Adolescents' motives to help their parents in different cultural contexts – in Germany, Russia and Estonia

Kairi Kasearu & Dagmar Kutsar
University of Tartu, Estonia

Workshop
VALUE OF CHILDREN AND INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

March 29th – 30th, 2012, University of Konstanz

▶ Due to demographic changes and the problems of ageing societies the focus is put on ingergenerational relationships

  ▶ E.g. Comparative large-scale studies: OASIS and SHARE.

▶ Different dimensions of intergenerational support: functional, emotional and instrumental support giving and receiving between generations (e.g. Arber & Attias-Donfut, 2000; Cooney & Uhlenberg, 1992; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Kohli & Künemund, 2001; etc)

▶ Whether the societal change and development of welfare state leads to the weakening of family ties and intergenerational solidarity and could it be described as a *crowding-out* process (Kohli, 1999, etc)

  ▶ The results indicate that the emotional ties between generations are still important and although the functional support might have decreased the emotional will even gain importance (Künemund, 2008).

Why this study?

– In the field of intergenerational relationships and solidarity mostly the help, support and emotional closeness are seen as an issue of two generations of adults (elderly parents and their grown-up children) and the third generation – the underage children and adolescents are understudied.

- – Children as carers of their chronically ill or disabled parents (e.g. Keith, 1995; Newman, 2003; and others) where their caring responsibility is their everyday's reality.
- – There are cultural differences in adolescents' attitudes towards family informal care obligations (e.g. Fuligini, Tseng & Lam, 1999)
- – The influence of the family of origin on the kinship norms of adolescents is relatively weak (Sabatier & Lannegrand-Willems, 2005; De Vries, Kalmijn & Liefbroer, 2009).

– In the context of rapidly changing welfare state and ageing societies the helping orientation of younger generations can refer to future *crowding-in* or *crowding-out* processes in the family groups.

- Intergenerational solidarity: affectual, consensual, functional, associational, family structure and normative solidarity (see Bengtson & Schrader, 1982; Bengtson & Roberts, 1991; Bengtson et al., 2002).

    - These six dimensions could be divided substantially into two general dimensions: structural-behavioural and cognitive-affective (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991).

- The dimensions of intergenerational solidarity are related to different motives/factors: altruism, reciprocity, affection and norms, and legal obligations of responsibility (Künemund, 2008).

- Altruism in relationships means that the aim of the action is do to something for others because one is concerned with the wellbeing of others.
  - Altruism is shaped by the fact that the parent-child-relations are bi-directional, whereby both parents and children are active and influence each other in everyday interactions (Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003).
  - Therefore, the level of altruism could be closely related to the relationship quality.
- Reciprocity of support assumes that individuals give help to others because they expect them to receive in return.
  - Reciprocity stands for the idea that receiving of some kind of support places an obligation to respond by giving something back or at least to show gratefulness (Gouldner, 1960).
  - Reciprocity approach allows also, especially within a family, some asymmetry between what is initially received and what is later given, for instance the financial help is returned as emotional or instrumental support (Künemund, 2008:109).

- The norms of altruism and reciprocity are transmitted by parents when the children are young with the aim to secure their investments and support in their old age.

- This means that family norms could be seen as internalized
  - The socialization process in early childhood and the relations between child and parent have impact on child's social, emotional and cognitive development and intergenerational relations over the life course (Trommsdorff & Nauck, 2010)

- In general, the postmodern societies are characterized by the weakening of traditional ties and norms;
  - Family relationships are not anymore characterized by rules and rituals and the central position is taken over by the intimacy and affection, which on the other hand is more difficult to secure and maintain (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Mason & Tripper, 2008).
  - Therefore, the internalization of family norms may become less effective and this could be lead to a rise of ambivalence in intergenerational relationships.

– In transition societies, the feeling of ambivalence could be emerge in relations of adolescents and their parents.

– The collapse of the Soviet Union was followed by the ideational changes initiating the societies to move towards western values: rising individualism, self-actualization, autonomy, self-reliance, etc (Lauristin, 1997; Thornton & Philipov, 2009).

– Therefore, it may initiate different expectations between generations, growing variance of value orientations and may result in higher ambivalence in family assistance

– Estonia and Russia, both belonged to the Soviet Union, but the family composition patterns and family values differ (Therborn, 2004)

– Young Estonians are representing more individualistic values than Russian youth (Realo & Allik, 1999).

– Russian adolescents represent more traditional family values and family formation plans compared to German adolescents (Meyer, Kuramschew, & Trommsdorff 2009).

Aim of the study & research questions

- We follow the idea that the motives to help are on the one hand the outcome of interpersonal relations within a family, but on the other hand they mirror the cultural norms and expectations toward care responsibilities and expectations between generations.

- The aim is to explore the adolescents' motives for help-giving in different cultural context
  - Whether there are differences in motives of adolescents in different countries?
  - What kind of motives are more valued and how these motives are internally related to each other?
  - Which motives are more closely related to family values measured as value profile of interdependence and whether there are different patterns across countries?
  - We expect that the readiness to support the parents is more strongly related to the quality of parent-child relationships than to the family norms; however this association could vary across motives for help giving.

Institute of
sociology and
soci...

The sample = 841 adolescents from three different countries: Germany (N=311), Russia (N=230) and Estonia (N=300)

- In Estonia, the sample is geographically representative for Estonian-speaking adolescents in age 14-17 including the families from different regions.

- From adolescents 45% were males and 55% females

  - Boys: Germany 44.1% (n=137), in Russia 40% (n=91) and in Estonia 49% (n=147).

- The mean age of adolescents: Germany 15.7 (SD=1.1), Russia 15.3 (SD=1.2) and Estonia 15.5 (SD=1.1)

- The average number of the children in a family was in Germany 2.29 (SD=0.9), in Russia 1.79 (SD=1.04) and in Estonia 2.5 (SD=1.37).

- Differences in marital statues of adolescents' parents:

  - In Germany and Russia, the survey was conducted only among families with two biological parents

  - In Estonia due to the procedure of random sampling the family background of adolescents is more diverse.

    - In Germany 88% and in Russia 80% of parents of adolescents were married (first marriage), in Estonia 55% of adolescents lived together with both biological parents and from these parents 83% are married. 15% of adolescents are living together with a stepfather and 30% in single-mother households.

Institute of
sociology and
social policy

- *Planned invested support* (Schwarz et al., 2001 on the basis of Rossi and Rossi's, 1991 design).
  - "*Please imagine that one of your parents has to stay in bed for several weeks after having a serious accident. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about why you would help your injured parent*".
    - 5 point Likert scale: (1) disagree ... (5) agree
  - Pro-social (e.g. „I would want my parent to feel good")
    Russia α = .76, Germany α = .79, and Estonia α = .85.
  - Rule-oriented (e.g. „My parent would expect me to help")
    Russia α = .62, Germany α = .70, Estonia α = .66.
  - Reciprocity
  - Relation-oriented

Institute of
sociology and
social policy

- *Interdependent self* (Singelis, 1994). (e.g. "It is important for me to respect decisions made by my family"),
  - 5 –items, 5 point Likert scale ranging from *(1) strongly disagree* to *(5) strongly agree.*
  - Russia α = .7, Germany α = .75 and Estonia α = .74. The average score of interdependent self in Germany and Estonia was 3.4 and in Russia 3.6; $((F(2, 813) = 7.04, p < .01)$
- *Relationship Quality* (Furman & Buhrmeister 1985) 5-point scale:*(1) never* to *(5) always*
  - intimacy (e.g. how often do you share your secrets and private feelings with your mother?) Russia α = .78, Germany α = .85 and Estonia α = .87.
  - admiration (e.g. how often do your mother like or approve of the things you do?) Russia α = .81, Germany α = .78, Estonia α=..81
  - conflict (e.g. how often do you and your mother get upset with or mad at each other?) Russia α = .81, Germany α = .83, Estonia α=.87

Tabel 1. Planned invested support in three countries

	Germany M (S.D)	Russia M (S.D)	Estonia M (S.D)
Prosocial motives	*4.11 (.55)* [a]	*4.35 (.52)* [b]	*4.21 (.56)* [a c]
I would want my parent to feel good	4.14 (.64) [a]	4.52 (.55) [b]	4.26 (.66) [a c]
I know that my parent would be pleased about it	4.23 (.61)	4.16 (.77)	4.21 (.66)
My help would improve my parent's situation	3.96 (.80) [a]	4.30 (.69) [b]	4.16 (.69) [b c]
I know that it would improve my parent's well-being	4.10 (.74) [a]	4.40 (.68) [b]	4.21 (.67) [a c]
Rule-oriented motives	*3.10 (.74)* [a]	*3.90 (.61)* [b]	*3.67 (.67)* [c]
It is my duty as a son or daughter	3.34 (.91) [a]	4.29 (.73) [b]	3.98 (.72) [c]
Other people would be surprised if I did not help my parent	2.71 (1.11) [a]	3.16 (1.17) [b]	3.30 (1.17) [b c]
My parent would expect me to	3.13 (.95) [a]	4.26 (.63) [b]	3.89 (.80) [c]
I would feel guilty otherwise	3.20 (1.07) [a]	3.91 (.93) [b]	3.51 (1.08) [c]
Reciprocity: My parent has done so much for me that I would want to compensate	4.00 (.77) [a]	4.31 (.78) [b]	4.01 (.89) [a c]
Relation-oriented: To maintain a good relationship with my parent	3.67 (.86) [a]	3.56 (1.09) [b a]	3.97 (.82) [c]

Means having the same superscript are not different; means with different subscripts differ significantly at least at *p* < .05. Means without any subscripts do not differ across contexts.

Tabel 2. Correlations between motives, and motives and interdependece by country

		Prosocial	Rule-oriented	Reciprocity	Relations-oriented
Germany	Prosocial				
	Rule-oriented	.211**			
	Reciprocity	**.433****	.241**		
	Relations-oriented	.272**	.333**	.260**	
	Interdependence	**.361****	.183**	.263**	.245**
Russia	Prosocial				
	Rule-oriented	.451**			
	Reciprocity	**572****	.374**		
	Relations-oriented	.286**	.503**	.264**	
	Interdependence	**.316****	.176**	**.315****	.143*
Estonia	Prosocial				
	Rule-oriented	.529**			
	Reciprocity	.509**	.481**		
	Relations-oriented	.408**	**558****	.434*'	
	Interdependence	**.379****	**.394****	.302**	**.396****

Table 3. Motives of helping. GLM Univariate Models for pro-social and rule-oriented motives: Parameter Estimates, Standard Errors (*SE*), and *P* Values

	MODEL: Pro-social motives			MODEL: Rule-oriented motives		
	Estimate	*SE*	*p*	Estimate	*SE*	*p*
Intercept	4.184	.269	.000	3.942	.342	.000
Country: Germany as compared to Estonia	-.167	.049	.001	-.631	.063	.000
Country: Russia as compared to Estonia	.033	.055	.547	.143	.070	.043
Sex: Boys as compared to girls	-.144	.038	.000	-.017	.048	.722
Age	.007	.017	.667	-.016	.021	.462
Number of children in a family	-.049	.018	.006	-.049	.022	.028
Family background: two adults compared to lone-parent family	.159	.069	.022	.155	.088	.079
R Squared	*0.058*			*.205*		
Adjusted R Squared	*0.051*			*.199*		

Table 4. Motives of helping. GLM Univariate Models for reciprocity and relations-oriented motives: Parameter Estimates, Standard Errors (*SE*), and *P* Values

	MODEL: Reciprocity			*MODEL: Relations-oriented motives*		
	Estimate	*SE*	*p*	Estimate	*SE*	*p*
Intercept	4.019	.406	.000	4.552	.453	.000
Country: Germany as compared to Estonia	-.104	.074	.161	-.338	.083	.000
Country: Russia as compared to Estonia	.158	.084	.059	-.460	.093	.000
Sex: Boys as compared to girls	-.087	.058	.133	.092	.064	.151
Age	.003	.025	.911	-.037	.028	.184
Number of children in a family	-.066	.027	.013	-.045	.030	.127
Family background: two adults compared to lone-parent family	.235	.104	.024	.101	116	.381
R Squared	*.039*			*.041*		
Adjusted R Squared	*.032*			*.034*		

Table 5. GLM univariate models predicting pro-social motives with control variables, relationship quality and family values in different countries.

	Germany			Russia			Estonia		
	B	*SE*	*p*	B	*SE*	*p*	B	*SE*	*p*
Intercept	2.992	.259	.000	2.317	.334	.000	3.288	.220	.000
Sex: Boys as compared to girls	-.145	.056	.011	-.139	.066	.035	-.056	.058	.338
Number of children in a family	-.035	.029	.234	.034	.037	.352	-.044	.020	.034
Interdependence	.277	.051	.000	.279	.058	.000	.238	.048	.000
Intimacy	,009	.011	.426	.004	.014	.765	-.010	.013	.440
Admiration	.037	.014	.010	.078	.016	.000	.051	.014	.000
Conflict	-.023	.015	.144	.035	.018	.056	-.021	.012	.094
R Squared	*.223*			*.270*			*.228*		
Adjusted R Squared	*.207*			*.249*			*.211*		

Table 6. GLM univariate models predicting rule-oriented motive with control variables, relationship quality and family values in different countries

	Germany			Russia			Estonia		
	B	SE	p	B	SE	p	B	SE	p
Intercept	2.137	.390	.000	2.326	.417	.000	2.207	.280	.000
Number of children in a family	.038	.045	.399	-.044	.047	.347	-.065	.026	.014
Interdependence	.328	.078	.000	.315	.074	.000	.440	.062	.000
Intimacy	-.009	.016	.564	-.035	.017	.040	.004	.016	.801
Admiration	-.038	.022	.086	.053	.020	.009	-.010	.018	.594
Conflict	.030	.024	.204	.048	.022	.035	.026	.016	.109
R Squared	.066			.114			.190		
Adjusted R Squared	.049			.092			.175		

Table 7. GLM univariate models predicting reciprocity with control variables, relationship quality and family values in different countries.

	Germany			Russia			Estonia		
	B	*SE*	*P*	B	*SE*	*p*	B	*SE*	*p*
Intercept	2.902	.397	.000	2.153	.507	.000	3.078	.377	.000
Number of children in a family	-.021	.046	.650	.025	.057	.666	-.067	.035	.058
Interdependence	.354	.080	.000	.361	.090	.000	.306	.083	.000
Intimacy	.019	.017	.264	.024	.020	.242	-.019	.022	.392
Admiration	-.012	.023	.597	.073	.025	.003	.070	.024	.004
Conflict	-.016	.024	.507	-.014	.027	.614	-.068	.021	.002
R Squared	*.089*			*.208*			*.178*		
Adjusted R Squared	*.073*			*.189*			*.163*		

Table 8. GLM univariate models predicting relations-oriented motive with control variables, relationship quality and family values in different countries.

	Germany			Russia			Estonia		
	B	SE	P	B	SE	p	B	SE	p
Intercept	2.173	.462	.000	2.694	.776	.001	2.332	.347	.000
Number of children in a family	.052	.054	.329	-.190	.087	.030	-.043	.033	.185
Interdependence	.313	.093	.001	.334	.138	.017	.467	.077	.000
Intimacy	.023	.019	.226	-.021	.031	.503	-.026	.020	.205
Admiration	.002	.026	.938	.007	.037	.844	.041	.022	.065
Conflict	.012	.028	.669	.019	.042	.653	-.006	.020	.771
R Squared	.058				.051		.164		
Adjusted R Squared	.041				.029		.149		

- Country differences emerged in the average scores of help-giving motives:
    - German adolescents showed in general lower level of agreement with all help-giving motives compared to Russian and Estonian adolescents
- The order of motives is relatively similar in all countries
    - Altruistic reasons are followed by reciprocity, relationship-oriented and finally by rule-oriented reasons.
- In Russia, the rule-oriented and reciprocal help-giving motives are more spread than in other countries, by indicating the higher collectivism and traditional family values.
- In Estonia, compared to the other countries, rather the relations-oriented help orientation is relatively highly valued.
    - In Estonia: to maintain a good relationship with a parent, is more important reason for help-giving than in Russia and Germany.

- The associations between motives vary across cultures showing the different pattern
- In Estonia and in lesser extent in Russia, the relations-oriented motive is highly correlated with the rule-oriented motive.
  - Both are indicators of normative solidarity indicatinge different aspects of it
    - External rule-oriented motives: to meet the expectations of 'the others' (inc. Society, family, parents).
    - The relations-oriented motive as internal normative solidarity: an understanding that the readiness to help a parent is initiated by the wish to sustain stability in parent-child dyad.
      - In Estonia the relations-oriented motive is strongly related to the interdependence self-construal but it is not linked to actual level of relationship quality with a mother.
      - The ambivalent feelings may develop?

– Relationship quality with mother: intimacy, admiration, conflict

- INTIMACY as a quality of parent-child relationship is not universally related to the helping orientations
  - only among Russian adolescents, the higher level of intimacy will reduce the support for rule-oriented motives, but it is not significantly related to the prosocial motives.
- Intimacy was not very highly valued by adolescents: The sharing of thoughts, secrets and feelings with a mother t is not important in this developmental stage in the parent-child relations.

- CONFLICT: only two significant associations between conflict and motives for help:
  - Russian adolescents: conflict positively associated with rule-oriented motive
  - This demonstrates that in case of poor relationships, the help-giving is more strongly leaded by norms, but it is determined by the cultural context.
  - In Estona: the higher level of conflict between adolescent and a mother will reduce the reciprocity effect in help giving.

- ADMIRATION: In Russia and Estonia is related to reciprocity
  - The adolescents, who perceive that their mother admires, approves and supports them, were showing higher level of agreement with the reciprocity motive. It is consistent with the results of Laursen et al. (2000) who pointed out that less close parent-child relationships contained less reciprocity.
- Related to parenting skills → Estonian and Russian families seem to be more vulnerable in this case.
- Reciprocity in family relationships may be transferred into different kind of support (Künemund, 2008), in our case the emotional support received from mother is transformed to readiness to give an instrumental help.
- However, this is not the case of German adolescents, by suggesting that the reciprocity as a mechanism of intergenerational solidarity varies across cultures.
  - In case of German adolescents, the perceived maternal admiration is only associated with the altruistic motive of help. Therefore, the willingness to improve parent's wellbeing and make him/her to feel good is higher among those adolescents who have higher quality of relationship with their mother.

Institute of
sociology and
social policy

– The relationship quality is measured from the point of view of adolescents → should we check the associations also with mothers estimations on relationship quality?

  – In the present models, the adolecenst estimations on relationships with mother are measured, should we take adolescent's relationsip quality with the father as well?

    – Problem: Then we will loose some cases in Estonian sample.

– Should we go furhter and see how the motives are related to behavior?

Thank you!

kairi.kasearu@ut.ee