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## **Basic values and attitudes toward foreign and domestic policies in Germany**

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## **Abstract**

This paper addresses the role of basic values in shaping attitudes toward domestic and foreign policy issues in the German public. Building on previous research, it argues that Schwartz's system of basic values could be powerful in shaping attitudes toward policies from various domains. Basic values might thus give coherence to political belief systems across policy domains. Moreover, it derives the hypothesis that basic values should be more powerful in affecting issue attitudes among political sophisticates than among political novices. These expectations are examined using data from a telephone survey conducted in Germany in 2009. The evidence shows that, by and large, basic values are associated with policy attitudes as predicted by Schwartz's theory. Though basic values are quite powerful in shaping attitudes toward new politics issues, they exhibit only minimal effects on attitudes toward economic and foreign policy. Accordingly, basic values are not effective in giving coherence to political attitudes across policy domains. The evidence also suggests that political sophistication does not increase effects of values on policy attitudes across the board. The paper concludes by summing up the findings and discussing implications and suggestions for future research.

## **Introduction**

Values are central concepts in the study of public opinion and political behavior (e.g., Rokeach 1973; Zaller 1992; Knutsen 1995; Feldman 2003). They are conceptualized as beliefs about desirable states that orient people to the world in which they live (Marini 2000; Hitlin/Pilavin 2004). Values thus serve as criteria for evaluating political objects and as guiding principles for political action (Schwartz/Bilsky 1987; Hitlin/Pilavin 2004). In this vein, Inglehart (1977, 1990), for example, argued that Western democracies underwent a cultural shift resulting in fundamental changes in politics involving public policies, party systems, and political institutions. What is more, values are conceptualized as abstract beliefs that transcend specific situations. They may thus serve as “a sort of glue to bind together many more specific attitudes and beliefs” (Converse 1964: 211). Put differently, values might lend structure and coherence to political belief systems.

Previous research has pointed to this potential and has studied the role of values in shaping political attitudes. In fact, a host of studies has addressed linkages between values and more specific attitudes from diverse policy domains. Hurwitz/Peffley (1987), for example, showed that domain-specific values like ‘ethnocentrism’ and ‘morality of war’ go a considerable way in structuring foreign policy postures and attitudes toward specific foreign policy issues. By showing that values drive foreign policy attitudes, however, scholars cannot establish that these values also shape attitudes toward policies in the domestic domain. Thus, single-domain analyses do not suffice to demonstrate that values serve as organizing ideas across policy domains.

At the same time, scholars argued that there are fundamental values that apply to both foreign and domestic policies. In this vein, Chittick (2006) suggested “security”, “prosperity”, and “community” as common sources of foreign and domestic policy attitudes. Other scholars argued that two basic values organize policy attitudes. Rathbun (2007) proposed

“community” and “hierarchy” while Lakoff (2008) employed the concepts “empathy” and “authority”. These conceptions, like other models of overarching values, however, have not yet been tested rigorously in terms of constraint on policy attitudes. So, we do not know whether political belief systems of ordinary citizens are organized across policy domains by fundamental values. Yet, some facts suggest that there are values that bind together political attitudes of ordinary citizens. In belief systems of political elites attitudes toward foreign and domestic issues appear to be closely linked (e.g., Holsti/Rosenau 1996; Murray et al. 1999; Rathbun 2007). Furthermore, in party programs statements about foreign policy issues appear to be aligned along similar dimensions as statements about domestic policies (e.g., Budge et al. 2001). Since elite cues are an important source of attitudinal constraint of ordinary citizens (e.g., Converse 1964; Sniderman 2000; Sniderman/Bullock 2004), these findings suggest that in mass publics, as among elites, attitudes toward foreign policies might be linked to domestic policy opinions and might be structured by the same basic values. At the same time, it is well-known that ordinary citizens suffer from a lack of political sophistication (e.g., Delli Carpini/Keeter 1996). It thus cannot be taken for granted that all voters learn from elite cues what attitudes go with what values. Put differently, it is warranted to explore the role of values in constraining policy attitudes across policy domains empirically.

A particularly promising candidate to lend structure to policy attitudes of ordinary citizens is Shalom Schwartz’s value system because it is designed to exhaustively capture basic values and to apply universally. At the same time, to my knowledge, it has not yet been studied whether Schwartz’s basic values give structure to policy attitudes from different domains. This paper thus aims at examining whether Schwartz’s value system has the capacity to lend coherence to political attitudes across policy domains. In the remainder of this paper, Schwartz’s conception of basic values will be described and hypotheses about effects of values on policy attitudes will be proposed. Using data from a telephone survey, these hypotheses will be tested empirically. The analysis shows that basic human values affect

policy postures and attitudes toward specific attitudes. The role of basic values, however, varies considerably across policy domains. The paper concludes by summing up the findings and discussing implications.

## **Theory and Hypotheses**

In a series of articles, Shalom Schwartz proposed his conception of broad basic values (e.g., Schwartz 1992, 1994a, b, 2006; Schwartz/Sagiv 1995). He argues that basic values derive from three universal requirements of human existence, including biological needs of individuals, requirements of coordinated social interaction, and survival and welfare needs of groups. These basic requirements are then cognitively represented as specific values, so that individuals can communicate them. Building on these assumptions, Schwartz identifies ten types of values with distinct motivational bases. These values are: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security (see Table 1).

Schwartz goes on by arguing that pursuing values leads to social and psychological conflicts between values. These conflicts, in turn, lend structure to an individual's value system. Schwartz proposes a universal structure of the ten broad values. Accordingly, they are arranged in a circumplex structure. In this structure, proximity indicates similarity of values, whereas opposing values are assumed to conflict (Figure 1).

### **Table 1: Definitions of Ten Basic Values**

*Security*: safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self.

*Conformity*: restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.

*Tradition*: respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self.

*Benevolence*: preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact.

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

*Self-direction*: independent thought and action – choosing, creating, exploring.

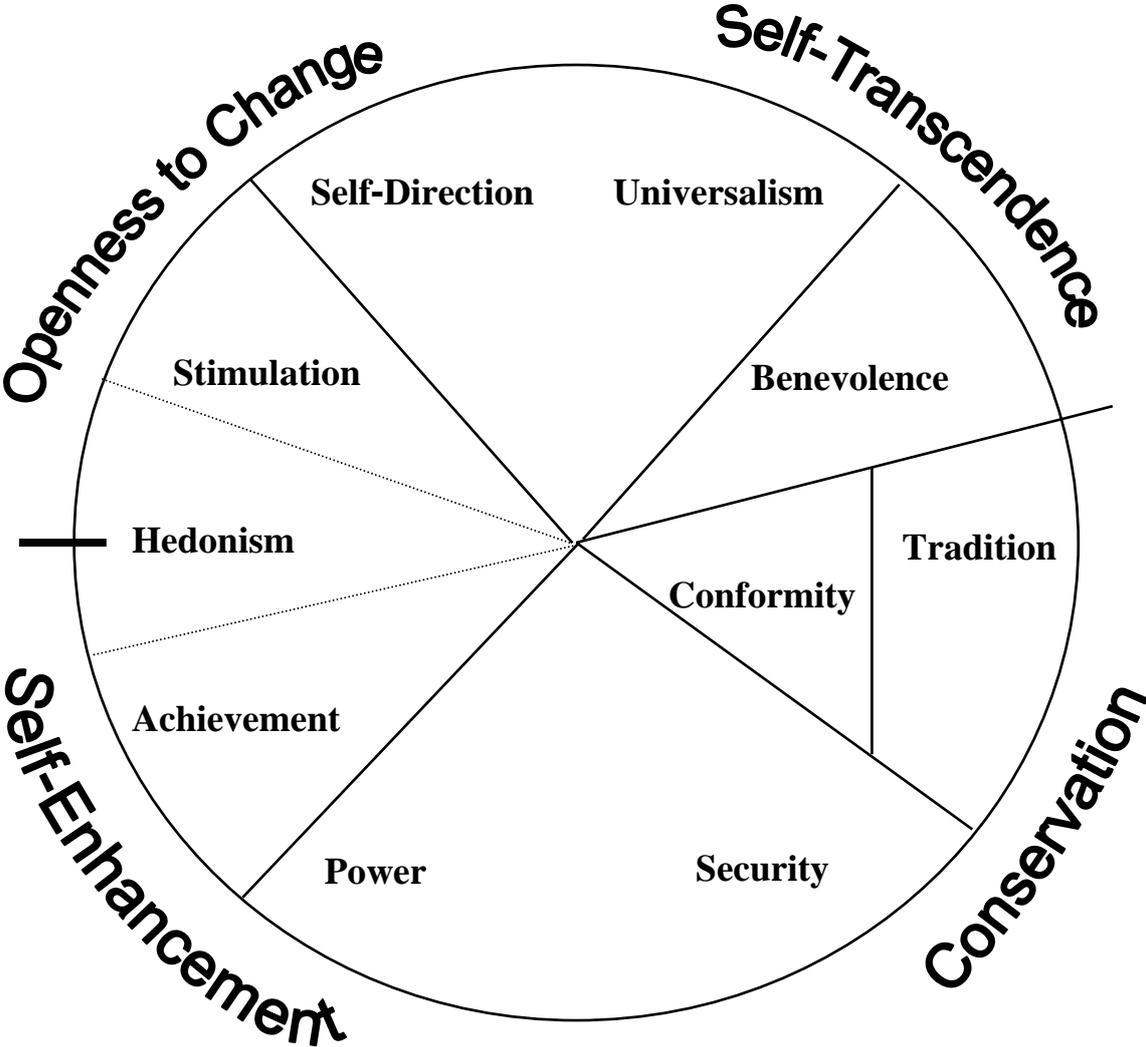
*Stimulation*: excitement, novelty, and challenge in life.

*Hedonism*: pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself.

*Achievement*: personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.

*Power*: social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.

**Figure 1: The motivational continuum of ten basic values, four higher-order values, and two basic dimensions**



In this circular structure, Schwartz proposes two basic conflict dimensions. The poles of these dimensions are higher-order value types including two or more of the ten values. One dimension opposes openness to change and conservation. The openness-to-change higher-order type combines values emphasizing independence of thought and action and support for change (self-direction, stimulation). By contrast, conservation values call for preservation of traditional practices, protection of stability, and submissive self-restriction (security, conformity, and tradition). The second dimension is defined by a conflict between self-enhancement and self-transcendence. The former values emphasize one's own success and dominance over others (power and achievement), while the latter indicate acceptance of others as equals and concern for their welfare (universalism and benevolence). According to Schwartz, hedonism belongs to both the self-enhancement and the openness-to-change pole.

Schwartz's system of basic values has been tested using data from samples from diverse countries and cultures (e.g., Schwartz 1992, 1994a, 2006; Schwartz et al. 2001). Schwartz and Sagiv (1995), for example, utilized data from 40 countries in different parts of the globe that generally supported the theoretically derived circular structure. Unfortunately, Schwartz and his colleagues heavily drew on data gathered from convenience samples, i.e. primarily teachers and students, rather than random samples. In recent years, however, several surveys of random samples included Schwartz's items allowing to test whether the structure can be generalized to the public as a whole. Analyses yielded mixed results as they showed that the evidence does not support the notion of ten distinct value types. At the same time, the values that are unified in the voters' minds are those that are adjacent in the theoretical circular structure. It thus appears to be warranted to conclude that the data do not violate the motivational assumptions underlying the circular structure of basic values (Schwartz/Boehnke 2004; Iser/Schmidt 2005; Schwartz 2007; Schmidt et al. 2007; Davidov 2008; Davidov et al. 2008b).

The two fundamental dimensions of value conflict, according to Schwartz (1994b), resemble quite closely dimensions well-known from the study of political attitudes. Accordingly, the self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence dimension is similar to “economic egalitarianism”. This dimension revolves around the issue of whether government should redistribute resources to create more equality or “protect citizens’ ability to retain the wealth they generate in order to foster economic growth and efficiency” (Schwartz 1994b: 40). The conservation vs. openness-to-change dimension resembles the dimension of “classic liberalism”. This dimension captures the conflict between “protecting the social status quo by controlling deviance from within or enemies from without” (Schwartz 1994b: 39) and caring for civil rights and individual freedoms. Since these two dimensions play a key role in shaping political controversy and political attitudes in many countries (e.g., Kitschelt 1994; Benoit/Laver 2007), Schwartz’s system of basic values appears to be a promising candidate to lend structure to political belief systems. Moreover, Schwartz (1994b) includes a foreign policy component in the conservation vs. openness dimension, so that his conception might even be capable of shaping attitudes toward issues from this domain. Basic values might thus be common sources of domestic and foreign policy attitudes.

At the same time, Schwartz’s two-dimensional model differs considerably from Chittick’s (2006) three-component model as well as from the conception Rathbun (2007) proposed to account for attitudes toward domestic and foreign policy attitudes. Whereas Rathbun (2007) combines economic, social, and political equality in a single dimension and opposes it to hierarchy, Schwartz proposes separate dimensions for economic and political equality. Furthermore, he opposes economic inequality to efficiency and political freedom to the status quo, though change does not by necessity imply more individual freedom. Given these and additional conceptual differences, it is an empirical question whether Schwartz’s conception of basic values is capable of organizing political attitudes across policy domains.

Prior research has demonstrated that Schwartz's ten values types have a considerable impact on political attitudes and political behavior. Barnea/Schwartz (1998) showed that values significantly predicted vote choice in the 1988 Israel election. Barnea (2003) demonstrated similar effects across 14 nations. Likewise, Caprara et al. (2006) showed that in the 2001 Italian election values discriminated between voters of center-left and center-right parties. As refers to political attitudes, Schwartz (1994a) found that basic values affect voters' attitudes toward immigration in 15 Western European countries. The findings of a recent study in 19 European countries by Davidov et al. (2008) resembled these results. In particular, self-transcendence has a positive effect on support for immigration, whereas conservation exhibits a negative effect. Moreover, Grunert/Juhl (1995) and Schultz/Zelezny (1999) demonstrated that basic values have an impact on attitudes toward environmental protection. Spini and Doise (1998) showed that basic values affect involvement in human rights, while Cohrs et al. (2005) provided evidence for effects of values on attitudes toward war. Finally, Burroughs and Rindfleisch (2002) found a relationship between basic values and materialism.

These studies are valuable contributions as they demonstrate that basic values affect political attitudes and behavior. At the same time, they focus on specific behavior and attitudes toward a limited number of policy measures.<sup>1</sup> Though they demonstrate that basic values have an impact on political attitudes they cannot address the hypothesis whether basic values give coherence to political attitudes across policy domains. Examining this potential role of basic values requires analyzing the effect of values on attitudes from different policy domains.

In this paper, I address this issue by exploring the role of basic values in shaping policy-related attitudes from three different policy domains in the German public. The analysis deals with attitudes toward the socio-economic dimension of domestic politics which for a long was considered the most important dimension of political controversy. On this dimension,

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<sup>1</sup> Several findings could be, to some extent, due to similarities in indicators of independent and dependent variables. For example, indicators of materialism resemble indicators of power values. Likewise, Schwartz's measures of universalism include several items tapping environmental protection; accordingly, effects of basic values on attitudes toward environmental protection may come as no surprise.

economic laissez-faire is opposed to government intervention into the economy. In more recent decades, the so-called new politics dimension attracted scholarly attention revolving around social issues including acceptance of new life styles, immigration, and environmental protection. Finally, the foreign policy domain includes several issues referring, inter alia, to international cooperation and the use of military force.

In each policy domain, attitudes at two levels of abstraction are distinguished (e.g., Hurwitz/Peffley 1987). At the lower end of the “ladder” of abstraction, attitudes toward specific policy proposals are located. These opinions are distinct from general postures, or policy-specific predispositions. The latter attitudes are conceptualized as more general and more stable than the former. Policy predispositions are conceptually less distant to personal values than issue attitudes. For voters it will thus be considerably easier to link basic values to general postures rather than to opinions about specific issues. Accordingly, basic human values are anticipated to be more powerful in affecting general postures than specific policy attitudes.

Proposing hypotheses on the specific effects of values on policy-related attitudes requires taking a closer look at the value dimensions and their substantive fit to policy stances. Starting with the socio-economic dimension, two general postures are addressed: attitudes toward the free-market principle and attitudes toward (economic) equality. At the issue level, the analysis addresses the effect of personal values on attitudes toward the introduction of a minimum wage, support for cutting taxes to fight the economic crisis, and attitudes toward governmental aid for suffering firms.

Self-transcendence values emphasize caring for others rather than pursuing one’s own success at the expense of others. Accordingly, universalism and benevolence are anticipated to increase support for equality while decreasing support for economic laissez-faire. This line of reasoning also suggests that both self-transcendence values will voters make more likely to endorse a minimum wage and government intervention into the economy. Likewise, self-

transcendence values should make voters less inclined to endorse tax cuts. In Schwartz's system of basic values, self-transcendence values are opposed to self-enhancement values. Following Schwartz's line of reasoning, the latter values, i.e. achievement and power, are hypothesized to exhibit effects on policy attitudes that are somewhat of a mirror-image of the findings concerning self-transcendence values.

Values on the conservation vs. openness-to-change dimension, according to Schwartz (1994b), do not primarily refer to policies on the socio-economic dimension. Accordingly, it might be expected that values from neither pole exhibit any effect on postures and issue attitudes from this domain. At the same time, the market economy and the resulting differences in wealth and income might be deemed a feature of the traditional social order. So, conservation values should increase support for economic laissez-faire and tax cuts while making citizens more skeptical of equality, aid to firms, and minimum wages. At the same time, tax cuts and government intervention are aimed at preserving established firms and the existing economic order. Looked at from this angle, opposite effects might be expected. As a result, theory lends support to contradicting expectations. The same applies to the role of openness-to-change values in affecting attitudes toward socio-economic policies.

In the new politics domain, the analysis addresses three postures: moral traditionalism, support for law and order policies, and acceptance of immigration. At the issue level, the analysis includes opinions about abortion, same-sex marriage, and Muslims' right to build mosques in Germany. Self-transcendence values emphasize accepting others as equals and caring for their welfare. Accordingly, subscribing to universalism should increase opposition to moral traditionalism and law and order policies as well as support for abortion, same-sex marriage, immigration, and mosques in Germany. As concerns benevolence, parallel effects might be expected. This value refers to in-group solidarity, however, so that this cannot be taken for granted because citizens might differ in their definitions of in-groups. Since achievement and power values are opposed to self-transcendence values in the circular

structure they are expected to affect postures and issues in opposite direction. At the same time, individuals deeming power important might consider moral traditionalism and collectively binding rules as restraints on their pursuit of personal success. The analysis will show which of these competing hypotheses will be borne out by the evidence.

New politics issues, almost by definition, tap questions concerning traditional values. Citizens endorsing conservation values are thus expected to oppose change. Accordingly, conservation values are anticipated to be conducive to opposition to immigration, abortion, same-sex marriage, and mosques in Germany. At the same time, these values should increase support for moral traditionalism and law and order policies. In line with Schwartz's conception, openness to change might be expected to be opposed to law and order policies as well as moral traditionalism and to increase support for new life styles and immigration (but see Davidov et al. 2008a).

In the foreign policy domain the analysis includes the posture toward the use of military force. Since the use of military force is the ultima ratio in enforcing a claim self-enhancement values to be positively related to the use of military force, whereas self-transcendence values should be expected to exhibit the opposite effect. Conservation values are also likely to increase support for the use of military force because they emphasize restraints on individual self-expression (see Cohrs et al. 2005). Since the issue concerning the deployment of German troops in Afghanistan is closely related to the use of military force I anticipate the effects of values on these attitudes to resemble the findings on the use of military force.

The issues of Turkey's EU membership and the deepening of the European integration, by contrast, do not concern the use of military force. They rather refer to international cooperation and the possibility of other nations influencing the rules Germany's citizens are subject to. Cooperation implies the acceptance of others as equals. Accordingly, I expect benevolence and, in particular, universalism to increase support for European integration and Turkey's EU membership. At the same time, both kinds of international cooperation could

result in challenges to the traditional order. So, voters subscribing to conservation values should be likely to oppose European integration and Turkey's EU membership.

The literature on vertical constraint in political belief systems suggests that political sophistication plays a conditioning role because linking specific issues to abstract principles requires contextual knowledge (e.g., Sniderman 1991; Zaller 1992; Michaud et al. 2009; but see the findings in Barnea & Schwartz 1998). Moreover, receiving and decoding elite signals minimum political sophistication. Voters lacking political sophistication thus should not exhibit any value constraint on policy attitudes. By contrast, political sophisticates should face less difficulty linking concrete issues and policy postures to abstract values. Since foreign policy is traditionally conceived as more removed from everyday life than domestic issues, it might be more demanding to link the former issues, rather than the latter, to personal values. As a result, political sophistication might be more powerful in conditioning the effect of values on opinions about issues from the foreign than the domestic domain.

## **Data and methodology**

The analysis utilizes data from a CATI-survey conducted from June 18<sup>th</sup> and to July 29<sup>th</sup> 2009 among the German electorate. 1078 respondents were interviewed by SRU-BACES. Basic values were measured using the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ; Schwartz 2006). The PVQ includes 40 short verbal portraits of different people that consider certain values particularly important. Respondents are then asked how closely each portrayed person resembles herself. The value system of a respondent is inferred from the (self-described) similarity to people with different values. Each basic value is measured by at least three items; internal consistency ranges from .61 (tradition) to .78 (achievement).<sup>2</sup> To my knowledge, this

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<sup>2</sup> Respondents show individual differences in rating values in general as more or less important. To correct for individual differences in scale use, basic values scores were standardized around the respondent's mean.

study is the first one to employ the full PVQ, rather than a short version, in a survey of a random sample of the German public.

As refers to the dependent variables, political postures were measured using scales comprising three to six items. Items were partially taken from prior studies including Feldman (1988), McCann (1997), Jacoby (2006), and Gunther and Kuan (2007). Cronbach's alphas are considerably lower than for basic values ranging from .41 (free market) to .69 (traditional morality). Attitudes toward political issues were captured by single item instruments (see for details and descriptive statistics the Appendix).

The final hypothesis deals with conditioning effects of political sophistication on the role of left-right ideology in shaping policy attitudes. Previous research concluded that the best way to measure political sophistication is probing an individual's political knowledge (Zaller 1992; Bartle 1997; Goren 1997). Unfortunately, the data set utilized in this analysis does not include any item capturing political knowledge. I thus use an index that combines (self-declared) interest in politics and formal education as a proxy.

To examine the role of basic human values in lending structure to political attitudes, this analysis employs a straightforward strategy. First, policy postures and attitudes toward specific policy issues will be regressed on each basic value separately. Then, I will assess the joint contribution of basic human values to explaining policy attitudes. Both analyses will include gender, age, and education as control variables because these characteristics might affect policy attitudes independently of basic values but are not affected by values.<sup>3</sup> Omitting these controls would thus result in inflated estimates of the total effect of values on policy postures and issue attitudes. To explore the conditioning role of political sophistication, the analyses will be replicated for voters at different levels of sophistication separately.

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<sup>3</sup> As far as values affect education, controlling for education results in conservative estimates of the effects of values on attitudes.

## **Empirical findings**

The results of the analyses concerning policy postures are reported in Table 2, whereas Table 3 includes the results referring to issue attitudes. Both tables report OLS coefficients indicating the effect of each basic value on policy attitudes while controlling for gender, age, and education. These coefficients allow exploring whether basic values are associated with policy attitudes in the expected direction. The tables also include the variance in policy attitudes accounted for by the ten basic values. This information gives a hint at how strongly basic values jointly shape policy attitudes.

Policy postures from the socio-economic domain are mainly affected by self-transcendence values. Citizens deeming universalism important are disproportionately inclined to oppose economic laissez-faire while endorsing equality. Benevolence exhibits parallel, though smaller, effects. The findings on the values at the opposite pole in Schwartz's value system, i.e. self-enhancement values, are more mixed. The power motive is conducive to support for the free market-principle and decreases support for equality. While these findings confirm the expectations, achievement affects only attitudes toward equality.

Turning to the values from the "classic liberalism" dimension in Schwartz's value model, the evidence suggests that neither openness-to-change values nor conservation values play a role in shaping attitudes toward economic laissez-faire. Security and conformity, however, exhibit negative effects on support for equality. This finding is in line with the notion that citizens endorsing security want to preserve the existing social order including its social pecking order. By and large, the evidence at the posture level, thus, suggests that the self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement dimension mainly shapes attitudes toward attitudes concerning policies from the socio-economic policy domain.

**Table 2: Effects of basic values on policy postures in Germany 2009 (OLS regression)**

	Free Market	Equality	Moral tradition	Law and order	Immigration	Military force
Conformity	0.03 (0.04)	-0.08* (0.04)	0.33** (0.04)	0.43** (0.04)	-0.26** (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
Tradition	0.03 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)	0.47** (0.04)	0.20** (0.05)	-0.24** (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)
Security	0.06 (0.04)	-0.16** (0.04)	0.26** (0.05)	0.42** (0.05)	-0.19** (0.04)	0.12** (0.04)
Benevolence	-0.11** (0.04)	0.17** (0.04)	-0.11* (0.05)	-0.21** (0.05)	0.26** (0.04)	0.02 (0.05)
Universalism	-0.22** (0.04)	0.41** (0.04)	-0.37** (0.05)	-0.34** (0.05)	0.42** (0.04)	-0.18** (0.05)
Self-direction	-0.00 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)	-0.46** (0.05)	-0.53** (0.06)	0.27** (0.05)	-0.09 (0.05)
Stimulation	0.05 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.28** (0.04)	-0.13** (0.05)	0.17** (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)
Hedonism	0.03 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)	-0.21** (0.04)	-0.08 (0.05)	0.06 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)
Achievement	0.01 (0.04)	-0.10** (0.03)	0.08 (0.04)	0.11* (0.04)	-0.13** (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
Power	0.11** (0.04)	-0.22** (0.04)	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.30** (0.05)	-0.09* (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)
Multiple regression						
Adj. R <sup>2</sup> (values only)	.03	.12	.27	.28	.19	.03
Increment in adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.03	.11	.16	.20	.15	.01
Observations	838	837	833	827	859	847

Entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Standard errors in parentheses. \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05

Increment in R<sup>2</sup> refers to a comparison of model with gender, age, and education and a model which additionally includes basic values.

When it comes to issue attitudes, this pattern still prevails, though the picture turns out to be more blurred. Clearly, universalism and benevolence make voters more inclined to endorse the introduction of minimum wages, while they also (tend to) decrease support for cutting taxes. Attitudes toward the question whether the government should give aid to suffering firms are affected neither by self-transcendence values nor by self-enhancement values. Moreover, the power motive decreases, as expected, support for minimum wages and renders voters less likely to endorse tax cuts. In addition, values from the conservation and the

openness pole affect attitudes toward the three socio-economic issues included in this analysis. In particular, some conservation values increase support for aid to suffering firms and tax cuts, while undercutting support for minimum wages. This pattern appears to be plausible since the two former policy proposals aim at rescuing existing firms whereas minimum wages might imply a change to the traditional social order. The self-direction value makes voters more inclined to reject tax cuts and subsidies to fight the economic crisis, while hedonism exhibits opposite effects.

Taking a look at the role of basic values in shaping postures in the new politics domain, a clear-cut pattern emerges. As hypothesized, values on the conservation vs. openness-to-change dimension are particularly powerful predictors. Individuals subscribing to conservation values are inclined to endorse both moral traditionalism and law and order policies. At the same time, the specific effects of the three components of the conservation syndrome vary across policies. Whereas security and conformity exhibit much stronger effects on attitudes toward law and order policies than on moral traditionalism for tradition the opposite pattern applies. The effects of conservation values on acceptance of immigrants are somewhat of a mirror-image of their impact on traditional morality and law and order. The effects of openness-to-change values are also in line with the expectations. Voters subscribing to self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism are likely to reject moral traditionalism, law and order policies, and restrictions on immigration. Thus, this part of the analysis confirms Schwartz's theory and his proposition that the conservation vs. openness dimension resembles "classic liberalism".

**Table 3: Effects of basic values on issue attitudes in Germany 2009 (OLS regression)**

	Aid to firms	Tax cut	Minimum wage	Mosques	Abortion	Same-sex marriage	Afghanistan	Turkey EU member	European integration
Conformity	0.16** (0.05)	0.12 (0.06)	-0.07 (0.06)	-0.38** (0.06)	-0.12 (0.06)	-0.22** (0.06)	0.04 (0.06)	-0.15** (0.06)	-0.14* (0.06)
Tradition	0.06 (0.06)	0.01 (0.07)	-0.15* (0.07)	-0.26** (0.07)	-0.54** (0.07)	-0.49** (0.07)	-0.02 (0.07)	-0.13* (0.06)	-0.12 (0.07)
Security	-0.02 (0.06)	0.16* (0.07)	-0.10 (0.07)	-0.34** (0.07)	-0.03 (0.07)	-0.23** (0.08)	0.18* (0.07)	-0.31** (0.07)	-0.29** (0.07)
Benevolence	0.02 (0.06)	-0.13 (0.08)	0.24** (0.07)	0.28** (0.07)	-0.23** (0.08)	0.21** (0.08)	0.06 (0.08)	0.13 (0.07)	0.14 (0.08)
Universalism	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.29** (0.08)	0.49** (0.07)	0.48** (0.07)	0.21* (0.08)	0.50** (0.08)	-0.12 (0.08)	0.35** (0.07)	0.22** (0.08)
Self-direction	-0.20** (0.07)	-0.23** (0.09)	0.03 (0.08)	0.47** (0.08)	0.30** (0.08)	0.34** (0.09)	-0.10 (0.09)	0.22** (0.08)	0.05 (0.09)
Stimulation	-0.01 (0.06)	0.10 (0.07)	-0.13* (0.07)	0.13* (0.07)	0.24** (0.07)	0.28** (0.07)	-0.02 (0.07)	0.11 (0.06)	0.11 (0.07)
Hedonism	0.05 (0.06)	0.14* (0.07)	0.04 (0.07)	0.14* (0.07)	0.27** (0.07)	0.25** (0.07)	-0.04 (0.07)	0.10 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.07)
Achievement	0.02 (0.05)	0.11 (0.06)	0.00 (0.06)	-0.12 (0.06)	0.05 (0.06)	-0.18** (0.06)	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.06)	0.10 (0.06)
Power	-0.09 (0.06)	-0.17* (0.08)	-0.27** (0.07)	-0.00 (0.08)	0.03 (0.08)	-0.11 (0.08)	0.03 (0.08)	-0.14* (0.07)	-0.03 (0.08)
Multiple regression									
adj. R <sup>2</sup> (values only)	.02	.04	.06	.11	.08	.12	.01	.05	.03
increment in adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.01	.02	.06	.09	.08	.06	.01	.04	.02
Observations	874	836	873	860	875	860	854	851	861

Entries are OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05. Increment in R<sup>2</sup> refers to a comparison of model with gender, age, and education and a model which additionally includes basic values.

Self-transcendence values affect new politics attitudes, as well. The results show that universalism decreases support for moral traditionalism and tends to make respondents less susceptible to a law and order stance. Benevolence exhibits parallel effects. Both values at the self-transcendence pole are also conducive to support for immigrants. In Schwartz's theory, self-enhancement values are opposed to self-transcendence values. In contradiction to the anticipation to find opposite effects, the evidence indicates that the power motive decreases support for moral traditionalism and law and order policies. Though at odds with the original theory, this finding makes sense insofar as moral and collectively binding rules set restraints to pursuing success at the expense of others.

The evidence at the issue level resembles the findings at the posture level quite closely. By and large, conservation values foster opposition to abortion, same-sex marriage, and mosques in Germany. Openness-to-change values affect, as expected, also these issue opinions. Stimulation, self-direction, and hedonism increase support for the three policy proposals from the new politics domain. As predicted by theory, values from the self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence dimension are less influential in affecting opinions about new politics issues. Power and achievement do not exhibit any effect. Universalism and benevolence, by contrast, appear to be related to these issue attitudes. Universalism increases support for mosques, same-sex marriage, and abortion, as predicted by theory. The same holds for benevolence, with a single exception: benevolence decreases, rather than increases, support for abortion.

As refers to the foreign policy domain, the evidence indicates that self-enhancement values play no role in affecting support for the use of military force. By contrast, universalism decreases, as expected, support for military force in international politics. Moreover, voters deeming security important are inclined to endorse employing military force and sending German troops to Afghanistan. Security values, as well as conformity and tradition, make citizens more skeptical of deepening and broadening the European Union. In line with Schwartz's conception, universalism exhibits opposite effects. Self-enhancement and

openness-to-change values, however, play a small, if any, role in affecting attitudes toward foreign policy issues.

Thus far, the analysis demonstrated that, by and large, Schwartz's basic values are associated with policy postures in line with predictions derived from the theory underlying the circular structure. Establishing these effects, however, does not imply that values exhibit a powerful constraint on political attitudes from different policy domains. Exploring the role of values in giving coherence to policy attitudes across policy domains requires addressing the joint explanatory power of the ten basic values. A straightforward indicator of the explanatory power of basic values is the increment in  $R^2$  attributable to basic values after controlling for demographic variables. The respective information is reported in the bottom sections of Tables 2 and 3.

The evidence suggests that basic values are, by and large, more powerful in shaping postures than issue attitudes. In the new politics domain, in particular, basic values account for considerably more variance in postures than in attitudes toward specific policy proposals. This finding is in line with the notion that postures are more general attitudes than opinions about specific issues and are thus less distant to values in the hierarchy of attitudes.

Irrespective of the level of abstraction, effects of values on attitudes in the new politics domain are quite sizable. At the posture level, Schwartz's ten basic values account for 15 to 20 percent of variance in the dependent variables. When it comes to issue attitudes, six to nine percent can be explained by values. The evidence in the socio-economic domain and the foreign policy domain is considerably less encouraging. To be sure, one tenth of the variance in attitudes toward equality can be accounted for by basic values. But only three percent of variance in attitudes toward economic laissez-faire and one percent in attitudes toward the use of military force are explained by values. Unsurprisingly, the proportion of variance explained in issue attitudes is not more sizable.

Given these findings, it is warranted to conclude that the ten basic values are not effective in giving coherence to political attitudes across policy domains. Rather, Schwartz’s basic values appear to be quite influential in shaping attitudes in the new politics domain while they hardly make any difference in attitudes toward socio-economic and foreign policy topics.

This result does not imply, however, that basic values fail to bind together policy attitudes from different domains in all subsections of the electorate. I thus turn to test whether basic values give coherence and structure to political attitudes across policy domains at least in the politically sophisticated subsections of the electorate. To examine this hypothesis, the variance explained by basic values was estimated separately for low, middle, and high sophistication voters. The results of these analyses are reported in Table 4.

**Table 4: Explanatory power of basic values by level of political sophistication**

	Free market	Equality	Traditional morality	Law and order	Immigration	Military force
Low	.00	.10	.16	.17	.09	.00
Middle	.04	.13	.15	.23	.18	.02
High	.04	.10	.21	.27	.15	.02

	Aid to firms	Tax cut	Minimum wage	Mosques	Abortion	Same-sex marriage
Low	.06	.01	.00	.05	.01	.02
Middle	.04	.02	.07	.10	.13	.08
High	.00	.03	.10	.05	.05	.06

	Afghanistan	Turkey EU member	European integration
Low	.00	.01	.00
Middle	.05	.04	.04
High	.04	.06	.06

Entries are increments in adjusted R<sup>2</sup> when basic values are included in a model with demographic variables.

The evidence turns out to be not very encouraging. To be sure, in some instances the explanatory power of values increases with increasing political sophistication. But there are several exceptions to this pattern in favor of the notion that political sophistication serves as a conditioning factor. For example, as political sophistication increases the effect of basic values on attitudes toward aid to suffering enterprises declines. These findings suggest that political sophistication does not necessarily tighten already existing links between policy attitudes and values. Rather, political sophistication might also affect on which values voters rely when forming policy-related attitudes (see e.g. Alvarez/Brehm 2002).

What is more, even in those instances in which political sophistication exhibits an expected positive effect on the value constraint, the value constraint on attitudes in the high sophistication group is not particularly strong. For example, in the high sophistication group, basic values account for six percent of variance in attitudes toward European integration and Turkey's EU membership. Thus, even in the most sophisticated subsections of the electorate, Schwartz's basic values appear to be not capable of giving coherence and structure to political attitudes across policy domains.

## **Conclusion**

This paper addresses the role of basic human values in shaping policy postures and attitudes toward specific policy issues. Utilizing data from a random sample, the analysis showed that basic values play a role in affecting policy attitudes. Moreover, the statistical associations of basic values to policy attitudes are, by and large, in line with theory. Insofar, the analysis confirms Shalom Schwartz's theory of a system of ten basic values.

At the same time, the explanatory power of basic human values varies considerably across policy domains. Values are quite strong predictors of attitudes toward policies from the new policy domain. The explanatory power is considerably smaller when it comes to socio-

economic and foreign policy attitudes, however. This finding suggests that the advent of the new politics dimension in Western democracies has augmented the impact of basic human values on citizens' attitudes toward political issues. As far as policy predispositions and issue attitudes affect voting behavior, this change in the substance of political controversy also increased the effects of values on vote choice.

Looked at from a different angle, the evidence suggests that basic human values are not particularly suitable to lend structure and coherence to political belief systems. This conclusion draws on the observation that basic values explain a good deal of variance in some attitudes, but not in others. In particular, socio-economic attitudes and opinions about foreign policy issues are weakly structured by basic values, if at all. Even among voters who are particularly politically sophisticated the analysis does not yield evidence in favor of a strong value constraint on policy attitudes across policy domains. In the new politics domain, however, basic human values are quite valuable in organizing political attitudes. The capability of basic values to lend structure to political belief systems thus appears to be confined to this subsection of political attitudes.

Schwartz aimed at creating an exhaustive and universal system of basic values. His conception, thus, might be considered a particularly promising candidate to lend structure to political belief systems across policy domains and to unify the study of domestic and foreign policy attitudes. The finding that this system of basic values does not serve as an overarching and organizing principle is thus disappointing – in particular, to scholars looking for common sources of domestic and foreign policy attitudes.

This leaves us with the question why basic values fell short of our expectations. Referring to methodological issues would be a particularly convenient way of dealing with this issue. However, this analysis utilized data from a random sample and employed standard measures; moreover, though reliabilities of some scales were quite low they cannot completely account for the small effects of values on attitudes. Alternatively, the negative findings might be

discarded as a result gathered during a period in which voters had not thought thoroughly about economic and foreign policies, so that they could not exhibit any value constraint. When the interviews were conducted, however, political discourse mainly revolved around economic issues so that basic values might be expected to be particularly powerful in shaping attitudes toward economic policy. The null findings thus are not likely to be a time-specific artifact.

A different argument is probably more promising. As we know from previous research, elite cues play a considerable role in horizontal and vertical constraint in mass belief systems (e.g., Converse 1964; Sniderman 2000; Sniderman/Bullock 2004). Accordingly, a lack of attitudinal constraint indicates that elites do not assist ordinary citizens in linking different concepts. As refers to the present analysis, it implies that German politicians do not rely on those values derived from Schwartz's model when debating public policies. For example, the argument suggests that politicians do not rely on power and achievement motives when discussing economic policy nor do they refer to these values in debates about the use of military force. Though there is a lack of evidence from content analyses, taking a glance at political discourse in Germany suggests that this description resembles closely public debates.

This argument becomes even more cogent when we take into consideration the indicators employed to measure values. By and large, the items tapping self-enhancement and openness-to-change values resemble quite closely items used to measure personality traits (Costa/McCrae 1992). By contrast, items designed to measure conservation and self-transcendence values include terms like "Having a stable government is important to him. He is concerned that the social order be protected." and "He thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. He believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life." While the latter items tap political concepts, the former refer to an individual's personal conduct. In German public discourse, however, political actors employ political, rather than personal, arguments. Moreover, it is primarily economic and foreign policy

attitudes which, according to Schwartz, should be affected by values like power, hedonism, achievement, and stimulation. Thus, some of the null findings might, to a certain extent, result from this interplay of political, conceptual, and methodological factors.

Though this argument has some face-validity, it has not yet been tested empirically. Future research thus might study whether elite framing in terms of basic values makes a difference in value constraint on policy-related attitudes. A promising way to address this issue is conducting survey experiments that present respondents with different frames. This argument also suggests that the nature of value constraint on political attitudes might differ across nations. For example, countries in which public debates about economic issues refer to economic self-interest and discussions about foreign policy regularly employ concepts like “power” and “national interest” might exhibit different patterns of value constraint than the one presented in this paper. Shalom Schwartz’s system of basic values might thus turn out to be more valuable in lending structure to political attitudes than this single-country analysis suggests.

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## Appendix

### Basic value dimensions

Conformity (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .68$ ): "He believes that people should do what they're told. He thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching.", "It is important to him always to behave properly. He wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.", "He believes he should always show respect to his parents and to older people. It is important to him to be obedient.", "It is important to him to be polite to other people all the time. He tries never to disturb or irritate others."

Tradition (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .61$ ): "He thinks it's important **not** to ask for more than what you have. He believes that people should be satisfied with what they have.", "Religious belief is important to him. He tries hard to do what his religion requires.", "He thinks it is best to do things in traditional ways. It is important to him to keep up the customs he has learned.", "It is important to him to be humble and modest. He tries not to draw attention to himself."

Security (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .76$ ): "It is important to him to live in secure surroundings. He avoids anything that might endanger his safety.", "It is very important to him that his country is safe.", "It is important to him that things be organized and clean. He really does not like things to be a mess.", "He thinks government must be on watch against threats from within and without.", "He tries hard to avoid getting sick. Staying healthy is very important to him.", "Having a stable government is important to him. He is concerned that the social order be protected."

Benevolence (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .70$ ): "It's very important to him to help the people around him. He wants to care for their well-being.", "It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him.", "It is important to him to respond to the needs of others. He tries to support those he knows.", "Forgiving people who have hurt him is important to him. He tries to see what is good in them and not to hold a grudge."

Universalism (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .77$ ): "He thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. He believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.", "It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them.", "He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him.", "He believes all the world's people should live in harmony. Promoting peace among all groups in the world is important to him.", "He wants everyone to be

treated justly, even people he doesn't know. It is important to him to protect the weak in society.”, “It is important to him to adapt to nature and to fit into it. He believes that people should not change nature.”

Self-direction (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .65$ ): “Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way.”, “It is important to him to make his own decisions about what he does. He likes to be free to plan and to choose his activities for himself.”, “He thinks it's important to be interested in things. He likes to be curious and to try to understand all sorts of things.”, “It is important to him to be independent. He likes to rely on himself.”

Stimulation (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .67$ ): “He thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life. He always looks for new things to try.”, “He likes to take risks. He is always looking for adventures.”, “He likes surprises. It is important to him to have an exciting life.”

Hedonism (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .67$ ): “He seeks every chance he can to have fun. It is important to him to do things that give him pleasure.”, “Enjoying life's pleasures is important to him. He likes to ‘spoil’ himself.”, “He really wants to enjoy life. Having a good time is very important to him.”

Achievement (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .78$ ): “It's very important to him to show his abilities. He wants people to admire what he does.”, “Being very successful is important to him. He likes to impress other people.”, “He thinks it is important to be ambitious. He wants to show how capable he is.”, “Getting ahead in life is important to him. He strives to do better than others.”

Power (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .68$ ): “It is important to him to be rich. He wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.”, “It is important to him to be in charge and tell others what to do. He wants people to do what he says.”, “He always wants to be the one who makes the decisions. He likes to be the leader.”

## General postures

Free market (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .41$ ): "All public enterprises should be removed from government control and made private", "Government should be more involved in regulating the way businesses operate", "The freer the market is from government interference the better", "All high school and university education should be controlled and supported by the government".

Equality (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .42$ ): "If people were treated more equally in this country we would have many fewer problems", "It is a mistake to try to guarantee an equal distribution of resources between rich and poor", "Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has equal opportunities to succeed", "We need larger income differences as incentives for individual effort".

Law and order (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .67$ ): "The government should forbid all protests that might turn violent", "The police should have more powers to protect citizens", "Censorship is necessary to protect our society against subversive ideas", "The rights and freedoms of some groups in society should be limited".

Traditional morality (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .69$ ): "It is extremely important to protect our traditional religious and moral values", "Newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of our society", "This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties".

Immigration (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .53$ ): "People who come to live here from other countries generally make our country a better place to live", "People who come to live here from other countries undermine harmony in our country", "People who come to live here from other countries make our country's cultural life richer", "People who come to live here from other countries generally take jobs away from the workers of our country".

Military force (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .64$ ): "Going to war is sometimes the only solution to international problems", "War is never justified", "Our country should join other democratic nations in sending troops to fight dangerous regimes", "Military intervention in other country's affairs is always wrong".

**Table A1: Descriptive statistics: basic values, postures, and issue attitudes**

	Obs	mean	std. dev.
Conformity	954	.51	.19
Tradition	999	.42	.17
Security	1017	.56	.16
Benevolence	1030	.61	.15
Universalism	1003	.62	.15
Self-direction	1033	.66	.13
Stimulation	1022	.50	.17
Hedonism	1019	.56	.17
Achievement	1023	.45	.18
Power	1013	.38	.15
Free market	1008	.39	.20
Equality	1004	.61	.20
Traditional morality	986	.45	.24
Law and order	984	.44	.26
Immigration	1034	.74	.22
Military force	1015	.26	.22
Aid to firms	1063	.41	.30
Tax cut	1015	.50	.36
Minimum wage	1065	.75	.35
Mosques	1041	.66	.35
Abortion	1057	.73	.35
Same sex-marriage	1042	.71	.39
Afghanistan	1036	.39	.35
Turkey EU member	1033	.33	.32
European integration	1046	.57	.36