

# ETHICS IN FINNO-UGRIAN COUNTRIES: ETHICAL IDEALISM AND RELATIVISM

## Introduction

The European Union (EU) has been a kind of laboratory for social scientists and cultural researchers for the past 20 years. Two major events shaped the European landscape: first the collapse of the Soviet system changed the position of the former Soviet bloc of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, and later, the EU membership of these countries in 2004 and 2007 pushed them towards the Western European market economies. In this paper we focus on four EU countries, i.e. Finland, Estonia, Hungary, and Hungarians in Slovakia, which have the same distant roots in Uralic genetic heritage and languages with a common origin, but have gone different routes to join the EU family (Cavalli-Sforza et al. 1994; Nurmi and Üksvārav 1994). The purpose of this paper is to examine differences in ethics, and more specifically, ethical idealism and relativism, between these Finno-Ugrian countries as well as how age and gender are related to ethical idealism and relativism.

The discussion of relativism and idealism leans on studies investigating ethics from a cross-cultural perspective. Based on a meta-analysis of 139 samples related to ethics position theory (EPT) (Forsyth 1980) measuring idealism and relativism in 29 different countries around the world, Forsyth et al. (2008) found out important cultural variations in ethical ideology. The meta-analysis revealed that the levels of idealism and relativism vary across regions of the world in predictable ways. In addition, the nation's ethics position was related to prior cultural dimensions of individualism and uncertainty avoidance by Hofstede (1980), and to Ingelhart's index

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(1997) of traditional/secular-rational values. More recently, a study contrasting US and Moroccan business managers has found significant differences in idealism and relativism between the two countries. Moroccan managers tended to be more idealistic than US managers (Oumlil and Balloun 2009). The Finno-Ugrian countries of our study were not involved in Forsyth et al.'s (2008) meta-analysis, which offers an interesting arena to study ethical idealism and relativism in these countries. Finland represents a Nordic welfare state, while Estonia, Hungary and Hungarians in Slovakia are the CEE transition nations. All these countries share similarities but also represent different cultural traditions (Hofstede 1980 & 2001; House et al. 2004; Eurobarometer 2005).

The paper starts with a discussion of literature on ethical idealism and relativism, followed by an institutional and cultural overview added by country descriptions. Next, the analysis of empirical data from four European countries/nations: Estonia, Finland, Hungary, and Hungarians in Slovakia are presented with the emphasis on age and gender differences. The results are discussed at the end of the paper.

## Theoretical framework

According to ethics position theory (EPT), individuals' personal moral philosophies influence their emotions, judgments and actions in ethically intense situations. The ethics position theory involves two independent dimensions: idealism (concern for positive outcomes) and relativism (skepticism with regards to inviolate moral principles) (Forsyth 1980; Forsyth et al. 2008, p. 813). Idealism and relativism have a significant role to play in the development of ethical theory for ethical ideology can explain differences in individuals' moral judgment (Forsyth 1980, 1992; Forsyth and Nye 1990): idealist individuals maintain the absolutism of a moral standard in contrast to relativists who try to avoid universal moral rules.

## Ethical relativism and idealism

Relativism involves the idea that universal moral principles (e.g., never steal; always tell the truth) depend on the situation (Forsyth 1992). Highly relativistic individuals are skeptical of universal moral principles and emphasize instead the role of circumstances and stakeholders, while the non-relativistic individuals accept universal principles in their ethical judgments (Bass et al. 1998). Davis with colleagues (2001) found relativism neither to be related to empathy, empathic concern, nor the ability to adopt the views of others, while idealism is positively related to all these characteristics.

Idealists are seen as more other-centered, altruistic, and unselfish than relativists (e.g., Forsyth 1992; Park 2005). Idealism involves a person's genuine concern for others (Forsyth 1992). An idealist (i.e., a person who identifies strongly with idealism) takes only such actions that avoid harm to others. Idealists believe that good outcomes can be achieved for everybody by morally correct actions (Forsyth 1980), while according to non-idealists, morally correct actions could also lead to negative outcomes. Consequently, the results of actions are important to idealism (Hartikainen and Torstila 2004). Idealists believe that good outcomes for all can be achieved by morally correct actions; therefore the emphasis is on morally correct actions. Instead, the non-idealists assume that even morally correct actions might lead to negative consequences.

Based on the degree of idealism and relativism, Forsyth (1980) identifies four ethics positions: high idealism/low relativism (ethical absolutists), high idealism/high relativism (ethical situationists), low idealism/low relativism (exceptionists), and low idealism/high relativism (subjectivism). Even though ethical ideologies are distinct from practical judgments in particular situations, they are related. Thus, absolutists tend to have the strictest moral judgments and higher ethical attitudes, whereas subjectivists tend to have the most lenient moral judgments (Hartikainen and Torstila 2004).

According to Gifford (1983), three levels of analyses are needed in the development of the theory of ethical relativism: 1) individual, 2) role and group, and 3) cultural level. At the individual level, age and gender are typical factors in ethics studies (e.g., Bass et al. 1998; Marques and Azevedo-Pereira 2008). Group-level studies refer, for example, to a social group, department, organization, or possibly an industry, where everybody may be involved in potentially conflicting norms (McDonald 2010). The cultural level studies, instead, focus on cultural differences in ethics. According to McDonald, cultural relativists deny the existence of ultimate universal ethical principles. All value judgments are relative to the cultural context. According to this view, it is not only a question of cross-cultural differences but also individual-level reasoning about morality.

Ethical conduct is thus influenced by cultural or situational factors pushing and pulling individuals towards certain reasoning and conduct, but also by the individual-level characteristics, i.e., individual differences or the matter in question itself (Trevino and Katherine 1999). For instance, Bierly et al. (2009) found a positive relationship between creativity and relativism in a group of business students. A similar positive relationship was also found between creativity and idealism. The results indicate that highly creative people are more likely to be "situationists" according to Forsyth's (1980) classification. According to previous studies, also demographic characteristics, such as age and gender have an impact on ethics. We first review these individual-level factors impacting ethics and then focus on cultural differences.

## Factors influencing ethical conduct: Age and gender

In prior literature of ethical beliefs and conduct, age and gender are widely examined determinants. According to several studies (e.g., Colby et al. 1983; Ruegger and King 1992; Dawson 1997; Peterson et al. 2001), ethical standards, ethical awareness, and ethical decisions increase with age. Instead, in studies dealing with ethical idealism and relativism, the findings are contradictory. According to Marques and Azevedo-Pereira (2009), older people were significantly more relativistic than the younger ones, while in a study by Bass et al. (1998), older sales managers were less relativistic and more idealistic than their younger counterparts. This was supported by Kim and Choi (2003) who found that older respondents showed high idealism and low relativism and a higher agreement with professional ethics. Also an international comparative study by Alsua et al. (2012) revealed that younger respondents were lower in idealism and higher in relativism than the older ones.

Based on prior literature on the relationship between age and ethical conduct, we propose the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1a:* Younger people are more idealistic than older people.

*Hypothesis 1b:* Younger people are less relativist than the older ones.

Prior research on gender and ethics has revealed versatile findings. According to Clark and Barry (1997) and Bass et al. (1998) women are more idealistic and more ethical than men, and they are more concerned about relationships and feelings (Gilligan 1982; Ruegger and King 1992; Lund 2008; Bierly et al. 2009). As to relativism, several studies reveal that woman express higher ethical attitudes than men and get lower values in relativism (Cohen et al. 2001). Whereas Hartikainen and Torstila (2004) and McCabe et al. (2006) found no gender differences in ethical perceptions, and Marques and Azevedo-Pereira (2009) found males to be less relativistic than women and with higher ethical attitudes. And further, Hoffman (1998) revealed that in some situations women are more ethical but in other situations they are not.

Based on prior results of the relationship between gender and ethics, we propose the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 2a:* Men are less idealistic than women.

*Hypothesis 2b:* Men are more relativistic than women.

Because of these mixed results we compare and contrast the levels of ethical relativism and idealism in different countries.

## The context of the study: The Finno-Ugrian countries

Ethical issues are strongly influenced by moral values held by members of the community at large (Forsyth 1992). The context of this study concerning ethical idealism and relativism is four countries, which share the heritage of the Finno-Ugrian group of nations: Finland, Estonia, Hungary, and Hungarians in Slovakia. Hungarian is the biggest language followed by Finnish and Estonian in the Finno-Ugrian family of twelve languages. The languages have a distant, common origin, with Estonian and Finnish being particularly close to each other. Two-thirds of the genetic heritage of Estonians and Finns is shared (Nurmi and Üksväre 1994, p. 26). Finns and Hungarians also share the same proportion of European to Uralic genes (Cavalli-Sforza et al. 1994).

Geographically Finland and Estonia are located in Northern Europe separated by the Gulf of Finland, while Hungary and Slovakia (where Hungarian people were studied) are neighboring countries in Central Europe. Finland and Estonia share common phases in history as being part of the Swedish rule in 1629–1710 and the Russian rule in 1809–1917 (Nurmi and Üksväre 1994) after which Finland and Estonia became independent. Finland retained its independence in spite of losing the war against the Soviet Union; instead, Estonia was incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940. Hungary was an independent kingdom and part of Habsburg Empire, and became independent at the same time with Finland and Estonia in 1917/18. Hungary was then occupied by Soviet Union at the same time with Estonia, and remained as a Soviet satellite with ‘goulash communism’ until the end of 1980s (Reuvid 2003). With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Baltic States including Estonia re-established their independence, and the Soviet-bloc countries could start the transition from the communist regime to market economy.

Part of Hungarians live in neighboring countries, and Hungarians in Slovakia are the largest ethnic minority of the country with a share of almost 10% of the population. The Hungarian minority is concentrated mostly in the Southern part of the country, near the border with Hungary. Ethnic Hungarians compared with Slovaks are more likely to live in villages and they are less educated (Miller et al. 2011). Several thousands of ethnic Hungarians are employed in Hungary, mainly as production line workers. Since the EU enlargement in 2004 Hungarian firms have been able to employ ethnic Hungarians from Slovakia full time and without significant red tape. Many ethnic Hungarians desire a greater degree of autonomy and self-determination within the Hungarian areas in southern Slovakia, especially with respect to language, education, and cultural issues. (Hungarians in the Slovak Republic 2007) From the ethics point of view, Miller et al. (2011, p. 185) found that ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia, when compared to the Slovaks, are less inclined to corruption of officials.

In Finland the post-war period was different. The Nordic cooperation in the present form started in the early 1950s, when the Nordic Council was founded, and the Agreement on a Common Labor Market was accepted with the Nordic Passport Union allowing free mobility across the borders of the Nordic countries (Lindeberg et al. 2004). Since the 1960s, Finland has constructed the Nordic welfare state with strong principles of equality and well-being.

All three Finno-Ugrian countries differ in religiosity. According to Eurobarometer (2005) poll, only 16% of Estonian citizens responded that they believe in God as compared with 41% in Finland and 44% in Hungary (and even 61% in Slovakia). In a more recent survey conducted by Gallup in 2006–2008 (Crabtree and Pelham 2009) Estonians were the most non-religious people among 143 countries around the world.

The cultural studies, e.g. GLOBE (House et al. 2004) and Hofstede (1980; 2001; Hofstede and Hofstede 2005) show that among the Hungarians individualism, masculinity, and cultural power distance are more typical (Bakacsi and Tacács 1998), while in Finland and Estonia, the typical features are: femininity, individualism, relatively low power distance, and average uncertainty avoidance.

As Appendix 1 shows there are different phases in histories of Finno-Ugrian countries also from the institutional perspective. According to the institutionalist perspective, organisations are socially embedded in a particular society (Geppert 2003). Organisations can be described using the open-system approach, in which the organisation may be seen as answering the challenges of a new environment.

Institutions could be seen from both the structural perspective and the social one. From the structural viewpoint, institutions exist as institutionalised forms of 'external social constraints'. From the social perspective, institutions are accounts of how the social world works and embody normative principles and social values (Meyer et al. 1994).

Socio-economic transformation, at both macro and micro levels, could be understood as an institutional change, from both the structural and social perspective, embracing both structures and social values. *Deinstitutionalisation* and *reinstitutionalisation* take place (Clark and Soulsby 1999). During these processes the patterns and activities are redefined on the basis of values, which differ from values previously taken for granted. New social practices occur very slowly, because values and their underlying logic take time to become reproduced unquestioningly in the routine conduct (ibid).

The institutional theory is applied to compare the results in different countries.

Based on the cultural differences and similarities between the three Finno-Ugrian countries we ended up with the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 3a:* Finland and Estonia are more idealistic countries than Hungary and Hungarians in Slovakia.

*Hypothesis 3b:* Hungarians are more relativistic than Finnish and Estonian respondents.

## Method

### Measurement of ethical idealism and relativism

Survey data related to Ethics Position Questionnaire developed by Forsyth (1980) were collected in four countries, Finland, Estonia, Hungary, and among Hungarian minority in Slovakia in 2011. The questionnaire was translated from English to Finnish, Estonian, and Hungarian languages in order to conduct the survey in these countries. Retranslation was done back to English to guarantee the accuracy of the translation.

We used the original Forsyth's (1980) EPQ measure of ethical idealism and relativism. The first 10 items of the scale measure idealism and the other 10 items measure relativism. *Idealism* is generally defined as the extent to which a respondent believes that ethically correct actions produce desirable outcomes, while relativism refers to the extent an individual cognitively accepts or rejects universal moral perceptions as the basis in ethical decision-making (Chonko et al. 2003). In ethical relativism different types of morality cannot be treated in terms of "right" or "wrong" because what is moral depends on the situation.

The statements describing ethical idealism included: "*If an action could harm an innocent another then it should not be done*" and "*A person should make certain that their actions never intentionally harm another even to a small degree*". The relativism scale included: "*What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another*" and "*Different types of moralities cannot be compared as to rightness*" (Forsyth 1980).

In the current study, a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 5 (= strongly agree) was applied. Higher scores indicate higher levels of idealism or relativism. The Cronbach's alpha for the idealism scale was  $\alpha = .764$  and  $\alpha = .706$  for the relativism scale, indicating a high internal consistency of the scales.

In addition, age (in years and classified in 1 = less than 25 years, 2 = 25–35 years, and 3 = over 35 years), and gender (1 = male, 2 = female) of respondents were asked about.

### Respondents

The total number of respondents was 823. The respondents were distributed as follows: 200 from Finland, 267 from Estonia, 186 from Hungary, and 170 from Slovakia. According to gender, 32.4% (267 respondents) were men and 67.6% (556) were women. According to age, the respondents were divided into three groups: respondents below 25 years belong to the "youngest" group, and those above 35 years belong to the "oldest" group. The "middle" group covers respondents between 25 and 35 years. The youngest group was formed from 356 respondents, the middle one from 330 and the oldest one from 137 respondents.

## Results

The analysis begins with the comparison of idealism and relativism between four countries of the study. Then the impact of gender and age on ethical idealism and relativism are studied. Spearman correlations and t-test, and One-way ANOVA and F-tests are used to test the hypotheses presented.

Table 1: Means and standard deviations of idealism and relativism in Finno-Ugrian countries

		Finland (N=200)	Estonia (N=267)	Hungary (N=186)	Slovakia (N=170)	Total (N=823)	F
Idealism	Mean	3,842	3,791	4,283	3,488	3,852	70,169***
	SD.	,600	,491	,473	,535	,587	
Relativism	Mean	3,410	3,450	3,280	3,542	3,421	6,787***
	SD.	,500	,528	,678	,544	,568	

$P < 0.05^*$ ,  $p < 0.01^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.001^{***}$

In all data, the value of idealism was higher than relativism; so it was in all countries. Idealism was especially high in Hungary, where relativism was lower than in the other countries. The differences between the countries were statistically significant in both scales (Table 1). Idealism was highest in Hungary, followed by Finland and Estonia and lowest among the Slovakian Hungarians. In the case of relativism, the countries were in the opposite order: relativism was highest among the Slovakian Hungarians, followed by the Estonians and the Finns. Hungary was lowest in relativism.

In all data, age and gender correlate with idealism statistically significantly, which means that older people and women are more idealistic than the younger ones and men. Instead, relativism has a lower and negative correlation with age referring to higher relativism of younger people. There was no statistically significant correlation between gender and relativism.

Table 2: Correlation matrix, Finno-Ugrian countries (N=823)

	Age	Gender	Idealism	Relativism
Age				
Gender	,207***			
Idealism	,223***	,292***		
Relativism	-,122***	-,042	-,011	

$P < 0.05^*$ ,  $p < 0.01^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.001^{***}$



The next tables (3 and 4) illustrate the gender and age differences in idealism and relativism.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations of idealism and relativism according to gender

		Men (N=267)	Women (N=556)	F
Idealism	Mean	3,604	3,971	76,687***
	SD.	,622	,531	
Relativism	Mean	3,455	3,404	1,433 NS
	SD.	,549	,576	

$P < 0.05^*$ ,  $p < 0.01^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.001^{***}$ , NS = non-significant

Table 4: Means and standard deviations of idealism and relativism according to age groups

		Under 25 years (N=356)	25–35 years (N=330)	Over 35 years (N=137)	F
Idealism	Mean	3,683	3,980	3,984	27,689***
	SD.	,606	,536	,548	
Relativism	Mean	3,497	3,381	3,316	6,424**
	SD.	,542	,551	,647	

$P < 0.05^*$ ,  $p < 0.01^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.001^{***}$ , NS = not significant

Table 5 illustrates gender differences in idealism and relativism in different age groups. According to the table, women are more idealistic than men in all age groups. Among women, idealism increases with age, while among men, the middle age group (25–35 years) were the most idealistic and the younger ones the least idealistic.

Table 5: Means and standard deviations of idealism and relativism of men and women in different age groups

		Under 25 years		25–35 years		Over 35	
		Male (N=158)	Female (N=198)	Male (N=80)	Female (N=250)	Male (N=29)	Female (N=137)
Idealism	Mean	3,494	3,833	3,798	4,038	3,665	4,069
	SD.	,623	,549	,567	,514	,642	,489
Relativism	Mean	3,524	3,476	3,417	3,370	3,182	3,352
	SD.	,502	,573	,678	,538	,602	,656
Idealism	F-value	29,579***		12,485***		13,532***	
Relativism		,699 NS		,433 NS		1,580 NS	

$P < 0.05^*$ ,  $p < 0.01^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.001^{***}$ , NS = not significant

In relativism, the differences between women and men in different age groups were small and statistically non-significant. In both gender groups, relativism slightly decreased with age.

The country level differences in idealism and relativism were described in Table 1. Next, the country level differences are analyzed according to gender and age.

Table 6: Means and standard deviations of idealism and relativism of men and women in different countries

		Finland		Estonia		Hungary		Slovakia	
		Male (N=89)	Female (N=111)	Male (N=85)	Female (N=182)	Male (N=32)	Female (N=154)	Male (N=61)	Female (N=109)
Idealism	M.	3,721	3,938	3,517	3,919	4,062	4,329	3,314	3,585
	SD.	,654	,537	,526	,418	,483	,459	,593	,475
Relativism	M.	3,486	3,349	3,513	3,420	3,281	3,279	3,419	3,611
	SD.	,457	,525	,571	,505	,758	,662	,504	,555
Idealism	F	6,649*		45,144***		8,759**		10,560***	
Relativism		3,755 NS		1,818 NS		,000 NS		4,947*	

$P < 0.05^*$ ,  $p < 0.01^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.001^{***}$ , NS = not significant

In all the countries, women were more idealistic than men confirming that ethical idealism is related to gender. Instead, ethical relativism was only loosely related to gender among Slovakian Hungarians, and interestingly, women got higher values than men in relativism. In other countries the differences were not statistically significant.

Table 7: Means and standard deviations of idealism and relativism of different age groups in different countries

		Finland		Estonia		Hungary		Slovakia	
Age groups		Idealism M/SD	Relativism M/SD	Idealism M/SD	Relativism M/SD	Idealism M/SD	Relativism M/SD	Idealism M/SD)	Relativism M/SD
Under 25		3,799	3,448	3,479	3,622	4,186	3,453	3,381	3,490
		,609	,537	,506	,559	,474	,671	,499	,525
25–35		3,836	3,339	3,832	3,398	4,330	3,255	3,577	3,608
		,550	,481	,509	,444	,488	,678	,624	,604
over 35		4,018	3,353	3,791	3,296	4,320	3,082	3,680	3,603
		,611	,628	,491	,702	,426	,639	,428	,506
F		1,720	,987	26,659	6,517	1,795	3,759	4,683	,958
Sign.		NS	NS	***	**	NS	*	*	NS

$P < 0.05^*$ ,  $p < 0.01^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.001^{***}$ , NS = not significant

Table 7 reveals that in all countries idealism increases with age although the differences among Finnish Hungarian respondents were not statistically significant. Instead, relativism was higher among the youngest age group in Finland, Estonia and Hungary, while Hungarians in Slovakia had the lowest relativism values in the youngest age group.

## Conclusions

In the present study the authors compared ethics in three countries which share the same cultural roots, but have experienced different historical developments, especially during the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Alas and Edwards 2007). An empirical study in these countries indicated, that there are differences in ethical perceptions according to gender and age of respondents.

Hypothesis 1a stated, that younger people are more idealistic than older people. This hypothesis was rejected in all four samples. The youngest age group had the lowest values in idealism.

Hypothesis 1b was mainly rejected. Younger people were less relativist than older ones only among the Hungarians in Slovakia. In other countries, and among women and men, relativism was highest in the youngest age group.

Hypothesis 2a, which stated that men are less idealistic than women, was supported. Men had systematically lower values in idealism than women also according to age and in every country.

Hypothesis 2b, which stated that men are more relativistic than women, was not supported. There were no statistically significant differences in ethical relativism between men and women in different age groups or different countries. There was one exception: among the Hungarians in Slovakia, women were more relativistic than men.

Hypothesis 3a about idealism in different countries was not supported. Although respondents from Finland and Estonia were more idealistic than the Hungarians in Slovakia, the Hungarian respondents were most idealistic.

Hypothesis 3b was not fully supported: the Hungarians were less relativistic than the Estonian and the Finnish respondents. Only the Hungarians in Slovakia had the highest relativism.

These results indicate, that living abroad as a minority impacts ethics more than cultural roots or institutional differences. The Hungarians living in Slovakia differ from the Hungarians living in their own country, although they live close to the Hungarian border and have not lost connections with the home country. These people are less idealistic and less relativistic than the people from the same nationality living in the country of origin. The most surprising finding was that the Hungarian

respondents were the most idealistic. This might be explained with their better economic condition before the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and fewer changes after that than Estonia went through. More stable institutions may have helped to develop higher idealism than the dramatic changes in the Estonian economy.

The other surprising finding was connected with age. Low idealism of younger people might be connected with the new age cohort in the Western countries, who has had access to all kinds of information. This might have had an impact on the lowering of ideals. Also, the baby boom generation or the X and Y generations partly vary from country to country.

To conclude, women were more idealistic than men. There were no differences in relativism. People younger than 25 were less idealistic and more relativistic than people older than 25 years. Among the countries Hungary was the most idealistic and Estonia the least idealistic. At the same time the Hungarians living in Slovakia were the least idealistic. The results were exactly opposite for relativism. The main finding is, that the country of living has more impact on ethics than the country of origin.

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## Appendix 1: A comparison of Estonian, Finnish and Hungarian history in institutional context

	ESTONIA		FINLAND		HUNGARY	
1000–1917/18	Institutions changed over time	Under the rule of different foreign states	Institutions changed over time	Under the rule of different foreign states	Institutions changed over time	1000–1526 Independent kingdom 1526–1918 Part of Habsburg Empire
1917/18–1940	All countries: Creation of new institutions followed by a period of stable institutions			All countries: Creation of independent state		
1940–1950	De-institutionalisation and re-institutionalisation	Soviet occupation	Stable institutions	World War 2 (WW2), Independence	De-institutionalisation and re-institutionalisation	WW2, Soviet occupation and incorporation in Soviet sphere of influence
1950–1987	Period of stable institutions	Soviet rule	Period of stable institutions	Independence	Period of stable institutions	Soviet satellite, with 'goulash communism' from 1960s
1987–1995	1987–91 Creation of additional institutions 1991 De-institutionalisation 1991–95 Social transience	1987–91 movement towards independence 1991 Re-establishment of independent state;	Stable institutions  Stable institutions	Independence	1989 De-institutionalisation 1989–95 Social transience	1989 End of communist regime, transition to market economy
1995–	Reinstitutionalisation; greater institutional stability; creation of some additional institutions	Greater economic stability 2004 EU entry	Creation of some additional institutions	EU entry	Reinstitutionalisation; greater institutional stability; creation of some additional institutions	Greater economic stability 2004 EU entry

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## ETHICS IN FINNO-UGRIAN COUNTRIES: ETHICAL IDEALISM AND RELATIVISM

### Abstract

- Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to examine differences in ethics in Finno-Ugrian countries. The research question is, how ethical idealism and relativism differ in Finland, Hungary and Estonia and how age and gender are related to ethical idealism and realism.
- Methods: Survey data related to Ethics Position Questionnaire developed by Forsyth (1980) were collected in four countries, Finland, Estonia, Hungary, and among Hungarian minority in Slovakia in 2011. The questionnaire was translated from English to Finnish, Estonian, and Hungarian languages and retranslation was done back to English.
- Results: The women were more idealistic than men, younger people were less idealistic and more relativistic than older. Respondents from Hungary were most idealistic, followed by respondents from Finland and Estonia. Hungarians living in Slovakia were least idealistic. Results were exactly opposite for relativism.
- Conclusions: The main finding is, that country of living has more impact on ethics than country of origin.

**KEYWORDS: ETHICAL IDEALISM, ETHICAL RELATIVISM, FINNO-UGRIAN COUNTRIES, FINLAND, ESTONIA, HUNGARY**

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## ETYKA W KRAJACH UGROFIŃSKICH: ETYCZNY IDEALIZM I RELATYWIZM

### Streszczenie

- Celem niniejszej pracy jest zbadanie różnic w etyce krajów ugrofińskich. Teza badawcza brzmi: jak etyczny idealizm i relatywizm różni się w Finlandii, na Węgrzech i w Estonii oraz jaka jest relacja wieku i płci do etycznego idealizmu i relatywizmu.
- Metody: Dane z ankiety odnoszącej się do Kwestionariusza Pozycji Etyki opracowanego przez Forsytha (1980) zostały zebrane w czterech krajach: w Finlandii, Estonii, na Węgrzech oraz wśród mniejszości węgierskiej na Słowacji w roku 2011. Kwestionariusz został przetłumaczony z języka angielskiego na fiński, estoński i węgierski, a następnie ponownie przetłumaczony na język angielski.



- Wyniki: Kobiety były bardziej idealistyczne niż mężczyźni, a młodzi ludzie byli mniej idealistyczni i bardziej relatywistyczni niż starsi. Respondenci z Węgier byli najbardziej idealistyczni, za nimi byli respondenci z Finlandii i Estonii. Węgrzy mieszkający na Słowacji byli najmniej idealistyczni. Jeśli chodzi o relatywizm, to wyniki były dokładnie odwrotne.
- Wnioski: Z przeprowadzonych badań wynika, że kraj zamieszkania ma większy wpływ na etykę niż kraj pochodzenia.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: IDEALIZM ETYCZNY, RELATYWIZM ETYCZNY, KRAJE UGROFIŃSKIE, FINLANDIA, ESTONIA, WĘGRY**

