

## Democratic Values in Times of Radical Change: A Comparison at the Local Level between Lithuania, Belarus, Russia, Sweden and the Netherlands

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*This paper addresses the question how policy-values among policy makers change in times of turbulence. In five countries, experiencing radical political change in the last ten years the change in policy values is measured and related to the succession of local policy makers, in terms of rejuvenation, generational succession and period-effects. The research is based on a survey conducted in 1989, and repeated in 1996 and 2000 among politicians and senior administrators at the local level in Sweden, the Netherlands, Russia, Lithuania and Belarus. The conclusion is that it are first and foremost period effects that account for the attitude change among local policy makers. This can be explained by the development of the urgency of policy problems, through these periods.*

*Keywords: Democratic Values, Radical Change, Comparative analysis.*

### 1. Introduction

More than ten years after the fall of the Berlin wall and the start of the democratization process in Eastern Europe, one may well ask whether changes are visible in democratic attitudes among influential people in these countries and more specifically among politicians and leading policy makers in the bureaucratic apparatus at the local level. This is an important question, because as Yehezkel Dror aptly puts it: „Radical improvement of the morality of senior governance elites, and especially senior politicians, is essential, with virtues are becoming more important than ‘being nice’ and ‘smiling a lot’. Without progress in this direction, other improvements of capacities to govern are likely to fail or to be misused“. (Dror, 2002: 99). Following this line of thinking, the capacity to govern at the local level will depend, among others, on the moral role and position of the local elites. Much seems to depend on actions initiated by them, which in turn might depend on the values they adhere to.

This paper reviews how and in which direction values among such local elites have changed in the 1990s in Russia, Belarus, Lithuania, and Poland as new democracies and how these changes compare with value changes in countries which are standing very high in all democracy-ratings, namely the Netherlands and Sweden. The communality between the five countries is that they all experienced rapid political-economic change at the national level in this period. The new democracies witnessed the end of

the communist era and the change toward market economy. In Sweden at the beginning of the 1990s for the first time in centuries a government saw the light not consisting of social democrats, and in the Netherlands a coalition government was formed, in which, for the first time since 1921, the Christian Democratic party, did not take part.

The question posed in this paper is to which degree such periods, in which radical changes occur, have an impact on the values of local elites.

The intention of the paper is first and foremost to give a descriptive comparison. A comparison of value change among local elites over different countries and over time. The research is based on a survey among local politicians and leading administrators conducted in all these countries. The empirical analysis is based on data derived from a longitudinal research project in which surveys were conducted in 1989 and repeated in 1996 and 2000. This research is part of the international research project called ‘*Democracy and Local Governance*’ (Jacobs, 1993). Numerous questions arise from these data on, among others. localism, attention for the rule of law, views on participation and the free market, public ethics, and decisiveness. Is there a significant change in their values visible after a decade? Did any convergence take place between local elites from different countries? On which points are differences still visible and on which points do they agree? The paper focuses on the description of such changes and shows that significant differences exists in the developments among old democracies as well as among the new democra-

cies as well as between local elites in old and new democracies. These findings point at the need to change ‘what is inside the head’ of these local elites to enhance the capacity to govern at the local level.

The theoretical point to be made is that in many policy-theories the explanation of possible changes in attitudes can be attributed to actors. Kingdon, for instance, speaks about the opening of ‘policy windows’ by personal changes in the policy arena. In his model new actors are next to changes in policy problems and solutions one of the three streams that induce policy change (Kingdon, 1984). Sabatier also acknowledges the importance of succession of actors in his advocacy coalition theory. He states about such developments “Turnover in personnel – sometimes resulting from external conditions, sometimes merely from death or retirement- constitutes a second noncognitive source of change that can substantially alter the political resources of various advocacy coalitions and thus the policy decisions at the collective choice and operational levels“ (Sabatier & Jenkins Smith, 1993: 19). Also in the punctuated-equilibrium model (Schattschneider, 1960; Baumgartner & Jones, 1993) in which the simultaneous explanation of incremental and radical changes is central, the entrance of new actors in the policy arena is thought to be crucial. „They may insist on rewriting the rules, and on changing the balance of power that will be reinforced by new institutional structures as previously dominant agencies and institutions are forced to share their power with groups or agencies that gain new legitimacy (True, Jones and Baumgartner, 1999: 101)

The question arising from such theories is what it is in the succession of actors that induces policy change. In this paper it will be argued that it are not so much the characteristics of the changing actors, such as rejuvenation or a new generation of policy makers, that are determinative for the changing attitudes, but first and foremost the changing circumstances in which they have to develop policies. It seem to be characteristics of the period in which attitudes become dominant, that are crucial for those attitudes.

On age and generations, many theories are available, linking these variables to the change in values (see a.o. Inglehart, 1971, Rokeach, 1973; Hazelrigg, 1991; Riley, 1987). On the effects of periods on opinions, attitudes and values, fundamental theories are scarce. In such theories one has to assume that opinions and attitudes are to a large degree contingent. Dependent on economic circumstances, the dominant political culture, media-attention or more general the spirit of the time, attitudes and belief systems are supposed to change. Such conceptions do not assume that attitudes are structural, but rather on the opposite notion, that they are somewhat opportunistic and can change in accordance to the cir-

cumstances. In this conception policy views are determined primarily by the possibilities and restrictions at the time, as given in economic growth, inflation, unemployment and the severity and urgency of social problems. For the case at hand this theory implies that local elites will simultaneously – irrespective of their age or generation, adapt their opinions and views relevant for their policies to the changing boundary conditions. A set of opinions is characteristic for the 1960s, the 1970s, the 1980s, the post-cold war period, or the post 9-11 period, and this belief systems are not expected to be different for younger and older elites or elites belonging to a distinct generation. The hypothesis is that a set of opinions is characteristic for a certain period. Policy makers will adapt their views irrespective of their age and the generation to which they belong.

In the fourth section the results of the research are presented. The analysis goes into changing values and norms among local elites, and the changes in the severity of policy problems with which they are confronted.

The research questions structuring this paper are the following:

- Which developments in these five countries are visible that characterize them as countries experiencing radical change?
- Which value change is visible in these countries, with regard to leadership, decision-making, parochialism and income-policies and do these point to convergence or divergence?
- What explains the policy values among local elites?
- Which hypotheses can be derived from the outcomes of this research?

## 2. The five countries

The point that opinions and attitudes are contingent is argued on the basis of research into the development of policy views of the local elite in five European countries between 1989 and 2000. These are the Netherlands, and Sweden as old democracies and Lithuania, Russia and Belarus as new democracies. This section discussed why these countries are said to have experienced radical change in the 1990s.

The changes in the former Soviet Union, later called *Russian Federation* between 1989 and 2000 can be called dramatic. At the beginning of the 1990s it lost most of its satellite states and changed from being a superstate into a developing state. Politically the turnover of power from Gorbachev to Jeltsin was significant and the change toward a market economy caused at the beginning a hyperinflation and a decrease of GNP with 17 percent. It lasted until 1995

before the economy started slowly to improve, but the Russian government kept suffering from budget deficits, increasing social expenditures, increased environmental problems and a high hidden unemployment. Lack of money and economizing public expenditures in the middle of the 1990s and at the same time an expensive war in Chechnya as well as a still centralized administration did not do much to improve the problems at the local level. Life expectancy is relatively low, the GNI per capita is decreasing and inflation relatively high at 37 percent.

The Baltic state of *Lithuania* is one of the formerly East European states that only at a very late stage started to profit from the turn to a free market economy after the fall of the Berlin wall. After a difficult start in which they were seen as initiators of the fall of the CPSU and were among the first to proclaim itself as a sovereign nation-state, they were suffering a blockade by Gorbachev in 1990, and a Soviet attack of paratroopers in 1991. However, the popular reaction resulted in a temporary path to independence, with an unexpected return to communist government in 1992. Several politico-economic crises were visible again in 1995 and 1999. The economic dependence on Russia also remained with approximately 46 percent of the exports going to Russia. After the fall of the Russian Ruble in 1997 the Lithuanian economy tumbled. Nonetheless, because of their geographic position they were the first to apply for NATO membership and association with the EU. They did become official partner of NATO and received the status of associate member of the European Union in 1995. Only in the last years the national economic situation started to improve. This is, however, not yet reflected in an improved situation in the local communities.

*Belarus* did experience the same radical events in 1989, as Lithuania, and also did not profit from it during the decade that followed. To sketch the current situation by some characterizing figures: In 2000 there is a yearly inflation of 185 percent. The GNI per capita is even lower than that of Lithuania, with approximately 42 percent of the population living under the poverty line (World Development Indicators, 2002). There is a negative population growth and the already negligible foreign direct investments are decreasing further and further, that is, from 440 million dollars in 1999 to 99 million dollars in 2000. The country, being geographically enclosed between Poland, Lithuania, Russia and the Ukraine, is nearly completely dependent on trade with Russia, from which it imports nearly all its energy (at a much too high price) and which it has to trade for machinery and electronics. It did not, like Lithuania, receive the status of associate member of the European Union and it is by far the poorest country in the sample of

five investigated in this paper. The problems originating from being a satellite of the Soviet Union before 1989 have remained as severe as they were before. As Zaprudnik and Urban put it, it is a poor country caught by corruption and chaos.

However, not only the nation-states in Middle and East Europe experienced dramatic political-economic changes. These also occurred in west European countries like Sweden and The Netherlands. *Sweden* and *the Netherlands* belong to the old democracies in Europe and are in many aspects similar. Nonetheless, the Swedish economy in the 1990s was not as booming as that in the Netherlands. The 1990s were characterized by a drastic policy of economy measures, privatization and a devaluation of the Swedish currency called the 'krona'. These policies were carried out by a conservative government which came to power in 1991 after decades of Social Democratic ruling. Their drastic policies were continued by the returning minority cabinet of the Social Democrats in 1995. In the period under investigation Sweden also experienced a 'forced' joining of the European Union and the developments in the 1990s showed that it was very hard to return to the socio-economic progress it experienced until the 1980s. As Stromberg and Scüz put it: 'The welfare state in Sweden was rapidly economized and this resulted in an increase of social problems at the local level' (see Strömberg & Szücs, forthcoming). Their survey among the local elite in Sweden points out that problems at the local level somewhat deteriorated in the 1990s and that the euphoria as visible in the Netherlands is absent here. It shows simultaneously, that the vast majority of the Swedish local elites, is satisfied about the developments in their community. Sweden is a modern welfare state with a GNI per capita of \$27,000, an annual economic growth of about 3 percent, an inflation below 1 percent, growing exports and a dominant service sector, containing nearly 68 percent in 2000 (World Development Indicators).

In the Netherlands the circumstances did change rapidly in the 1990s from a country with huge problems concerning financial deficits and unemployment, into a country with a booming economy and disappearing labor market problems and even a surplus in public finances. Also for the first time in its modern history, the Christian Democrats were not part of the coalition forming the national government, which was regarded as a break with history. In every way the situation improved during the 1990s. The incomes rose, the public expenditure in nearly all policy areas rose, and even the municipal finances were improved. The opinion of the local leaders in 2000 reflect this upheaval and even point at some complacency (De Vries, 2003). They hardly see any serious problems any more at the end of the millennium.

Concluding, we selected five countries experiencing rapid change in the 1990s. Although one might dispute whether the changes were equally dramatic in all these countries, none of them can be called stable during this period. This allows one to investigate whether such macro-political and economic changes are reflected in a change of values among policy makers in those countries.

### 3. Changing values among local elites

The first question to be answered in order to derive hypotheses about the relation between radical political-economic change and value change is how the policy-values in the five countries develop between 1990 and 2000 and which tendencies are seen. This section discusses some of the outcomes in which stability and changes in attitudes are seen, and profound differences between countries as well as patterns of convergence and divergence. We will discuss the attitudes of the local elites in the five countries toward leadership, the role of minorities in decision making processes, their attitudes toward participation, conflict and conflict resolution, toward central-local relations and toward income-policies. It will be argued that in general it is not possible to derive conclusions about convergence or divergence; that differences between old and new democracies do not apply to all attitudes and values and that the development of values at first sight is a complex phenomenon not easily explained.

The data used in this research come from an international research project, titled 'Democracy and local governance'. This international comparative project started after the events of the late 1980s in Eastern Europe. In all the countries involved, thirty communities comprising between 25,000 and 250,000 inhabitants were selected at random; within each of these communities about 15 political leaders and 15 leading officials were interviewed, resulting in a database of over 10,000 respondents. The interviews were carried out in 1989-1991 and repeated in 1995-1996. The interviews/questionnaires were standardized in order to make valid comparisons possible. It

is a large scale survey into the background and opinions of local elites in a large number of countries in the northern hemisphere. The project includes the gathering of data from other countries such as the USA, Sweden, Switzerland and the Netherlands. (see among others De Vries, 1999, 2000; Jacob et al, 1993, 1999). Of five countries in which the survey was conducted we have data on at least two points of time. First in the period between 1989 and 1991, secondly in the period 1995-1997 and thirdly in the period 2000-2001. These are Russia, Belarus, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden (Sweden only for 1990 and 2000). The respondents, being leading politicians and chief public administrators at the local level, were asked among other things about the severity of municipal problems, the effectiveness of policies, responsibility, influence, contacts, and important in this respect, they were given a large number of statements with which they could (completely) agree or disagree on a four point Likert scale.

#### 3.1. Attitudes toward leadership

First we look to the changing attitudes toward leadership. The survey put forth a number of statements to which the respondents could respond on a four point Likert scale, namely completely agree, agree, disagree and completely disagree. The statements about leadership were the following:

- Most decisions should be left to the judgement of experts;
- The most important thing for the leader is to follow his convictions even if this is different from what the constituency expects;
- Certain people are better qualified to run this country due to their traditions and family background;
- In this complicated world the only way we can know what is going on is to rely on leaders or experts who can be trusted;
- It will always be necessary to have a few strong, able people actually running everything;

Table 1. Attitudes towards minorities in decision making processes

YEAR OF STUDY	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
COUNTRY	Netherlands	Netherlands	Sweden	Sweden	Belarus	Belarus	Lithuania	Lithuania	Russia	Russia
Follow Wishes Community		05	43	39	69	74	60	18	63	69
Few Strong Run Everything		25	13	09	62	51	34	37	64	55
Decisions made by Experts	17	10	09	09	80	73	74	75	82	83
Rely on Leaders, Experts		20	27	22	90	99	67	58	87	
Leaders Tradition Family		11	07	06	74	68	65	51	76	
Leaders Follow his Convict-	71	70	51	56	55	51	22	23	55	46
Decision Left in Hands	10	03	05	04	74	69	57	31	73	73

- A leader is obligated to follow the wishes of the community even if he thinks the citizens are mistaken.

Shown in table 1 is first of all the large discrepancies between local leaders in Eastern Europe and those in western Europe. In the former East European states local leaders were and still are much more inclined to give decision making power to experts, there is a lower propensity for leaders to follow their own convictions, but a higher inclination to follow what they see as the wishes of the community.

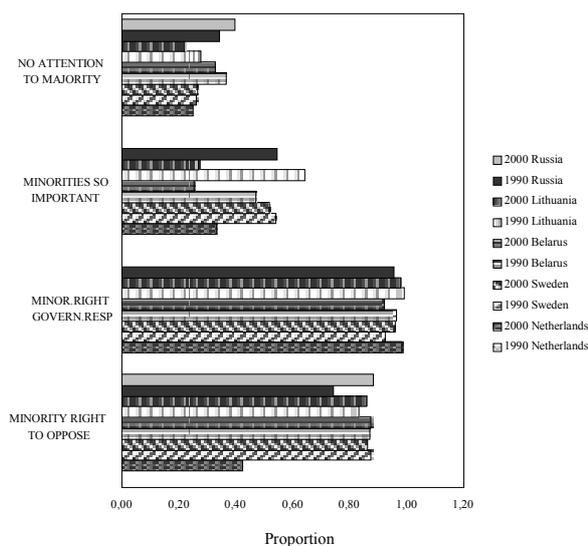
Secondly, converging tendencies are varying between the investigated countries and among issues of leadership. Convergence is seen to some degree for Lithuania, Sweden and the Netherlands, for instance, concerning the role of experts in decision making, but Russia and Belarus keep very distinct position on this point. However, when it comes to strong leadership, it are especially Belarussian and Russian local leaders that through time become more skeptic about its merits. Nevertheless, the most important differences in values concerning leadership are seen when comparing local leaders in the new democracies with those in the old democracies.

### 3.2. Attitudes towards minorities in decision making processes

In every policy making process, there will be people that agree with the proposals and people that are opposed. The question is what to do with those people forming a minority with regard to the decision making process. Should they be ignored, or are they so important that the majority should take their interests into account. Should their interests be protected and what are their rights to oppose decisions? This are important questions in every policy process and it tells us something about the way in which policies are developed at the local level. In figure 1 the opinions about the role of minorities are presented. Our data are based on the (dis)agreement of the local leaders with the following statements.

- When some important problems are in question, a leader should not pay attention to the fact that the majority of the people in the community oppose him.
- The rights of minorities are so important that the majority should be limited in what it can do
- The government has the responsibility to see to it that rights of all minorities are protected
- The minority has the right to oppose but no right to resist decisions taken by the majority

Figure 1. Opinions about minorities



Shown is a moderate view in the western as well as the former East European countries about the role of minorities. Minorities should not be neglected, but they also should not limit the majority in their decisions. Only a small minority in all countries agrees with the first statement about minorities, but there is also no majority in favor of the second statement. Hence, the interests of minorities should be judged, but not be decisive. Furthermore, the government has obligations toward minorities according to the vast majority of local leaders in all countries, but the minorities should be restricted in their actions if decisions are costly for them. Also shown is that there are only slight changes through time. Sometimes the local leaders in a country become more favorable toward the position of minorities, like in Russia, sometimes they become more strict toward minorities, like in Belarus, and sometimes the local leaders attitudes toward minorities is stable, like in Lithuania.

The lack of variance among the local leaders in different countries is, however, the most striking in these issues. Where large differences were seen concerning leadership, these differences are notably absent, when taking the attitudes toward minorities into account.

### 3.2. Attitudes toward participation, conflict and conflict resolution

The third battery of statements concerns attitudes concerning public participation, conflict and conflict resolution. The statements on which the figures presented in table 2 are the following:

- A good leader should refrain from making proposals that divide the people even if

Table 2. Attitudes toward participation, conflict and conflict resolution

YEAR OF STUDY	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
COUNTRY	Netherlands	Netherlands	Sweden	Sweden	Belarus	Belarus	Lithuania	Lithuania	Russia	Russia
Modify Actions Consensus	33	59	47	46	86	93	94	96	81	87
Decision be Postponed	46	17	05	08	85	92	83	68	81	81
Participation bring Confl.	45	32	26	20	64	52	41	38	59	59
Right to Organize Resist		94	91	92	71	58	82	93	80	78
Confl. Res. is Ineffective	39	70	44	41	66	75	75	84	71	
Harmony Precedes Achivem.	27	17	15	21	71	75	73	50	66	
Public Decision Should be	14	02	33	34	94	96	21	68	94	94
Fully Informed Should Vot	07	19	05	07	88	90	95	48	82	

Given are the percentage of respondents in each country and point of time agreeing with the statement

these are important for the community;

- A leaders should modify his actions to keep consensus;
- Preserving harmony in the community should be considered more important than the achievement of community programs;
- Public decisions should be made with unanimous consent;
- Widespread participation in decision making often leads to undesirable conflicts;
- Leaders that are over concerned about resolving conflicts can never carry out community programs successfully.

Regarding these kind of issues much more differences in opinions and attitudes are seen. Shown is, for instance, that the former East European local elites are much more in favor of modifying and postponing decisions in order to reach consensus, than are the local elites in Sweden and the Netherlands. Although the latter have the image of doing so, fewer members of the local elite are in favor of actually adjusting plans in order to keep consensus. The table shows that only a minority of the local elites in the West European countries has the propensity to adjust and postpone decisions, while a vast majority in the new democracies is inclined to do so. East European local elites are much more inclined to delay decisions than their counterparts in Western Europe. It seems that the former are much more open to critique, and much more willing to do something about it in the substance of their decisions than the latter.

East European local elites are however, much less favorable about public participation as such. According to a majority of them it often results in undesirable conflict, while only a minority in the two West European countries thinks so. The same goes, grosso modo, for the effectiveness of conflict resolution and the opinion about who should participate in decision

making processes. In the new democracies the local leaders would like to restrict it to persons who are fully informed, while this opinion is hardly shared by local elites in West European countries. The former also think that decisions are to be made by unanimity. In the West form most local elites a simple majority is found sufficient.

Concluding, local elites in Eastern Europe are much more skeptical about public participation in general and like decision processes to be restricted to knowledgeable people. However, their propensity to take the interests of opponents into account, and to alter or postpone decisions in order to reach agreement is much larger than in the West. In the two old democracies, more people are allowed to join the decision making process. However, anticipation, in order to take heir interests into account is mainly absent here. In other words, they may participate, but are not listened to. They may participate, but this may not influence the decision at stake.

### 3.3. Attitudes toward parochialism and central-local relations

The third set of statements to which the local policy makers in the five countries responded, were aimed to measure their attitude toward central-local relations. The statements put forward were the following:

- Community progress is not possible if national goals always have priority;
- We should not worry so much about national problems, when we have so many in our own community;
- National goals should not be obtained at great costs to local communities;
- Although national affairs are important, people here should first worry about their own community problems.

**Table 3. Opinions about parochialism and national interests**

YEAR OF STUDY	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
COUNTRY	Netherlands	Netherlands	Sweden	Sweden	Belarus	Belarus	Lithuania	Lithuania	Russia	Russia
No Community Progress	24	46	67	65	66	53	76	79	63	74
Not Worry about National	10	07	20	16	45	45	25	45	41	57
National Goal Not at Cost	27	40	78	88	91	87	83	91	94	91
Community Problems First	69	31	61	65	74	75	99	84	76	89

Attitudes toward income policies Given are the percentage of respondents in each country and point of time agreeing with the statement

The tendencies in the five countries are presented in table 3. Seen is that in the old democracies there is more parochialism, concerning the first item, that community progress is not possible if national goals always have priority.

In the old democracies the local elites recognize the importance of national developments and do not see a systematic contrast between national and local development. However, convergence in these views among the local elites in the countries involved is clearly seen concerning this issue. This is, however, not the case concerning the second item, in which the national concerns are compared with the local concerns. A much larger percentage of the local elites in the new democracies shows parochial tendencies than in the old democracies. And here divergence between the countries is seen. Concerning the third issue, a significant convergence is seen. This convergence is due to the changing values in the old democracies. An increasing part of the local elites in the Netherlands and Sweden is in 2000 skeptical about the pursuance of national goals, if these imply great costs for the communities, compared to 1990. Hence, they don't see a systematic conflict between national and local goals (issue 1), but if such conflicts exist, they increasingly show patterns of parochialism, just like their counterparts in the new democracies.

As to the last issue with regard to central-local relations, divergence is seen again. It is comparable to the second issue, and only differs in the wording. Local elites in the new democracies were already in 1990 more parochial than their counterparts in the old democracies, and this difference even increased in the subsequent period.

Concluding, the local elites in the different countries all show some kind of parochialism, and increasingly share the view, that in the specific cases of contrasts between national and local goals, the latter should have precedence (convergence), but they increasingly differ in their view whether such contrasts are always at stake i.e. whether national developments always go at the expense of local developments.

The logic is that all local elites according to their specific position, are expected to let local interests take precedence in case of conflicts with national goals. However, the subjective interpretation whether such conflicts are general between the central and local level there exists a significant and increasing difference between the local elites in both groups of countries.

### 3.4. Attitudes on income policies

The last block of statements put forward to the local elites concerns their views about social and economic equality. The statements were the following.

- Rich people should pay more for the support of community projects than poor people;
- There should be an upper limit on income so that no one earns very much more than others;
- The government has the responsibility to see that nobody lives well when others are poor
- Discrepancies in salary should be continually reduced;
- In every situation poor people should be given more opportunities than rich people.

The percentage of local elites in the different countries in 1990 and 2000 agreeing with these statements is given in table 4. To be seen is that concerning the first item the local elites in the new democracies are much more in favor of leveling policies than the elites in the old democracies. Although in both groups of countries in the 1990s the percentage in favor of such policies increases. A clear convergence to be in favor of such policies is visible in all five countries.

However, when this specific statement, over which communities might take action is generalized, to general income policy, only the majority of the local elites in Sweden show a propensity in favor of leveling policies. In the other countries it is a minority which is in favor of such policies, although this mi-

Table 4. Attitudes toward income policies

YEAR OF STUDY	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
COUNTRY	Netherlands	Netherlands	Sweden	Sweden	Belarus	Belarus	Lithuania	Lithuania	Russia	Russia
Rich should pay more	74	68	41	50	89	89	92	93	90	93
Poor be given more opportunities	25	25	62	50	52	47	44	59	46	50
Upper limit on income	24	19	22	22	20	30	09	42	23	39
No. lives well when others are poor.	43	07	89	86	35	40	43	40	33	
Salary discr. Be reduced	27	25	72	66	36	50	18	46	38	

Given are the percentage of respondents in each country and point of time agreeing with the statement

nority is becoming larger in Lithuania and Russia. A convergence in the percentages of local elites in favor of income redistribution policies is seen between the countries. Only the position of the local elites in the Netherlands stands out as a special case. In all other countries an equal division between local elites in favor of leveling policies and those against is visible.

### 3.5. A note of caution

We cannot but conclude that general conclusions about value change on the basis of these outcomes are by necessity false. Sometimes we see stability and convergence, sometimes change and growing diversity between the members of the local elite in the countries involved. To say that local elites in the old democracies have more democratic attitudes than those in the new democracies is also far from the truth. It depends on the issues and on the values at stake. The analysis above therefore does not permit general conclusions. However, perhaps when we try to explain the changes in attitudes, some general inferences may come out of the analysis. That analysis aims at explaining the attitude change by rejuvenation of the local elite in the different countries, the succession by a new generation and period effects. The next sections of this paper are directed towards solving the puzzle how to explain the patterns.

## 4. Discriminant analysis

To investigate which of the three factors – rejuvenation, the succession of generations, or period effects - is most important in explaining value change, implies entering a very old discussion, that has been debated continuously in sociology and political science and in which seemingly unsolvable problems dominate (Mannheim, 1929; Inglehart, 1971, Georgescu Roegen, 1971; Rokeach, 1973; Elder, 1992; Elder & O’Rand, 1995; Hazelrigg, 1991; Riley, 1987). The main problem is that the three variables,

that is, age, birth cohort and period are not independent from one another. When the birth cohort is known to which someone belongs, as well as his or her age, one also knows by definition the period at stake,  $P=A+C$  (Hagenaars, 1998). Therefore, it is impossible to take the three factors simultaneously in a regression analysis as exogenous variables, because this results in unsolvable identification problems.

Alwin states „Due to the confounding of A, B and C (age, birth cohort, and chronological time, MdV) it is never possible to separate the effects of aging, cohorts and time by simply analyzing the linear additional effects of age, birth year and time of survey. Without some assumptions, which are often lacking, there is apparently no straight forward solution to the identification problem“ (in Hardy, 1997: 168). We just have to live with the fact that we cannot determine which one of the three is responsible for ones’ attitudes.

### 4.1. The logic of discriminant analysis

We suggest a different approach by way of discriminant analysis. The idea behind this approach is that one should not use the attitudes as the dependent variable and the categories as explaining variables, but reverse this. Then one is able to investigate to which degree one can predict the age of someone, the generation he or she belongs to or the period one lives in on the basis of the set of opinions. The better this is possible, the more relevant the category is for the set of opinions. By reversing the research question one might avoid the identification problem and still be able to come at conclusions about the relative relevance of the three categories. In the end, the substantial question concerns the relevance of someone’s age, generation or period in which one lives for the set of opinions. This can be rewritten as ‘these kind of opinions are typical for the 1960s’, ‘this is really distinctive for someone your age’, or ‘this is characteristic for the protest generation’. Then the ques-

tion becomes: ‘to which extent is it possible to summarize sets of opinions or to which degree are they determinative for these categories’. This transforms the categories into endogenous variables of which one investigates whether it are real, significant and relevant categories.

A discriminant analysis seems to be an adequate method to answer the questions posed here. It determines for attitudes or scales thereof to which extent they are distinctive for the classification criterion. The method tries to minimize the differences in attitudes within such groups and to maximize the differences between groups. In order to accomplish this a function is determined of those attitudes that are significantly distinctive for the classification criterion (age groups, periods and generations). On the basis of this function one is able to predict in which group the respondents most likely belong and this is compared with the group to which they actually belong (Gadourek, 1993; Miller & Wicker, 1999). This is not the place to give an extensive description of discriminant analysis. Important for this investigation is which indices are used to determine the relative relevance of the classification criteria.

First, the number of attitudes being distinctive for a classification criterion is important. The more variables being distinctive, the more a set of opinions can be seen as characteristic for that classification criterion. The discriminantfunction indicates this.

Second, the degree to which one is able to give a correct prediction on the basis of the attitudes is important. Are respondents correctly classified in the categories they actually belong to, on the basis of their opinions?

The categories are seen as the endogenous variables. The idea that a set of opinions is a better predictor of the period in which these opinions are given than of the generation to which someone belongs, implies that the former is a more meaningful category than the second. Using this method one can analyze whether values, norms, attitudes or opinions are better summarized within the generation concept, different age categories or the period in which one lives. The outcomes are indicative for the degree to which the concept of generations, age and periods are characteristic for these opinions and to which degree these opinions are distinctive for different values of those concepts.

#### 4.2. Outcomes of the discriminant analysis

The discriminant-analyses were conducted for the five countries separately. The results thereof are presented in table 5 and 6.

*Table 5. Relative importance of classification criteria given the number of discriminating items*

	Periods	Generations	Age Groups	N
Netherlands	11	2	4	1011
Lithuania	18	4	7	<b>585</b>
Russia	13	5	10	1525
Belarus	18	7	7	899
Sweden	13	2	3	1754

*Table 6. Relative importance of classification criteria given the percentage of correct predictions*

	Periods Values	Generations Values	Age Groups Values	N
Netherlands	96%	63	57	740
Lithuania	91%	62	<b>67</b>	<b>585</b>
Russia	87%	59	65	1525
Belarus	73%	59	65	899
Sweden	68%	61	63	1754

To be seen in these tables is firstly that in all five countries period-effects are dominant compared to generation and age-effects. Values seem to be characteristic firstly for the period in which they are expressed. The number of items discriminating between periods in four of the five countries larger than the number of items discriminating between generations and age groups. Secondly, on the basis of all the discriminating items, a better prediction of the period local elites live in is visible than of their age group or generation. The period effect is strongest in the Netherlands, Lithuania and Russia. Like in the Netherlands, the value-change in Lithuania is most characteristic for the period in which they are expressed. The same goes pretty much for Russia. The predictive power of the discriminating items is pretty strong and also the explanatory power of the problem perception. Both are above 80 percent. This is less the case for Belarus and not at all for Sweden.

When the conclusion is that period-effects seem to be most important for explaining value change and that values are especially characteristic for periods and less for generations and age-groups, results in the last question addressed in this paper, namely what is it in periods that distinguishes them? The remaining question is how to explain the result that especially period-effects determine the changing attitudes among local policymakers. To expedite it on something like ‘the spirit of the time’ seems to be to mea-

ger an explanation. One way to gain insight into this problem is to investigate whether the local circumstances changed in the periods distinguished. For instance the circumstances determined by the compassing societal problems.

In the surveys we asked the local elites about the severity of the problems in 14 policy areas, ranging from poverty, immigration, health and housing to infrastructure, public safety, and economic development. The perception of the severity of these problems, might well explain the differences between the periods. After all, for all five countries it were times of radical political change and this might also be reflected in the development of problem intensity. The degree to which problems are characteristic for the two moments in time is given in table 7.

*Table 7. The predictive power of problems for periods*

	Periods		N
	Values	Problems	
Netherlands	96%	85%	740
Lithuania	91%	91%	585
Russia	87%	82%	1525
Belarus	73%	79%	899
Sweden	68%	76%	1754

Shown in table 7 is that the problem perception is also determinative for the periods under consideration and with a similar relative strength in the different countries as the value change. In those countries where the value change was least determinative for the periods also the changes in problem-perception are least determinative (i.e. Sweden and Belarus).

For Belarus this is explainable. It was and is still one of the poorest countries in Europe and Belarussian society is politically apathetic to a greater degree than elsewhere in Eastern and Central Europe. To quote a scholar on the subject: 'By and large, the Belarussian people are not convinced that the pluralistic system they have has been designed to improve their daily lot' (Bremmer and Taras, 1997: 301). The presidency of Lukashenko, the first 'democratic' elected president, did not help much to transform the formerly communist system. This lack of change from the beginning to the end of the research period is reflected in the lack of value change among the local elite.

Sweden, however, is like the Netherlands an old democracy. One would expect similar outcomes. However, where the Dutch economy was booming in the 1990s and the problems at the local level diminished rapidly, this was not the case in Sweden. The

Swedish economy remained problematic and the problems at the local level did also, according to the Swedish local elite. Hence, a radical change in social and economic circumstances was not visible over there, and it is therefore not expected that a radical value change should occur.

## 5. Conclusion and reflection

This paper discussed the question whether value change is visible among local elites in countries experiencing radical change and how this can be explained. The paper started by introducing the five countries in which the research was conducted: Belarus, Lithuania, Russia, Sweden and the Netherlands between 1990 and 2000. It was argued that radical political-economic changes were visible in all these countries. Looking at values among local policy makers, and especially those concerning leadership, public participation, local-central relations and attitudes on income policies, several surprising outcomes were found, which are however difficult to interpret. Sometimes, convergence is seen, sometimes divergence, sometimes large differences between countries are seen, sometimes there is a large degree of congruence, sometimes large changes in attitudes are visible, sometimes they remain stable. This resulted in the question how to explain such value-change.

The answer to this question is based on a discriminant analysis, by which it was investigated whether a set of opinions is especially distinctive for generations, age-groups, entrance-cohorts or periods. It was proposed as a method to avoid the methodological problems normally encountered when trying to distinguish the effects of the three mutually related categories. That analysis suggests that there is much in favor for emphasizing period-effects. In all five countries investigated, the differences in values are best summarized by the two periods and less by age differences and generation-shifts. Especially in the Netherlands, Lithuania and Russia changing values seem to be determinative for the two periods distinguished. Not only most of the items are distinctive for the periods, also the classification of respondents on the basis thereof is nearly perfect. Less important are the birth cohorts (generation-shifts) and age-effects (rejuvenation). The attitudes of local policymakers in the Netherlands and Lithuania seem to be characteristic for the period in which they express those opinions. Although in all countries, and therefor also in these three, at the beginning of the 1990s many members of the so-called silent generation were replaced by members of the protest-generation, this does not seem to explain very much. The opinions of the members of the latter generation have

changed in approximately the same direction as those of their predecessors. Irrespective of the age and generation the local policy makers belong to, general trends in values are seen during the 1990s. In the Netherlands, for instance, less and less of them are in favor of leveling incomes, more and more emphasize decisiveness over consensus seeking and there is an increasing part of them acknowledging the importance of national problems compared to local problems. Concluding, the first hypothesis resulting from this research is that *changes in policy views among the local elite are predominantly a result of a period-effect and to a much lesser degree of generation-shifts or the rejuvenation of the local elite.*

This period-effect was substantiated by investigating the impact of the urgency of local problems the local elites are confronted with. The trend seems to be in the last decade of the previous century that the Dutch respondents perceived less and less problems and showed an increasing complacency. In Lithuania and Russia the opposite trend in local problems occurred, implying a deterioration of the situation in local communities. This change in problems goes hand in hand with value change, irrespective of the direction of the change in the severity of policy problems. The values in these countries also drastically changed in the research period although in the opposite direction as in the Netherlands. In Belarus and Sweden the period effects are also dominant, but the values are less determinative for the distinguished periods. It is to be noted that the changes in the urgency of social problems at the local level also changed less in these countries. The results for these two countries point out again that it is not the level of severity in the problems itself that is important, but only the change therein. The differences in the urgency of problems between countries as such (partly) determine the differences in values between the local elites in different countries. For instance regarding the valuation of democracy and technocracy, decisiveness and cooperation and parochialism.

Therefore, this research not only pointed to the importance of period effects for values change among the local elite but also enables us to pinpoint the cause of such period-effects. Whereas all the five countries investigated experienced great turmoil, the old democracies as well as the new democracies, and several changes occurred simultaneously, this research pointed to one determinative factor for value change at the local level, that is the change in severity of social problems at the local level. The strength of the period effect on value change seems to co-incide with the change in the urgency of such problems. This results in a second hypothesis: *Period-effects on value change will be especially strong when the periods are*

*distinguished by a significant shift in the urgency of societal problems and are likely to be absent if the urgency of social problems remains stable over the periods.*

These outcomes do not imply that generation-shifts and rejuvenation do not matter in general or that previous research into the effects of generations and agegroups on value change is refuted by this research. First, the respondents are not just members of a population, but leading politicians and chief public administrators and as such quite different from the population in general. Perhaps the most outspoken difference is that our respondents are in a responsible position that does not allow them to adhere too long to existing opinions, as expected from the theory on generational shifts, and that forces them to adapt their views to the requirements of the circumstances, and to be somewhat opportunistic.

Second, the value change investigated among these local elites seen is not related to general values, but job related values. It concerns questions whether and how policies should be developed. Who should participate, and who should be listened to, which level is predominant, the central or local, whether decisiveness or participation should have priority? From a political point of view this are the questions to be asked to local elites. It are, however, rather different questions than those normally asked to the general public.

Third, the findings are not necessarily a consequence of individual opportunism. It is not that individual members of the local elite show that much value-change. It might well be the other way around. Because of changing circumstances, new members of the local elite are necessary. New members with values adapted to those changing circumstances. In the first half of the 1990s many leading positions were passed from the old to a new elite. This research suggests that the circumstances determine which members of a generation or age group become members of the local elite. In countries experiencing drastic political change with simultaneous change in the urgency of social problems, it seem to be especially those individuals that appreciate the difficulties of the time and feel comfortable with the changing political winds that are likely to become members of the new local elite.

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**Demokratinės vertybės radikalių permainų metu:  
Lietuvos, Baltarusijos, Rusijos, Švedijos ir Olandijos savivaldos lyginamoji analizė**

Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojami vertybiniai pokyčiai politikoje radikalių permainų metu. Vertinami penkių šalių, pastarąjį dešimtmetį patiriančių radikalias politines permainas, politikos formuojamų vertybių pokyčiai, jie siejami su savivaldos kūrėjų sėkme, atgimimu ir kartų kaita. Tyrimo pagrindą sudaro savivaldybių politikų ir administratorių apklausa Švedijoje, Olandijoje, Rusijoje, Lietuvoje ir Baltarusijoje, atlikta 1989 m. bei pakartota 1996 ir 2000 metais. Daroma išvada, kad per pradinį savivaldos formavimo etapą įvykusios permainos turėjo didžiausios įtakos tolesnei savivaldos raidai.

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