Unit 2 *Theoretical and Methodological Issues*
Subunit 1 *Conceptual Issues in Psychology and Culture*

Article 11

12-1-2012

An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values

Shalom H. Schwartz
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, msshasch@mscc.huji.ac.il

An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values

Abstract

This article presents an overview of the Schwartz theory of basic human values. It discusses the nature of values and spells out the features that are common to all values and what distinguishes one value from another. The theory identifies ten basic personal values that are recognized across cultures and explains where they come from. At the heart of the theory is the idea that values form a circular structure that reflects the motivations each value expresses. This circular structure, that captures the conflicts and compatibility among the ten values is apparently culturally universal. The article elucidates the psychological principles that give rise to it. Next, it presents the two major methods developed to measure the basic values, the Schwartz Value Survey and the Portrait Values Questionnaire. Findings from 82 countries, based on these and other methods, provide evidence for the validity of the theory across cultures. The findings reveal substantial differences in the value priorities of individuals. Surprisingly, however, the average value priorities of most societal groups exhibit a similar hierarchical order whose existence the article explains. The last section of the article clarifies how values differ from other concepts used to explain behavior—attitudes, beliefs, norms, and traits.

Introduction

Values have been a central concept in the social sciences since their inception. For both Durkheim (1897/1964) and Weber (1905/1958), values were crucial for explaining social and personal organization and change. Values have played an important role not only in sociology, but in psychology, anthropology, and related disciplines as well. Values are used to characterize cultural groups, societies, and individuals, to trace change over time, and to explain the motivational bases of attitudes and behavior.

Application of the values construct in the social sciences during the past century suffered from the absence of an agreed-upon conception of basic values, of the content and structure of relations among these values, and of reliable empirical methods to measure them (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; Rohan, 2000). Recent theoretical and methodological developments (Schwartz, 1992; Smith & Schwartz, 1997) have brought about a resurgence of research on values.

The recent theory concerns the basic values that people in all cultures recognize. It identifies ten motivationally distinct types of values and specifies the dynamic relations among them. Some values conflict with one another (e.g., benevolence and power) whereas others are compatible (e.g., conformity and security). The "structure" of values refers to these relations of conflict and congruence among values. Values are structured in similar ways across culturally diverse groups. This suggests that there is a universal organization of human motivations. Although the nature of values and their structure may be universal, individuals and groups differ substantially in the relative importance they attribute to the values. That is, individuals and groups have different value "priorities" or "hierarchies."

A Theory of Value Contents and Structure

The Nature of Values

When we think of our values, we think of what is important to us in life. Each of us holds numerous values (e.g., achievement, security, benevolence) with varying degrees of importance. A particular value may be very important to one person but unimportant to another. The value theory (Schwartz, 1992, 2006a) adopts a conception of values that specifies six main features that are implicit in the writings of many theorists:[1]

(1) **Values are beliefs** linked inextricably to affect. When values are activated, they become infused with feeling. People for whom independence is an important value become aroused if their independence is threatened, despair when they are helpless to protect it, and are happy when they can enjoy it.

(2) **Values refer to desirable goals** that motivate action. People for whom social order, justice, and helpfulness are important values are motivated to pursue these goals.

---

[1] e.g., Allport, 1961; Feather, 1995; Kluckhohn, 1951; Morris, 1956; Rokeach 1973.

(3) **Values transcend specific actions and situations**. Obedience and honesty values, for example, may be relevant in the workplace or school, in business or politics, with friends or strangers. This feature distinguishes values from norms and attitudes that usually refer to specific actions, objects, or situations.

(4) **Values serve as standards or criteria**. Values guide the selection or evaluation of actions, policies, people, and events. People decide what is good or bad, justified or illegitimate, worth doing or avoiding, based on possible consequences for their cherished values. But the impact of values in everyday decisions is rarely conscious. Values enter awareness when the actions or judgments one is considering have conflicting implications for different values one cherishes.

(5) **Values are ordered by importance** relative to one another. People's values form an ordered system of priorities that characterize them as individuals. Do they attribute more importance to achievement or justice, to novelty or tradition? This hierarchical feature also distinguishes values from norms and attitudes.

(6) **The *relative* importance of multiple values guides action**. Any attitude or behavior typically has implications for more than one value. For example, attending church might express and promote tradition and conformity values at the expense of hedonism and stimulation values. The tradeoff among relevant, competing values guides attitudes and behaviors (Schwartz, 1992, 1996). Values influence action when they are relevant in the context (hence likely to be activated) and important to the actor.

The above are features of *all* values. What distinguishes one from another is the type of goal or motivation that it expresses. The values theory defines ten broad values according to the motivation that underlies each of them. These values are likely to be universal because they are grounded in one or more of three universal requirements of human existence with which they help to cope. These requirements are needs of individuals as biological organisms, requisites of coordinated social interaction, and survival and welfare needs of groups. Individuals cannot cope successfully with these requirements of human existence on their own. Rather, people must articulate appropriate goals to cope with them, communicate with others about them, and gain cooperation in their pursuit. Values are the socially desirable concepts used to represent these goals mentally and the vocabulary used to express them in social interaction.

I next define each of the ten values in terms of the broad goal it expresses, note its grounding in universal requirements, and refer to related value concepts. To make the meaning of each value more concrete and explicit, I list in parentheses the set of value items included in the first survey instrument to measure each value. Some important value items (e.g., self-respect) have multiple meanings; they express the motivational goals of more than one value. These items are listed in brackets.

Self-Direction

Defining goal: independent thought and action--choosing, creating, exploring.
Self-direction derives from organismic needs for control and mastery (e.g., Bandura, 1977; Deci, 1975) and interactional requirements of autonomy and independence (e.g., Kluckhohn, 1951; Kohn & Schooler, 1983). (creativity, freedom, choosing own goals, curious, independent) [self-respect, intelligent, privacy]

Stimulation

Defining goal: excitement, novelty, and challenge in life.
Stimulation values derive from the organismic need for variety and stimulation in order to maintain an optimal, positive, rather than threatening, level of activation (e.g., Berlyne, 1960). This need probably relates to the needs underlying self-direction values (cf. Deci, 1975). (a varied life, an exciting life, daring)

Hedonism

Defining goal: pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself.
Hedonism values derive from organismic needs and the pleasure associated with satisfying them. Theorists from many disciplines (e.g., Freud, 1933; Williams, 1968) mention hedonism. (pleasure, enjoying life, self-indulgent)[2]

Achievement

Defining goal: personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.
Competent performance that generates resources is necessary for individuals to survive and for groups and institutions to reach their objectives. As defined here, achievement values emphasize demonstrating competence in terms of prevailing cultural standards, thereby obtaining social approval. (ambitious, successful, capable, influential) [intelligent, self-respect, social recognition][3]

Power

Defining goal: social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.
The functioning of social institutions apparently requires some degree of status differentiation (Parsons, 1951). A dominance/submission dimension emerges in most empirical analyses of interpersonal relations both within and across cultures (Lonner, 1980). To justify this fact of social life and to motivate group members to accept it, groups

---

[2] Although happiness is an important value, it is not included because people achieve it through attaining whatever outcomes they value (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000).

[3] Achievement values differ from McClelland's (1961) achievement motivation. Achievement motivation concerns meeting internal standards of excellence. It is expressed in self-direction values.

must treat power as a value. Power values may also be transformations of individual needs for dominance and control. Value analysts have mentioned power values as well (e.g., Allport, 1961). (authority, wealth, social power) [preserving my public image, social recognition]

Both power and achievement values focus on social esteem. However, achievement values (e.g., ambitious) emphasize the active demonstration of successful performance in concrete interaction, whereas power values (e.g., authority, wealth) emphasize the attainment or preservation of a dominant position within the more general social system.

Security

Defining goal: safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self.
Security values derive from basic individual and group requirements (cf. Kluckhohn, 1951; Maslow, 1965). Some security values serve primarily individual interests (e.g., clean), others wider group interests (e.g., national security). Even the latter, however, express, to a significant degree, the goal of security for self or those with whom one identifies. (social order, family security, national security, clean, reciprocation of favors) [healthy, moderate, sense of belonging]

Conformity

Defining goal: restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.
Conformity values derive from the requirement that individuals inhibit inclinations that might disrupt and undermine smooth interaction and group functioning. As I define them, conformity values emphasize self-restraint in everyday interaction, usually with close others. (obedient, self-discipline, politeness, honoring parents and elders) [loyal, responsible]

Tradition

Defining goal: respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides.
Groups everywhere develop practices, symbols, ideas, and beliefs that represent their shared experience and fate. These become sanctioned as valued group customs and traditions. They symbolize the group's solidarity, express its unique worth, and contribute to its survival (Durkheim, 1912/1954; Parsons, 1951). They often take the form of religious rites, beliefs, and norms of behavior. (respect for tradition, humble, devout, accepting my portion in life) [moderate, spiritual life]

Tradition and conformity values are especially close motivationally; they share the goal of subordinating the self to socially imposed expectations. They differ primarily in the objects to which one subordinates the self. Conformity entails subordination to persons with whom one frequently interacts—parents, teachers, and bosses. Tradition entails subordination to more abstract objects—religious and cultural customs and ideas. As a

corollary, conformity values exhort responsiveness to current, possibly changing expectations. Tradition values demand responsiveness to immutable expectations from the past.

Benevolence

Defining goal: preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (the 'in-group').

Benevolence values derive from the basic requirement for smooth group functioning (cf. Kluckhohn, 1951) and from the organismic need for affiliation (cf. Maslow, 1965). Most critical are relations within the family and other primary groups. Benevolence values emphasize voluntary concern for others' welfare. (helpful, honest, forgiving, responsible, loyal, true friendship, mature love) [sense of belonging, meaning in life, a spiritual life].

Benevolence and conformity values both promote cooperative and supportive social relations. However, benevolence values provide an internalized motivational base for such behavior. In contrast, conformity values promote cooperation in order to avoid negative outcomes for self. Both values may motivate the same helpful act, separately or together.

Universalism

Defining goal: understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of *all* people and for nature.

This contrasts with the in-group focus of benevolence values. Universalism values derive from survival needs of individuals and groups. But people do not recognize these needs until they encounter others beyond the extended primary group and until they become aware of the scarcity of natural resources. People may then realize that failure to accept others who are different and treat them justly will lead to life-threatening strife. They may also realize that failure to protect the natural environment will lead to the destruction of the resources on which life depends. Universalism combines two subtypes of concern—for the welfare of those in the larger society and world and for nature (broadminded, social justice, equality, world at peace, world of beauty, unity with nature, wisdom, protecting the environment)[inner harmony, a spiritual life]

An early version of the value theory (Schwartz, 1992) raised the possibility that spirituality might constitute another near-universal value. The defining goal of spiritual values is meaning, coherence, and inner harmony through transcending everyday reality. If finding ultimate meaning is a basic human need, then spirituality might be a distinct value found in all societies. The value survey therefore included possible markers for spirituality, gleaned from widely varied sources (a spiritual life, meaning in life, inner harmony, detachment, unity with nature, accepting my portion in life, devout). However, spirituality did not demonstrate a consistent meaning across cultures. In the absence of a consistent cross-cultural meaning, spirituality was dropped from the theory despite its potential importance in many societies.

The Structure of Value Relations

In addition to identifying ten basic values, the theory explicates the structure of dynamic relations among them. One basis of the value structure is the fact that actions in pursuit of any value have consequences that conflict with some values but are congruent with others. For example, pursuing achievement values typically conflicts with pursuing benevolence values. Seeking success for self tends to obstruct actions aimed at enhancing the welfare of others who need one's help. But pursuing both achievement and power values is usually compatible. Seeking personal success for oneself tends to strengthen and to be strengthened by actions aimed at enhancing one's own social position and authority over others. Another example: Pursuing novelty and change (stimulation values) is likely to undermine preserving time-honored customs (tradition values). In contrast, pursuing tradition values is congruent with pursuing conformity values. Both motivate actions of submission to external expectations.

Actions in pursuit of values have practical, psychological, and social consequences. Practically, choosing an action alternative that promotes one value (e.g., taking drugs in a cultic rite—stimulation) may literally contravene or violate a competing value (obeying the precepts of one's religion—tradition). The person choosing what to do may also sense that such alternative actions are psychologically dissonant. And others may impose social sanctions by pointing to practical and logical inconsistencies between an action and other values the person professes. Of course, people can and do pursue competing values, but not in a single act. Rather, they do so through different acts, at different times, and in different settings.

The circular structure in Figure 1 portrays the total pattern of relations of conflict and congruity among values. Tradition and conformity are located in a single wedge because, as noted above, they share the same broad motivational goal. Conformity is more toward the center and tradition toward the periphery. This signifies that tradition values conflict more strongly with the opposing values. The expectations linked to tradition values are more abstract and absolute than the interaction-based expectations of conformity values. They therefore demand a stronger, unequivocal rejection of opposing values.

Viewing values as organized along two bipolar dimensions lets us summarize the oppositions between competing values. As Figure 1 shows, one dimension contrasts *'openness to change'* and *'conservation'* values. This dimension captures the conflict between values that emphasize independence of thought, action, and feelings and readiness for change (self-direction, stimulation) and values that emphasize order, self-restriction, preservation of the past, and resistance to change (security, conformity, tradition). The second dimension contrasts *'self-enhancement'* and *'self-transcendence'* values. This dimension captures the conflict between values that emphasize concern for the welfare and interests of others (universalism, benevolence) and values that emphasize pursuit of one's own interests and relative success and dominance over others (power, achievement). Hedonism shares elements of both openness to change and self-enhancement.
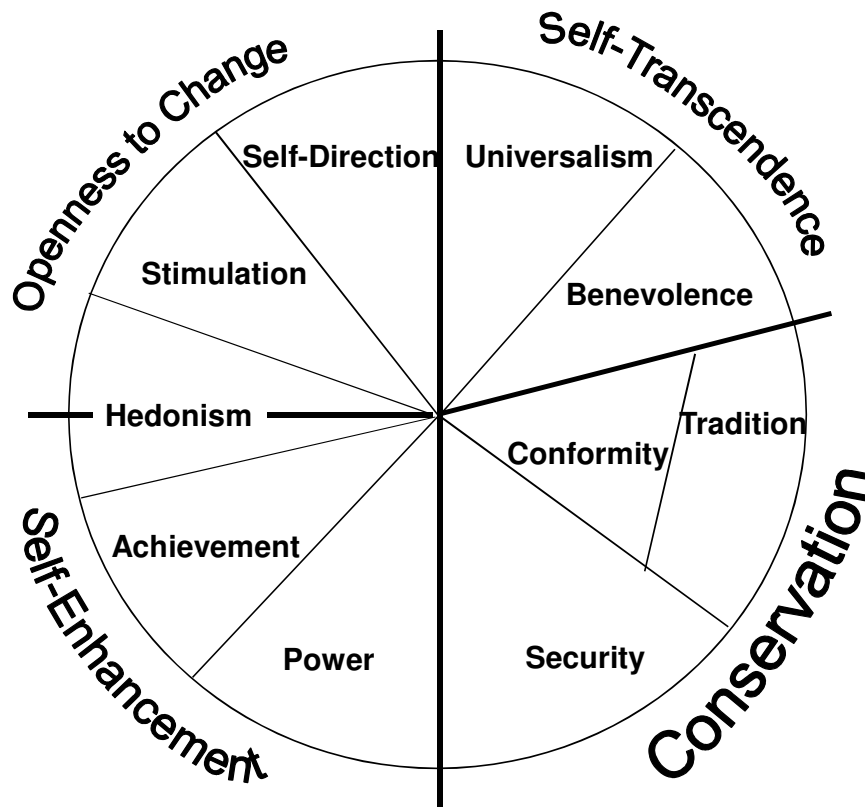
Figure 1. Theoretical model of relations among ten motivational types of value

Although the theory discriminates ten values, it postulates that, at a more basic level, values form a continuum of related motivations. This continuum gives rise to the circular structure. To clarify the nature of the continuum, I note the shared motivational emphases of adjacent values:

a) power and achievement--social superiority and esteem;
b) achievement and hedonism--self-centered satisfaction;
c) hedonism and stimulation--a desire for affectively pleasant arousal;
d) stimulation and self-direction--intrinsic interest in novelty and mastery;
e) self-direction and universalism--reliance upon one's own judgment and comfort with the diversity of existence;
f) universalism and benevolence--enhancement of others and transcendence of selfish interests;
g) benevolence and tradition--devotion to one's in-group;
h) benevolence and conformity--normative behavior that promotes close relationships;
i) conformity and tradition--subordination of self in favor of socially imposed expectations;

j) tradition and security--preserving existing social arrangements that give certainty to life;

k) conformity and security--protection of order and harmony in relations;

l) security and power--avoiding or overcoming threats by controlling relationships and resources.

In sum, the circular arrangement of the values represents a motivational continuum. The closer any two values in either direction around the circle, the more similar their underlying motivations; the more distant, the more antagonistic their motivations. The idea that values form a motivational continuum has a critical implication: Dividing the domain of value items into ten distinct values is an arbitrary convenience. It is reasonable to partition the value items into more or less fine-tuned distinct values according to the needs and objectives of one's analysis.[4] Conceiving values as organized in a circular motivational structure has an important implication for the relations of values to other variables. It implies that the whole set of ten values relates to any other variable (behavior, attitude, age, etc.) in an integrated manner.

Measuring Value Priorities

The Schwartz Value Survey

The first instrument developed to measure values based on the theory is now known as the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS; Schwartz, 1992, 2006a). The SVS presents two lists of value items. The first contains 30 items that describe potentially desirable end-states in noun form; the second contains 26 or 27 items that describe potentially desirable ways of acting in adjective form.[5] Each item expresses an aspect of the motivational goal of one value. An explanatory phrase in parentheses following the item further specifies its meaning. For example, 'EQUALITY (equal opportunity for all)' is a universalism item; 'PLEASURE (gratification of desires)' is a hedonism item.

Respondents rate the importance of each value item "as a guiding principle in MY life" on a 9-point scale labeled 7 (of supreme importance), 6 (very important), 5, 4 (unlabeled), 3 (important), 2, 1 (unlabeled), 0 (not important), -1 (opposed to my values). [6] People view most values as varying from mildly to very important. This nonsymmetrical scale is stretched at the upper end and condensed at the bottom in order to map the way people think about values, as revealed in pre-tests. The scale also enables respondents to

---

4   A recent refinement of the theory, partitions the same continuum into 19 more narrowly defined values that permit more precise explanation and prediction (Schwartz, et al., 2012).

5   This followed Rokeach's (1973) idea that ends values and means values function differently. My research suggests that this distinction has no substantive importance (Schwartz, 1992). One item in the 56-item SVS (1988) was dropped and two others added in the revised 57-item version (1994).

6   Schwartz (1994) explains the rational for preferring rating of value importance to ranking.

report opposition to values that they try to avoid expressing or promoting. This is especially necessary for cross-cultural studies.

The score for the importance of each value is the average rating given to items designated a priori as markers of that value. The number of items to measure each value ranges from three (hedonism) to eight (universalism), reflecting the conceptual breadth of the values. Only value items that have demonstrated near-equivalence of meaning across cultures in analyses using multi-dimensional scaling (SSA; Schwartz, 1992, 1994, 2006a) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA; Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004) are included in the indexes.

The Portrait Values Questionnaire

The Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) is an alternative to the SVS developed in order to measure the ten basic values in samples of children from age 11-14 and of persons not educated in Western schools that emphasize abstract, context-free thinking. It works equally well with adults in representative national samples. The PVQ also permitted assessing whether the values theory is valid independent of measurement method.[7]

The PVQ includes short verbal portraits of 40 different people, gender-matched with the respondent (Schwartz, 2006a; Schwartz, Melech, Lehmann, Burgess, & Harris, 2001). Each portrait describes a person's goals, aspirations, or wishes that point implicitly to the importance of a value. For example: "Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way" describes a person for whom self-direction values are important. "It is important to him to be rich. He wants to have a lot of money and expensive things" describes a person who cherishes power values.

For each portrait, respondents answer: "How much like you is this person? Responses range from 'very much like me' to 'not like me at all'. We infer respondents' own values from their self-reported similarity to people described implicitly in terms of particular values. Respondents are asked to compare the portrait to themselves rather than themselves to the portrait. Comparing other to self directs attention only to aspects of the other that are portrayed. So, the similarity judgment is also likely to focus on these value-relevant aspects.

The verbal portraits describe each person in terms of what is important to him or her. Thus, they capture the person's values without explicitly identifying values as the topic of investigation. The PVQ asks about similarity to someone with particular goals and aspirations (values) rather than similarity to someone with particular traits. The same term can refer to both a value and a trait (e.g., ambition, wisdom, obedience). However, people who value a goal do not necessarily exhibit the corresponding trait; nor do those who exhibit a trait necessarily value the corresponding goal. For example, people may value

---

[7] Both Brocke and Bilsky (2005, July) and Oishi, Schimmack, Diener, and Suh (1998) have subsequently developed paired comparison instruments based on the SVS to measure the ten basic values.

creativity as a guiding principle in life but not be creative. And some creative people may attribute little importance to creativity as a value that guides them.

The number of portraits for each value ranges from three (stimulation, hedonism, and power) to six (universalism), reflecting the conceptual breadth of the values. The score for the importance of each value is the average rating given to these items. All the value items have demonstrated near-equivalence of meaning across cultures in analyses using multi-dimensional scaling (Schwartz, 2006a). A shorter, 21-item version of the PVQ has been developed for use with representative national samples in large surveys when time is limited. Although reliability of measurement is compromised by the reduction in items, this instrument also demonstrates reasonable meaning equivalence across cultures and considerable predictive validity (Davidov, Schmidt, & Schwartz, 2008; Schwartz, 2006b).

Generating Value Priorities

Respondents differ in the way they use response scales. Some rate most abstract values very important as guiding principles (SVS) or most portraits very similar to themselves (PVQ). Others use the middle of the response scales, and still others rate most values unimportant or most portraits dissimilar to themselves. The scale should measure people's value *priorities*, the relative importance of the different values. This is because what affects behavior and attitudes is the tradeoff among relevant values, not the importance of any one value. Say, two people rate tradition values 4. Despite this same rating, tradition obviously has higher *priority* for a person who rates all other values lower than for one who rates all other values higher. To measure value priorities accurately, we must eliminate individual differences in use of the response scales. We do this by subtracting each person's mean response to all the value items from his or her response to each item. This converts the ratings into relative importance scores for each of the person's values—into value priorities.

Cross-Cultural Evidence for the Theory

Studies have assessed the theory with data from hundreds of samples in 82 countries around the world, using either the SVS or PVQ methods of measurement. The samples include highly diverse geographic, cultural, linguistic, religious, age, gender, and occupational groups, with representative national samples from 37 countries (Bilsky, Janik & Schwartz, 2011; Davidov et al., 2008; Schwartz, 2006b). In these analyses, the oppositions of self-transcendence to self-enhancement values and of openness to change to conservation values are virtually universally present. Moreover, each of the ten basic values is distinguished in at least 90% of samples. When a value is not distinguished, the items that measure it are mixed together with the items of a value that is adjacent to it in the value circle of Figure 1. These findings show that people in most cultures respond to ten types of values as distinct and that the broader value orientations captured by adjacent values are discriminated nearly universally. They strongly support the idea that human values form the motivational continuum postulated by the theory.

Roots of the Dynamic Structure of Value Relations

It is quite amazing that the structure of relations among values is common to all human societies we have studied. Why is this so? Thus far, we have suggested one dynamic principle that organizes the structure of values: congruence and conflict among the values that are implicated simultaneously in decisions. Figure 2 suggests additional principles.[8]
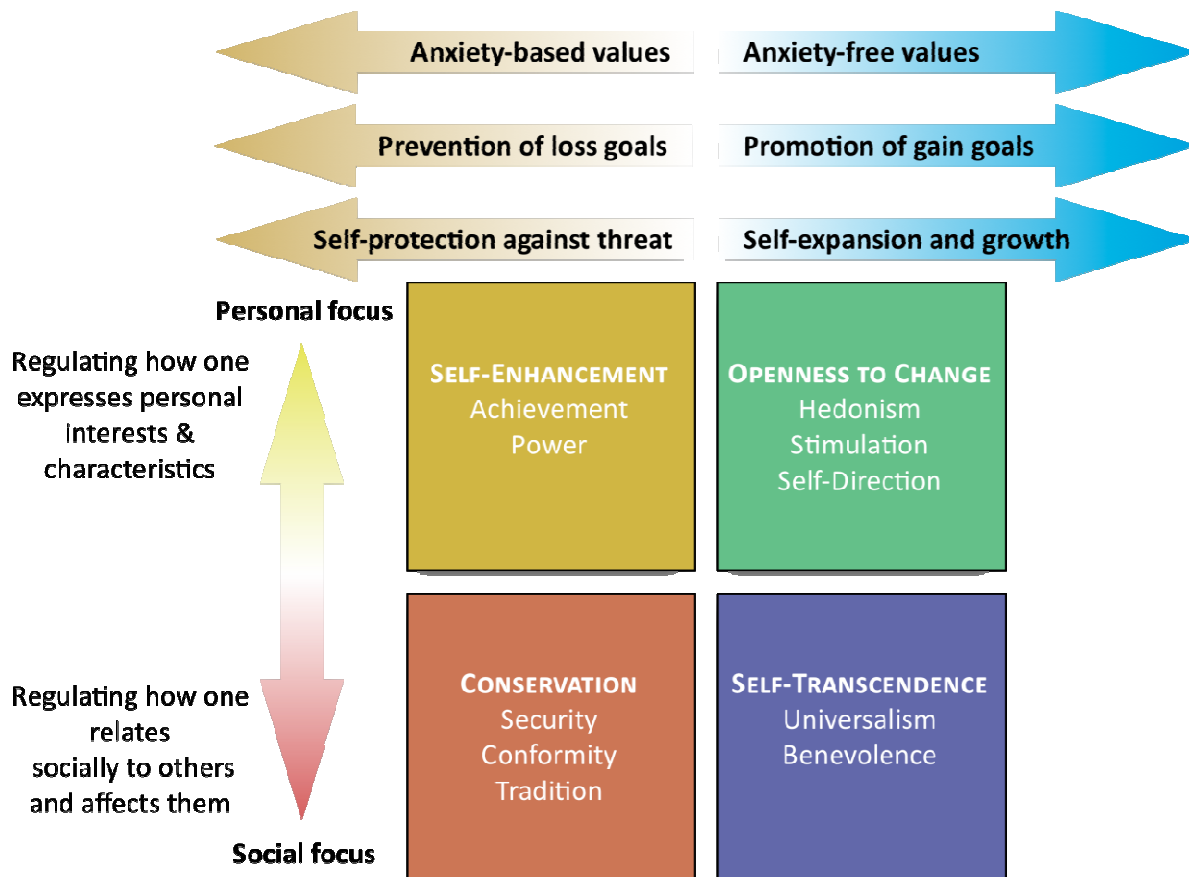
Adapted from: Schwartz, S. H. (2006). Les valeurs de base de la personne: Théorie, mesures et applications [Basic human values: Theory, measurement, and applications]. *Revue française de sociologie*, 42, 249-288.

Figure 2. Dynamic underpinnings of the universal value structure

A second principle is the interests that value attainment serves. Values in the top panel of Figure 2 (power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction) primarily regulate how one expresses personal interests and characteristics. Values in the bottom panel (benevolence, universalism, tradition, conformity, security) primarily regulate how

---

[8]   The value theory specifies the order of the 10 values. Figures 1 and 2 both show this order, but each orients the circle differently. Rotation of the value circle does not affect the meaning of the structure.

one relates socially to others and affects their interests. Figure 2 shows that security and universalism values are boundary values. They primarily concern others' interests, but their goals also regulate pursuit of own interests.

Relations of values to anxiety are a third organizing principle. Pursuit of values on the left in Figure 2 serves to cope with anxiety due to uncertainty in the social and physical world. These are self-protective values. People seek to avoid conflict (conformity) and to maintain the current order (tradition, security) or actively to control threat (power). Values on the right (hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence) express anxiety-free motivations. These are growth or self-expansive values. Achievement values do both: Meeting social standards successfully may control anxiety and it may affirm one's sense of competence. Drawing on the grounding of values in interests and in anxiety can help in predicting and understanding relations of values to various attitudes and behavior.

A Pan-Cultural Baseline of Value Priorities[9]

Individuals differ substantially in the importance they attribute to the ten values. Across societies, however, there is surprising consensus regarding the hierarchical order of the values. Across representative samples, using different instruments, the importance ranks for the ten values are quite similar. Benevolence, universalism, and self-direction values are most important. Power and stimulation values are least important. The pan-cultural hierarchy provides a baseline to which to compare the priorities in any sample. Such comparison is critical for identifying which, if any, of the value priorities in a sample are distinctively high or low. A sample may rank benevolence highest, for example, but compared with other samples the importance rating of this value may still be relatively low.

Why is there such a pan-cultural hierarchy of values? It probably derives from the adaptive functions of values in maintaining societies and from our common human nature (e.g., Campbell, 1975; Parsons, 1951; Schwartz & Bardi, 1997). Socializers and social control agents discourage values that clash with the smooth functioning of significant groups or the larger society. Values that clash with human nature are unlikely to be important. The basic social function of values is to motivate and control the behavior of group members (Parsons, 1951). Two mechanisms are critical. First, values serve as internalized guides for individuals; they relieve the group of the necessity for constant social control. Second, people invoke values to define particular behaviors as socially appropriate, to justify their demands on others, and to elicit desired behaviors. Socializers seek, consciously or not, to instill values that promote group survival and prosperity. To explain the pan-cultural value hierarchy, we must explain why particular values are viewed as more or less desirable across societies.[10]

---

[9] Schwartz and Bardi (2001) provide a detailed examination of this topic on which this section draws.

[10] This does not mean that the pan-cultural value hierarchy reflects individual tendencies to respond in a socially desirable manner to value surveys. The personality variable of social desirability does not correlate consistently with the importance individuals attribute to the values that are high in the pan-cultural hierarchy (Schwartz, Verkasalo, Antonovsky, & Sagiv, 1997).

Three demands of human nature and requirements of societal functioning are especially relevant: (1) Most important is to promote and preserve cooperative and supportive relations among primary group members. The critical focus of value transmission is to develop commitment to positive relations, identification with the group, and loyalty to its members. (2) Individuals must be motivated to invest time and effort to perform productive work, to solve problems that arise when working, and to generate new ideas and technical solutions. (3) It is socially functional to legitimize gratification of self-oriented needs and desires as long as this does not undermine group goals. Rejecting all such gratification would frustrate individuals and lead them to withhold their energies from the group and its tasks.

The high importance of benevolence values (ranked 1st) derives from the centrality of positive, cooperative social relations in the family, the main setting for initial and continuing value acquisition. Benevolence values provide the internalized motivational base for such relations. They are reinforced and modeled early and repeatedly. Universalism values (2nd) also contribute to positive social relations. They are functionally important primarily when group members must relate to those with whom they do not readily identify, in schools, work-places, etc. They may even threaten in-group solidarity during times of intergroup conflict. Therefore, universalism values are less important than benevolence values.

Security (4th) and conformity (5th) values also promote harmonious social relations. They do this by helping to avoid conflict and violations of group norms. But these values are usually acquired in response to demands and sanctions to avoid risks, control forbidden impulses, and restrict the self. This reduces their importance because it conflicts with gratifying self-oriented needs and desires. Moreover, the emphasis of these values on maintaining the status quo conflicts with innovation in finding solutions to group tasks. Acting on tradition values (overall 8th) can also contribute to group solidarity and thus to smooth group functioning and survival. But tradition values find little expression in the behavior that interaction partners have a vital interest in controlling. They largely concern commitment to abstract beliefs and symbols.

Pursuing power values (10th) may harm or exploit others and damage social relations. Still, they have some importance because power values help to motivate individuals to work for group interests. They also justify the hierarchical social arrangements in all societies.

Self-direction (3rd) values serve the second and third basic functions of values without undermining the first. They foster creativity, motivate innovation, and promote coping with challenges. Behavior based on these values is intrinsically motivated. It satisfies individual needs without harming others. Hence, it rarely threatens positive social relations. Interestingly, self-direction values are much less important and conformity values much more important in countries where the typical nuclear family is large (seven or more children). To maintain order, very large families need to enforce conforming behavior rather than cultivating each member's unique interests and abilities.

The moderate importance of achievement values (7th) may reflect a compromise among the bases of value importance. On the positive side, these values motivate individuals to invest in group tasks and legitimize self-enhancing behavior as long as it

contributes to group welfare. On the negative side, these values foster efforts to attain social approval that may disrupt harmonious social relations and interfere with group goal attainment.

The importance of hedonism (6th) and stimulation (9th) values derives from the requirement to legitimize inborn needs to attain pleasure and arousal. These values are probably more important than power values because, unlike power values, their pursuit does not necessarily threaten positive social relations.

How Values Relate to Attitudes, Beliefs, Traits and Norms

When trying to explain why individuals' behave as they do, people often refer to attitudes, beliefs, traits, or norms. A crucial way in which each of these concepts differs from values is that it varies on another scale, so it is measured differently. As described above, values vary on importance as guiding principles in life.

Attitudes are evaluations of objects as good or bad, desirable or undesirable. Attitudes can evaluate people, behaviors, events, or any object, whether specific (ice cream) or abstract (progress). They vary on a positive/negative scale. Values underlie our attitudes; they are the basis for our evaluations. We evaluate people, behaviors, events, etc. positively if they promote or protect attainment of the goals we value. We evaluate them negatively if they hinder or threaten attainment of these valued goals. If we value stimulation highly and attribute little importance to security values, for example, we are likely to have a positive attitude toward bungee jumping.

Beliefs are ideas about how true it is that things are related in particular ways. Examples of beliefs are "war *never solves* problems," "Africa *is larger than* Europe," and "psychologists *are* wise." Beliefs vary in how certain we are that they are true. General beliefs that people hold about how the world functions are called social axioms (Leung & Bond, 2004). Unlike values, beliefs refer to the subjective probability that a relationship it true, not to the importance of goals as a guiding principles in life.

Norms are standards or rules that tell members of a group or society how they should behave. Examples of norms are "children should be seen and not heard," "we should stand up when the national anthem is played." Norms vary on a scale of how much we agree or disagree that people should act in a specific way. Our values affect whether we accept or reject particular norms. Because norms prescribe behaviors with specific consequences, we are more or less inclined to accept them depending on whether these consequences are compatible or in conflict with our valued goals. More generally, because norms are social expectations, we are more or less inclined to accept them depending on how important conformity vs. self-direction values are to us.

Traits are tendencies to show consistent patterns of thought, feelings, and actions across time and situations. As noted above, the same term can refer to both a value and a trait (e.g., wisdom, obedience). However, people who exhibit a trait may not value the corresponding goal and those lacking a trait may value the corresponding goal highly. For example, a person may behave obediently yet not value obedience and behave foolishly

yet value wisdom highly. Traits vary in the frequency and intensity with which people exhibit them. They describe what people are like rather than what people consider important. People believe their values are desirable but may consider their traits positive or negative.

Conclusions

The individual level values theory has identified ten basic, motivationally distinct values that people in virtually all cultures implicitly recognize. The validity of this claim does not depend on the way we measure values. The ten basic values emerge whether people report their values explicitly (SVS) or whether we infer their values indirectly from their judgments of how much various other people are like them (PVQ). The values theory applies in populations around the world. Especially striking is the emergence of the same circular structure of relations among values across countries and measurement instruments. People everywhere experience conflict between pursuing openness to change values or conservation values. They also experience conflict between pursuing self-transcendence or self-enhancement values. Conflicts between specific values (e.g., power vs. universalism, tradition vs. hedonism) are also near-universal. I described several dynamic processes that may account for the observed circular structure. These processes may point the way toward a unifying theory of human motivation.

An astonishing finding of the cross-cultural research is the high level of consensus regarding the relative importance of the ten values across societies. In the vast majority of nations studied, benevolence, universalism, and self-direction values appear at the top of the hierarchy and power, tradition, and stimulation values appear at the bottom. This implies that the aspects of human nature and of social functioning that shape individual value priorities are widely shared across cultures. I presented the initial, functionalist explanation that has been offered for this phenomenon. It deserves much more analysis in depth.

Values are one important, especially central component of our self and personality, distinct from attitudes, beliefs, norms, and traits. Values are critical motivators of behaviors and attitudes. In another article, I will examine how we come to hold the values we do and, most importantly, how our value priorities influence our behavior and attitudes.

Relevant Links
http://www.humanvalues.eu/
https://elias.it.helsinki.fi/PSYKO/values.nsf

References

Allport, G. W. (1961). *Pattern and growth in personality*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84,* 191-215. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191.

Berlyne, D. E. (1960). *Conflict, arousal and curiosity.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Bilsky, W., Janik, M., & Schwartz, S. H. (2011). The structural organization of human values – Evidence from three rounds of the European Social Survey (ESS). *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 42,* 759-776. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022022110362757.

Brocke, B. & Bilsky, W. (2005, July). *The measurement of value preferences by paired comparisons.* Paper presented at the 1st European Association for Survey Research Conference, Barcelona, Spain.

Campbell, D. T. (1975). On the conflicts between biological and social evolution and between psychology and moral tradition*. American Psychologist, 30,* 1103-1126. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.30.12.1103.

Davidov, E., Schmidt, P., & Schwartz, S. H. (2008). Bringing values back in: The adequacy of the European Social Survey to measure values in 20 countries. *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 72, 4**20**-445. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfn035.

Deci, E. L. (1975). *Intrinsic motivation.* New York: Plenum.

Durkheim, E. (1897/1964). *Suicide.* Glencoe, Il.: Free Press.

Durkheim, E. (1912/1954). *The elementary forms of religious life.* Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Feather, N. T. (1995). Values, valences. and choice: The influence of values on the perceived attractiveness and choice of alternatives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68,* 1135-1151. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.68.6.1135.

Freud, S. (1933). *New introductory lectures in psychoanalysis.* New York: Norton.

Hitlin, S. & Piliavin, J. A. (2004). Values: Reviving a dormant concept. *Annual Review of Sociology, 30,* 359-393. http://dx.doi.org/annurev.soc.30.012703.110640.

Kluckhohn, C. (1951). Values and value-orientations in the theory of action: An exploration in definition and classification. In T. Parsons & E. Shils (Eds.), *Toward a general theory of action* (pp. 388-433). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kohn, M. L., & Schooler, C. (1983). *Work and personality.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Leung, K., & Bond, M. H. (2004). Social axioms: A model of social beliefs in multi-cultural perspective. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 36, pp. 119-197). San Diego, CA: Academic Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(04)36003-X.

Lonner, W. J. (1980). The search for psychological universals. In H. C. Triandis & W. W. Lambert (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology. Perspectives* (Vol. 1, pp. 143-204). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Maslow, A. H. (1965). *Eupsychian management.* Homewood, IL: Dorsey.

McClelland, D. C. (1961). *The achieving society.* Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.

Morris, C. W. (1956). *Varieties of human value.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Oishi, S., Schimmack, U., Diener, E., & Suh, E. (1998). The measurement of values and individualism-collectivism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 24,* 1177-1189. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/01461672982411005.

Parsons, T. (1951). *The social system.* Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values.* New York: Free Press.

Rohan, M. J. (2000). A rose by any name? The values construct. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 4,* 255-277. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0403_4.

Sagiv, L., & Schwartz, S. H. (2000). Value priorities and subjective well-being: Direct relations and congruity effects. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 30,* 177-198. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0992(200003/04)30:2<177::AID-EJSP982>3.0.CO;2-Z.

Schwartz, S. H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theory and empirical tests in 20 countries. In M. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 25, pp. 1-65). New York: Academic Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60281-6

Schwartz, S. H. (1994). Are there universal aspects in the content and structure of values? *Journal of Social Issues, 50,* 19-45. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1994.tb01196.x.

Schwartz, S. H. (1996). Value priorities and behavior: Applying a theory of integrated value systems. In C. Seligman, J. M. Olson, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *The psychology of values: The Ontario Symposium* (Vol. 8, pp. 1-24). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Schwartz, S. H. (2006a). Les valeurs de base de la personne: Théorie, mesures et applications [Basic human values: Theory, measurement, and applications]. *Revue Française de Sociologie, 47,* 249-288.

Schwartz, S. H. (2006b). Value orientations: Measurement, antecedents and consequences across nations. In Jowell, R., Roberts, C., Fitzgerald, R. & Eva, G. (Eds.) *Measuring attitudes cross-nationally - lessons from the European Social Survey* (pp.169-203)*.* London, UK: Sage.

Schwartz, S. H., & Bardi, A. (1997). Influences of adaptation to communist rule on value priorities in Eastern Europe. *Political Psychology*, *18*, 385-410. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0162-895X.00062.

Schwartz, S. H., & Boehnke, K. (2004). Evaluating the structure of human values with confirmatory factor analysis. *Journal of Research in Personality, 38*, 230-255. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566(03)00069-2.

Schwartz, S. H., Cieciuch, J., Vecchione, M., Davidov, E., Fischer, R., Beierlein, C., Ramos, A., Verkasalo, M., Lönnqvist, J.-E., Demirutku, K., Dirilen-Gumus, O., & Konty, M. (2012). Refining the theory of basic individual values. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 103,* 663-688. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0029393.

Schwartz, S. H., Melech, G., Lehmann, A., Burgess, S., & Harris, M. (2001). Extending the cross-cultural validity of the theory of basic human values with a different method of measurement. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 32,* 519-542. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022022101032005001.

Schwartz, S. H., Verkasalo, M., Antonovsky, A., & Sagiv, L. (1997). Value priorities and social desirability: Much substance, some style. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 36,* 3-18. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.1997.tb01115.x.

Smith, P. B., & Schwartz, S. H. (1997). Values. In J. W. Berry, M. H. Segall & C. Kagitcibasi (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology,* (2nd ed., Vol. 3, pp. 77-118). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Weber, M. (1905/1958). *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.* New York: Scribner's.

Williams, R. M., Jr. (1968). Values. In E. Sills (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social sciences* (pp. 283-287). New York: Macmillan.

About the Author

Shalom H. Schwartz is Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Scientific Supervisor of the Socio-Cultural Laboratory at the National Research University—Higher School of Economics in Moscow. He obtained his PhD in social psychology from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and taught at the University of Wisconsin until he moved to Israel in 1979. He is past president of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology and recipient of the Israel Prize in psychology. He is the author of the human values scale included in the biennial surveys of representative national samples of the European Social Survey. He began to search for whether there was a meaningful, perhaps universal, set of basic values in 1982, never imagining where this would lead. He has since collaborated with some 150 researchers who have applied his theories and methods for measuring values in over 80 countries. Publications on his values research appear in international journals in social psychology, cross-cultural psychology, developmental psychology, political psychology, sociology, education, law, and economics.

Discussion Questions

(1) Are there any values important to you that are not part of the basic ten? Try to place them in one of the ten by considering the motivation they express.

(2) Hedonism is becoming more important in most Western societies. How is this likely to affect the importance of the other values around the circle? Which values are likely to become more important along with hedonism and which ones less important?

(3) Considering how much cultures differ, how can it be that people in almost all societies organize their values into the same circular structure?

(4) How are war, economic depression, or personal crises, likely to affect our value priorities? Why?

(5) When people talk about values, they usually mean 'moral' values. Which values are 'moral' and which are not? What makes a value 'moral'?

(6) People often behave in ways that seem to contradict their values. How can the value circle help to explain this?