

**Value-Dimensions in America**

Report to the National Election Studies Board

Based on the 2006 ANES Pilot Study

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## **Value-Dimensions in America**

The topic of values is undergoing something of a resurgence in the social sciences (see Hitlin and Piliavin 2003; Rohan 2000 for overviews). The media has framed recent political events as having been influenced by “values voters”, suggesting that academic interest in values mirrors popular notions. We offered one of multiple proposals to the ANES board to include a measure of values in the 2006 pilot study. Other contributors have already offered analyses of the value-items, treated as independent entities (Schwartz 2007). In this report, we augment the discussion of the values measures in the 2006 ANES pilot study in two ways. First, we compare the items drawn from the Portrait Values Questionnaire with the alternative options that were pilot-tested, coming down strongly in support of using the PVQ items. Second, we analyze the PVQ items along two factor-derived dimensions to suggest alternative uses of these measures, uses that allow comparisons of potential ANES data with other cross-national surveys like the World Values Surveys (WVS).

### **PVQ Measures vs. Alternative Wording**

Other reports (Schwartz 2007) detail in-depth the characteristics of the PVQ and its precursor, the Schwartz Value Survey. The PVQ was designed to be accessible for populations for whom the original Schwartz Value Survey items might have been too abstract (see Schwartz et al., 2001 for a design overview). Initially, the wording of the Schwartz items (“How much like you is this person?”) might appear too distal – too focused on abstract others -- to get a proper measure of an individual’s values. We assume this was the motivation for piloting questions asking about respondents’ own

values. However, Schwartz et al., (2001) were concerned that asking respondents directly about their values might lead them to focus too much on other aspects of the self, and not enough on commonalities across people in terms of important values. By asking about another person, the PVQ avoids biasing respondents' answers through a possible conflation of values with other self-processes.

Our preliminary analyses support their initial decision not to ask respondents directly about themselves. In the 2006 ANES pilot, respondents were randomly asked one of two sets of values-items; an abbreviated version of the PVQ and a similar set of items asking individuals directly about the same PVQ values.

To compare these two instruments, we decided to look at second-order factors derived through confirmatory factor analyses for each instrument. The Schwartz approach to values holds that they are arrayed on two dimensions (see Figure 1). Given the fact that adjacent value-types represent similar value-orientations, we expected two dimensions to emerge, roughly paralleling the self-oriented (self-enhancement/openness to change) and other-oriented/stability (self-transcendence/conservation) value areas of the Schwartz model (see also Hitlin 2006). As we discuss below, this two-factor interpretation of the PVQ allows us to situate the empirical study of values within another important literature, Inglehart and colleagues' treatment (Baker 2005; Inglehart and Baker 2000; Inglehart and Wetzel 2005; Inglehart 2006).

The scree plot for the PVQ questions indicates that there are two underlying concepts that map on to the expected factors. The scree plot for the pilot-tested value questions however shows three underlying concepts. Without a good theoretical basis for

utilizing a three-factor model, we prefer the PVQ. We cannot determine in a pilot study what the referents were for respondents, but likely when thinking of their own values they were also cognitively accessing other self-relevant aspects that influence their responses. We suggest the committee consider employing the validated PVQ instrument.

### **PVQ Measures: Two Important Dimensions**

The ANES Pilot study used 10 items from the PVQ designed to tap into the ten cross-cultural values in the Schwartz-scheme (see Figure 1). Each of these items can be treated as a separate indicator of a different value-orientation, though we know that single-item measures are inherently problematic. Rather, for the reasons hinted at above, we treat the 10-item instrument as indicative of one of the most important facets of the Schwartz-approach (1992, 1994), the dimensional nature of the cross-national array of human values.

Preliminary analyses of the 10 PVQ items used in the ANES pilot suggest that success in discriminating these two separate factors: one comprises the ‘openness to change’/‘self-enhancement’ dimension, the other captures the ‘conservation’ quadrant along with the adjacent ‘benevolence’ value. The item for *universalism*, which is situated between these two factors, loads equally well on both factors (See Table 1). We dropped it from our construction of second-order values due to this lack of discrimination. We suggest that future versions of the ANES add at least one more item to help discern how *universalism* operates within this sample.

In addition to mapping onto the body of literature in the Schwartz-tradition, a closer examination of these two factors suggests important parallels with the wider literature on values. For simplicity's sake, we term the first factor (comprised of values *stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, self-direction*) Self-Experience values, and the second factor (*security, tradition, conformity, benevolence*) Social-Order values. The first dimension comprises individuals who are concerned about self-oriented issues, their success in the world, their pleasures, and their relative autonomy and standing. They are not selfish, but view the world through the lens of first-person concerns, what Inglehart and Wetzel (2005) suggest are self-expression values. They argue that global patterns of industrialization are necessarily leading to the rise of these sorts of values around the world, and they link self-expression values with the development and continuation of democracy (see also Inglehart and Baker 2000).

The second dimension groups people primarily concerned with welfare and stability of the wider social world, captured in notions of benevolence (care for known others) as well as the grouping of security and tradition values. Such people value a predictable world in which individuals are other-regarding. Using the World Values Survey (WVS), Inglehart (2006), Baker (2005), and colleagues report a similar dimension found in surveys around the world, what they term a secular-tradition values dimension.

The WVS has led to a robust body of theory and research, strikingly so given the limited nature of their measures. The constraints of sampling populations around the globe are immense, so there is ample justification for their use of dozens of binary-items to measure values. However, as we learn from the Schwartz tradition, the WVS “yes or no” measures do a poor job of conceptualizing the multifaceted, variable, and generally-

positive valence of human values. WVS researchers report strong cross-national support for their value-dimensions, even using these truncated measures.

The overlap between these two traditions, represented in the two-factor utilization of the ANES pilot PVQ instrument, provides significant face validity for their inclusion in future surveys. This is especially true given the inherent advantage of the PVQ measures' larger response categories (6 compared to 2 in the WVS measures), allowing for more sensitive discrimination between peoples' values. The WVS runs the risk of forcing respondents into binary categories, collapsing meaningful variation in possible responses that contributes to its empirical support for a theory based on binaries. The extra level of abstraction for the PVQ is also a benefit, as it avoids problematic issue-terms ('abortion', 'moral values') that might shoehorn respondents into employing unreflective cognitive categories when selecting responses. One might value *self-direction* in general, just not for an issue like abortion, but that more global orientation would be represented differently in the two approaches. The WVS measures involve many items that are properly considered to be attitudes, including a number that directly tap into religious and spiritual beliefs. An advantage of the PVQ is its level of abstraction; comparisons can be made between religious groups with values-measures that have not, themselves, tapped directly into religious-issues.

That said, the ANES pilot items generally support – with added levels of detail – the Inglehart-thesis that there are two dimensions of human values in play in societies; secular/traditional and self-expressive/survival dimensions. With respect to the American case, this merging of theoretical approaches offered in utilizing the PVQ in the ANES offers a wonderful opportunity for expanding on studies that employ WVS data (e.g.,

Baker 2005; Nevitte and Cochrane 2006), that hold America is exceptional in its pairing of self-oriented values with traditional values. However, the measures they use presuppose the relationship of specific items ('poverty', 'women's rights') with global values. The ANES would allow scholars to properly examine the relationships between values, attitudes, and political positions in novel – and empirically valid – ways.

Additionally, researchers could begin to explore other 'popular' notions of the distribution of values in America. The conventional wisdom is that the country is divided on such values, but empirically this may not be the case if values are properly measured. Evidence suggests that the American public is not as divided on cultural issues as popular media suggests (Dimaggio et al., 1996; Mouw and Sobel 2001; Evans 2003), and it would be valuable to know if this relative homogenization extends to their core values.

We offer some preliminary correlations to suggest the utility of the PVQ measures as indicators of two separate values-dimensions (see Table 2). We find significant, expected relationships between Self-Expression values and gender, with males scoring higher on these items (that include *achievement* and *power*), and women advocating significantly lower levels of this dimension. Initially, we expected that this value dimension would correlate with two other items concerning how much the respondent liked and disliked unpredictable situations. No significant relationship was found, though we suggest that the questions' use of "unpredictability" – which initially appears to be about perceptions of autonomy, a key aspect of this value dimension – actually connoted a lack of autonomy. Had the items been more about perceived personal control in the presence of novel – rather than unpredictable – situations, perhaps we would find the expected relationship.

The second dimension, what we refer to as Social –Order values (which conceptually overlap with the traditional pole of the secular/traditional WVS dimension) demonstrates significant relationships with some expected measures, as well. High scores on this dimension – who consider values such as *tradition* and *security* to be highly important – are significantly correlated with ‘more guidance provided by religion’ and, as we might expect given how party labels are realigning (see Baker 2005), more likely to report being republican (see Table 2). Men are less likely to advocate these values.

Slightly surprisingly, these values are uncorrelated with measures of optimism and social trust, though the pilot study occurred at a time of remarkable pessimism in the nation. Typically, we would expect people who are highly invested in the current social order to express more optimism, though the relationships would be mediated by individual and social characteristics that we are unable to properly explore with this small of a sample.

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

Other reports (Schwartz 2007) go into great detail about the performance of individual PVQ value items on the 2006 ANES pilot study. We do not want to reinvent the wheel, so we offer a report suggestive of a different empirical approach toward utilizing the PVQ items. We do so in the service of advocating for their inclusion in the next rounds of the ANES. Based on these preliminary results, we make the following three suggestions:

- 1) Use the PVQ items rather than the piloted-values items.
- 2) Add more values-items to the 10-item PVQ.

This would gain statistical power for discriminating among more than two value-factors (as the Schwartz-model originally was intended to do) and gain better reliability for each value. The 10 current items do help gather meaningful responses from American participants, and thus are themselves useful for understanding the relationships between structural variables, social psychological orientations, and attitudinal/voting outcomes. Yet, with very little cost (6-8 items), researchers would gain much in explanatory power. With the exception of the ‘security/tradition/conformity’ quadrant, each other value would be improved by adding an additional item that taps into the underlying value.

- 3) At a minimum, include one more item tapping into ‘universalism’.

Research suggests that ‘universalism’ is an important value for discriminating among different ways of viewing social situations and political attitudes, and the one item included in the pilot study fails to discriminate between the two factors discussed here.

Even if the 10-item PVQ scale remains, we suggest that it is useful in adding statistical depth to a robust set of findings about value-dimensions in societies around the world. Inclusion in future rounds of the ANES provides the opportunity to meaningfully address popular notions of value-voters, and whether or not individuals disagree at the most abstract levels, or at more concrete, policy levels.

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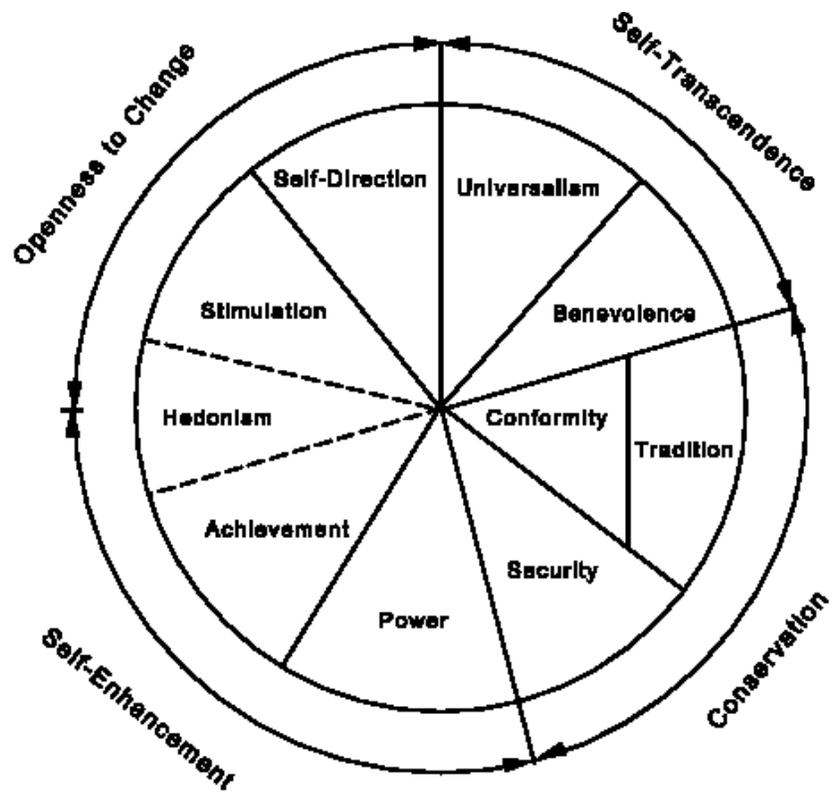


Figure 1. Schwartz Theoretical Model of Relations Among Motivational Types of Values

**Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>**

	Component	
	1	2
MOD7_A1 How like R is one who believes everyone should be treated equally	.305	.287
MOD7_A2 How much like R is one who wants to live in secure surroundings	.466E-03	.673
MOD7_A3 How much like R is person who looks for adventure and risks	.753	-.215
MOD7_A4 How much like R is person who follows traditions	.103	.710
MOD7_A5 How much like R is person who seeks out fun	.696	-1.28E-02
MOD7_A6 How like R is one who believes people should do as told	.320E-02	.728
MOD7_A7 How much like R is one who thinks it important to be successful	.630	.243
MOD7_A8 How much like R is one who believes it important to help others	.226	.530
MOD7_A9 How much like R is one who believes it important to be in charge	.460	.109
MOD7_A10 How much like R is one who wants to make own decisions	.498	.119

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Quartimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

**Component Transformation Matrix**

Component	1	2
1	.742	.670
2	.670	-.742

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Quartimax with Kaiser Normalization.

**Table 1: Rotated Factors from 2006 ANES Pilot Study of 10 PVQ items**

Table 2: Significant Correlations of Second-Order PVQ Factors and Related ANES Measures

	Self Experience	Social Order
Gender	.123*	-.211**
Dislike Unpredictable Situations		.175*
How often attends religious services		.290*
Republican or Democrat		.190*

Note: \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01