PERSONAL VALUES OF INTERNET USERS: A CLUSTER ANALYTIC APPROACH

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Motif

To find out whether, and how well, a set of values of an individual in the post-transition country explains his/her actions, attitudes and behavior when online.

Everyday life in the digital environment shifted our focus to Internet users, who make up about two thirds of the adult population in Croatia.

Research questions

What personal values do Internet users prefer and which ones do they have in common?

Could people using the Internet be clustered on the basis of their values, and if so, what explains the differences among groups?

Is it all about trust in institutions or in other people?

Demography explains it all?

Schwartz's value theory

According to (Schwartz, 1992; 2012), there are ten motivationally distinct values driven by universal requirements of human life:

- power,
- achievement,
- hedonism,
- stimulation,
- self-direction,
- universalism,
- benevolence,
- tradition,
- conformity,
- security.

By asking respondents to what extent the listed ideas represent a life-guiding principle for them personally, 57 value items of Schwartz's Value Survey enable the positioning of an individual in a cultural group.

Methodology

Short Schwartz's Value Survey (SSVS)

by Lindeman and Verkasalo, 2005

Questionnaire included:

- ten questions on SSVS values;

- ten questions on social trust, need for privacy online and computer anxiety, all measured by Likert-type 5-point scale

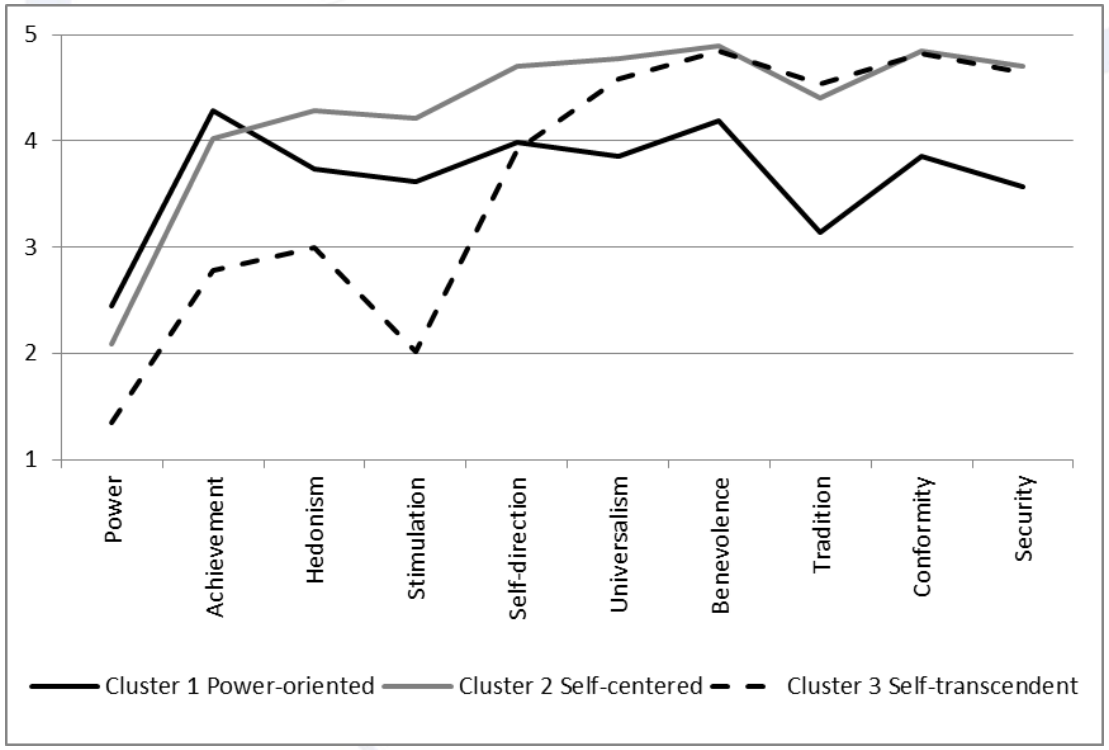
- demographic variables: gender, age, education, household income, and occupation.

Data collected by a telephone survey in Croatia in 2016, at representative net sample of 2060 adult Internet users.

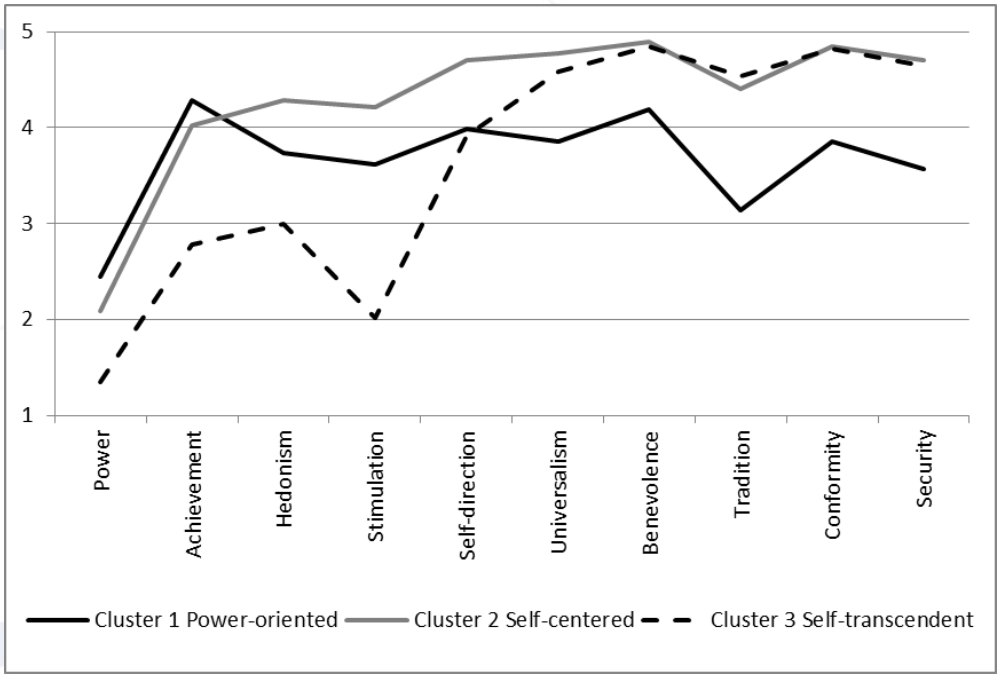
Results

Cronbach' alpha coefficients, exploratory factor analysis, K-means cluster analysis:

Personal-value clusters of Internet users in Croatia, 2016



Power-oriented cluster 1



The highest aspiration for achievements, wealth, authority and social power over other people.

Do not care much about tradition.

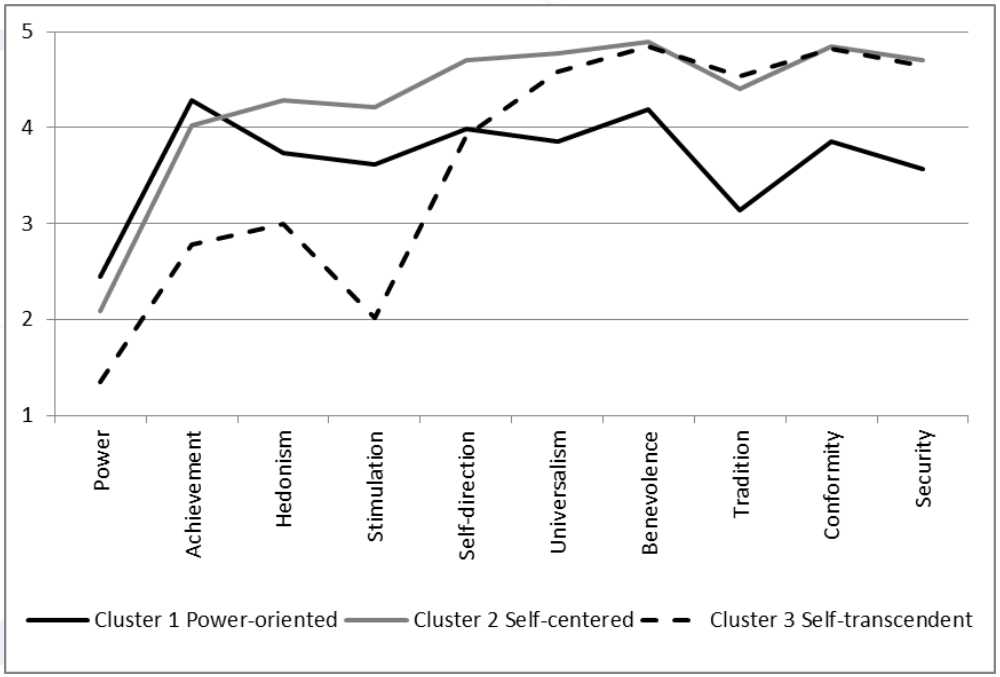
Do not value humbleness, modesty and devotion, helpfulness, forgiveness, showing respect for elderly people, obedience, social justice, equality.

The lowest mean value of universalism, benevolence, conformity and security.

Nature, arts, environmental protection and other universalistic concepts do not stand as life-guiding principles for them.

Self-centered cluster 2

Driven by achievement, hedonism, stimulation and self-direction.



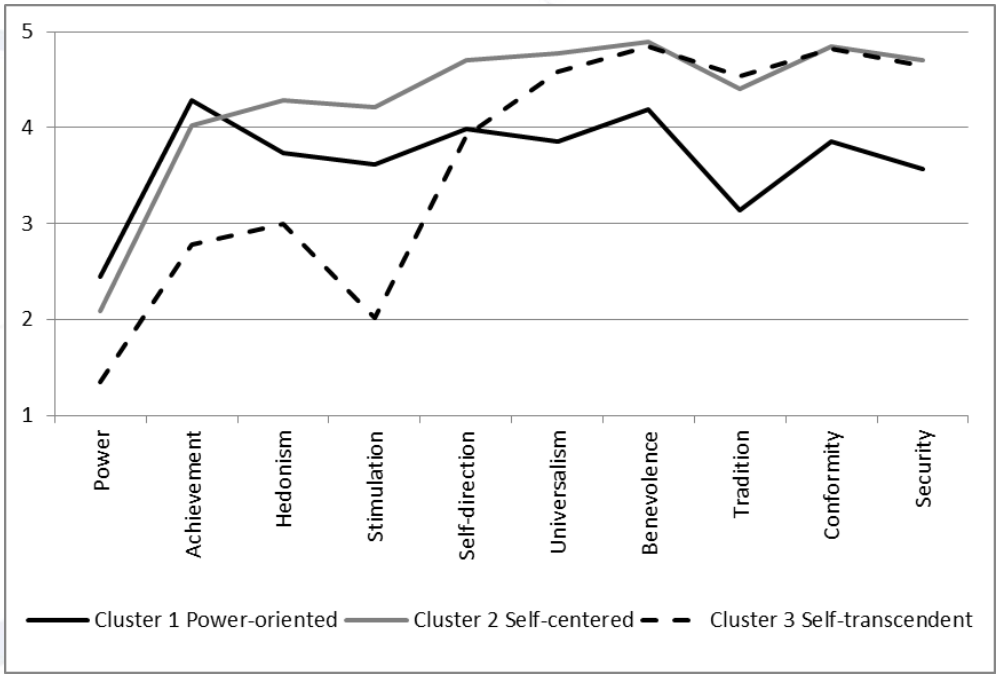
Appreciate the idea of an exciting life very much.

High level of universalism: driven by universal values in terms of beauty of nature and arts, environment, wisdom and social justice, as well as world peace and equality.

Value benevolence, conformity and security.

Self-transcendent cluster 3

Life-guiding principles are benevolence and conformity.



Appreciate honesty, helpfulness, forgiveness, loyalty and responsibility.

Care about tradition, conformity in terms of obedience and honoring parent and elderly people, self-discipline and politeness.

Value national and family security, social order and reciprocation of favors.

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Distinctive characteristics of clusters

Power-oriented cluster 1:

Male, younger, more educated, more earnings, striving for success and power is a driving value for company owners, managers, and professionals as well as for students.

The lowest recorded social trust in institutions, opposed to the highest social trust in strangers.

They have expressed no need for privacy online, and a lack of computer anxiety.

Self-centered cluster 2:

Moderate value cluster, slightly prevalent female, aged< 40 years, 53% have secondary education: professionals and technicians.

Leads in the level of social trust in institutions and seems to be concerned about privacy online. Demonstrate nearly the average computer anxiety.

Self-transcendent cluster 3:

Female, middle-aged and elderly people Internet users with primary and secondary education , lower household incomes. Workers, unemployed, retired.

Reserved towards strangers and more trustful towards judiciary, political and other institutions.

The highest computer anxiety and technology aversion.

Conclusion

According to our best knowledge, this is the only research on the value sets of individuals that applies the Short Schwartz's Value Survey to a large sample of Internet users in a post-transition country.

Online privacy concerns, measured by the expressed need for privacy when online and by computer anxiety, are related to the set of values of groups of Internet users in Croatia.

Trust in institutions and in other people explains the differences between clusters as well.

Among demographic characteristics, the most pronounced differences between clusters are found in Internet users' age, level of education and income that is connected with respondents' employment status and occupation.

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Future research

Direction and strength of causal relations?

If, for example, older Internet users share more traditional values, does it make them more anxious about computerization, or concerned about privacy protection?

Do individual values, demographic characteristics and social trust stand as antecedents of privacy concerns of Internet users in Croatia?

All these interesting questions remain to be further explored in an Extended Model of Online PRIvacy CONcern.

Thank you for your attention.

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