

THE CHANGES IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS JUSTICE IN ESTONIAN SOCIETY DURING THE PERIOD OF 1991–2005

Marii Paškov

Tallinn University

Abstract. This paper will analyse the changes in attitudes towards justice in Estonian society during the period from 1991 to 2005. The aim of this paper is to examine whether the recent changes in Estonian society have had any impact on people's value judgements, especially attitudes towards egalitarian and inegalitarian justice principles. The impact of a person's social position on attitudes towards social justice has been observed in addition to general tendencies. The results of the analyses are contradictory to the assumptions made at first. Although there has been a shift from socialist to market system in Estonian society, the support for inegalitarian principles has decreased and the support for egalitarian principles has increased. There were significant differences between groups in attitudes towards market and egalitarian principles in 1991. In 2005 people with different social positions had various opinions only about egalitarian principles. The most remarkable result of this paper is the fact that the two justice principles were seen as more adversative in 1991, whereas in 2005 people tended to support market and egalitarian principles simultaneously. The results give cause to doubt whether market and egalitarian principles are opposed to each other and whether it is at all necessary or possible to contrast them.

Keywords: egalitarianism, inegalitarianism, transition period, dominant ideology, individual factors, "split-consciousness" thesis

1. Introduction

In the matter of perceiving justice Estonia deserves heightened attention due to the eventful last decades. A transformation began in the beginning of the 1990s when the Soviet Union collapsed – within a short period of time Estonian society changed fundamentally. The former member of the Soviet Union had become a member of European Union, equipotent with other democratic countries. Hence the period from 1991 to 2005 is of great importance as it was the time of transition – Estonia shifted from socialist society to market society, different in many ways. Changes in societal level rarely occur without affecting people and their value

judgements. Therefore the aim of this paper is to answer the question of whether and to what extent the attitudes towards justice changed during the period from 1991 to 2005. In addition to providing a descriptive picture of how justice beliefs and attitudes have been shaped in the transition years, people's socio-economic position on justice beliefs is also taken into consideration. Therefore the differences in attitudes among people with various socio-economic characteristics have been examined.

According to the conceptual framework of the International Social Justice Project (international research project about justice beliefs in 12 countries from 1989 to 1996, headed by J. R. Kluegel and D. S. Mason), egalitarian principles are common in former communist countries (socialist ideology) and inegalitarian principles represent the western way of thinking (capitalist ideology). Egalitarianism supports equality and the role of the state is very important. Inegalitarianism supports the principles of free market and competition. During the period of transition the duality of egalitarian and inegalitarian principles came forth more expressively in Estonia and other postcommunist countries. The conceptions and interpretations of the International Social Justice Project and their validity in Estonian society are tested in this paper.

The analysis relies on the data gathered under two different projects sharing a common conceptual framework. The International Social Justice Project is the source of the data for 1991, while the data for 2005 originate from the Estonian Science Foundation's project "Social Justice in Estonian society: changing perceptions of new generations".

2. Theoretical conceptions of social justice

There are many ways to define justice. This paper is based on a conception established by John Rawls, who sees justice as a policy of distributing goods – economic products, fundamental rights and duties (Rawls 1971:10). In political philosophy there are different conceptions of justice which are characterised by different distribution principles. There are four major theories of distributive justice: Karl Marx represents egalitarianism (equality and small differences in income), John Rawls stands for contractarianism (justice as fairness, equal opportunities, and inequality being fair just only to the extent that it benefits the least advantaged), the main representatives of utilitarianism are Bentham and Mills (the greatest good to the greatest number of people), and libertarianism is represented by Robert Nozick (the proportionality of rewards to effort) (Plionis & Plionis 2000:37).

The main concern of the above-mentioned normative theories of distributive justice is looking for an answer to the question of what makes a society just, what ought to be – what the society should be like?. Empirical justice theory and research, on the other hand, concerns the "what is" dimension and does not try to explain what a fair society should be like, describing the real situation instead

(Kluegel *et al.* 1995:3). Still, the philosophical notions of justice can be combined with the justice beliefs people actually hold.

Modern societies have adopted distribution systems which include principles of egalitarianism, contractarianism, utilitarianism and libertarianism or combinations of these. In the International Social Justice Project egalitarian and inegalitarian principles are distinguished and seen as mutually exclusive. Egalitarian justice principles are characterised by the conception of equality (egalitarianism). A person's input is not considered, the quantity and quality of work should not affect the income. In inegalitarianism the key aspect is liberal market. A limited government involvement is favoured. Differences in incomes are considered fair (Kluegel and Mason 2000:162).

Also other distribution systems exist but nevertheless this paper focuses on the two principles of justice, which are also contradicted in the International Social Justice Project. This is reasonable since one of the main consequences of the transition from socialism to liberal democracy in Estonia was that egalitarian ideology gave place to inegalitarian ideology. Thus the two justice principles clearly existed in Estonian society during the time of the study. At the same time one of the aims of this paper is to compare the results with the International Social Justice Project and to test whether and to what extent the same tendencies apply to the Estonian society.

3. The formulation of justice principles

3.1. The macro-level and individual factors in the formulation of justice principles

In the shaping of people's value judgements there are two primary factors – collective and individual. First, the macro level factors such as ideology and social structure collocate societal and cultural values and norms which form a socialization environment which is a basis for ideologies that are accepted by the majority, if not all members of a society (Wegener and Liebig 1995:240–241). Differences in attitudes can also be explained with variations at the individual level, such as an individual's psychological motives and self-interest calculations. Consequently the structural position of individuals is connected to their value judgements. People evaluate positively those aspects from which they gain personally and disapprove of those aspects that do not appear advantageous for them (Andreß and Heien 2001:339).

The macro-level and individual determinants impact people simultaneously but the extent of the impact depends on the nature of the question and the period of time. Estonian society at the beginning of the 1990s can be characterised with the term “symbolic ideology”. It was a dynamic and disruptive period in the lives of the people, with new political patterns, economic and social systems, new institutions and more. Previous empirical studies show that at the beginning of the transition period Eastern Europeans were even more supportive of capitalist values than were the people in capitalist states. Therefore changes on the political and

societal level had a strong influence on people's value judgements. The relatively high support for capitalist values reflected the uncritical welcoming of the capitalist alternative to communism. After a while the economic reality became clear and enthusiasm towards capitalism decreased. The consensually held goal of breaking away from the Soviet Union and gaining independence had been achieved. Individual interest became more important and therefore individual level factors started to play the main role in judgements about justice (Mason and Kluegel 2000:16).

*3.2. The dominant ideology and split-consciousness:
the concurrences of macro-level and individual factors*

While interpreting attitudes towards justice beliefs the central question is: how do justice beliefs arise? Are the preferences of different justice principles explained by the cultural environment and macro-level factors, or are the rational considerations of a person a stronger determinant?

One of the main theoretical concerns within modern Marxism is "the dominant ideology thesis" according to which "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (Abercrombie et al. 1980:7). Therefore in every society there is an ideology for evaluating the distribution of goods that serves to justify the privileged status of economic elites. Privileged elites promulgate the "dominant ideology" through institutions over which they exert a strong influence: the schools, the church, the arts, the popular media, and other. Since the dominant ideology is demonstrated to the public very often and through different channels it becomes the only accepted explanation of things (even inequality). The dominant ideology thesis even argues that certain principles are uniformly held by the more or less privileged, and therefore irrespective of the person's socio-economic position in a society; the dominant ideology is uniformly accepted by everybody (Kluegel and Matějů 1995:211).

Scholars in the Marxist tradition also call it the "false consciousness" of the exploited since even the disadvantaged members of societies tend to see major forms of inequality as legitimate (Kreidl 2000:153). Hence, the dominant ideology thesis suggests little or no differences in the beliefs held by various class, ethnicity, gender, and age categories (Lewin-Epstein et al. 2003:6). The same idea is supported by the structural-functionalist approach which is applying that the personality becomes a "mirror-image" of the social system (Dekker et al. 1991: 86).

Of course it can be questioned as to what extent the beliefs justified by the most privileged are in fact "dominant". Abercrombie doubts that dominant ideology could be deeply rooted in a society. In contrast, he argues that there is a strong disagreement between social classes and their values (Kreidl 2000:153).

The self-interest theory argues against the dominant ideology thesis by applying that the individual characteristics of a person determine the justice beliefs.

The "split-consciousness" theory proposes that beliefs about distributive justice have two broad influences. First, they are products of the dominant ideologies

described above – the general attitudes. Second, beliefs are products of everyday experience, emerging from day-to-day struggle to make do with limited resources; they are the attitudes to particular problems and may in short be called “challenging ideologies”. Dominant and “challenging” norms exist in parallel and occupy different “segments” of an individual’s consciousness (Kluegel et al. 1995:182).

Thus unlike the “dominant ideology” thesis the “split-consciousness” thesis takes into consideration both characteristics – macro-level as well as individual. Many presumptions in the International Social Justice Project are made relying on the assumption that the dominant ideology is shared by virtually all members of a society, despite the socio-economic position of a person. Individual factors affect the attitudes towards challenging beliefs and norms which derive from feelings of blocked opportunities due to personal characteristics. People with lower positions are more often in favour of the challenging ideology since they have reasons to be unsatisfied with the existing system (Kluegel and Matějů 1995:211).

While the macro level factors determine the dominant ideology in a society, which is supported by all members of a society, it is the individual characteristics that determine whether and to what extent the challenging and alternative ideology is being supported. According to this theory the successful groups of a society support only the dominant ideology. People who are less well-off, who have reason to doubt the legitimacy of the existing system, support both – the dominant justice beliefs as well as the alternative justice principles.

The International Social Justice Project explains that in contemporary western societies, capitalism and market principles are dominant. Therefore the acceptance of egalitarian principles can be expected by all or the majority of the people. The challenging ideology is egalitarianism – consequently the principles of equality are accepted by people in more disadvantaged positions.

The tendencies that are expected in Western societies cannot be directly applied to Estonian and other Eastern-European countries because of the exceptional conditions at the time of the study, especially with regards to the early 1990s. At the same time Kluegel and Matějů imply that the duality in beliefs about equality and inequality will exist as well and may be even more pronounced in post-communist than in capitalist countries. They argue that it is the result of competing ideologies and poor economic conditions. In addition to that people in postcommunist societies might not be able to see the capitalist and egalitarian ideas inconsistent with each other and therefore have higher chances of supporting both of them at the same time (Kluegel and Matějů 1995:212).

4. Method

The analysis combines data from two different projects. The data for 1991 is from the International Social Justice Project carried out by *Saar Poll*. The data for 2005 is from the project “Social Justice in Estonian society: changing perceptions of new generations” carried out by *Turu-uuringute AS*. The dataset of both periods

includes 1000 respondents and they are representative for the entire working-age population of Estonia.

To achieve the main goal of this paper – to compare the attitudes towards egalitarian and inegalitarian justice principles – two single summary measures of egalitarian and inegalitarian principles were derived from the four attitudinal questions contained in the survey. The summary measures included propositions respective to the theoretical background, among them propositions common to egalitarian and inegalitarian principles. New values from –2 to 2 were given to the justice principles. The highest negative value represents the strongest disagreement with the argument. The highest positive value represents total agreement with the argument. Exact values are the following: –2 “strongly disagree”, –1 “disagree”, 0 “neither for nor against”, 1 “agree”, 2 “strongly agree”. Negative and positive signs become very meaningful later on in the analyses since the aim of the analyses is to compare means. Justice principles used in the analyses are listed below.

Market justice principles:

1. People are entitled to keep what they have earned – even if this means some people will be wealthier than others.
2. It is fair if people have more money or wealth, but only if there are equal opportunities.
3. There is an incentive for individual effort only if differences in income are large enough.
4. It is all right if businessmen make good profits because everyone benefits in the end.

Egalitarian justice principles:

1. The government should provide a job for everyone who wants one.
2. The most important thing is that people get what they need, even if this means allocating money from those who have earned more than they need.
3. The government should place an upper limit on the amount of money any one person can make.
4. The fairest way of distributing wealth and income would be to give everyone equal shares.

The cross tabs and ANOVA method is being used to analyze the attitudes towards social justice. The significance of differences is also tested.

5. Findings

5.1. General justice beliefs in 1991 and 2005

The results indicate that significant changes in attitudes towards justice have occurred in Estonia from 1991 to 2005. Although Estonian society has shifted from socialism towards capitalism the contrary has happened to people's value

judgments. Support for market justice principles has decreased and support for egalitarian principles has increased (Table 1).

Those results seem contradictory at first but this phenomenon can be explained with the fact that the survey was conducted in the period of considerable political and economic flux, even turmoil. The term “symbolic ideology” characterises the beginning of the 1990s in the Estonian society. A lack of experience with capitalism and enthusiasm towards the future brought about relatively high support for capitalistic values. Egalitarian principles were associated with the Soviet system and therefore found less support as people had negative experience with it. This in turn caused a situation where the new market principles gained relatively wide support and egalitarian principles were rather unpopular as people were hostile towards them. By 2005 the situation had stabilised. Both justice principles had become more clarified in the minds of the people and therefore the evaluations did not rely on “symbolic ideology” any more. People had experience with capitalism and could evaluate it critically. The negative association with the principles of equality had faded. Therefore, it is natural that former enthusiastic support for capitalism and negative association with egalitarianism, when judged critically, gave place to lower support for capitalism and higher support for egalitarianism.

It can be assumed that the results are more elicited from the lack of experience in the 1990s, and the decline in support from 1991 to 2005 is more a sign of stabilization. A new survey has to be conducted to find out whether the support for market justice principles continues to decline or is the current decline really a result of the transformation.

The low support for egalitarian principles in the 1990s affirms the doubt about acceptance of the official ideology of the Soviet Union by the public. The Soviet regime was not voluntary for Estonian people and therefore they may have not accepted the ideology advocated by the government. People were against the system and at the same time against the ideology advocated by it. Therefore it is expected that egalitarian principles were not popular among the public. Later on, as the negative association with egalitarian principles faded, people started to support those principles again (mainly because of the economic difficulties that were caused by the transformation). The change in support for egalitarian justice principles from negative mean (−0.13) in 1991 to positive mean (0.13) in 2005 is a clear sign of this (Table 1).

At the same time it has to be noted that the mean assessment of market and egalitarian justice principles is not very high in neither of the periods observed. Uncertain attitudes towards both of the principles are a reflection of relatively unformed value judgements of people in Estonia both in 1991 and 2005. Still, statistically significant, therefore noteworthy changes have occurred during the time period under observation.

Table 1. Attitudes towards market and egalitarian justice principles in Estonian society in 1991 and 2005 (comparing means)

	Period	Mean	Significance level	Difference between means
Market justice principles	1991	0.59	0.000	-0.17 units
	2005	0.42		
Egalitarian justice principles	1991	-0.13	0.000	0.26 units
	2005	0.13		

5.2. The inconsistency of market and egalitarian justice principles

According to International Social Justice Project the egalitarian and inegalitarian principles are in a competing relationship (represented by a significant negative correlation between the two principles) (Kluegel and Matejů 1995:212). The situation in Estonian society in the early 1990s was complicated. Due to the newness of market justice ideas and the lack of experience with capitalism combined with decades of socialist justice as the dominant ideology, egalitarian and inegalitarian ideas may not have been seen as inconsistent. Thus the two justice orientations in post-communist countries may not as often seen to be opposed as in capitalist countries. Since from 1991 to 2005 Estonia has become more similar to Western countries, an increase of negative correlation between egalitarian and inegalitarian principles would be expected.

Contradictory to the presumptions, the results show that negative correlation between egalitarian and inegalitarian principles has decreased during the period from 1991 to 2005 (Table 2). The correlation of -0.26^* in 1991 has decreased to the correlation of -0.08^* in 2005. This implies that people saw egalitarian and inegalitarian principles as more inconsistent in 1991, while in 2005 people tended to oppose them less. Therefore higher support for egalitarian principles did not cause less support for inegalitarian principles, and vice versa.

Table 2. Correlations between egalitarian and inegalitarian justice principles in 1991 and 2005

Period	Correlation between egalitarian and inegalitarian justice principles	Significance level
1991	-0.26^*	0.000
2005	-0.08^*	0.015

Significant at: * $p < 0.05$

5.3. The impact of a person's socio-economic position on attitudes towards social justice

The paper expands upon the question of whether and to what extent a person's socio-economic position influences the attitudes towards justice. Significant differences appear in 1991. All observed social groups (gender, education, occupation status, subjective social position) differed in the attitudes towards both egalitarian and inegalitarian justice principles (Table 3). According to the "split-consciousness" thesis every society has a dominant ideology which is accepted by all or the majority of a society. The existence of significant differences in the attitudes towards egalitarian and inegalitarian principles among the different socio-economic groups gives ground to the premise that in 1991 there was no definite and uniformly accepted preoccupation about social justice, people supported different justice beliefs.

Therefore in 1991 a person's socio-economic position played an important part in determining the attitudes towards justice principles. This argues against the principles of "dominant ideology" showing instead that people are not accepting passively the "ruling ideas" and "common culture", but think what is more useful for themselves. People had certain vision of whether the new system would bring them value or not. Assumptions about the impact of the former dominant ideology are hard to make. Since people's value judgements varied significantly there is no clear sign of the "hand of the past" (soviet ideology) or on the other hand, sign of a clear acceptance of the new ideology (capitalism).

Table 3. The significance of differences in different social groups in 1991 and 2005

Characteristic	1991		2005	
	The significance of differences of inegalitarian principles	The significance of differences of egalitarian principles	The significance of differences of inegalitarian principles	The significance of differences of egalitarian principles
Gender	0.00*	0.01*	0.15	0.00*
Education	0.00*	0.00*	0.67	0.00*
Status	0.00*	0.01*	0.22	0.00*
Social position	0.00*	0.00*	0.01*	0.00*

Significant at: * $p < 0.05$

The situation in 2005 does not seem to be so vague any more, the "split-consciousness" thesis can be used for explaining the justice beliefs in Estonian society. The results indicate that significant differences among groups occur only in the case of egalitarian principles. Regarding inegalitarian principles, the statistically significant differences between groups are absent (except for people with subjectively different positions). Thus it can be concluded according to both

the International Social Justice Project and the “split-consciousness” thesis that inegalitarian principles are dominant in Estonian society since they are uniformly accepted and the challenging ideology – egalitarianism – is accepted by people with certain individual characteristics; supposedly the ones less privileged.

5.4. Support towards egalitarian and inegalitarian principles in 1991 and 2005

The analysis of the different principles separately is in many ways remarkable and sheds light on many questions offering a chance to analyse the results and changes in people’s value judgements in depth.

The results indicate that radically egalitarian and inegalitarian principles were not very popular among people either in 1991 or in 2005. People tended to support the less radical justice principles: the right to keep one’s earnings, equal opportunities to everybody, the right for a job, and support for the least advantaged (Table 4).

Table 4. Means for egalitarian and inegalitarian justice principles in 1991 and 2005

	Justice principles	Mean in 1991	Mean in 2005
Inegalitarian justice principles	People are entitled to keep what they have earned – even if this means some people will be wealthier than others	1.56	1.16
	It’s fair if people have more money or wealth, but only if there are equal opportunities	0.75	0.96
	There is an incentive for individual effort only if differences in income are large enough	0.60	0.00
	It is all right if businessmen make good profits because everyone benefits in the end	-0.57	-0.45
Egalitarian justice principles	The government should provide a job for everyone who wants one	0.81	1.10
	The most important thing is that people get what they need, even if this means allocating money from those who have earned more than they need	0.29	0.39
	The government should place an upper limit on the amount of money any one person can make	-0.43	-0.04
	The fairest way of distributing wealth and income would be to give everyone equal shares	-1.09	-0.92

Support for radically egalitarian and radically inegalitarian principles is smaller and even negative – people tend to disagree with some of those principles. Although the summary measures of egalitarian and inegalitarian principles seemed to be supported in 2005, the results from the separate analyses of the principles show that among both principles there are some arguments that people disagree with. For example people do not believe that everybody will benefit from the high

profits of businessmen (-0.45) and that income differences can motivate individual effort (0.00). People also do not consider it fair to distribute all wealth and income between everybody (-0.92), or to set a maximum limit on the amount of money that a person can make (-0.04) (Table 4).

Although the summary measures expressed more support for inegalitarian principles, it can be doubted after analysing the different justice principles separately. The dominance of inegalitarian principles is also under serious doubt because of the means for the corresponding principles. The positive sign expresses support but it is still far from "total agreement".

5.5. The dominant principles in 1991 and 2005?

As implied repeatedly above, the dominance of ideology is being expressed by the mutual support for the corresponding principles. The differences between the groups towards justice principles should be absent in this case. In 1991 the attitudes towards justice principles are relatively diverse and it is hard to make any profound conclusions. With regard to 2005 the analysis of summary principles confirms the perception based on the "split-consciousness" thesis handled in the International Social Justice Project. There were no significant differences between the groups' attitudes towards the market justice principles. Thus they are accepted similarly by the majority of the members of the society. Support for egalitarian principles is clearly affected by the social position of a person. Significant differences occur between men and women, and people with a different level of education, social status and position (Table 3).

When analyzing different justice principles separately, two arguments appear without significant changes between the groups in 2005 (Table 5). The first one is an egalitarian principle: "The most important thing is that people get what they need, even if this means allocating money from those who have earned more than they need"; the second is a market principle: "It's fair that people have more money or wealth, but only if there are equal opportunities". This, in accordance with the "dominant ideology" theory, "split-consciousness" thesis and mainly according to the interpretations of the International Social Justice Project, leads to the conclusion that covering people's basic needs and securing equal opportunities are more uniformly valued in the Estonian society than the other principles. While making this conclusion it is supposed that dominant are the principles accepted similarly by different groups and it has been disclaimed from the premise that only one of the inconsistent principles can be dominant – either egalitarian or inegalitarian.

Looking at the means of those principles the dominance of these ideas can again be seriously doubted since they are positive (0.96 and 0.39) but far away from the maximum value (Table 4). Still the absence of differences between groups shows the orientation towards certain principles.

Table 5. The significance level of justice principles among different socio-economic groups in 1991 and 2005

Justice Principles	1991				2005			
	Gender	Educa- tion	Posi- tion	Status	Gender	Educa- tion	Posi- tion	Status
People are entitled to keep what they have earned – even if this means some people will be wealthier than others	0.74	0.08	0.00	0.03	0.06	0.02	0.08	0.02
It's fair if people have more money or wealth, but only if there are equal opportunities	0.05	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.58	0.41	0.85	0.07
There is an incentive for individual effort only if differences in income are large enough	0.31	0.04	0.01	0.41	0.22	0.00	0.00	0.73
It is all right if businessmen make good profits because everyone benefits in the end	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.10	0.37	0.11	0.00	0.00
The government should provide a job for everyone who wants one	0.06	0.06	0.00	0.01	0.19	0.00	0.00	0.00
The most important thing is that people get what they need, even if this means allocating money from those who have earned more than they need	0.83	0.57	0.41	0.92	0.09	0.94	0.40	0.00
The government should place an upper limit on the amount of money any one person can make	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00
The fairest way of distributing wealth and income would be to give everyone equal shares	0.87	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00

6. Conclusions and discussion

This paper examines the changes in attitudes towards justice in the Estonian society during the period of 1991–2005. The main objective was to explore the attitudes towards egalitarian and inegalitarian justice principles and whether and to which extent are the attitudes affected by macro-level factors (dominant ideology) and individual determinants of a person (self-interest). The summary of different justice principles and separate principles were analysed for that purpose.

The results indicate that significant changes have occurred during the period from 1991 to 2005. Although on a societal level, there has been a shift from socialist to market system, in value judgements the opposite has emerged: the

support for market justice principles has decreased and the support for egalitarian principles has increased.

Both macro-level and individual characteristics have influenced people's attitudes towards justice. The relatively high support for market principles in 1991 can be explained with an uncritical welcoming of capitalist values, people's hopefulness towards the future, lack of personal experience with the new policy and seeing it as an alternative to communism. Egalitarian principles on the other hand were associated with the Soviet Union and this caused a smaller support for or even confrontation with the principles of equality. The general tendencies have been determined by macro-level factors, the political and economic conditions of a society. At the same time there were significant differences between different groups. Therefore the impact of the macro-level factors did not override the impact of individual characteristics. Attitudes were still strongly related to person's individual characteristics.

The same applies to 2005: both macro-level and individual characteristics influence people's opinions about justice. According to the International Social Justice Project and the thesis of "split-consciousness" the dominant ideology in every society is the one accepted by most or the majority of the people. Individual characteristics determine the attitudes towards alternative justice principles. The accordance to the assumptions made in the International Social Justice Project is therefore confirmed by statistically significant differences among groups in attitudes towards challenging – the egalitarian principles. At the same time the dominance of inegalitarian principles is doubtful because of the mean of the corresponding principles (the mean is far from maximum support).

The adequacy of a dominant ideology and the interpretation of the "split-consciousness" thesis by the International Social Justice Project is doubtful because of the relatively linear approach – dominant ideology can be just one, market or egalitarian, while support for both principles means that a person has a split-consciousness. In 2005 there appeared two justice principles in Estonian society without significant differences among groups. One of them is an inegalitarian principle ("It's fair if people have more money or wealth, but only if there are equal opportunities") and the second is an egalitarian principle ("The most important thing is that people get what they need, even if this means allocating money from those who have earned more than they need"). The absence of significant differences between the groups in the case of these principles gives a reason to believe that those principles were most jointly accepted among the public. This in turn according to the conceptions from the International Social Justice Project would lead to the conclusion that having equal rights and providing normal conditions for the less privileged are the most highly valued or even the dominant principles in the Estonian society in 2005. This conclusion relies on a perception that dominant values are the ones that are supported regardless of the socio-economic position of a person (as was assumed in the International Social Justice Project). At the same time the condition that it can be only either an egalitarian or inegalitarian principle is abandoned in this case.

The approach of the International Social Justice Project to the thesis of “split-consciousness” seems too injudicious since egalitarian and inegalitarian principles are seen as inconsistent. In pursuance to these conceptions one of the principles can exist on the macro-level and it is called the dominant ideology. The coexistence of dominant and potentially challenging values is accepted but here it is called “split-consciousness” – they are people with “divided selves”.

Several questions arise from here: should a person having equal support for the principles of equality and inegalitarianism be regarded as having a “split-consciousness”? Whether and why do dominant principles have to represent only one dimension – either the egalitarian or the inegalitarian?

The answer may rely in the fact that egalitarian and inegalitarian justice principles are more normative principles and therefore try to explain what ought to be. The empirical results of the current survey show what the justice beliefs of people really are. Therefore Estonian society may be regarded as a good example of the conflict between normative theories and beliefs that people really hold; the economic elite advocates principles of free market and capitalism but the public, as confirmed in the analyses above, supports a combination of egalitarian and inegalitarian principles.

What to think of a situation where the principles accepted by the public do not correspond to the ideas advocated on a societal level? Is a dominant orientation the one supported by the privileged elite or the one supported by the public? Answering these questions was not the purpose of this paper but it most certainly will leave topics for further discussions.

Still, despite all the doubts and new questions that arose from the current analysis, certain conclusions can be derived. There are values in Estonian society in 2005 that people have a similar understanding about and that are more or less accepted: ensuring equal opportunities for people and helping the less privileged. This result can be regarded as remarkable because of its similarity to the contract theory of justice by John Rawls. According to Rawls two conditions should be fulfilled. First each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others. Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) to the greatest advantage to the least advantaged and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equal opportunity (Rawls 1971:164). Herewith the contract principles of Rawls and the results from this paper indicate equal rights and the need to support the less privileged. This is a combination of egalitarian and inegalitarian principles.

Of course it has to be understood that the theory of John Rawls cannot be regarded as representing entirely the justice beliefs in Estonian society. On the other hand, the International Social Justice Project was comparing the egalitarian and inegalitarian justice beliefs, both of which have certain normative backgrounds; egalitarianism is derived from the theories of Karl Marx and inegalitarianism is close to the philosophical perspective called libertarianism represented by Robert Nozick. Therefore in response to the conceptions used in the International Social

Justice Project the current analysis argues that justice beliefs in Estonian society cannot be explained using the egalitarian-inegalitarian scale. A new normative dimension is needed for explaining the justice beliefs of people. The contract theory of John Rawls is currently more suitable for describing the value judgements of people in Estonian society compared to the egalitarian-inegalitarian notion.

Therefore, the question asked at the beginning of this paper – the need and possibility to oppose two justice principles (egalitarian and inegalitarian) seems to have found an answer: people in the Estonian society tend to have uniform support for a combination of egalitarian and inegalitarian justice principles. Thus it can be argued whether it is politic to oppose egalitarian and inegalitarian justice principles at all, but in people's minds they are clearly not excluding one another and are more likely to coexist. Therefore it seems even unreasonable to distinguish between these principles since they are closely attached to one another and the suggestion for the future might be to think of other dimensions for measuring and explaining justice beliefs.

Acknowledgements

The research on which this article is based has been financially supported by the Estonian Science Foundation (grant number 5952).

Address:

Marii Paškov
Tallinn University
Narva mnt 25
10120 Tallinn, Estonia

Phone: +372 55 642 415

E-mail: MariiPaskov@hotmail.com

References

- Abercrombie, N., Hill, S., Turner, B. S. (1980). *"The Dominant Ideology Theory"*. London: George Allen & Unwin
- Andreß, H.-J., T. Heien, T. (2001) "Four worlds of welfare state attitudes? A comparison of Germany, Norway, and the United States". *European Sociological Review* 17, 4, 337–356.
- Dekker, H., Meyenberg, R. (1991). *"Politics and the European Younger Generation: Political Socialization in Eastern, Central and Western Europe"*. Oldenburg: Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Universität Oldenburg.
- Cluegel, J. R. et al. (1995b) "Accounting for the rich and the poor: existential justice in comparative perspective".
- Cluegel, J. R. and D. S. Mason (2000) "Market justice in transition". In *Marketing democracy: changing opinion about inequality and politics in east central Europe*, 161–187. D. S. Mason, J. R. Cluegel, L. Khakhulina, P. Matëjü, A. Örkeny, A. Stoyanov, and B. Wegener, eds. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

- Kluegel, J. R., D. S. Mason, and B. Wegener (1995a). "The international social justice project". In *Social justice and political change: public opinion in capitalist and post-communist states*, 1–12. J. R. Kluegel, D. S. Mason, and B. Wegener, eds. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Kluegel, J. R., P. Matějů (1995) "Egalitarian vs. inegalitarian principles of distributive justice". In *Social justice and political change: public opinion in capitalist and post-communist states*, 209–223. J. R. Kluegel, D. S. Mason, and B. Wegener, eds. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Kreidl, M. (2000). "Perceptions of Poverty and Wealth in Western and Post-Communist Countries". *Social Justice Research*, 13 (2), 151–176.
- Lewin-Epstein, N., Kaplan, A., Levanon, A. (2003). "Distributive Justice and Attitudes Toward the Welfare State". *Social Justice Research*, 16 (1), 1–24.
- Mason D. S. and J. R. Kluegel (2000a) "Introduction: public opinion and political change in the postcommunist states". In *Marketing democracy: changing opinion about inequality and politics in east central Europe*, 1–25. D. S. Mason, J. R. Kluegel, L. Khakhulina, P. Matějů, A. Örkeny, A. Stoyanov, and B. Wegener, eds. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Plionis, D. and E. M. Plionis (2000) "Social justice and privatisation". In *Social justice and the welfare state in central and eastern Europe*, 35–50. D. S. Iatridis, ed. Westport: Praeger Publishers.
- Rawls, J. (1971) *A theory of justice*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Wegener, B. and S. Liebig (1995) "Dominant ideologies and the variation of distributive justice norms: a comparison of East and West Germany, and the United States". In *Social justice and political change: public opinion in capitalist and post-communist states*, 239–284. J. R. Kluegel, D. S. Mason, and B. Wegener, eds. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.