

Oct 1st, 11:45 AM - 12:30 PM

# Looking at a Values Research Program

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Geoff Soutar, "Looking at a Values Research Program" (October 1, 2010). *SBS HDR Student Conference*. Paper 15.  
<http://ro.uow.edu.au/sbshdr/2010/papers/15>

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**Description**

Professor Soutar's presentation outlines preliminary results from a long term research program focused on values.

**Location**

iC - SBS Teaching Facility

# Looking at a Values Research Program

Based on research being  
undertaken by

Geoff Soutar,  
Julie Lee and others



## What are basic values?

(e.g. views on *freedom, wealth, equality, security, pleasure, obedience*)

**beliefs** about the desirable

motivational **goals**

**transcend** specific actions and  
situations

**criteria** of judgment

Ordered in **a hierarchy** of  
importance

**Differentiated** by type of  
motivation

reflect what is **socially  
desirable** or acceptable  
in society

there is an element of  
**choice**

believed to be **relatively  
stable** in adults

## Why are basic values important?

Motivate our choice of behavior - *what we do*

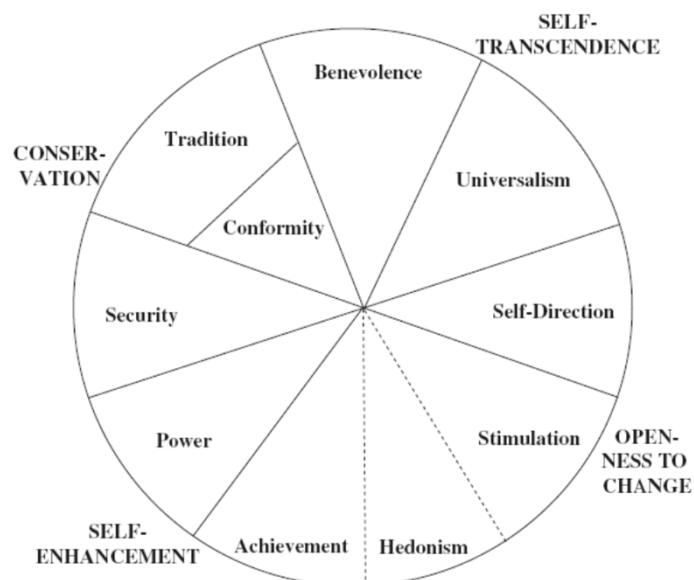
Justify our past behavior - *why we do it*

Standards we use to evaluate people & events -  
*who and what we like*

Direct our attention and perception -  
*what we notice*

Can serve as social indicators -  
*reflect fundamental societal change*

## Schwartz's Values Theory is at the heart of our research





## SVS: Some disadvantages

50+ items

9-point Scale

-1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Lexical equivalence (supreme importance)

Cleaning procedures

Delete respondents who choose 7 more than  
15 times

Some question as to whether SVS data are  
interval scaled

Original Schwartz's Value Survey Scale	Schwartz's Value Survey Interval Transformation Scores						
	Notional Value	Australia	New Zealand	United Kingdom	United States	South Korea	China
Opposed to my values	-1	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
Not important	0	2.74	1.71	1.38	0.34	1.94	-0.21
	1	3.85	3.29	2.90	1.93	3.21	2.77
	2	4.48	4.09	3.57	3.38	4.03	3.48
Important	3	5.46	4.83	4.53	4.13	4.64	3.99
	4	5.68	5.08	4.81	4.57	4.80	4.35
	5	5.93	5.60	5.50	5.32	5.22	5.01
Very important	6	6.49	6.42	6.18	6.26	5.77	5.56
Of supreme importance	7	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00
Mean deviation from I		.71	.57	.48	.34	.61	.83
Inertia explained		.85	.89	.89	.87	.82	.82
Sample size		202	221	201	233	201	224

**Lee & Soutar (2009)**

**Also an issue about skews and potential endpiling  
due to SDR biases that impacts on correlations**

In one study correlations for SVS scores ranged from 0.10 to 0.76. All were positive and all but three were significant at the 0.05 level

While values on opposite sides of Schwartz's circle should be conflicting, many were positively correlated well beyond the 0.001 level (e.g. Security and Stimulation and Achievement and Benevolence)

**This type of result is typical**

**Solution for this type of  
response bias**

Typically addressed post-hoc

Mean centring

Removing negatively worded items

**BUT**

Are we removing biases or true differences?

Can we be *proactive* rather than *reactive*?

## SVS data corrections

### Correlations

- partial correlations
- Individual mean as a covariate

### ANOVA/ANCOVA

- Individual mean as a covariate

### Regression

- mean centered scores
- no more than 9 of the 10 values
  - Choose based on theoretical grounds
  - Could use a stepwise process

### MDS, Canonical, Discriminant, or Factor analyses

- Use raw scores

**FAILURE TO  
CORRECT FOR  
SCALE USE GIVES  
INCORRECT  
RESULTS!**

## Cross-cultural measurement issues

### Translation

- Cross-cultural response biases may be even more problematic
  - Extreme responding [or not]
  - Acquiescence issues

### Evidence

- High PD and Masculinity more ***extreme response style***
  - Clarity and decisiveness valued
- Low Ind, UA, PD and Masculinity more ***acquiescent***
  - Harmony and deference (low Ind)
  - Less assertiveness, decisiveness, daring (low Ind, low Masc)



## Best-Worst Scaling (BWS) – an alternative

Louviere invented BWS at Alberta in 1988

Finn & Louviere (1992) BWS in polling

Louviere & Swait (1994) extended BWS to conjoint & discrete choice applications

Marley & Louviere (2005) proved the approach's measurement & model properties

Many applications now under way

## SVBWS task (set 1)

Most Important (Click ONE)		Least Important (Click ONE)
<input type="radio"/>	Successful, capable, ambitious.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Protecting the environment, a world of beauty, unity with nature.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Helpful, honest, forgiving.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Devout, accepting portion in life, humble.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Clean, national & family security, social order.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Equality, world at peace, social justice.	<input type="radio"/>

## Remember our earlier correlation problems

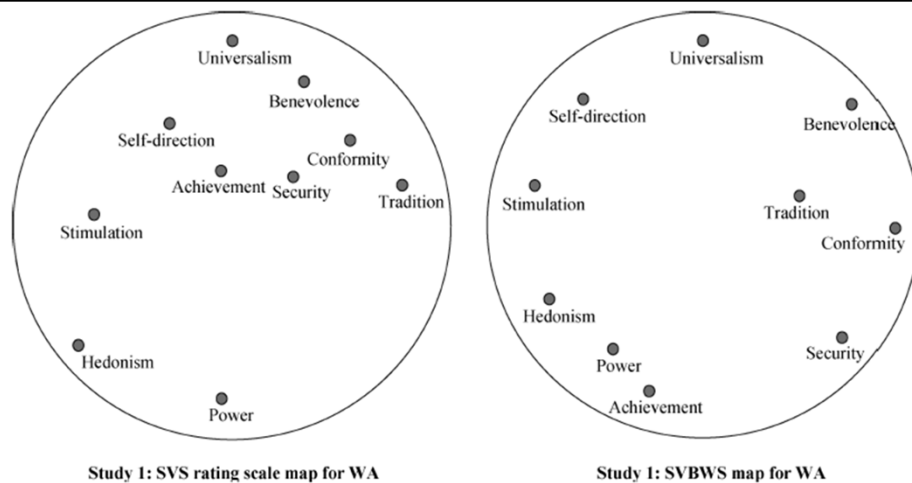
The SVBWS correlations ranged from -0.47 to 0.51

Ten of the 45 BW correlations were positive and significant at the 0.05 level, while 25 were negative and significant and 10 were not significantly different from zero – a much better outcome

The sig. negative correlations were between opposing values, such as Tradition and Achievement (-0.48) and Universalism and Power (-0.41)

The sig. positive correlations were between neighboring values, such as Power and Achievement (0.51) and Conformity and Tradition (0.35)

**These relationships were sensible – suggesting the BWSVS allows respondents to provide values information in a meaningful way**



**WA adults randomly assigned to SVS or SVBWS Lee, Soutar & Louviere (2008)**

## Also an issue of a lack of expected significant relationships across cultures

East-Asian samples often produce fewer expected *negative* correlations than Western samples

Attributed to East-Asian dialectic thinking

Confucianism & Buddhism promote the acceptance of contradiction

But - is it a substantive difference or a method bias issue?

**Lee, Soutar & Daly (in press)**

## Values and travel benefits

Travel benefits can

1. Have unpredictable and uncertain directions
2. Preserve the status quo and minimise risk and uncertainty

	Openness to change (OC)	Conservation (CO)
Stepping into the unknown	+	-
Experience a different culture	+	-
Being safe and secure	-	+

## Method

**Online panel members in UK and SK allocated to one of two surveys (either ratings or BWS)**

**Greater London and Greater Seoul areas**

**Screened to be international travelers, 18 to 65 years**

**Sample sizes ranged from 201 to 242**

**Measures:**

**57-item SVS or 11 set SVBWS**

**11 Travel benefits using ratings and BWS**

## Results

**Expected positive relations**

SVBWS-BWS in UK and SK

SVS-ratings in UK

SVSc-ratings in UK

SVSc- ratings in SK

Not significant for OC and experience a different culture, nor for

CO and safe and secure

**Expected negative relations**

SVBWS-BWS in UK and SK

SVSc-rating in UK

SVS-rating no negative relationships in UK or SK

## **Conclusions from this study**

BWS combination worked equally well in UK & SK  
for positive and negative correlations

Standardised ratings combination worked equally  
well in the UK and SK for positive correlations  
However, less well in SK than the UK for the  
expected negative correlations

**Unstandardised rating combination did not  
produce any negative correlations**

## **Some Further Conclusions**

The BWS approach worked significantly better  
than the non-standardised ratings approach

Marginally better than the  
standardised approach

**However**, BWS did this without any post-hoc  
manipulation of scores that may remove both  
substantive differences as well as response bias

## **Cross-cultural benefits of BWS**

Easier lexical equivalence of anchoring terms

Eliminates the need for numerical anchors that may have different meanings

E.g. using 4 in China

Eliminates patterning bias

E.g. mid-point or extreme-point responding

Produces a metric score

Produces expected negative correlations in Western and in Eastern Asian countries

## **Some Other Advances**

**Looking at subgroups**

**Augmenting the SVBWS**

To look at the subgroup issue, adults in **China and the USA** were surveyed using

The traditional Schwartz Values Survey (SVS) – for which raw scores and standardised (Z) scores were computed

Lee, Soutar and Louviere's (2008) Schwartz Values Best Worst Survey (SVBWS)

**Ward's (1963) hierarchical clustering procedure was used to group people in each country**

In each case, we obtained two to six cluster solutions for which point-biserial correlation coefficients were computed as a way to determine the appropriate number of clusters

**The SVS (Z) data suggested a two cluster solution, the SVS raw data suggested a three cluster solution and the SVBWS data suggested a four cluster solution in the USA and in China**

Discriminant analysis was used to clarify the six (3 scaling types by two countries) cluster solutions

**The SVS (Z) scores produced only 2 clusters-  
which meant only one discriminant function  
could be estimated**

The single function explained most of the variation between the Chinese and American sub-groups – which suggests there were meaningful differences between the groups

However, in both countries, the two groups attached more or less importance to all of the values – **a common but not very useful outcome with this type of values related ratings data**

The unstandardised SVS data suggested three clusters in both countries, allowing two discriminant functions to be estimated

**However, 99% of the explained variance in China and 96% of the explained variance in the USA was due to the first function, suggesting only one function should be retained**

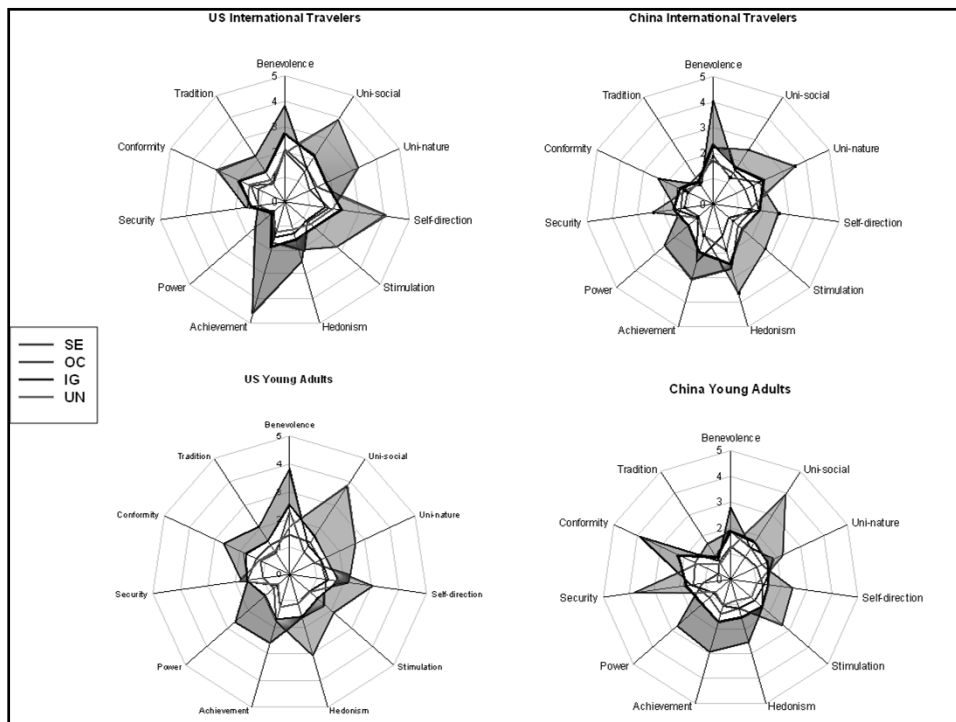
The discriminant analysis again showed the China and USA clusters were a function of respondents agreeing more or less to all of the values (with a third moderate group) – **which meant this result was no more useful than the standardised SVS outcome**



The SVBWS data, however, suggested four clusters in both countries, allowing three discriminant functions to be estimated

**In both countries, all functions were significant and explained most of the inter-group variation**

In contrast to the SVS data, the SVBWS discriminant analysis results found useful information about the sub-groups



**There were similarities and dissimilarities in the values groups within and across the two countries, which would not have been obvious had SVS or SVS (Z) scores been used to measure values**

**Country differences seemed to be due to the different numbers in the different subgroups rather than to the presence of different subgroups – this may be the more important issue**

**I wonder what subgroups researchers may have missed by using ratings scales**

## **Augmenting the SVBWS task (set 1)**

### **The original BWS task**

<b>Most Important (Click ONE)</b>		<b>Least Important (Click ONE)</b>
<input type="radio"/>	Successful, capable, ambitious.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Protecting the environment, a world of beauty, unity with nature.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Helpful, honest, forgiving.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Devout, accepting portion in life, humble.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Clean, national & family security, social order.	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Equality, world at peace, social justice.	<input type="radio"/>

## The augmented SVBWS task (set 1)

Of these, which are the most and least important?

For more information hold your mouse pointer over any word in each set.

	Most important <i>pick one</i>	Not most, but relatively important <i>pick all that apply</i>	Least important <i>pick one</i>	Not least, but relatively unimportant <i>pick all that apply</i>
Successful, capable, ambitious.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpful, honest, forgiving.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Devout, accepting portion in life, humble.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clean, national & family security, social order.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protecting the environment, a world of beauty, unity with nature.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equality, world at peace, social justice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Augmented BWS Measurement

Let the set be {Values A, B, C, D, E, F}

A most important

F least important

Information from original BWS  $A > B > C > D > E > F$

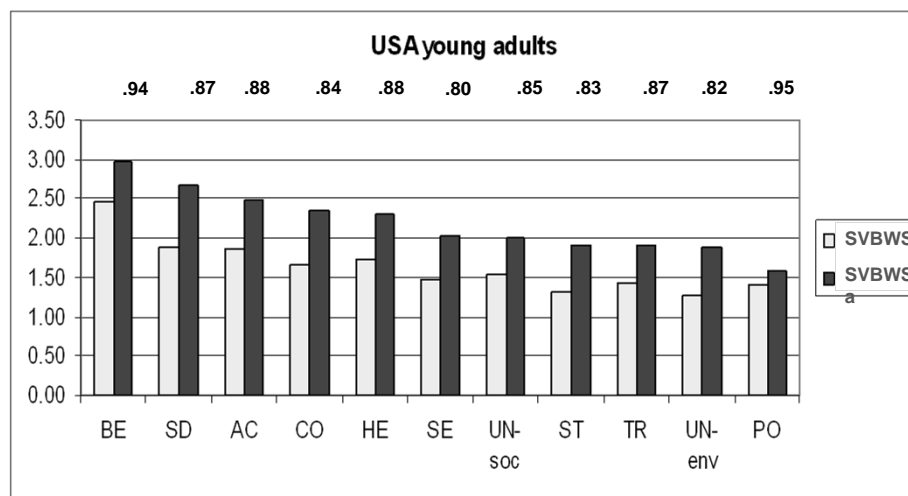
A most important

B & C important

E unimportant

F least important

**Information from Augmented task  $A > B > C > D > E > F$**



**Can you see how the augmented task shows increased importance – this is a truer reflection**

**What I have shown here are the results of a long running study that has examined a variety of values aspects**

Each study led to new insights and further developments – which is why the research remains exciting and vibrant even after 8 years

**It also demonstrates that a research program is more valuable and more fun than a single study – we have new things to do that build on our past research – we have a future as well as a past**

**We already have ideas for at least 5 new big projects**