

## Stability or change?

### *Sheet 1*

‘More than once I had the opportunity to address the EFOS meeting on European values. An actual update:’

A lot of influential thinkers have stated that the world after the corona crisis will never be the same again; they expect profound societal and political change.

The European Values Study, a longterm panel study with fieldwork waves in 1981, 1991, 2000, 2008 and 2017 is a useful instrument to test change. Four years ago, at the EFOS meeting in Groningen we discussed the results of 2008, then the most recent wave. Now, the fieldwork of 2017 is also available on the website < [www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu](http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu)>.

In May 2020, during the first wave of Covid-19, the Dutch respondents of 2017 were re-approached with the same questions (N=1300).

Stability or change: a fascinating subject!

---

### *Sheet 2*

Expected Stability of Values before and during the Coronavirus Crisis

How stable are values? Some...very!

The sheet shows that this applies especially to the ‘Core Values’ socialized at a young age (e.g. religiosity, political ideology, social trust, post-material value orientations)

Some political issues, originating from long-standing principles, are expected to be quite stable as well (easy political issues)

Other issues are more prone to circumstances and require evaluation of the actual context (e. g. institutional trust, importance of leisure)

Example of a hard topic is privacy concern, politicized during the current pandemic because of its impact on the everyday life of everybody

The next sheet explains more about Post-materialism and how it is measured in this study

### Sheet 3

Post-materialism means the transformation of individual values from materialistic, physical and economic to new individual values of autonomy and self-expression.

The political scientist Inglehart argued that with increasing prosperity, such post-materialistic values would gradually increase in the population of advanced industrial societies. He constructed an index of the scores on 4 topics which figure in sheet 3

- 2 material aims (maintaining order and fighting high prices)
- 2 post-material aims (more say etc, freedom of speech)

The sheet is of interest to all of us since it shows the development for each country; as an overall picture we see post-materialism on the move in the upward arrows on 'freedom of speech' and the downward arrows on 'fighting high prices'.

---

### Sheet 4

- Ranking order for the stability of the individual values: from top to bottom the stability decreases. (*Read the last value as 'expert's involvement on policy making'*)
- For 18 of the 23 values the ranking order of stability is what the authors expected: See Confirm yes/no.
- As expected concerns about privacy are quite unstable and increase over time, as a direct response to discussions over Corona measures for contact tracing
- Highly significant increase of stability for 'Trust in Parliament and Government': An amazing result, unexpected by the authors and surely today, 1,5 year later, unthinkable! This positive evaluation took place

during a period of ‘intelligent lockdown’ in our country, combined with generous financial economic support measures

- Post-materialism turns out not half as stable as expected by the authors: a significant fall back on materialistic aims: the corona crisis induced here a politically antidemocratic ‘rally effect’.
- Similar is the reliance on expert involvement in policy making and preference for strong leadership, which both increased since 2017. On the other hand, state intervention has become less popular during the pandemic circumstances than the authors of this study had anticipated. Evidently, institutional functioning can evoke emotional as well as rational responses and are thus not always consistent.

More about these non-confirm positions see next sheet

---

### *Sheet 5*

According to the authors these shifts are symptoms of what happens to values in crisis-situations: Exposure to insecurity causes a conservative reflex. Time will tell if the values ‘Trust in Parliament and Government’ and ‘Post-materialism’ will simply switch back to their original stability/volatility after the crisis or that they will manifest a more permanent change

---

### *Sheet 6*

Alertness for us seniors is required on the following:

- **BEWARE** of the privacy infringes that electronic devices and state intervention might have in store for us
- **DEFEND** our precious values like self-expression and autonomy even when post-materialism is on the retreat
- **MAY** social solidarity and social trust, our most stable values, be also the guiding principles of expert involvement in policy making!