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Introduction to the Special Issue on the Theory of Human Values

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Abstract: Research on human values in the social sciences took of after Schwartz introduced his theory of basic human values in 1992. This special issue includes articles dealing with methods of data analysis applied to measurements of some or all of the values postulated by the theory and of other variables.

Introduction

Eldad Davidov, Peter Schmidt and Shalom Schwartz

Values are central to public discourse today and are viewed as important for the understanding and explanation of attitudes and behavior. Research on human values in the social sciences took off after Schwartz introduced his theory of basic human values in 1992. That theory included 10 motivationally distinct values that are presumed to cover the main value orientations recognized across cultures. Several instruments have been developed to measure these values. A short version of one of these instruments has been included in all four rounds of the European Social Survey. These instruments have revived a lively discussion between methodologists and substantive researchers on the value concept in recent years at the European Survey Research Association (ESRA) bi-annual conference, at other conferences with methodological and substantive foci, and in journal articles in sociology, psychology, political science, business administration and communication.

We believe that such discussion between methodologists and substantive researchers can advance the theory and the method. We therefore proposed a special issue of this journal to facilitate this discussion. We would like to thank Rainer Schnell and Jaak Billiet, editors of the journal, for their interest in this special issue and for providing us the opportunity to prepare it. We had two goals in preparing this issue. In keeping with the focus and scope of the Survey Research Methods journal, we sought to have each article discuss methodological issues and their implementation when addressing interesting research questions. Second, we sought to have each article make a theoretical contribution. All theoretical contributions in this issue discuss the human values theory of Schwartz (1992).

The special issue includes articles dealing with methods of data analysis applied to measurements of some or all of the values postulated by the theory and of other variables. Each article provides new theory-relevant insights. The issue includes six contributions, ordered alphabetically by the last name of the first author. The first study of Barni and Knafo examines empirically the meanings of a large set of values to parents and to their adolescent children. It uses multidimensional scaling and discusses the implications of the analyses with respect to value transmission from parents to their offspring. Beckers, Siegers and Kuntz investigate the extent to which the concepts and measurements of values by Schwartz and Inglehart are similar or different, finding that correlations between them are at most moderate. They also compare the effectiveness of the two sets of concepts for explaining moral and social attitudes and report that the Schwartz scale, with its richer set of constructs has greater explanatory power. Beierlein et al. examine whether the statistical findings of Knoppen and Saris (2009a,b) in student samples, that suggest subdividing some of the original ten Schwartz values generalize to a representative sample of the German population. They also report a test of the full model of the 11 basic values suggested by Knoppen and Saris using data from a new, experimental version of the Portrait Value Questionnaire. Cieciuch and Davidov examine the measurement invariance of the full 40-item version of the Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) compared to the 21-item version used in the European Social Survey (ESS). They conclude that the PVQ-40 is more appropriate for cross-cultural research. Morselli, Spini and Devos employ structural equation modeling and multilevel analyses to study the relationship between values and trust in institutions. For this purpose, they use data from both the World Values Survey (WVS) and the ESS. Finally, Steinmetz, Baeuerle and Isidor present a meta-analytical, structural equation modeling approach to test the circular structure of the Schwartz theory using cluster analysis. Table 1 below lists the authors' names, titles of the contributions, the method of analysis used, the scale used to measure the Schwartz values and the dataset used.

The complexity and richness of the value theory necessitates elaborate methodological and theoretical discussions, as reflected in this issue. We hope readers will find that the contributions in this issue advance both knowledge about methods and about the substantive implications of the Schwartz theory. We also hope this issue will encourage discussion and serve researchers in their endeavors to investigate the theory, its implications, and relevant modes of measuring and analysis and thereby contribute to the development of our understanding of human values. We thank the editors of this journal, Jaak Billiet and Rainer Schnell, and the publication officer of the journal, Wiebke Katharina Weber, for their support during the production of this issue.

References

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Table 1: A list of the contributions by authors' names, title, method used, scale used to measure the Schwartz values and the dataset used

Authors	Title of contribution	Method used	Scale used to measure Schwartz's values	Dataset
1. Barni, Daniela and Ariel Knafo	Value systems of fathers, mothers and adolescents: Do parents and their children construe basic values in the same way?	MDS	PVQ40	381 Italian family triads (father, mother and one adolescent child)
2. Beckers, Tilo, Pascal Siegers and Anabel Kuntz	Congruence and performance of value concepts in social research	CFA and SEM	PVQ40 (ESS version)	A German self-selected online access panel (n = 762)
3. Beierlein, Constanze, Eldad Davidov, Peter Schmidt, Shalom H. Schwartz and Beatrice Rammstedt	Testing the discriminant validity of Schwartz' Portrait Value Questionnaire items – A replication and extension of Knoppen and Saris (2009)	CFA	PVQ40 and an experimental version	A representative sample of the German population (n = 1,966) and a sample (n = 325) of students at Goethe-University in Frankfurt, Germany
4. Cieciuch, Jan and Eldad Davidov	A comparison of the invariance properties of the PVQ-40 and the PVQ-21 to measure human values across German and Polish Samples	MGCFA and MGSEM	PVQ40 and PVQ21 (ESS version)	Paper-and-Pencil questionnaires of 1,204 students in Germany and Poland
5. Morselli, Davide, Dario Spini and Thierry Devos	Human values and trust in institutions across countries: A multilevel test of Schwartz's hypothesis of structural equivalence	Multilevel SEM, MIMIC modeling, CFA	SVS, PVQ21, 10 item WVS version	A sample of 4,757 students and teachers in 17 countries collected by Schwartz in 1996; a sample of 3,838 university students from 21 countries, collected by Spini in 1996; WVS 2005; ESS 2004-5
6. Steinmetz, Holger, Naissa Baeuerle and Rodrigo Isidor	Testing the circular structure of human values: A meta-analytical structural equation modeling approach	Meta-analytical SEM, MGSEM, cluster analysis, circumplex structure analysis	PVQ40, PVQ21 (ESS version), SVS	Data from 88 studies and the ESS

CFA = Confirmatory Factor Analysis; ESS = European Social Survey; MDS = Multidimensional scaling; MGCFA = Multiple Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis; MGSEM = Multiple Group Structural Equation Modeling; MIMIC = Multiple Indicators Multiple Causes; PVQ = Portrait Value Questionnaire; SEM = Structural Equation Modeling; SVS = Schwartz's Values Survey; WVS = World Value Survey