

perspectives on their parent's socialization efforts. How do children interpret, resist, and negotiate parental messages? Lastly, the phenomenon of bi-directional influence needs to be better understood. This is because the processes underlying children's receptivity and resistance to parental influence and of parental receptivity and vulnerability to children's influence are still largely unexplored.

See also: Altruism and Prosocial Behavior, Sociology of; Ethics and Values; Kohlberg, Lawrence (1927–87); Moral Development: Cross-cultural Perspectives; Moral Education; Moral Reasoning in Psychology; Piaget, Jean (1896–1980); Piaget's Theory of Human Development and Education; School Outcomes: Cognitive Function, Achievements, Social Skills, and Values; Values: Psychological Perspectives; Values, Sociology of

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## Values: Psychological Perspectives

### 1. Overview

This article asks the following questions: what are values and how are values distinguishable from related concepts like motives, goals and attitudes? Are values located within individuals or social structures?

Values are difficult to study and persistent questions arise as to whether they are 'real,' whether they actually can be shown to have causal influence on behavior. Yet much of everyday life is cast in terms of values—think of ethics, law, religion, politics, art, child rearing, and more. Abstract value judgments are embodied in seeming gut reactions that something is right, moral, or natural vs. wrong, immoral, or unnatural. Another way to 'see' values in action is to contrast cultures or subcultures in what seems right, natural, or moral. One of the great contributions of cultural and cross-cultural research is the way that it brings Western cultural values into sharp relief.

Americans are said to value life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But what does value mean? Implicitly or explicitly we evaluate or assign value to everything—regarding things as good or bad, a truth or falsity, a virtue or a vice. How do we know? One important means is through values. Values can be thought of as priorities, internal compasses or springboards for action—moral imperatives. In this way, values or mores are implicit or explicit guides for action, general scripts framing what is sought after and what is to be avoided.

### 2. Definitions

Modern theories of values are grounded in the work of Kohn (class and values), Rokeach (general value systems), and Kluckhohn (group level). Values can be

conceptualized on the individual and group level. At the individual level, values are internalized social representations or moral beliefs that people appeal to as the ultimate rationale for their actions. Though individuals in a society are likely to differ in the relative importance assigned to a particular value; values are an internalization of sociocultural goals that provide a means of self-regulation of impulses that would otherwise bring individuals in conflict with the needs of the groups and structures within which they live. Thus, discussion of values is intimately tied with social life. At the group level, values are scripts or cultural ideals held in common by members of a group; the group's 'social mind.' Differences in these cultural ideals, especially those with a moral component, determine and distinguish different social systems. In this sense Weber's Protestant 'ethic' and 'spirit' of capitalism describe value systems.

Values, to which individuals feel they owe an allegiance as members of a particular group or society, are seen as the glue that makes social life possible within groups. Yet, they also set the stage for frictions and lack of consensual harmony in intergroup interactions. Values are thus at the heart of the human enterprise; embedded in social systems, they are what makes social order both possible and resistant to change. Values are not simply individual traits; they are social agreements about what is right, good, to be cherished.

What is common to all value phenomena? At the individual level, values contain cognitive and affective elements and have a selective or directional quality; they are internalized. Preference, judgment, and action are commonly explained in terms of values. Individuals take on values as part of socialization into a family, group and society. Once taken on, values are assumed relatively fixed over time (see *Values, Development of*). Indeed, values that are individually endorsed and highly accessible to the individual do predict that individual's behavior. Conversely, even personally endorsed values won't influence action when they are not made salient to the individual at the time of action. Moreover, in any given situation more than one personally endorsed value may apply, and the behavioral choice appropriate for one value may conflict with the behavioral choice appropriate to another value.

Values are codes or general principles guiding action, they are not the actions themselves nor are they specific checklists of what to do and when to do it. Thus, two societies can both value achievement but differ tremendously in their norms as to what to achieve, how to achieve, and when pursuing achievement is appropriate. Values underlie the sanctions for some behavioral choices and the rewards for others. A value system presents what is expected and hoped for, what is required and what is forbidden. It is not a report of actual behavior but a system of criteria by which behavior is judged and sanctions applied.

Values scaffold likes and dislikes, what feels pleasant and unpleasant, and what is deemed a success or failure. Values and value systems are often evoked as rationales for action; for example, values of freedom and equality were evoked to elicit American support for the Civil Rights movements. Values differ from goals in that values provide a general rationale for more specific goals and motivate attainment of goals through particular methods.

### 3. History and Current Developments

Initially viewed with suspicion by Western social scientists as too subjective for scientific study, the concept of values found increasing use beginning with *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Thomas and Znaniecki 1921). Impetus for the study of cultural values comes from the work of Alfred Kroeber, Clyde Kluckhohn, Talcott Parsons, Charles Morris, Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton, Raymond Firth, A. I. Hallowell, and more currently Milton Rokeach and Shalom Schwartz.

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) proposed that cultural value systems are variations of a set of basic value orientations that flow from answers to basic questions about being: (a) What is human nature—evil, neutral, mixed, or good? (b) How do we relate to nature or supernatural—subjugation, harmony, or mastery? (c) What is the nature of time—past, present, future? (d) What is the nature of human activity—being, being-in-becoming, doing? (e) What is the nature of our relationship to others—are we joined vertically, horizontally or are we simply separate individuals? They also organized a system for comparing values in terms of their level of generalization and function in discourse and conduct, proposing that values fit into a pyramid of ascending generalization. For each society, a few central or focal values were proposed to constitute a mutually interdependent set of what makes for the 'good life.' These include the unquestioned, self-justifying premises of the value system and definitions of basic and general value terms; for example, happiness, virtue, beauty, and morality.

Since American researchers dominated values research, much early work focused on documenting American values. Need for achievement as an American value, and concern over decline in the centrality of this orientation appear as early as 1944 (Spates 1983). Values studies documented the influence of education, age, type of employment, and socioeconomic status on value preferences of Americans, adding to Weber's thesis of the influence of religion (Protestantism vs. Catholicism) on achievement and work values in Europe. Kohn (1977) was responsible for a number of important values surveys documenting that in various European countries and the US, parents of higher socioeconomic status value self-direction in their

children more than parents of lower educational and occupational levels. These findings have been verified cross-nationally in 122 societies.

Extending the documentation of American values, Rokeach (1973) validated empirically 36 values related to preferred end states and preferred ways of behaving. Using Rokeach's scale, value differences tied to class, age, race, subculture, and level of differences were documented in many countries. Building on Rokeach, Schwartz (1992) delineates values as ways of articulating universal requirements of human existence—to survive physically, have social interchange, and provide group continuity. For Schwartz, values represent operationalizations of these needs as goals that fit together in meaningful clusters (achievement, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, and power). Some clusters are compatible (e.g., stimulation and hedonism) and others compete (e.g., self-direction and conformity).

Using mostly data from teachers and college students in 20 primarily Western countries, Schwartz shows that, with the exception of China, specific values mostly do 'cluster' and 'compete' as expected. Thus, 'honest,' 'forgiving,' and 'helpful' cluster together as 'benevolence,' and 'self-direction,' and 'stimulation' cluster far from 'conformity,' 'tradition,' and 'security.' These data suggest important universality to how values are organized cross-culturally and that societies differ in which clusters of values predominate public life.

#### 4. Controversies

Key tensions in the values literature focus on the conditions under which they may influence behavior, and the appropriate level of analyses for seeing values in action. Interest in values as a research focus has ebbed in the past as each paradigm for studying values has been criticized for lack of specificity of findings as due to values and not other social norms, attitudes or situational constraints. Current cultural psychology focuses attention on social structures as the repository of values such as personal freedom, group harmony, personal happiness, and duty or filial piety.

How do we know that values exist? A number of options are available: (a) Individual testimony—people say what values they hold. Yet, self-reports of values are subject to pronounced context effects (see *Attitudes and Behavior*). (b) Behavioral choices—either in naturalistic or laboratory settings, value differences may be imputed from behavior. Yet, behavior is influenced by many variables other than values. At the individual level, values themselves are assumed to link to behaviors via their influence on norms and attitudes, but people may infer their values from their behavior, reversing the causal relationship. (c) Cultural and social structures—expenditure of resources, time, energy and structuring of the natural environment;

cultural products can be seen as concrete residues of value-based choices (see *Cross-cultural Psychology; Cultural Psychology*). (d) Social interchange—observation of behavior in situations of conflict, and more generally observation of what is rewarded or punished, praised or vilified provides data for identifying what is socially valued. Here, too, the question of appropriate evidence arises. To what extent is it appropriate to assume that differences in social structures and societies are evidence of value differences? Political and economic influences and simple inertia may set the stage for behaviors, without a causal influence of necessarily values.

#### 5. Future Directions

Cross-cultural perspectives are currently becoming increasingly central to values discussion. For example Inglehart (1990) documented values and value change in a large multinational study, and a large number of two-nation comparison studies has emerged. Another important topic of research is the connection between values of individuals, values of subcultural groups, and values of larger cultural systems and methods for identifying and studying each of these. Perhaps in addition to identifying value vocabularies at each level, it is time to begin to ask whether values appropriately are studied as fixed traits of individuals or as embodied in groups, and to what extent values research is synonymous with cultural and cross-cultural research.

Given that any particular behavior importantly is influenced by context effects that make certain information salient at the moment of action, it is not surprising that the effects of individual value endorsements on behavior have a 'sometimes you see it, sometimes you don't' quality about them. But focusing on individual endorsement of values may miss much of the power of value systems to influence everyday life. That is, individuals may not need to personally endorse or have salient particular values in order for their influence to be felt. The most profound influence of values may be through the ways that they influence rules, norms, procedures within a society, and in this way structure the everyday life choices for individuals within a society.

Thus, whereas previous researchers have documented values using survey techniques in which individuals rated the extent to which various values were important to them, future assessment of values may need to consider more indirect approaches such as what services a society provides its members, what behaviors are rewarded or sanctioned and so on.

*See also:* School Outcomes: Cognitive Function, Achievements, Social Skills, and Values; Values, Anthropology of; Values, Development of; Values, Sociology of; Vocational Interests, Values, and Preferences, Psychology of

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## Values, Sociology of

Everything social actors appreciate, appraise, wish to obtain, recommend, set up or propose as an ideal, can be considered as a value. Ideas, emotions, moral deeds, acts, attitudes, institutions, material things, etc. may possess this special quality by virtue of which they are appraised, desired, or recommended. But what is attractive for some, can be repulsive to others. Thus, to values correspond countervalues which are underrated, disapproved, rejected. Nationalism and internationalism, private and public property, freedom and equality, etc., may be, according to diverse actors, values or countervalues.

## 1. Dimensions of the Concept

Four main dimensions of the concept can be distinguished:

(a) Each value has an *object*, i.e. what is valued, prized. The nation, Moslem faith, work, profit, instruction, leisure, honesty, the family, etc., may become values. Any element of social reality, of the spiritual and moral world, can have a 'value aspect' insofar it is praised or refused, advocated, or condemned.

(b) This object is qualified by a *judgment* as valuable or contemptible, as good or bad, as useful or useless, as true or false, as desirable or not, as beautiful or ugly, etc. The sentence expressed is a value judgment. One will say, e.g., that one's country is inviolable and

its enemies are unkind, that Moslem faith is true and unbelievers are mistaken, that work is sacred and profits are unjust, that honesty is a virtue while robbery is dishonest, and so on. Value judgments answer to a large set of principles and criteria whereby opinions, beliefs, convictions are shaped, choices are made.

(c) Values become *norms* when they command and/or regulate conducts, prescribe a course of action. Norms tend to conform behavior and commitments to the values confessed. If your country is inviolable, you should defend it, if Islam is true, you must comply with its prescriptions, if profits are unjust, you must fight against them, if instruction is important, you must learn, if honesty is a virtue, you are not allowed to misappropriate funds. Values provide the grounds for accepting or rejecting particular norms, and norms are standards for actual conduct.

(d) The *value holders* are either individual or collective actors or social groups. Therefore one can speak of the values of such and such person, of the liberals, of the middle class, of the teenagers, of the Russians, or of Bantu culture.

The concept of value is inseparable from the notion of preference. To value one object rather than another (e.g. to prefer a party of cards to the theater) means that in a given situation the value inducing the choice was adopted or inculcated to the detriment of another.

## 2. Value Systems: Definition

The values of an individual or a collectivity do not appear as sharply separated and independent units. Instead, they are bound together, are interdependent, they form a *system*. When a new value is acquired or an old one is lost, when a value is weakening (lowering) or strengthening (rising), the whole system will be affected.

A system of values is hierarchically built up. It is also a scale of values. Often the difference between actors does not proceed from the content of their systems, but from their difference in ranking their values. For example, in the abortion debate, all participants may highly prize the value of life, but some will emphasize the conceived child's future while others will take into account the mother's decision.

The actor is more or less tied to certain values than to others. Values contain not only cognitive elements, they involve strong affective components too. The more a value is deeply rooted, the more it takes a central place in the system and the more it is lived intensely, arouses emotions, and mobilizes vehement energies. There are values men are ready to die for.

The mode of organizing a system of values varies from one culture to another. Its inner logic does not obey the same rules. This fact is undoubtedly the main reason why misunderstanding prevails between peoples pertaining to different cultures, each one interpreting the world in its own terms.

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