TARGET ARTICLES

The Value Balance Model and Democratic Governance

Valerie Braithwaite

Regulatory Institutions Network (RegNet), The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

Mature democracies have a core set of values with wide appeal that define and justify political agendas. Underlying their use is the assumption that people think along a left–right political continuum and that values that are favored by conservatives are necessarily at odds with values favored by liberals. The value balance model shows this to be a misrepresentation. Some people have value priorities that are predominantly security oriented, leading them to support conservative parties and ideology. Some are predominantly harmony oriented, supporting left of center parties and ideologies. Most people, however, have balanced value orientations (dualists if both are strongly held and relativists if both are weakly held). Typically they occupy the middle ground on the left–right continuum. Yet they have distinctive ways of engaging with political institutions. Dualists take positions that show compassion and responsibility to others while drawing a line at risking exploitation. For the left and right, dualists may be fence sitters, but potentially they are bridge builders, engaging constructively with democratic contestation. In contrast, relativists are wary of endorsing value positions, look for contextual detail, and display low commitment to making the democracy work.

Key words: societal values, institutions, value orientations, trust, hope.

Within mature democracies, trust in political institutions and engagement in political processes have been declining (Bean, 2003; Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 1997). Substantial numbers of citizens feel disempowered and see their governments ignoring their needs (LaFree, 1998). They perceive powerful political actors abusing privilege and advancing their own interests (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 1997). Loss of trust in the political system reduces the degree to which cooperation can be established between government and those being governed (Tyler, 2001).

Building trust and eliciting cooperation is no simple task. Changes in patterns of behavior require sharing a vision of what might be, a strategy of implementation, and capacity to get the job done (Bandura, 1986, 1989; Carver & Scheier, 1998; Mitchell, 1994). This article focuses on the first step, having a vision for change and sharing it with others—essentially a psychological process, involving the capacity to offer hope to others through furthering their aspirations, connecting with what they know and hold dear, and sidestepping fear and doubt.

On November 4, 2008, President Barack Obama shared a vision that inspired not only Americans but also communities across the world. Obama's raising of hopes internationally was not based on what he would do in Australia, or Europe, or Africa, or Asia, or even America. Hopes were raised through the masterful communication of shared values—the articulation of a set of principles for how a democratic government should and would engage with its people and with the people of other nations (Obama, 2006). Such principles included opportunity, prosperity, individual liberty, self-reliance, responsibility, honesty, social inclusiveness, a willingness to listen, and advancement of the cause of peace.[1] Pragmatists and sceptics will say that government cannot deliver on all of these values. Importantly, however, as this article shows, people look to government to try. Although political endorsement of these values runs the risk of disappointment, it

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[1] From President-elect Barack Obama's victory speech, November 4, 2008, Grant Park, Chicago (http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/results/president/speeches/obama-victory-speech.html).

also makes possible the revitalization of the democracy through building trust, social capital and cooperation.

Values as Building Blocks of Social Inclusion

Values can be defined as personal or social goals or standards of behaviour that capture our shared sense of the desirable across place and time (Kluckhohn, 1951; Rokeach, 1968, 1973, 1979; Smith, 1963). Values as abstract, overarching concepts (e.g., equal opportunity, freedom, peace, and prosperity) have an ultimacy, absoluteness, and universality about them. We believe that they are desirable for their own sake, they apply regardless of circumstances, and others ought to support them as we do (Scott, 1965). Values are states of doing and being that represent our ideals. We regard their presence as preferable to their absence (Rokeach, 1968, 1973, 1979).

The social and cultural significance of values has long been recognized (Kluckhohn, 1951), but when values have been conceived as abstract principles there have also been doubts about their importance, particularly for governance. The strongest criticism is that when values are defined in such broad and general terms they are merely symbolic and can be applied to almost anything—they are too far removed from behavior to have much sway over action (Bauman, 1993; Denver & Hands, 1990; Sears, Huddy, & Schaffer, 1986). Some relegate values to the category of "motherhood statements" that people say they believe in but do not act on. Others see values more instrumentally. They may be used as a marketing device for shaping attitudes—values are the "feel good" anchors that grab our interest and capture our allegiance to a product (Neal, Quester, & Hawkins, 2004). Or they may be the socially desirable responses that we use to justify action after the event, not the principle guiding our action in the first place (Kristiansen & Zanna, 1994). If we have doubts about whether we have acted properly, we quell feelings of disquiet through explaining our actions with values that any reasonable person would accept as legitimate: Our message to others and ourselves is that although we may not have done the right thing, we meant well (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Maruna & Copes, 2004). All these perspectives are theoretically sensible and empirically defensible. They do not, however, attribute to values a deeply meaningful role in building trust, social capital, and cooperation, all of which are fundamental to having a vibrant and productive democracy (Putnam, 1993; Uslaner, 2002).

The purpose of this article is to explain how values play a framing role in democratic governance. The argument of the article is that people's social values are organized in two dimensions, one reflecting the value they place on security, the other harmony. Both

sets of values are important to people. This provides a base for deliberation and negotiation because we are able to understand the positions of others—we disagree on how we prioritize values, but we can agree that all the values are important in their own right. Values give humans a capacity for reasonableness, an important ingredient in building cooperation (Young, 2000).

Our political institutions, however, have not always capitalized on such reasonableness, at least not at the interface with the public. Generally speaking, individuals' engagement with political institutions requires them to map their values onto a single left–right political continuum. This article explains how those with balanced value orientations express themselves politically and respond to systems of governance, contributing to social capital in both positive and negative ways. First, a brief overview of the development of the value balance model.

Values Background: Systematic Observation and Measurement

The value balance model emerged from a set of studies that began in 1974 to test the adequacy of the Rokeach Value Survey (Braithwaite, 1982; Braithwaite & Law, 1985). Armed with a definition of values, illustrated through the items of the Value Survey, a random sample of the general population in Australia was engaged in dialogue, the purpose of which was to build a more comprehensive list of values and explain how best to measure their relative importance. The 125 values generated by this study formed the Goal, Mode and Social Values Inventories and became the basis for subsequent work on the significance of values in governance and regulation.

Five findings from public responses to the values inventories shaped further developments. First, the values that people espoused did not exist in isolation but rather cohered around certain themes (Braithwaite, 1994, 1997; Braithwaite & Law, 1985). Second, personal values were related to values for national and global governance, confirming a finding of Scott (1960) more than a decade earlier (Braithwaite, 1994, 1997). Third, respondents were able to articulate which values were fundamental to others, building maps of how values were justified and connected: Values were meaningfully integrated in people's belief systems as Rokeach had predicted (Braithwaite, 1994). Fourth, individuals sustained their attachment to value themes across time.[2] Fifth, values attracted enormous

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[2]For the individual items of the Social Values Inventory, coefficients ranged from .28 to .64 (*Mdn* = .44). The items of the Goal and Mode Values Inventory had coefficients ranging from .38 to .66 (*Mdn* = .47; http://vab.anu.edu.au). Although some coefficients for individual items are on the low side, 3 years separated the test–retest measures. The findings are consistent with the way in which values

consensus—they were aspirations that were socially shared by the public and allowed individuals to identify readily with the collective (Braithwaite & Blamey, 1998).

A set of factor analytic studies identified 14 themes or dimensions of valuing (Braithwaite & Law, 1985). Higher order factor analyses based on several data sets collected over 3 decades have provided evidence for the security and harmony dimensions. The value scales measuring national strength and order, propriety in dress and manners, social standing and getting ahead consistently defined a security value orientation. The scales of international harmony and equality, personal growth and harmony, and a positive orientation to others consistently defined a harmony value orientation (Braithwaite, 1997, 1998c; see statistical report at http://vab.anu.edu.au). The major value scales have shown impressive stability over time with test-retest reliability coefficients ranging from .54 to .75 (*Mdn* = .61) over a 3-year interval. These data on coherence and consistency in public responses to the value inventories suggested that values were important to individuals. The next step was to build on the empirical work to understand how security and harmony value orientations could coexist and yet guide engagement with political institutions.

Conceptualizing Security and Harmony Value Systems

The security value system brings together guiding principles that ensure that one is well positioned to protect one's interests and further them within the existing social order. Security values guide us in deciding how we divide up limited resources, what kinds of competition between groups and individuals are legitimate, and how we define winners and losers. The principles apply at a personal and societal level. At the societal level, values such as the rule of law, national security, national economic development, and national greatness are socially sanctioned goals for ensuring the safety of one's group and individuals within it. At a personal level, security values reflect an individual's sense of propriety and hopes for material and social success—being in a position of authority, having social recognition, economic prosperity, and being competitive.

In contrast, the harmony value system brings together societal and personal values that aim to further peaceful coexistence through a social order that shares resources, communicates mutual respect, and

cooperates to allow individuals to develop their potential to the full. Harmony values orient us toward establishing connections to others, transcending our individual grievances and dissatisfactions, and finding peace within ourselves and with our world. Harmony values for society include a good life for others, rule by the people, international cooperation, a world at peace, human dignity, equal opportunity for all, greater economic equality, and preserving the natural environment. Harmony values for the individual revolve around hopes for personal integrity and connectedness—gaining self-insight, the pursuit of knowledge, finding inner harmony, self-respect, and wisdom as well as being tolerant, generous, forgiving, helpful, and loving.

This two dimensional model of values sits comfortably alongside other models that map how individuals engage with each other and their environments (Katz & Hass, 1988; Rasinski, 1987). The analyses most closely parallel the work of Scott (1960, 1965), who showed relatively independent clusters of values that reflected competition and cooperation, clusters that incorporated both personal and political values. In analyses that incorporated the value instruments of Rokeach (1968), Scott (1960, 1965), and Morris (1956), the relative independence of a harmony and security value system was confirmed (Braithwaite, 1998c).

A defining feature of the scales that measure the security and harmony constructs is that they are positively correlated, an outcome that cannot be explained satisfactorily by response bias (Braithwaite, 1994, 1997, 1998c). The value justification study clarified the significance of the positive relationship between security and harmony values. More often than not, particular security values such as "national greatness" were justified in terms of harmony values, for example, "a world at peace." Finding that most people place importance on both security and harmony jars with left versus right analyses of political opinion. In a broader social framework, however, it makes sense and has theoretical support. Fromm (1949), Weber (1946), and Hogan (1973) have all proposed two ethics, both of which reside in well-socialized human beings—an ethic of respect for external authority, order, and social control and an ethic of interpersonal connectedness, personal integrity, and the realization of human potential. Different contexts draw out different ethics. In some situations conflict will arise, but in others, oftentimes the most institutionally challenging, successful adaptation requires both. In coping with natural disasters, humans at the micro- and macro-levels benefit from the order generated by security institutions that coordinate rescue operations and distribute resources and from the care shown through harmony institutions that express empathy and support. Individuals do not regard security and harmony values as necessarily incompatible and oftentimes their expression is symbiotic.

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are likely to fluctuate over a period of years in response to changing social conditions. When the items of the Social Values Inventory were tested over a shorter 4-week period, test–retest reliability coefficients were higher, ranging from .46 to .92 (*Mdn* = .62; Braithwaite, 1982).

Value Balance Model

Political institutions, however, do not show such symbiosis when they engage the public in their deliberations. Individuals generally are invited to participate as proponents of the left or right, not both. Individuals are required to trade off their harmony and security values. The question put to the public in adversarial, political contests is generally, do you prefer a party leaning to the left or right?

The value balance model guides our quest to understand how those with balanced value orientations engage with adversarial political systems. Value balance refers to the relative importance that individuals place on security and harmony—in practice this translates into the difference between the two empirically derived and theoretically supported value orientations that have been shown as enduring and widely shared in the community (Braithwaite, 1998b). Harmony values pull people toward the liberal pole, whereas security values pull these same people toward the conservative pole. In regression models, harmony and security values have been shown to make independent but opposing contributions. Those who favor harmony values tend to support political parties of the left and the social issues they champion. They are more likely to be both more committed and consistent in their support for liberal policies. Those who favor security values align with conservative parties and are more consistent and stronger in supporting policies of the right. Outcomes have included standardized measures of conservatism, election issues and left–right party identification (Blamey & Braithwaite, 1997b; Braithwaite, 1994, 1998b, 1998c).

Individuals who have value balance—be it with strongly held or weakly held values—occupy the middle ground on the left–right political continuum (Braithwaite, 1998b). At first blush they must be taken off guard by left–right political debate, given that they have a natural affinity with neither left nor right. In the past we have overlooked these groups as the "undecided" or "inconsistent" majority. Tetlock (1986) effectively challenged the assumption that those in the middle lack political sophistication through showing that they have relatively higher levels of cognitive complexity in deliberating upon issues than those at either extreme. Individuals with balanced value orientations find ways of adapting to the constraints of political institutions.

The value balance model draws a distinction between those who have strong value commitments to both security and harmony (dualists) and those with relatively weaker value commitments to both security and harmony (relativists). As cohabitants of the middle ground, dualists and relativists do not have publicly recognizable political identities. A primary goal of research on the value balance model has been to uncover

these identities and show how they affect capacities for regulation and governance. To ground these discussions in empirical findings, the instrument that has been used most commonly to measure value balance, the Social Goal Values Inventory[3] is described next, together with an account of how the value instrument has been useful over 30 years, reflecting changes in public concern over political developments.

The Social Goal Values Inventory

A large part of the work examining the operation of harmony and security value systems has relied on the Social Goal Values Inventory, a subset of 18 values that represent the kind of world we want to live in (see the appendix for items and rating scale). A security dimension and a harmony dimension have consistently emerged from factoring these items, with relatively minor changes occurring over 30 years.[4] The security dimension is represented by the social goals of national strength and order, and the harmony dimension by the social goals of international harmony and equality.

The items of the Social Goal Values Inventory have attracted a high degree of support since they were first measured in 1975. Table 1 lists the percentage of Australians who expressed some degree of acceptance for these values in three national surveys in 1975, 1995, and 2005. Ratings of "inclined to accept," "important," "very important," or "of the utmost importance" have been combined to produce acceptance ratings of more than 80%. Two of the original values are not present—"domination of nature" and "upholding traditional sexual moral standards." Their acceptance levels were much lower than other values (61% and 73%, respectively, in 1975).

In addition to showing widespread support for values, Table 1 shows changes in their relative importance over time. These fluctuations are consistent with national and international events—globalization, poverty, war, environmental threats, and support for minority groups. Over the past 30 years we have seen a drop in the value placed on "international cooperation," "a

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[3]This inventory is one of the three in the set mentioned earlier. It comprises values for society and is the shortest inventory, being the most economical for survey research. In recent work, the societal values are being used in conjunction with two personal value scales—personal growth and inner harmony and status as part of developing further the value balance model.

[4]Splinter factors comprising one or two items have occurred over the years as values have strengthened or weakened their association with the primary dimensions. A specific environmental factor comprising "domination of nature," "a world of beauty," and "preserving the natural environment" emerged in early years and has reemerged in more recent analyses. Other specific factors have involved "reward for individual effort" and "upholding traditional sexual moral standards" (Braithwaite, 1982; Braithwaite & Law, 1985).

Table 1. *Consensus and Change in Social Values Across Three Cross-Sectional General Population Surveys (1975, 1995, 2005)*

Social Values	Survey A 1975[a]		Survey B 1995[b]		Survey C 2005[c]	
	% Accept	M (SD)	% Accept	M (SD)	% Accept	M (SD)
Harmony (international harmony and equality)						
A world at peace	98	6.30 (1.02)	96	6.34 (1.14)	98	6.32 (1.02)
Human dignity	99	5.98 (0.99)[a,b]	97	6.16 (1.16)	99	6.12 (0.99)
Preserving the natural environment	97	5.98 (1.10)	96	5.94 (1.19)[b]	98	6.10 (1.08)
Equal opportunity for all	98	5.88 (1.06)[a]	96	5.98 (1.20)	98	6.05 (1.04)
International cooperation	94	5.74 (1.23)[a,b]	91	5.48 (1.39)[b]	94	5.36 (1.20)
A world of beauty	95	5.62 (1.14)[a,b]	90	5.43 (1.38)	93	5.41 (1.23)
A good life for others	94	5.44 (1.21)[a,b]	88	5.23 (1.42)	94	5.22 (1.17)
Social progress/social reform	93	5.29 (1.21)	88	5.12 (1.38)[b]	96	5.26 (1.06)
Rule by the people	84	5.07 (1.52)	85	5.10 (1.54)	91	5.12 (1.22)
Greater economic equality	80	4.93 (1.56)[a,b]	86	5.32 (1.54)[b]	91	5.54 (1.38)
Freedom[d]	97	5.91 (1.16)[b]	96	6.06 (1.21)[b]	98	6.17 (1.02)
Security (national strength and order)						
National security	97	6.01 (1.19)[a]	90	5.58 (1.46)[b]	97	6.11 (1.11)
The rule of law	98	5.90 (1.09)[a,b]	96	6.20 (1.16)[b]	96	5.73 (1.13)
National economic development	92	5.40 (1.28)	92	5.46 (1.32)	96	5.49 (1.11)
National greatness	83	5.09 (1.58)	78	4.90 (1.64)[b]	90	5.13 (1.28)
Reward for individual effort[d]	94	5.44 (1.26)[a,b]	95	5.74 (1.26)[b]	87	5.62 (1.06)

Note. Means with superscript a are statistically different from the 1995 mean at the .01 level of significance. Means with superscript b are statistically different from the 2005 mean at the .01 level of significance.

[a] $N = 483$. [b] $N = 1,680$. [c] $N = 3,358$. [d] These values were not part of the original harmony and security scales. In 1975 they were unattached values, but in 2005 they had become integrated into the major value dimensions. For consistency, they have not been included in the analyses with the value scales reported in this article.

good life for others," and "a world of beauty." Increasing in importance are values that are concerned with enabling individuals to make good through their own efforts—"equal opportunity for all," "human dignity," "reward for individual effort," and "freedom." Growing support for individualism has been well documented (Inglehart, 1997), as has scaling back of support for citizens through the welfare state (Handler, 2004).

At the same time, compassion has not disappeared from people's consciousness. Movement toward market economies and globalization has brought an increasing gap between rich and poor that has been tolerated by parties of the left and right (Phillips, 1999). In the meantime, attention has been drawn to poverty and its consequences (Pusey, 2003; Stiglitz, 2002). It is not surprising that as governments globally have been concentrating on growing their economies, the public's concern about inequality has risen. The data show that "greater economic equality" has steadily increased in importance as a value for Australians.

When nations go to war, public concern is expressed in terms of values. "National security" and "national greatness" were high in 1975 at the time of Australia's engagement in the Vietnam War and again in 2005 at the time of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Values seem to increase in importance when these states of being are under threat, arguably serving to protect or correct the social system. The threat of climate change has brought the environment onto the political agenda

in recent years. In keeping with reports of impending environmental disaster, "preserving the natural environment" has increased in importance as a value over the past decade.

"The rule of law" is another value that has changed over time, peaking in 1995 after the High Court of Australia rewrote Australian common law by recognizing that Indigenous people have land rights in the historic 1992 Mabo decision. The event ignited insecurities over how the land could be used among pastoralists, mining companies, politicians, and the general population. Law and its legitimacy became a political focal point.

Although some values have fluctuated, other values have been highly consistent—"a world at peace," "rule by the people," and "national economic development," values that are at the heart of how democracies function. The continuities and fluctuations in value importance suggest that values stay with us individually and collectively and act as touchstones, perhaps they can even be likened to reference texts. They sit on a shelf within easy reach and we take them down from time to time when we need to get our bearings, or rethink our position, or when events dislodge our sense that all is well. Even the values that have lost their currency, that is, "domination of nature" and "upholding traditional sexual moral standards," should not be dismissed completely. In both cases, it is conceivable that although the language may have dated, these ideas maintain value

and can be called upon when the collective sees fit. The challenge of climate change is ushering in a resurgence of interest in harnessing or taming nature. Alarm over sexual exploitation and pornography heralds renewal of intent to tighten the regulation of sexual behavior.

In spite of fluctuations for particular values in 1975, 1995, and 2005, the overall strength of commitment has remained the same for national strength and order ($M = 5.59$, $SD = 1.05$; $M = 5.54$, $SD = 1.06$; $M = 5.61$, $SD = .87$, respectively) and international harmony and equality ($M = 5.62$, $SD = .76$; $M = 5.61$, $SD = .87$; $M = 5.65$, $SD = .79$, respectively). Across studies, international harmony and equality has been more strongly endorsed by women than men. National strength and order has consistently been favored by older age groups and by the less well educated (Blamey & Braithwaite, 1997b; see statistical report at http://vab.anu.edu.au).

When the value balance model is used empirically to examine and compare the political engagement of the security oriented, the harmony oriented, relativists, and dualists, scale scores on international harmony and equality and national strength and order are split at the median and considered conjointly, producing four groups: (a) high harmony and high security (dualists), (b) high harmony and lower security (harmony oriented), (c) lower harmony and high security (security oriented), and (d) lower harmony and lower security (relativists; Braithwaite, 1998b). For consistency, the median used in earlier studies (5.7) has also been used for grouping the more recent data reported here. The next question is, how do relativists, dualists, the security oriented, and the harmony oriented compare in terms of how they engage with the substance of political debate and with institutions that make the democracy work.

Comparing Social Attitudes of Relativists, Dualists, the Security, and Harmony Oriented

Among the politically controversial issues dividing left and right have been the export of uranium, welfare benefits for the disadvantaged, progressivity in the tax system, support for minority groups (Aborigines and women), and crime control. The security oriented and the harmony oriented adopted opposing positions on these issues. Dualists and relativists claimed the middle ground with similar response patterns for the most part. There was coherence in their position. They seemed to be conforming to Boulding's (1962) notion of social justice: They supported compassionate social programs but believed that individuals should play by the rules and earn their rewards. Dualists and relativists agreed that it was not acceptable for people to take advantage of government "handouts" (Braithwaite, 1994, 1998b).

Although dualists and relativists occupied the attitudinal middle ground between the political left and right, they differed on how far they were prepared to go in using values as their touchstone. Dualists were more comfortable subscribing to overarching principles of governance. Relativists, in contrast, put greater store on detail and context and were less convinced that the interests of the state should be prioritised over the interests of individuals (Braithwaite, 1998b). Relativists were more sympathetic than dualists to voting in one's self-interest. Two issues brought different levels of support from dualists and relativists: "stiffer penalties for those who break the law" and "environmental preservation whatever the cost." Unconditional commitments to state initiatives of this kind did not sit comfortably with relativists (Blamey & Braithwaite, 1997a; Braithwaite, 1998b).

Political Engagement of Relativists and Dualists

Differences in political engagement among value groups were explored in a 2005 national survey of 3,558 randomly selected Australian citizens (Braithwaite, Reinhart, & Mearns, 2008). The key concept was trust. A conservative government had held office for 10 years and had implemented an economic program of neo-liberal reform (see the appendix for items of the trust scale). The hypothesis was that trust would increase as political identification with the conservative government increased, with the security oriented defining the upper boundary of trust, the harmony oriented the lower. In other words, trust was anticipated as mirroring the adversarial left–right political continuum. Table 2 shows the results of a one-way analysis of variance with Scheffé tests. The security oriented were the most trusting of government ($M = 3.21$), the harmony oriented least so ($M = 2.53$). Relativists and dualists had comparable trust scores in the middle ($M = 2.93$ and 2.91 respectively in Table 2).

As in other mature democracies, trust was uniformly low. In Table 2, the average level of trust for the security oriented was only just above the rating scale midpoint of 3; all other value groups fell below the midpoint. There was considerable room for improvement and for government to build trust. With this in mind, attention turned to what government needed to do to earn citizens' trust. Trust norms comprise the standards that we agree we should abide by for others to trust us (Braithwaite, 1998a; see the appendix for items of the trust norm scale). Communal trust norms involve government in building social capital through inclusive practices and communicating respect. Communal trust norms were shown to have their roots in harmony values (Braithwaite, 1998a). Exchange trust norms involved obligations and delivering on promises through government being efficient and consistent in

Table 2. *Comparing Means (Standard Deviations) for Security Oriented, Harmony Oriented, Relativists, and Dualists on Measures of How Citizens Engaged With Government*

	M (SD)				
	Security[a]	Relativist[b]	Dualist[c]	Harmony[d]	F[e]
Government performance					
Trust in government	3.21 (.78)[a,b,c]	2.93 (.73)[c]	2.91 (.84)[c]	2.53 (.76)	69.85
Hope for trustworthiness					
Trust norms	5.20 (.67)[a,b,c]	4.97 (.74)[b,c]	5.57 (.57)[c]	5.43 (.52)	175.37
Engagement with democracy					
Disillusionment with democracy	3.56 (.74)[b,c]	3.64 (.64)[b,c]	3.88 (.70)[c]	4.04 (.62)	72.40
Commitment to taxation	3.79 (.58)[a,c]	3.56 (.63)[b]	3.83 (.67)[c]	3.63 (.74)	38.59
Disengagement from taxation	2.11 (.55)[a,c]	2.34 (.52)[b]	2.09 (.57)[c]	2.24 (.53)	46.29

Note. The means with superscript a are statistically different from the relativist mean at the .01 level of significance. The means with superscript b are statistically different from the dualist mean at the .01 level of significance. The means with superscript c are statistically different from the harmony oriented mean at the .01 level of significance.
[a]$N = 658$. [b]$N = 1,144$. [c]$N = 1,228$. [d]$N = 488$. [e]Statistically significant at the .01 level of significance.

decision making. Exchange trust norms had their roots in security values (Braithwaite, 1998a). In this particular study, support for exchange and communal trust norms were so highly correlated that they formed one scale. Presumably, the low trust expressed by both the left and right side of politics resulted in greater unity on what was needed to improve government trustworthiness.

The results in Table 2 show a comparison of the four value groups in terms of the importance they placed on government adherence to trust norms. Most notably, relativists and dualists responded differently. Relativists considered it least important for government to invest in winning the trust of the people on these standards ($M = 4.97$), whereas dualists considered it most important ($M = 5.57$). The harmony and security oriented occupied intermediate positions between relativists and dualists in the strength of their endorsement of trust norms ($M = 5.43$ and 5.20, respectively).

In summary, the story of trust across value groups was that confidence was highest for the security oriented who identified with the governing conservative party and lowest for the harmony oriented who identified with the left of centre opposition party. Relativists and dualists fell between the two, sharing reservations about government trustworthiness. They differed, however, in the change they considered possible. Relativists held out significantly less hope for improved trustworthiness through adhering to trust norms than dualists—or the security or harmony oriented for that matter. Dualists were the strongest supporters of building trust through adhering to trust norms. These findings portray relativists as possibly a negative force. But are these findings simply a manifestation of using general standards to capture trust norms: past research shows that relativists are wary of general principles, preferring to deal in specifics.

To better understand the politics of relativists, the four groups were compared in terms of their engagement with the democratic process. The disillusionment scale (see the appendix for items) tapped into a sentiment that ordinary people were excluded from the processes of government and that government pandered to the interests of the rich and powerful. From Table 2, relativists and the security oriented were least disillusioned ($M = 3.64$ and 3.56, respectively), the harmony oriented were highly disillusioned ($M = 4.04$), and dualists not far behind ($M = 3.88$). Compared with dualists who voiced criticism and supported the need for change, relativists aligned with the neo-liberal economic agenda and did not seem to see any need for government to better connect with the people.

Relativists appear sceptical about government and what it can achieve, whereas dualists place their hopes in government for a better society. If this proposition is true, relativists and dualists should have very different ways of engaging with the tax system. The hypothesis was that because dualists hope for more out of government, they would invest more seriously than relativists in cooperating with tax authority. The dual nature of their security and harmony value systems would enable them to overcome any concerns about the government of the day and work constructively within the system to support the collective. Relativists, in contrast, would have little reason to be accommodating to the demands of the tax system: Their indifference to societal values lessens the importance of the collection of tax.

Two measures were used to represent how individuals approached the tax system – commitment (sample item: I feel a moral obligation to pay my tax) and disengagement (sample item: I don't really know what the tax office expects of me and I'm not about to ask; Braithwaite, 2003). As predicted, relativists were least committed ($M = 3.56$) and most disengaged ($M = 2.34$) from taxation, whereas dualists were most

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committed ($M = 3.83$) and least disengaged ($M = 2.09$). The security oriented behaved like dualists, supporting the revenue-raising measures of the conservative government ($M = 3.79$ for commitment and 2.11 for disengagement). On the other hand, the harmony oriented behaved like relativists, spurning the conservative government's reformed and more regressive tax system ($M = 3.63$ for commitment and 2.24 for disengagement).

These findings show the security and harmony oriented, dualists and relativists adopting different roles in political deliberation and engagement. The security oriented were most supportive and expressed greatest confidence in the conservative government of the day. The harmony oriented adopted an adversarial stance, expressing least trust and offering least cooperation to government. They were the most disillusioned with the state of the democracy, but had not closed their minds to how government might win their trust in the future. Dualists were the most hopeful for government improving government trustworthiness, strongly supporting trust norms and positively engaging with the tax system as the vehicle for building a better society. Dualists like the harmony oriented were not blind to government shortcomings and had hope for building trust in government in the future. Unlike the harmony oriented, dualists were more prepared to support the system through its difficulties. Standing apart from all of these groups were relativists. They were least interested in how government might engage more constructively with their constituents.

Conclusion

The value balance model provides insight into political tensions that are overlooked in analyses that focus on the dominant contestation of left versus right. Institutional pressures to align with left or right may be noticed by the public, but are not accepted by them as the best way to engage with the political system. Strong allegiance to both security and harmony values for most people pull them in one direction and then the other along the left–right political continuum. Dualists are in the thick of the tussle and seem to embrace their role as "glue" in the political system. Those with weak allegiance to both value orientations behave differently. They appear to stand apart, treating the political system with a degree of scepticism and dismissiveness. Their modus operandi appears to be to deal with political events on an issues basis, and not be swayed by principle-based decision making. This group of relativists may be small when compared with the combined force of the other value groups, but they may be surprisingly influential in the political process when trust is low and visionary leadership is absent. At times of political crisis when the old rules of the game

lose force, those who experience anomie (Durkheim, 1897/1997) and normlessness can have their moment in history. When legitimate means to achieving goals are blocked, relativists may be the ones most open to using illegitimate means such as violence to achieve desired ends (Merton, 1968).

Where political stability and democratic processes endure, however, institutionalized forms of left–right encounters will prevail. The security and harmony oriented are likely to withdraw cooperation from the other depending on who holds power. Although they may oppose each other much of the time, their value allegiance means that they also understand where each other is coming from and are capable of mutual respect (Dryzek & Braithwaite, 2000). The security and harmony oriented are not incapable of finding a basis for bipartisan support for innovative policies and programs through consensual dialogue (Braithwaite, 2000; Braithwaite & Bush, 1998). Moreover, on occasions when they do reach an impasse and are at loggerheads, dualists are well positioned through their value sympathies and hopeful demeanor to build bridges and bring warring parties back into constructive debate, if not a cooperative partnership.

This dynamic, however, depends on a democracy and its government having forward momentum, with a proactive agenda of either a conservative or progressive kind. Values unite groups because they are used to underpin action, and action with a broad support base is integral to the government achieving its agenda. When a government has lost that agenda and has as its only purpose holding power, values lose their currency for framing debate and building coalitions. It is at such times that relativists may have a disproportionately influential, though not particularly obvious role in directing the course of government. Policies and political decisions become fragmented, issue specific, and possibly more oriented than usual to pleasing powerful interest groups. Transparency and integrity are both compromised when the public is unable to make sense of what government is doing and why. Overarching principles have the virtue of providing the public with benchmarks for evaluating government performance. It is true that these benchmarks are so broad that they allow for slippage in the government's narrative of achievement, a criticism that relativists will quickly make. But it is equally true that without any such benchmarks, the public are excluded from the democratic process. They don't have the insights and specialised knowledge to judge decisions on an issue-by-issue basis. Moreover, they are denied opportunity to engage at the level at which the public has a right to engage with its democracy, asking the question, is this government authentic in its desire to serve the people?

So far, relativists have been portrayed as the spoilers in the democratic process; the ones least likely to

build social capital. Relativists are sceptical and wary of collective action and the vision that lies behind it. Relativists may not be suited to the role of leadership in a democracy, but it would be a mistake to discount the valuable role that they may play in political deliberation. Governments need to be held to account and relativists are the ideal group for doing so. Relativists are possibly the least likely to buy into false hopes that can be created through political rhetoric that has value appeal but no action plan. They are the ones to throw cold water on exuberance without execution capacity and to look for detail in how particular ideas are going to be implemented. They are likely to be alert to overgovernance and wary of its consequences. Given the power that governments wield for good and ill, the role that relativists play in challenging vision is worthy of a response. The response, however, demands sound reasoning—not loss of political courage. Perhaps the genius of visionary political leaders like Lincoln and Mandela is that at times of disintegration, they can weave different strengths into the national fabric from citizens with value balance of different kinds.

Note

Address correspondence to Valerie Braithwaite, College of Asia and the Pacific, Building 8, Coombs Extension, The Australian National University, ACT 0200 Australia. E-mail: Valerie.Braithwaite@anu.edu.au

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Appendix

Social Values Scales

Respondents were asked to rate each of the following statements on a 7-point scale (1 = *reject*, 2 = *inclined to reject*, 3 = *neither reject nor accept*, 4 = *inclined to accept*, 5 = *accept as important*, 6 = *accept as very important*, 7 = *accept as of utmost importance*): For *international harmony and quality* (1) a good life for others (improving the welfare of all people in need); (2) rule by the people (involvement by all citizens in making decisions that affect their community); (3) international cooperation (having all nations working together to help each other); (4) social progress and reform (readiness to change our way of life for the better); (5) a world at peace (being free from war and conflict); (6) a world of beauty (having the beauty of nature and the arts: music, literature, art); (7) human dignity (allowing each individual to be treated as someone of worth); (8) equal opportunity for all (giving everyone an equal chance in life); (9) greater economic equality (lessening the gap between the rich and the poor); (10) preserving the natural environment (preventing the destruction of nature's beauty and resources). For *national strength and order* (1) national greatness (being a united, strong, independent, and powerful nation); (2) reward for individual effort (letting individuals prosper through gains made by initiative and hard work); (3) national security (protection of your nation from enemies); (4) rule of law (living by laws that everyone must follow); (5) national economic development (having greater economic progress and prosperity for the nation).

The Trust Scale

Respondents were asked to use a 5-point rating scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) to answer the following: The federal government . . . (1) turns its back on its responsibility to Australians*; (2) takes advantage of people who are vulnerable*; (3) acts in the interests of all Australians; (4) is trusted by you to administer the laws and rules fairly; (5) misleads the Australian people*; (6) is open and honest in its dealing with citizens; (7) meets its obligations to Australians. (∗These items were reverse scored before responses were aggregated for the trust scale.)

The Trust Norm Scale

Respondents were asked to use a 6-point rating scale (1 = *not at all*, 2 = *somewhat important*, 3 = *fairly important*, 4 = *important*, 5 = *very important*, 6 =

essential) to answer the following: How important is it for the federal government to . . . (1) have interest in the well-being of ordinary Australians; (2) be accountable for its actions; (3) treat Australians with respect; (4) be efficient in its operations; (5) be consistent in its decision making; (6) consult widely with different groups; (7) share the goals of the people; (8) keep citizens informed; (9) understand the position of individual Australians.

Disillusionment with Democracy Scale

Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither disagree nor agree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*): (1) I'm always cynical about government processes; (2) There's a dollar democracy that runs through our supposed democracy; (3) I don't think we have enough input into legislation and the decisions that are important; (4) Democracy is a term that has lost much of its original meaning; (5) Our government is attempting to mould our society to the needs of a profit-oriented market; (6) In Australia the rich have virtually unlimited access to the legal system and the capacity to use it to achieve their own ends.

Tax Commitment Scale

Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *disagree nor agree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*): (1) I think of tax paying as helping the government do worthwhile things; (2) Paying tax is the right thing to do; (3) Paying tax is a responsibility that should be willingly accepted by all Australians; (4) Paying my tax ultimately advantages everyone.

Tax Disengagement Scale

Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3= *neither disagree nor agree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*): (1) If I find out that I am not doing what the Tax Office wants, I'm not going to lose any sleep over it; (2) I personally don't think that there is much the Tax Office can do to me to make me pay tax if I don't want to; (3) I don't care if I am not doing the right thing by the Tax Office; (4) If the Tax Office gets tough with me, I will become uncooperative with them; (5) I don't really know what the Tax Office expects of me and I'm not about to ask.