categories of higher order values on two dimensions that fall diagonally on Figure 1: self-transcendence values are contrasted to self-enhancement values and conservation values are contrasted to openness to change values. According to Schwartz (2012, 10), the most important implication of conceiving values as a circular structure is that it shows how all ten values relate to any other variable (e.g. age, profession) in an integrated manner. The dynamic relationship between values gives rise to the first hypothesis of this work:

**Hypothesis 1 (H1): The use of a value frame in an opinion article is negatively associated with the use of value frames from the opposite side of the circular structure.**

### **Measuring Values**

The two main empirical instruments to measure values based on Schwartz's theory are the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS) and the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) - both designed by Schwartz himself (Schwartz, 1992; 2006; Schwartz et al, 2001). Researchers have also individually developed tools to measure values in contexts that preclude the use of surveys. For example, coding schemes for value-frames based on Schwartz's theory have been developed for content analysis (Suedfeld and Weiszbeck, 2004; Hoffmann and Slater, 2007). In this work, I analyze data collected using a shortened, 21-question version of the PVQ as part of ESS7 and use a coding scheme adopted from

Hoffmann and Slater's (2007) study on value-framing in health policy issues. The implications of using these instruments are discussed further in the section on methodology.

Schwartz (Schwartz et al, 2012) has proposed a refined version of his theory of values, defining 19 distinct values instead of the original ten and expanding on how those values are related. According to the study, the refined theory of values provides better predictive validity and is hence preferable to the original theory. Unfortunately, employing Schwartz's refined theory requires the use of a modified version of PVQ, which has not been adopted by major value surveys. For example, ESS7, which provides the most recent, and in the context of this work, most relevant data on the values of Estonians, employs a version of PVQ that is only compatible with Schwartz's original theory. Since this thesis has a comparative element that requires using data from ESS7, Schwartz's original theory was used instead of its refined version. This is not a major limitation since Schwartz's original theory (1992; 1994; 2012) still offers good predictive validity.

While the importance individuals impart to values varies, value hierarchies across societies and cultures have proven to be remarkably consistent. Bardi and Schwartz (2001) found, based on a sample of 56 nations, that any national value hierarchy correlates at least 80% with the average value hierarchy measured across all national samples. This is particularly striking considering the immense cultural variation across nations, as the sample was drawn from countries as diverse as, for example, Uganda, Singapore and USA (Bardi and Schwartz, 2001). Bardi and Schwartz (2001) define the aggregate hierarchy as the "pan-cultural baseline" of values, which ranks values from most important (1) to least important (10). The pan-cultural baseline is shown in Table 2 on the next page:

**Table 2: Pan-Cultural Baseline of Value Priorities**

| <b>Rank</b> | <b>Value</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1           | Benevolence    |
| 2           | Universalism   |
| 3           | Self-Direction |
| 4           | Security       |
| 5           | Conformity     |
| 6           | Hedonism       |
| 7           | Achievement    |
| 8           | Tradition      |
| 9           | Stimulation    |
| 10          | Power          |

(Schwartz, 2012, 15-16)

According to Schwartz and Bardi (2001), the structure of the pan-cultural hierarchy stems from the fact that the most important social function of values is to “promote and preserve cooperative and supportive relations among members of primary groups”. This explains the relative importance of self-transcendence values as cornerstones of a harmonious social order and conservation values as being central to its preservation. Significant national deviation from the pan-cultural baseline reflects an alternative understanding of the extent to which different values are conducive to social harmony. In the later sections of this work, I will briefly analyze on to what extent Estonians’ values mirror the pan-cultural hierarchy and its implications for future research.

# **Theory of Framing**

## **Framing and Value Frames**

Contrary to the democratic ideal of an informed citizen, members of liberal democratic polities have, on average, been shown to hold weak opinions that are strongly influenced by small changes in how issues are presented to them (e.g. Zaller 1992; Sniderman and Theriault, 2004). Presenting an issue in a way that causes people to “develop a particular conceptualization of the issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” is called “framing” (Chong and Druckman, 2007).

According to Chong and Druckman (2007), the major premise of framing theory is that “an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values and considerations”. For example, adoption of the Cohabitation act could be viewed as a positive step towards a more tolerant society (universalism frame) or a threat to the time-honored institution of heterosexual nuclear family (tradition frame). An individual who regards both universalism and tradition as important and lacks a strong opinion on the Cohabitation Act is likely to form their opinion on the issue based on the frames in which it is presented.

In competitive public environments, such as the opinion pages of a newspaper, individuals reading about an issue are often exposed to multiple competing frames. Sniderman and Theriault (2004) argue that in such instances, individuals are likely to hook on a frame that is consistent with their values or principles. Hence, framing arguments in terms of universally held values can be regarded as a powerful framing strategy. The use of value frames in public communication has been widely studied (e.g. Brewer, 2002; Nelson and Willey, 2001; Shah,

Domke, and Wackman, 2001) and shown to override opinions about the costs and benefits of policies (Nelson, 2004). While past research has mostly focused on framing in elite communication (e.g. Brewer, 2001; Schnell and Callaghan, 2001), it has been demonstrated that value frames are also used in “lay discourse” such as opinion pieces or letters to the editor written by ordinary citizens (Hoffman and Slater, 2007).

Authors of opinion articles are more likely to frame their arguments in terms of values that are held in high regard in that society. This is because of two reasons. Firstly, since social predominance is essentially the aggregate of individual preferences, authors of opinion articles<sup>3</sup> are simply more likely to hold these values and have their value preferences reflect in their communication. Secondly, even if they don’t hold these values, they are still incentivized to frame their arguments in terms of popular values so as to maximize the impact their communication has on people’s behavior and attitudes (Schemer, Wirth, and Matthes, 2012). This gives rise to the second hypothesis of this work:

**Hypothesis 2 (H2): Frames rooted in socially predominant values are likely to appear in opinion articles at a higher frequency.**

### **Contextual Applicability of Value Frames**

Not all value frames are applicable in any given context. For example, security probably has very little bearing on deciding to what extent the state should fund the arts. Using a security frame in that debate – for example, claiming that funding renegade artists could promote radicalism – would seem far-fetched and probably constitute a weak frame in the context of that discourse. Hence, some

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<sup>3</sup> Assuming that people who write opinion articles on average, hold the same values as the society at large.

value frames might be excluded from public discourse by the substantive nature of the issue being discussed. If we are interested in exploring to what extent people's value preferences are reflected in the frames used in public discourse, it is important to select an issue that allows for the use of a broad range of value frames. I argue that the discussion on the Cohabitation Act meets that criteria as it allows for logically coherent and contextually plausible arguments to be developed and framed in terms of all of Schwartz's (1992; 2012) ten values. Examples of arguments framed in terms of Schwartz's values are displayed in Table 3 on the next page.

**Table 3: Discussion of the Cohabitation Act Framed in Terms of Values**

| <b>Value</b>   | <b>Example argument</b>   |
|----------------|---|
| Self-Direction | The state should regard individual autonomy in sexual- and family affairs as more important than tradition.                             |
| Universalism   | Adopting the Cohabitation Act is a step towards a more tolerant society.  |
| Hedonism       | All people should be able to enjoy their relationships to the fullest extent.   |
| Achievement    | We should respect the social contributions of lesbian and gay citizens by honoring their rights.  |
| Power          | People are the most important resource and the state should adopt legislation that maximizes the reproductive potential of the society. |
| Security       | Since most Estonians oppose the Cohabitation Act, adopting it would threaten social stability.  |
| Conformity     | Individuals should try to suppress sexually deviant behavior.   |
| Tradition      | LGBT-progressivism goes against Christian values.   |
| Benevolence    | I have many gay friends and cannot bear the thought of them being discriminated against.  |
| Stimulation    | People should be able to pursue sexual diversity without paying social penalties.   |

## **Methodology**

Discussion of the research methods used in this thesis can be divided into three parts that follow the logical structure of the work. Firstly, I will describe the methods used to analyze the content of opinion articles. Secondly, I will outline the techniques used to operationalize values using data from ESS7. Thirdly, I will discuss the methodology of comparing the data derived from content analysis to the data from ESS7.

### **Content Analysis**

The process of content analysis - getting from text to results - consists of four main steps: unitizing, sampling, coding and reducing the data to manageable representations (Krippendorff, 2012, 84). According to Krippendorff (2012), the success of content analysis is largely predicated on the extent to which each of these steps is rooted in analytical constructs that emanate from relevant theory. In the following section, I will discuss how each of these steps was carried out in this research.

Unitizing refers to defining relevant units for analysis in order to “increase the productivity, efficiency and reliability of content analysis research” (Krippendorff, 2012, 98). Unitizing is done for three types of units: sampling units, coding units and context units. The unitization framework used in this work is shown in Table 4 on the next page:

**Table 4: Unitization Scheme for Content Analysis of Opinion Articles**

| <b>Unit Type</b> | <b>General Definition</b>  | <b>Unit Used</b> |
|------------------|--|------------------|
| Sampling Unit    | “Unit that is distinguished for selective inclusion in analysis“   | Opinion article  |
| Coding Unit      | “Unit that is distinguished for coding”  | Value.-frame     |
| Context Unit     | “Units of textual matter that set limits on the information to be considered in the description of coding units” | Opinion article  |

(Krippendorff, 2012, 99-102)

The sampling process for this work was guided by two goals – sampling from non-discriminatory sources and arriving at a representative sample. Both of these goals seek to maximize sampling validity, albeit in different ways. Foremost, RQ1 implies a meaningful choice between value-frames – if arguments framed in terms certain values were to be excluded from public discourse *a priori*, the explanatory value of this work would be greatly reduced. Hence, I chose to sample articles from sources that didn’t openly discriminate between articles based on their value-content. Articles published on the websites of interest groups such as, for example, SATPK<sup>4</sup>, were thus excluded from the sample. All opinion articles from putatively non-discriminating websites were included in the sample. In terms of timescale I included all articles published before October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014, as the adoption of the Cohabitation Act served as a watershed that arguably changed the nature of the discourse I chose to study. For example, the procedural resolution of the issue might have lead to a large number of actors withdrawing from the discussion; furthermore, the adoption of the law can cause changes in the relevance of certain value frames. The final sample comprises 51 articles

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<sup>4</sup> Sihtasutus Traditsiooni ja Perekonna Kaitseks

originally published on the online opinion pages of the five largest Estonian newspapers: Postimees, Eesti Päevaleht, Eesti Ekspress, Õhtuleht and Maaleht.<sup>5</sup> Insofar as we intend to study communication that is read by the general public, a sample of all the articles published in these pages is a good representation of the entire discourse, as those pages collectively capture the bulk of potential readership.

Coding for value frames was performed based on a translated version of the coding scheme<sup>6</sup> adopted from Hoffman and Slater (2007). The ten values from Schwartz's (1992) original theory were used as coding categories with keywords signifying concepts related to particular values used to guide the coding process. If a value-frame was employed in an article, the article was coded as "1" for that value; if a value-frame was absent, the article was coded as "0". Since I was the only coder that participated in the research, inter-coder reliability couldn't be determined. To ensure intra-coder reliability, I performed the coding process twice with a two-month interval between trials. Comparing the results of the two trials yielded a high reliability coefficient of  $\alpha=0.84$ .<sup>7</sup>

Frequencies of the occurrence of value frames were tabulated and displayed on a diagram in the order of prevalence. I used Phi to measure association between all value pairs from the opposite sides of the circular structure. Mean Phi values of all value pairs were used as a measure of association between the oppositional groups of higher order values.

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<sup>5</sup> For coding data and a full list of articles included in the sample, contact me at raunokiviloo@gmail.com

<sup>6</sup> See appendixes 1 and 2.

<sup>7</sup>  $\alpha$  refers to Krippendorff's alpha. See chapter 12 of Krippendorff's Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology (2012).

## **Operationalizing Values Based on ESS7 Data**

A shortened 21-question version of the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ-21) is included in the European Social Survey (Davidov, Schmidt, and Schwartz, 2008). The PVQ is based on presenting respondents with verbal portraits of people. Each verbal portrait describes a person who treasures a particular value. For example, “It is very important to him to help the people around him. He wants to care for their well-being.” describes a person who values benevolence. For each portrait, respondents are asked: “How much like me is this person?” The answer is provided on an ordinal scale of “very much like me”, “like me”, “somewhat like me”, “a little like me”, “not like me”, “not like me at all”, which is translated to a numerical scale of 1-6. There are two portraits representing each value with the exception of universalism, for which there are three portraits.

I used the Estonian country file of ESS7<sup>8</sup> (n=1981) to compute value scores for each of the ten values based on respondents’ answers to PVQ-21. The value score for a particular value was computed as the mean of ratings given to verbal portraits associated with that value. To improve intuitive comprehensibility, I reversed the coding of PVQ-21 response values so that higher numbers would correspond to higher levels of perceived affinity with a verbal portrait. To control for variability in how respondents use the scale<sup>9</sup>, I computed centered value scores for each value by subtracting the mean of all value scores from each value (Schwartz, 2013). Mean centered value scores can be used to evaluate the relative importance assigned to values by Estonians. A higher score corresponds to higher

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<sup>8</sup> Available at <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/>

<sup>9</sup> Some respondents, for example, use the full range of possible answers when evaluating the verbal portraits, others only use the middle of the scale, etc. Since we are interested in individuals’ relative value preferences, we must control for these idiosyncracies.

importance. I also calculated value scores for the oppositional categories of higher order values

### **Methods of Comparison**

Since the data from ESS7 and the data obtained by content analysis are on different scales (ordinal vs nominal), the availability of comparative analytical techniques is limited to mainly qualitative observations about the data. To answer RQ2, I compared the data in two ways. Firstly, I analyzed to what extent the hierarchy of value frames (ordered by frequency of use) mirrored the hierarchy of values held by Estonians (ordered by mean centered value scores). Secondly, I compared the relationships between oppositional categories of higher order values in both datasets in terms of Phi and Pearson's  $r$ .

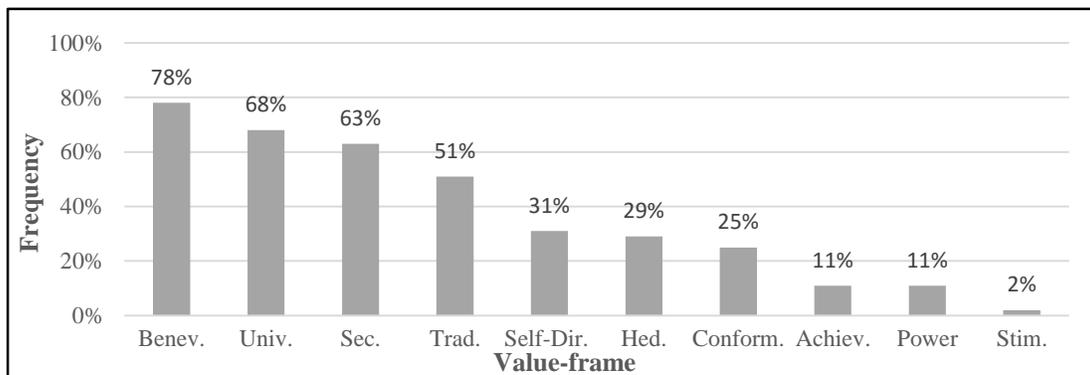
## Results and Discussion

I will begin by answering the research questions raised at the beginning of this thesis.

### **RQ1: Which value frames were used in public discourse on the Cohabitation Act?**

Results of the content analysis are displayed in Figure 2 below:

**Figure 2 – Frequencies of Value Frames in Sample (n=51) of Opinion Articles**



Multiple value frames were found in every opinion article analyzed. Each of Schwartz's ten values was used as a frame on at least one occasion. The most frequently used value frame was benevolence (78%) and the least frequently used frame was stimulation, which was used on only one occasion (2%). The prevalence of different value frames roughly follows the pan-cultural baseline of value priorities (Bardi and Schwartz, 2001). A moderately strong negative association was found between value frames situated on opposite ends of the circular structure of values, confirming H1 ( $\phi=-0.36$  for the openness to change /

conservation dimension;  $\phi = -0.44$  for the self-enhancement / self-transcendence dimension;  $p < 0.05$  for all values reported.)

**Research Question 2 (RQ2): To what extent did the value frames used in discussing the Cohabitation Act reflect the values held by Estonians according to ESS7?**

To answer RQ2, I created a table that ranks values based on three criteria – their ranking by importance according to the pan-cultural baseline of values, their prevalence as frames and by mean centered value scored based on data from ESS7. Ranks are assigned from 1 to 10 with 1 representing the most important / most prevalent / most highly scoring value.

**Table 5: Comparative Value Rankings**

| <b>Value Rank</b> | <b>Pan-Cultural Baseline</b> | <b>Prevalence as Frame</b> | <b>Mean Centered Value Score</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1.                | Benevolence                  | Benevolence                | Benevolence                      |
| 2.                | Universalism                 | Universalism               | Universalism                     |
| 3.                | Self-Direction               | Security                   | Security                         |
| 4.                | Security                     | Tradition                  | Self-Direction                   |
| 5.                | Conformity                   | Self-Direction             | Tradition                        |
| 6.                | Hedonism                     | Hedonism                   | Conformity                       |
| 7.                | Achievement                  | Conformity                 | Hedonism                         |
| 8.                | Tradition                    | Achievement                | Achievement                      |
| 9.                | Stimulation                  | Power                      | Stimulation                      |
| 10.               | Power                        | Stimulation                | Power                            |

(Bardi and Schwartz, 2001; ESS7)

Rankings based on prevalence as frames and mean centered value scores exhibit considerable structural similarities. Four out of ten values are ranked the same under the respective criteria and for the rest of the values, the maximum distance between value ranks is 1. In general, it is clear that socially predominant values (values with high mean centered value scores) are used more frequently as frames, confirming H2. Notably, Estonians regard tradition much more highly than one might expect based on the pan-cultural baseline. This preference is also reflected in the relative prevalence of tradition-based frames in public discourse. Future research in the field could be directed at exploring why Estonians place a relatively high importance on tradition and its potential social implications. Data from ESS7 revealed negative associations between oppositional groups of higher order values ( $r=-0.45$  for the openness to change / conservation dimension;  $r=-0.49$  for the self-enhancement / self-transcendence dimension;  $p<0.01$  for all values reported) similar to those found in the use of value frames. As predicted in H2, individuals tend to avoid value conflict both in terms of their communicative actions and the value preferences they adopt. This shows that the structural dynamics of values, exemplified by Schwartz's circular structure, manifest both in responses to surveys and public communication, providing evidence for the cross-contextual validity of Schwartz's (1992; 1994; 2012) theory of values.

## Summary

This work examined the use of value frames in public discourse on the Cohabitation Act based on S. H. Schwartz's theory of basic human values. More specifically, this thesis investigated which value frames were used in opinion articles on the cohabitation act and to what extent the relative prevalence of value frames reflects the value preferences of Estonians according to data from the 7<sup>th</sup> round of the European Social Survey. Two key premises of Schwartz's (1992; 2012) theory of values are that a) there are ten universally recognized basic values and b) these values are interrelated and function in an integrated fashion. A sample of 51 opinion articles was coded for value frames based on each of Schwartz's ten basic human values. Value-frames were ranked based on their frequency of use from most prevalent to least prevalent. All of Schwartz's ten values were used as frames in opinion articles discussing the Cohabitation Act. The most prevalent value frames were benevolence (78%), universalism (68%) and security (63%) while power (11%), achievement (11%) and stimulation (2%) were the least prevalent. The data obtained content analysis was compared to Human Values data from the seventh round of the European Social Survey, where the values held by Estonians were ranked based on the relative importance assigned to them. Comparison of the two data sets revealed that the relative importance assigned to values was positively correlated with the frequency at which they were used as frames in opinion articles.

## Kokkuvõte

Käesolevas töös uurisin väärtustel põhinevate raamide kasutust kooseluseadust käsitlevates arvamusartiklites. Täpsemalt analüüsisin milliseid väärtusraame arvamusartiklites kasutati ning mil määral peegeldas väärtusraamide suhteline sagedus eestlaste väärtuseelistusi vastaval Euroopa Sotsiaaluuringu andmetele. Uurimustöö põhines Shalom H. Schwartzi baasväärtuse teorial, mille kohaselt eksisteerib kümme universaalselt tunnustatud baasväärtust mis on omavahel tugevalt seotud ning funktsioneerivad integreeritud kogumina. Viisin läbi sisuanalüüsi, mille raames tuvastasin Schwartzi baasväärtustel põhinevaid raame 51-st arvamusartiklist koosnevast valimis. Kõiki Schwartzi kümnest väärtusest kasutati raamidena, kusjuures kõige rohkem kasutati heatahtlikkust (78%), universalismi (68%) ja turvalisust (63%) ning kõige vähem võimu (11%), saavutamist (11%) and stimulatstiooni (2%) Võrdlesin väärtustel põhinevate raamide esinemissagedust arvamusartiklites Euroopa Sotsiaaluuringu seitsmenda vooru andmetega eestlaste väärtusprioriteetidest. Uuringu tulemusena selgus, et eksisteerib positiivne korrelatsioon väärtusraamide esinemissageduse ning nende aluseks olevate väärtuste suhtelise sotsiaalse olulisuse vahel.

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# Appendixes

## Appendix 1 – Coding Scheme for Schwartz’s Values

| <i>TABLE 1</i><br><i>Values and Their Code Words</i> <sup>53</sup> |   |
|--|---|
| Value  | Code Words  |
| Power  | Social status, prestige, control, dominance, authority, wealth  |
| Achievement  | Successful, capable, ambitious, influential, intelligent, hard work, perseverance, competitiveness, competence                  |
| Hedonism   | Pleasure, enjoying life, sensuality   |
| Stimulation  | Daring, a varied life, novelty, an exciting life  |
| Self-direction   | Curious, creativity, freedom, choose own goals, independent, explore, autonomy, agency  |
| Universalism   | Protecting the environment, a world of beauty, social justice, wisdom, equality, a world at peace, welfare of others, tolerance |
| Benevolence  | Helpful, honest, forgiving, friendship  |
| Tradition  | Humble, respect for tradition, accepting my portion in life, customs, religious   |
| Conformity   | Obedient, obey norms, respect for others, honors parents and elders, politeness, self-discipline                                |
| Security   | Clean, national security, patriotism, social order, family security, harmony, healthy   |

(Hoffman and Slater, 2007, 64)

## Appendix 2 – Coding Scheme for Schwartz’s Values, Estonian Translation

| <b>Kood (väärtaus)</b> | <b>Märksõnad</b>   |
|------------------------|--|
| Võim                   | Sotsiaalne staatus, prestiiž, dominantsus, autoriteet, rikkus                                |
| Saavutamine            | Edu, võimekus, ambitsioonikus, mõjukus, intelligentsus, töökus, järjepidevus,                |
| Hedonism               | Mõnu, nauding, sensuaalsus   |
| Stimulatsioon          | Julgus, vaheldusrikkus, uudsus, põnevus  |
| Ennastuunavus          | Uudishimulikkus, loovus, vabadus, isiklikud eesmärgid, iseseisvus, avastama, autonoomia      |
| Universalism           | Keskkonnakaitse, sotsiaalne õiglus, rahu, võrdsus, teiste heaolu, tolerantsus                |
| Heateatlikkus          | Abivalmidus, ausus, andestamine, sõpsus  |
| Traditsioon            | Alandlikkus, vagadus, leplikkus, tavad, religioon  |
| Kuulekus               | Normide jälgimine, austus vanemate jm autoriteedi vastu, enesedistsipliin                    |
| Turvalisus             | Julgeolek, patriotism, sotsiaalne kord, perekondlik turvalisus, tervis, stabiilsus harmoonia |

(Hoffman and Slater, 2007, 64; translated by author)

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