THE NATURE OF VALUE CONFLICT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR PUBLIC OPINION

DISSERTATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

Citizens of democratic societies are often asked to make political choices that require them to balance one desired goal against another. How much freedom is one willing to give up in order to achieve a more tolerant, moral, or secure society? The choices that citizens are asked to make can be difficult because they implicate conflicting principles or values. A tradition of research in political psychology suggests that value conflict is common and consequential for the expression of political attitudes. But a number of recent studies suggest that value conflict is rare and inconsequential. I address this debate, focusing on the conceptualization, measurement, and effects of value conflict on political attitudes. I argue that value conflict can be latent or subjectively felt. I show that both forms of conflict occur in mass publics and lead to ambivalence (mixed feelings and beliefs about an issue), responsiveness to persuasion, attitude instability over time, moderation, and subjective uncertainty. These results challenge the widespread assumption that the weak attitudes often expressed by ordinary Americans in opinion polls are ephemeral, shallow, and otherwise poorly considered, suggesting instead that apparently weak attitudes are sometimes rooted in deeply held but conflicting core values.
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CHAPTER 1

THE EXPERIENCE AND EFFECTS OF VALUE CONFLICT

*The world that we encounter in ordinary experience is one in which we are faced with choices between ends equally ultimate, and claims equally absolute, the realization of some of which must inevitably involve the sacrifice of others. … But equally it seems to me that the belief that some single formula can in principle be found whereby the diverse ends of men can be harmoniously realized is demonstrably false. If, as I believe, the ends of men are many, and not all of them are in principle compatible with each other, then the possibility of conflict—and of tragedy—can never wholly be eliminated from human life, either personal or social. The necessity of choosing between absolute claims is then an inescapable characteristic of the human condition.*


Isaiah Berlin’s value pluralism thesis has vexed political philosophers for now more than three decades as they have tried to develop a philosophical justification for choosing between the absolute claims of conflicting values. Philosophers have found it difficult to identify grounds from which to adjudicate difficult choices between ultimate ends. Perhaps it is no wonder, then, that ordinary citizens are often thought to find it difficult to reconcile the conflicting claims of value conflict when making decisions on controversial political issues. For the ordinary citizen, not schooled in
the resolution of philosophical dilemmas, the choice may be equally difficult, equally irreconcilable.

This study deals with the nature and consequences of value conflict. I address how individuals experience value conflict and how this experience influences their expressed policy attitudes. For this study, I define value conflict as occurring when a person endorses two or more values that have conflicting implications for a policy judgment. I deal solely with conflicts between two values that have opposing implications for a single issue of public policy.\(^1\) When asked to give an opinion on an issue of welfare spending, the person who views equality as more important than self-reliance (or vice-versa) faces an easy choice. He or she adopts a position on the issue consonant with the endorsed value. The person who strongly endorses equality favors greater opportunity and social leveling through redistributive welfare spending. People should not be denied an opportunity to succeed because they are poor. The person who more strongly favors self-reliance supports allowing people to get ahead on their own without government handouts. We all face barriers to success, and it is up to us as individuals to overcome them.

But the person who cherishes both values faces a dilemma. He or she is psychologically stretched in different directions by the tugging implications of conflicting principles. The person who is “value conflicted” is psychologically stuck between a rock and a hard place as he or she wrestles with the conflicting claims of value conflict (Glathar 1997). Both values are personally important, and relevant to the issue, but to take a position on one side of the issue would enhance one value at
the expense of the other. Short of redefining the values or rationalizing the inconsistency, as even some contemporary political philosophers are wont to do, there is no way around it. Faced with this seemingly-irreconcilable choice, how is a person to choose? The person must find a way to cope with the conflict, to balance or calibrate the values’ opposing implications. The person who is value conflicted implicitly or explicitly sees merit in both sides of the debate, feels pulled in different directions, and must reconcile the conflicting implications of the clash of principles.

In this chapter I develop my hypotheses of the experience and effects of value conflict. I begin, in the next section, by discussing and defining key terms, including values, value conflict, and ambivalence. Then I place this study in the context of recent research on value conflict in American politics. This research points to two schools of thought, one that says value conflict is common and consequential and the other that says it is generally rare and inconsequential. Following that, I present my suppositions that I test in the chapters that follow.

In dealing with the nature or experience of value conflict I posit two forms of conflict—latent or potential value conflict and subjective or felt value conflict. Latent value conflict is “potential” conflict because it is based on our best guess of how conflicted a person is likely to be when he or she is faced with an issue that implicates conflicting values. It is based on our knowledge of a person’s endorsement of conflicting values in the abstract and the supposed likelihood that he or she will be conflicted when considering the issue.

1 There are other situations where value conflict may occur, such as conflicts that among multiple values rather than pairs of values, but I do not deal with those here.
Subjective value conflict is subjectively felt or experienced by the individual. The person *feels conflicted* by the opposing implications of the values for the opinion. This distinction between the two types of conflict is important because almost all previous studies of value conflict have assumed that people high in latent conflict feel conflicted but none have measured this conflict directly. This study is the first explicitly to conceptualize value conflict as latent or subjective and to develop measures of each. In this chapter I develop the theoretical underpinnings of this distinction. In the next chapter I develop empirical measures of both types of conflict.

Latent and subjective value conflict are likely to be related. I expect that people whom we expect to be conflicted, who have a strong potential for value conflict based on their endorsement of conflicting values in the abstract, *will feel* conflicted when presented with an issue that implicates both values. I discuss this hypothesis in this chapter and test it empirically in chapter 2.

In the next chapter I also address empirically the debate in the literature over the prevalence of value conflict. The test is limited to two issues and sets of values but is the first to examine how much of both kinds of conflict occur in a large sample representative of a Midwestern state.

In addressing the consequences of value conflict I develop six hypotheses about how value conflict affects policy attitudes.

First, I hypothesize that value conflict causes attitudinal ambivalence. Most studies of value conflict and ambivalence assume that they are the same thing.
this chapter I argue that they are not and that value conflict is a likely cause of ambivalence. In chapter 3 I test these suppositions empirically.

My second and third hypotheses are that value conflict is associated with two types of attitude change—responsiveness to persuasion and attitude instability over time. The “persuadability” hypothesis is based on the notion that people who are conflicted between core values should be likely to see merit in both sides of a policy debate. The person who views both freedom and security as very important agrees, to some extent, with both the civil libertarians and the security hawks on the issue of wiretapping as a response to terrorism. Having taken a position on one side of the issue, however, he or she should be more easily persuaded to switch sides when presented with a reason for doing so. Similarly, seeing merit in both sides of the debate, and perceiving a valid rationale for adopting a position on either side of the issue, the conflicted individual should be more likely than the person who is not conflicted to side with one value at one time and another value at another time, resulting in attitude instability. In chapter 3 I test the hypothesized association between value conflict and both types of change—responsiveness to persuasion and attitude instability over time.

My fourth hypothesis is that value conflict enhances moderation, the opposite of extremity. The argument here is that when asked to give an opinion on an issue that evokes value conflict, the conflicted individual, being pulled in different directions by the conflicting implications of clashing values, implicitly splits the difference between the two by taking a moderate stand on the issue. This provides an opportunity to resolve the conflict, to some extent, because offering a moderate
opinion satisfies the implications of both values to the greatest extent possible without negating either one. I test this hypothesis in chapter 4.

Fifth, I hypothesize that value conflict produces subjective uncertainty. People who are conflicted between core values relevant to an issue are more likely to admit to feeling less firm, sure, or certain about their opinion on it. Most research on uncertainty in political science assumes, even defines, uncertainty as reflecting a lack of information or knowledge. While controlling for the possibility that subjective uncertainty reflects a lack of information, I theorize that the subjective feeling of being uncertain is associated with value conflict rather than ignorance, and test this hypothesis in chapter 4.

Finally, I test the hypothesis that value conflict produces psychological tension and discomfort. Consistent with classic theories of cognitive dissonance and consistency (e.g., Abelson et al. 1968), most previous value conflict research assumes that people find value conflict psychologically aversive and that, for this reason, seek ways to resolve value conflicts as they arise. But little evidence to date supports this claim. The final hypothesis I test in chapter 4 is that value conflict causes psychological tension and discomfort.

I conclude the study in chapter 5, where I discuss the implications of the results for our understanding of public opinion, American politics, and American democracy.
Values, Value Conflict, and Ambivalence

Values

With so much attention to values in American politics in recent years, it is easy to overlook the fact that values, as social constructs, are rather new. Values have their roots in virtues. These include the classical Aristotelian virtues of wisdom, justice, temperance, and courage, and the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity (the latter referring to love of God). Tracing the roots of values, Himmelfarb (1995, prologue) discusses how, around the turn of the 20th century, virtues became "relativized and subjectified" such that "virtues' became 'values.'" Nietzsche, in the 1880's, was the first to speak of "values" not as a verb, or as a noun referring to the worth of a thing, but as a noun in the plural relating to moral beliefs. Though it has gone largely unnoticed, this contribution "is the great philosophical revolution of modernity," Himmelfarb suggests, "no less momentous than the earlier revolt of the 'Moderns' against the 'Ancients'—modern science and learning against classical philosophy." Nietzsche himself was much aware of and adamant about the revolutionary nature of his use of "values," as Himmelfarb explains.

He used the word consciously, repeatedly, indeed insistently, to signify what he took to be the most profound event in human history. His "transvaluation of values" was to be the final, ultimate revolution, a revolution against both the classical virtues and the Judaic-Christian ones. The "death of God" would mean the death of morality and the death of truth—above all, the truth of any morality. There would be no good and evil, no virtue and vice. There would be only "values."

The transformation was all the more momentous because it occurred without debate, without comment, without notice. When Weber, in the early 20th century,
spoke of and popularized the use of values as moral beliefs, he “used the word matter-of-factly, as if it were part of the accepted vocabulary and of no great moment.” Values, divorced from virtue, make no claim to the good, they are neutral, relative, and “value-free.” This sense of values was soon absorbed into the vocabulary of modern social science and, indeed, modern society.

Contemporary definitions of values approach the concept from the Weberian perspective, while often retaining overtones of the earlier notion of virtue. Rokeach (1973, p. 5) defined value as “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite mode of conduct or end state of existence.” Values are often defined in terms of motivations or goals, as in Feather’s (1996, p. 222) definition of values as “beliefs about desirable or undesirable ways of behaving or about the desirability or otherwise of general goals.” Perhaps more directly relevant to the study of politics is Schwartz’s (1999, p. 24) definition of values as “conceptions of the desirable that guide the way social actors (e.g., organizational leaders, policy-makers, individual persons) select actions, evaluate people and events, and explain their actions and evaluations.”

Values are prescriptive beliefs about what constitutes good behavior or the good society. From the perspective of social science, they are continuums, with some people esteeming the value and others not, with still others in between. At their most basic level, values can be conceived as the backstops of political opinion, providing the opinion holder a rationale that requires no further justification (Tetlock et al. 1996).
A large body of research shows that values have a directive influence on more proximate political attitudes. Researchers who use in-depth interviews (e.g., Hochschild 1981), and probing open-ended survey questions (e.g., Feldman and Zaller 1992) find that people often draw on principles to explain their points of view. Dozens of traditional survey-based analyses show that people’s attitudes toward contemporary political issues are derived at least in part from more basic value orientations, and experimental analyses show that the extent to which people bring values to bear on political choices is responsive to the context or framing of the decision (e.g., Brewer 2001; Chong, Citrin, and Conley 2001; Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999; Nelson et al. 1997a, 1997b). Although values can change over time in response to major events (Rokeach 1973, 1974), values are generally considered to be “highly stable” and “inherently resistant to change” (Rokeach and Ball-Rokeach 1989, p. 777; Inglehart 1985; Sniderman 1993). As stable enduring beliefs, values regulate more proximate political opinions.

**How People Experience Value Conflict (and Ambivalence)**

Value conflict occurs when a person endorses or views as personally important values that have conflicting implications for an opinion on an issue, and these conflicting implications pull the person in different directions at the same time. For the purposes of this study, I make three assumptions about value conflict.

First, like Tetlock (1986), I assume that value conflict occurs at a specific point in time. Usually, I suspect, it occurs when a person is faced with the prospect of evaluating an issue or giving an opinion on an issue that gives rise to value
conflict. I assume that value conflict happens in the here-and-how, that it is situational rather than constant and unremitting. A person may have a propensity to be conflicted, due to his or her endorsement of values that are often placed in conflict, but the conflict does not occur unless and until these values are brought to the fore by the political environment, when, for example, the person is faced with evaluating an issue that implicates both values.

Second, I assume that value conflict is best represented as continuum that ranges from low conflict to high conflict (or high consonance to high conflict) rather than an all-or-nothing state of mind. When presented with an issue that implicates conflicting values, it is not simply the case that some people are conflicted while others are not. More likely, some people are very conflicted, others somewhat conflicted, and others not at all conflicted. Value conflict is not either-or, but a matter of degree.

Third, I assume that value conflict is not the same thing as ambivalence. This assumption is surely the most controversial of the three, as it goes against the dominant view in value conflict and ambivalence research, which tends to use these two terms interchangeably. While this is fine for common parlance, for the purpose of this study, and the study of public opinion generally, I suggest that we can and should distinguish between them. Here is why.

Value conflict occurs when two distinct goal orientations—two distinct values—have opposing implications for an opinion on an issue. The values are related to the issue but are conceptually separate from each other and from the issue itself. We might demonstrate, for example, that the values of freedom and
national security have conflicting implications for an opinion of expanded use of wiretapping in response to terrorism, but it would be implausible to suggest that the person’s endorsement of these two abstract values are measures of, which is to say, the same thing as, his or her opinion of wiretapping. Freedom is a value, security is another value, and wiretapping is a policy issue. The two values are conceptually related to the issue but are separate from it; they are not attributes or characteristics of the issue itself. We might say that wiretapping has negative implications for freedom, but we would not describe the issue as “unfree.” Nor would we, despite its association with the value of national security, say that wiretapping is “safe” or “secure.” The two values have implications for the issue but they are not part and parcel of it.

The dominant view of ambivalence in the political and social psychology literature is that ambivalence occurs when a person has conflicting attitudes or feelings and beliefs about the issue or object itself (Cacioppo and Bernston 1994; Lavine 2001; Priester and Petty 1996). Ambivalence is different from value conflict in two key respects. First, ambivalence is broader. This can be seen in the fact that a person can be ambivalent about something for reasons that have nothing to do with values or value conflict. A person may be ambivalent about wiretapping because he or she dislikes perceived targets of the policy, such as Muslims or Middle-Easterners, and thinks it is ineffective at catching terrorists. These are plausible reasons for why a person may favor or oppose the issue but neither is directly associated with the values of freedom or security.
Second, the conflicting feelings and beliefs that constitute ambivalence may be rooted in, but are not synonymous with, values or value conflict. A person may think expanded wiretapping would be “useful” for controlling the spread of terrorism but “inappropriate” for a free society. He or she may feel “hopeful” or “optimistic” that expanded use of wiretapping will help to eradicate terrorism but “uneasy” or “worried” that it will be abused. These feelings and beliefs are attributes associated with the attitude object, wiretapping, but they are not, in any real way, indicators of the values of freedom, security, or the conflict between these values. Value conflict and ambivalence are similar but distinct constructs.

In this study I also depart from previous research by differentiating between two different types of value conflict. Latent or potential value conflict occurs when a person endorses values that have conflicting implications for a particular issue, but the person does not necessarily feel conflicted when thinking about the issue, nor even necessarily perceive or recognize the values as having conflicting implications for the issue. In this case, if value conflict influences the judgment, it does so outside of the person’s awareness. Latent or potential value conflict is measured by assessing the extent to which a person views as personally important values in the abstract, values that, in theory, conflict when applied to a specific issue. All previous studies that measure value conflict directly, using a standard measure (rather than interpretations of open-ended remarks), measure latent conflict.

Subjective or felt value conflict occurs when the person feels conflicted about the opposing implications of the competing values for the judgment. The person who experiences subjective value conflict perceives himself or herself as being
pulled in different directions at the same time by the opposing implications of the values for the issue. The conflict is subjectively manifest in the sense that the person is aware that his or her values conflict on the issue and he or she feels torn or conflicted by them. Previous research on value conflict does not distinguish between latent and subjective value conflict. It tends to assume that latent conflict reflects subjective conflict. This is the first study to make this distinction, measure the two types of conflict separately, and assess their independent consequences for public opinion.

Research on Value Conflict

Oversimplifying just a bit, research on value conflict that occurs within people (rather than across people, within societies) can be divided, somewhat loosely, into two categories or groups. One group of studies suggests that value conflict is common and consequential and the other suggests that value conflict is fairly rare and inconsequential.² Many, though not all, of the early and seminal studies of value conflict fall into the first group—they suggest that value conflict occurs frequently and affects people’s opinions in various ways (e.g., Hochschild 1981; Feldman and Zaller 1992). Many of the more recent value conflict studies are in the other group. They suggest that value conflict hardly ever occurs, and when it does occur, it is usually without much in the way of consequences (e.g., Alvarez and Brehm 2002; Jacoby 2003).

² Of course, it is conceivable that value conflict could be common and inconsequential or uncommon and yet (when it does occur) consequential. Research on value conflict to date, however, tends to conclude either that it occurs fairly often and with consequences or rarely and, when it does occur, without many consequences.
Scholars in the first group often draw from the consensus theorists. They argue that the American political culture places values in conflict (e.g., McClosky and Zaller 1984), that many, perhaps even most, Americans revere these values (e.g., Feldman 1988), and so become, to some extent, conflicted themselves (e.g., Feldman and Zaller 1992). Drawing from this mostly earlier work, scholars in the second group often begin with the assumption that value conflict is common and consequential but find, upon investigation, that it is neither. In their initial research on this topic, Alvarez and Brehm (1995) found that many people are ambivalent about legalized abortion. But their subsequent studies on the topic (e.g., 1998, 2002, 2003) have led them to conclude that such conflict is the exception rather than the norm. Other researchers (e.g., Jacoby 2002, 2003; Steenbergen and Brewer in press) have followed suit and drawn the same conclusion. The literature on value conflict is divided between those who say value conflict occurs often and with significant effect and those who say the opposite. In the next section I summarize the evidence on both sides. In the section that follows I discuss how, in the chapters to come, I add to this debate.

Value Conflict is Common and Consequential

Several of the most prominent studies in political psychology contend that value conflict occurs frequently and with predictable consequences. In her study of how people think about welfare issues, What’s Fair (1981), Jennifer Hochschild conducted guided, but otherwise open-ended, interviews with a small but diverse sample of 28 ordinary citizens from New Haven, Connecticut. Her participants
spoke at length about issues of distributive justice—their beliefs and opinions of welfare, fairness, equality, and the work ethic. For what her sample lacks in representativeness, she more than makes up for in uncovering how people think, reason, and decide on issues related to the appropriate distribution of wealth in American society.

Her qualitative, small-sample approach is decidedly different from the norm in public opinion research. Most public opinion studies are based on large samples whose respondents are asked a series of closed-ended questions, questions that ask them to choose from a selection of mutually-exclusive response options. The problem with traditional survey research, Hochschild suggests, is that it forces people into a procrustean box. When asked to give an opinion on an issue in such a survey, almost all respondents willingly comply. But in reality, people’s views are more complicated than the frequency distributions of closed-ended survey questions suggest. When given the opportunity to talk about, to discuss, to clarify, their position on an issue, “people do not make simple statements; they shade, modulate, deny, retract, or just grind to a halt in frustration” (p. 238). On such difficult issues she suggests people experience value conflict.

When verbalizing their thoughts on welfare and the just the distribution of wealth, Hochschild found that people from all walks of life experience conflict between the values of equality and differentiation. They are, she says, ambivalent. They cannot, without difficulty, square their beliefs about the appropriate distribution of wealth with their beliefs about individual initiative, the work ethic, and just desserts. The problem with the traditional approach to public opinion is that it hides
this common internal conflict. People are not mutually-exclusive in their opinions; they are conflicted. And this conflict leaves them confused, tongue-tied, helpless, vacillating, indecisive, inconsistent, and stymied.

Studies by Stanley Feldman and John Zaller (Feldman and Zaller 1992; Zaller 1992; Zaller and Feldman 1992) make similar points. Like Hochschild, Feldman and Zaller gave their participants an opportunity talk about their views of welfare and to express their ambivalence. In contrast to Hochschild, they interviewed a representative cross-section of the American public. This allows them to generalize their findings to the broader public with greater confidence. Hochschild’s analysis was qualitative and selective. She discussed exemplary participants and their reactions to welfare and wealth. Zaller and Feldman’s analysis is more quantitative—their impartial coders, unfamiliar with the authors’ hypotheses, coded respondents’ open-ended remarks and then Zaller and Feldman analyzed the results empirically. What Hochschild gives us in qualitative richness and theoretical insight, Feldman and Zaller match in the representativeness of their sample and in minimizing the risk of bias from the choice of which participants’ remarks to analyze and discuss.

In one study, Feldman and Zaller (1992) demonstrate empirically what the consensus theorists have argued for half a century—that Americans from across the political spectrum have inculcated the values of America’s liberal tradition. Feldman and Zaller show that a cross-section of Americans draw on the values of freedom, equality of opportunity, and individualism when asked about their opinions of social welfare policies. They agree with Converse’s seminal argument that most people do
not array their opinions, beliefs, or values on the left-right ideological spectrum. Instead, most Americans adhere to these values, some to different degrees, in what amounts to a consensus of traditional liberalism.

They found that most Americans draw on these values when giving their opinions on issues such as support for the American welfare state. Giving their respondents an opportunity to talk about issues of social spending and services, like Hochschild, they found a majority “made at least one remark that either invoked a value such as individualism, humanitarianism, or limited government, or made an argument at a comparable level of abstraction” (p. 278). “Americans are, by our survey-based evidence, quite able to make active use of values and principles in articulating their views” (p. 281).

On welfare issues especially, they suggest, American politics is a “political culture of ambivalence” (Feldman and Zaller 1992). While this is particularly true among liberals, who want government to help those who need it but believe that people should otherwise be responsible for themselves, they find it applies to Americans generally. “Nearly all Americans have absorbed the principal elements of their political culture,” they remark, and, “they are highly sensitive to its characteristic fault lines. Yet they are relatively nonideological in that most do not reconcile these tensions in ways that would lead to the development of consistent liberal or conservative ideologies” (p. 272). Feldman and Zaller find conflict amid consensus: consensus about basic American values, but conflict about how those values are to be reconciled when applied to contemporary issues.
In other studies they go further, suggesting that this characteristic ambivalence extends to most people and most issues of American politics (Zaller and Feldman 1992; Zaller 1992). The traditional view of attitudes—that people have them, carry them around, and can share them—is, they suggest, flawed. Most people “simply do not possess preformed attitudes at the level of specificity demanded in surveys. Rather, they carry around in their heads a mix of only partially consistent ideas and considerations” (Zaller and Feldman 1992, p. 579).

Zaller and Feldman and others (e.g., Wilson and Hodges 1992; Tourangeau and Rasinski 1988) suggest that people do not so much “have” opinions as “construct” them when asked to give one. They (Zaller and Feldman 1992) claim that this ambivalence can account for a laundry list of 17 consequences, most of them survey response effects such as question order effects, framing or priming effects, and interviewer effects. The most relevant one for this study, and the only one for which they have empirical support, is that ambivalence is associated with opinion instability over time. They argue that people who are ambivalent about an issue could decide an issue either way, depending on which considerations happen to be more salient or accessible at the time. If, at one time, they are asked to give their opinion on the appropriate amount of welfare spending, and pro-welfare considerations are most accessible, the result will be a pro-welfare response. Asked to give their opinion at another time, when anti-welfare considerations are more accessible, they give an anti-welfare response. People construct opinions based on whatever considerations happen to be at the top of their heads, resulting in unstable attitudes.
Research by Katz and Hass (1988) and their colleagues (Hass, Katz, Rizzo, Bailey, and Eisenstadt 1991; Hass, Katz, Rizzo, Bailey, and Moore 1992) suggests that value conflict is important when it comes to racial issues, particularly affirmative action. Katz and Hass (1988) argue that “these conflicting sentiments are rooted in two largely independent, core value orientations of American culture, humanitarianism-egalitarianism and the Protestant work ethic.” (Katz and Hass 1988, p. 893). Americans feel both sympathetic toward the plight of blacks, which reflects an “humanitarianism-egalitarianism” value, and that blacks are prone to violating the value of individualism, which esteems self-reliance, work, and achievement. Whites perceive blacks as both disadvantaged and deviant, Katz and Hass (1988) say, tend to evaluate the behavior of black people on this basis (Hass, Katz, Rizzo, Bailey, and Eisenstadt 1991) and, because of this conflict, when giving their opinion on racial issues, experience psychological tension and discomfort (Hass, Katz, Rizzo, Bailey, and Moore 1992). In a recent study, Federico (2004) found that attitudes toward racial issues evoked conflict between humanitarianism and individualism and this conflict was greatest among conservatives.

Philip Tetlock and his colleagues suggest that value conflict should be fairly common since “one of life’s painful truisms is that difficult choices are unavoidable” (Tetlock, Peterson, and Lerner 1996, p. 25) but that people go out of their way to avoid them. In politics as in other areas of life, the world presents “a daunting battery of tradeoffs.”
In political economy, there is the classic tension between social equality and economic efficiency. In international relations, there are the contradictory goals of deterrence (be strong enough to resist exploitation) and reassurance (don’t be so intimidating that you scare the other side into preemptively attacking you) (Tetlock et al. 1996, p.25).

“The world,” they suggest, “can be a very dissonant place” (e.g., Tetlock et al. 1996, p. 25).

In a series of studies Tetlock and his colleagues investigate how people cope with value conflict (see Tetlock 2000 for a review). Drawing from classic research on cognitive consistency and dissonance, he suggests that people find such trade-offs aversive and stressful and so try to avoid them. But sometimes avoiding them is not possible and so people must find ways to resolve conflicts as they arise. These people, Tetlock suggests, develop strategies for balancing or reconciling the inconsistent demands of the values and tend to think about conflict-producing issues in more complex ways.

Tetlock and his colleagues have thus found value conflict to be associated with explicit trade-off reasoning (e.g., Tetlock 1986). Though the world presents many such trade-offs, Tetlock and his colleagues find that “integratively complex trade-off reasoning is a relatively rare cognitive phenomenon” (Tetlock, Peterson, and Lerner 1996, p. 34) because people are artful in dodging dissonance-producing conflicts. In their studies Tetlock and his colleagues have found that a majority of participants “receive the lowest possible score” on the integrative complexity scale, “which indicates a complete denial of ambiguity, uncertainty, or conflict” (Tetlock, Peterson, and Lerner 1996, p. 34). Thus, whereas Tetlock asserts that trade-offs
are necessary and unavoidable in political and social life, people find ways to
downplay and avoid them. Their research suggests that though value conflict may
be common, it is likely to have little consequence for public opinion for the simple
reason that people are practiced in avoiding or working through them.

Many studies of value conflict do not make strong assumptions about the
prevalence or commonness of value conflict. They assume that it exists and find
that it exists in sufficient quantity to influence people and their opinions in various
ways. These studies suggest that value conflict is associated with opinions that are
more moderate in the sense of being less extreme (Fletcher and Chalmers 1991;
Liberman and Chaiken 1991; Glaðar 1997; Peterson 1995), more ambivalent (Craig,
Kane, and Martinez 2002), more susceptible to survey context effects (Tourangeau
et al. 1989), and issue framing (Tourangeau and Rasinski 1988), more unstable
partisan identifications (Keele and Wolak 2003), more responsive to persuasive
messages (Bassili and Fletcher 1991; McGraw 1995; Peffley, Kniggle, and Hurwitz,
and 2001; Sniderman et al. 1996), perceived by the opinion holder as more likely to
change over time (Huckfeldt and Sprague 2000; Schnell 1993), as well as less
predictable (Alvarez and Brehm 1995; but see Alvarez and Brehm 1998, 2002;
Jacob 2002; Steenbergen and Brewer in press), less personally involving or
important (Schnell 1993), less certain (Schnell 1993; Tetlock 1986) and less
confident (Feather 2002), less accessible (Bassili 1996; Bassili and Fletcher 1991),
given to delays in decision making (Huckfeldt and Sprague 2000; Tversky and Shafir
1992), and more likely to elicit “don’t know” responses in opinion surveys (Berinksy
2002; Glaðar 1997). To generalize, most scholars in the first group find that value
Conflict is common, or at least not uncommon, and has predictable consequences for public opinion.

Value Conflict is Uncommon and Inconsequential

These findings conflict with a tradition of theory in social psychology that casts doubt on the likelihood of value conflict within individuals. Although Freud famously theorized that psychosis is rooted in unresolved conflicts within the self, Lewin’s (e.g., 1951) field theory and especially the consistency theories of the middle-twentieth century (e.g., Abelson, Aronson, McGuire, Newcomb, Rostenberg, and Tannenbaum 1968) assumed that people are motivated to resolve inconsistencies among their beliefs and attitudes as they arise. The most prominent of these, Festinger’s theory of cognitive dissonance (e.g., Festinger 1957), proposed that inconsistencies among beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors produces dissonance in the form of psychological tension or discomfort that people seek to eliminate or resolve. As people are motivated to eliminate this discomfort by resolving internal conflicts as they occur, there is likely to be little in the way of value conflict in American public opinion.

Rokeach’s (1973) classic research on values is rooted in the consistency-dissonance tradition. Like the consistency theorists, Rokeach assumed that people find inconsistencies among their values to be psychologically aversive. He posited that politics and society routinely bring values into conflict and suggested that people seek to reduce or eliminate the dissonance by resolving these conflicts as they arise. The resolution may be difficult, to be sure, but people are compelled to achieve it.
Individuals who face a value conflict find ways to decide which of the two values is more important than the other and adopt a position on the issue consonant with the more important value. Over time, as conflict-producing issues arise, values are brought into conflict, and these conflicts are resolved, people develop naturally a fully-harmonized or rank-ordered hierarchy of values.

Rokeach’s values hierarchy theory is self-consciously similar to Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs. Maslow posited that people have lower order needs (such as air, water, and food) that must be met before higher order needs (such as self-esteem and self-actualization) can be addressed. Similarly, Rokeach suggested that people must feel secure in basic values (such as safety and security) before more abstract values (such as freedom and self-expression) can be achieved. Inglehart’s (e.g., 1990) theory of postmaterialism in modern democracies operates from the same premise. Inglehart argues that as a society becomes more affluent, its basic needs are met and taken for granted, people place more importance on abstract values than basic values. This perspective that values are naturally rank-ordered into hierarchies has been adopted by many values researchers.

More recent research begins with the premise that the American political culture is replete with conflicting values but suggests that value conflict in the aggregate does not necessarily imply value conflict within the individual. The American creed esteems conflicting values, to be sure, and the culture wars may imply an America increasingly polarized in its values, but conflict between values in the abstract and polarization between ideological groups does not imply that people are polarized within themselves. In their book on the values divide in Canadian
politics, *The Clash of Rights*, Sniderman and his colleagues (Sniderman, Fletcher, Russell, and Tetlock 1996) argue that the prevalence of value conflict between political parties and within the political culture reduces the likelihood of conflict within individuals. This is because in specific political conflicts parties and elites line up behind one value or set of values or the other. Citizens, who are exposed to these conflicts in the media and public discourse, receive these partisan cues, and line up behind the elites. From elites people learn, for example, that freedom clashes with national security on the issue of wiretapping in response to terrorism, and, on this basis, take a side. Civil libertarians learn that liberty must not be sacrificed for greater security and security hawks learn that liberty must sometimes bend to the greater good of protecting the country from harm. People learn which values are reflected in political issues and debates, that the endorsement of one value comes at the expense of the other, and decide for themselves which side they are on. Just as in the industrial Midwest there are fans of the Cleveland Browns and fans of the Pittsburgh Steelers, but few fans of both, so do citizens form allegiances in a values divide. As a result, there is little intrapersonal value conflict in democratic politics. Using the example of conflict between liberty and order, Sniderman and his colleagues (1996, p. 240) remark that

the claims of liberty and order can logically clash, in that honoring one means rejecting the other; yet for any given person, in deciding which claim to honor in that situation, there need not be intense psychological conflict because the empirical results, others’ as well as ours, make plain that the more importance people attach to the value of liberty, the less they tend to attach to that of order, and vice versa. Indeed, just insofar as political values like liberty and order do matter to citizens and political decision makers, they minimize the likelihood that they will find themselves having to choose between them by ensuring that their positions on the two values are politically consistent, that is to say, negatively correlated.
Value conflict within individuals is unusual, Sniderman and his colleagues say, because the political culture encourages people to take sides. In short, there is little value conflict within individuals because there is so much conflict between them.

Among the most prominent of these studies are those of R. Michael Alvarez and John Brehm. In studies of public opinion toward abortion (1995), racial issues (1997), the Internal Revenue Service (1998), euthanasia and suicide (2002), and other value-laden issues including English-only laws and school prayer (2003), they examine public opinion at the intersection of value conflict, ambivalence, and the predictability of political attitudes. In these studies, Alvarez and Brehm seek to discriminate issues that tend to be characterized by value conflict (or ambivalence, which is their primary concern) from those that reflect other characteristics or processes such as political ignorance or, alternatively, “equivocation,” which they define, paradoxically, as occurring when non-conflicting considerations make people more set or stable in their opinions.

Alvarez and Brehm place value conflict at the center of their ambivalence studies. They state that ambivalence implicates, even requires, value conflict. They say that an “ambivalent survey response requires comprehension of fundamentally irreconcilable and equally maintained values” (Alvarez, Brehm, and Wilson 2003, p. 165), that “ambivalence results when respondents’ expectations or values are

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3 Their use of “equivocation” to describe this phenomenon is paradoxical because the term would seem to mean the opposite of the psychological event they describe. Dictionaries and popular use of the term indicate that equivocation implies ambiguity. For example, Webster’s provides two definitions of the term: “1. Ambiguity of meaning; also a misunderstanding arising therefrom,” and “2. The use of expressions susceptible of a double meaning, esp. with a purpose to mislead; hence prevarication.” Alvarez and Brehm’s use of “equivocation” is paradoxical because they use
irreconcilable” (Alvarez and Brehm 2002, p. 58), and that “ambivalence stems from a choice between incommensurables, and the dominant literature points to the role of competing values” (Alvarez and Brehm 1998, p. 328).

To understand Alvarez and Brehm’s contribution the study of value conflict and ambivalence it is useful to revisit the conceptions of both constructs. Value conflict occurs when a pair of values, both personally important to the individual, have competing implications for an opinion on an issue related to both values. Ambivalence is similar yet broader in its implications. Ambivalence occurs when a person has mixed feelings and beliefs about something. Ambivalence is broader because a person can be ambivalent about something for reasons other than values or value conflict.

In research on ambivalence, there are two distinct understandings or conceptions of the construct. One conception, probably the most common one in political and social psychology, is that an ambivalent attitude is one that is inconsistent in its cognitive, affective, or behavioral components (Eagly and Chaiken 1998). An ambivalent attitude, by this definition, reflects inconsistent feelings, beliefs, or behaviors associated with an the attitude object. This form of ambivalence increases as the number of inconsistent “considerations” increases (Zaller and Feldman 1992). A second conception is that an ambivalent attitude is not one attitude but two, or maybe more (e.g., Alvarez and Brehm 2002; Wilson, Lindsey, and Schooler 2000). By this definition, a person who is ambivalent about something does not merely have inconsistent feelings and beliefs about it, but

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it to refer to situations in which values reinforce each other, leading to set or stable attitudes,
conflicting attitudes of it. The ambivalent person, by this conception, has both a positive and a negative attitude of something at the same time.

This distinction is more than academic. It has consequences for how we as researchers conceive, measure, and study ambivalence. If ambivalence simply reflects inconsistent feelings and beliefs, these are measured easily by asking participants a series of questions that tap these emotions and cognitions. But if ambivalence reflects conflicting attitudes, the analysis is more complicated because attitudes are not observable except when expressed and in most studies participants have but one opportunity to give their attitude of something. But if the person is ambivalent, and thus actually has two or more inconsistent attitudes, we cannot know which attitude he or she has given us.

The problem with standard public opinion measures is that they do not provide for the expression of ambivalence. In practice, we would have to measure their inconsistent attitudes by having them talk about their views on the issue, as did Hochschild and Feldman and Zaller, or measure their attitudes over time, as did Zaller and Feldman. But aside from the expressions of ambivalence in these open ended remarks, researchers have not tried to tap this form of ambivalence directly.

According to this conception, measuring ambivalence as conflicting feelings or beliefs about something may not do justice to ambivalence because people can have conflicting values related to an issue, or conflicting considerations about it, and yet have consistent or otherwise decided opinions of it. A person may believe in both unfettered individual autonomy and the sanctity of human life, yet not feel the rather than ambiguity or prevarication.
least bit ambivalent about legalized abortion because the person has decided his or her position on the issue. In this case, the conflicting values do not reflect ambivalence, in the sense of inconsistent attitudes at the same time, because the person has settled on a single attitude. Here the person has confronted the conflict and made up his or her mind. As Hochschild (1981, p. 239) remarks, “even conflicts between two norms within one domain need not lead to ambivalence, if the person is able to handle the conflict.” To tap ambivalence requires that we measure not only conflicting considerations related to an issue, but conflicting attitudes of it.

This is the perspective adopted, for the most part implicitly, by Alvarez and Brehm. And for researchers of ambivalence and value conflict it presents a problem. Whereas it is fairly easy to assess the consistency of a person’s feelings and beliefs about an issue, it is difficult, if not impossible, to measure reliably conflicting attitudes toward an object at the same time. The nature of the task—giving one’s opinion on an issue—implies that one has an opinion of it. People should be loathe to admit to having two attitudes at once for fear of appearing inconsistent, even illogical. The demand characteristics alone discourage people from complying with a request for two (different) attitudes.

Value conflict and ambivalence researchers such as Feldman and Zaller (1992) have addressed this issue by assessing the relation between people’s conflicting considerations and the stability of their stated opinions over time. People who possess conflicting considerations and give unstable opinions in successive ways of a panel study are presumably ambivalent.
But using panel data in this way also presents a problem, Alvarez and Brehm suggest, because panel data are fairly scarce and can have methodological artifacts that confound our ability to identify instability as a manifestation of ambivalence.

Generally … there are no multiple measurements of the same respondent. One usually has one or more cross-sectional interviews of different respondents in each cross-section. Even in panel studies where the same person might be asked at multiple times about the same policy domain, important aspects of the policy, the respondent, or the interview context would change (Alvarez and Brehm 2002, p. 62).

Panel data, they suggest, are less than optimal for assessing ambivalence.

Their alternative is to model the cross-sectional variability of people’s attitudes as a proxy for the multiple and conflicting attitudes individuals possess in their heads or would display over time if given the opportunity. The cross-sectional variability provides an estimate of the range of attitudes, the ambivalence, that each individual has about something.

The logic of this strategy is based on Alvarez and Brehm’s assumptions about how ambivalent people respond to attitude questions. When asked to give an attitude of a policy issue people who are ambivalent about it face a difficult choice because they actually have conflicting attitudes of it. This should make it more difficult for us, as researchers, to predict their opinions as these attitudes are offered, because, in fact, they do not have a single attitude, so whichever one they give us, it does not reflect their viewpoint. On the issue of government wiretapping in response to terrorism, it should be fairly easy for us to predict the opinions of extreme civil libertarians and proponents of national security. We know where they stand, they are not ambivalent, and when they give us an opinion, we can be reasonably sure it reflects their underlying attitude, with perhaps some degree of measurement error.
But, Alvarez and Brehm suggest, it should be more difficult for us to predict the opinions of people who are conflicted between these two values because they have both positive and negative attitudes of this issue at the same time; when asked to give their opinion, they could go either way. The opinions of these conflicted people would be poorly predicted by a standard regression model. Statistically, they would display greater error variance or heteroscedasticity than the civil libertarians and security proponents, whose opinions the model would predict well. According to Alvarez and Brehm, this greater error variance, when it is associated with conflicting considerations, serves as a proxy for the multiple or conflicting opinions inside the heads of ambivalent people.

Error variance, associated with value conflict or conflicting considerations, indicates ambivalence, the presence of multiple and variable attitudes. Of course, this greater error variance does not and indeed cannot indicate directly the presence of multiple attitudes, because error variance can be, and to some extent surely is, caused by things other than ambivalence, such as measurement error or a poorly-specified model. Moreover, and I suggest importantly, in Alvarez and Brehm’s several studies that use this method, and in those studies that emulate their method, there is no evidence to date that measurement error is associated with multiple attitudes in actuality. There is no evidence that the hypothetical, estimated variance of attitudes within individuals at any given time is associated with variable or unstable attitudes of individuals either at a single time or across time. Even so, it seems plausible that people whose opinions are poorly predicted by a regression model might be more ambivalent about the issue. Alvarez and Brehm’s research
program on value conflict and ambivalence hinges on the untested assumption that it does.

Alvarez and Brehm estimate this error variance, which serves as a proxy for attitude variability, using the heteroscedastic probit model. This model is similar to the standard probit in that it predicts or models a dichotomous variable. Here, the dichotomous variable might be whether a person favors or opposes expanding government wiretapping powers to fight terrorism. The heteroscedastic probit is different from the standard probit in that it relaxes the assumption that all groups in the population have equal variance in their responses to the question. The model is thus applied to the study of ambivalence because people who are ambivalent should be likely to display greater variability or heteroscedasticity in their responses to a question that asks their opinion of wiretapping. The heteroscedastic probit allows Alvarez and Brehm to model this error variance directly as a function of predictor variables, in this case, one or more measures of value conflict. The heteroscedastic probit is, in this sense, two models in one. One model predicts the opinion, as in a standard probit, and the other predicts the individual-level error variance associated with the opinion. The variance presumably reflects a variable opinion, an opinion that is both positive and negative at the same time. If the measure of value conflict is positively associated with the error variance, then individuals with high levels of value conflict are presumably ambivalent and the issue can be said to be characterized by ambivalence. “If we see a positive relationship between value competition and error variability,” they argue, “we will have evidence of ambivalence ….” (2002, p. 186).
Alvarez and Brehm use this method and data from the General Social Survey (GSS) and the National Election Study (NES) to gauge the presence of value conflict and ambivalence associated with a range of public issues. They interpret their results as suggesting that value conflict and ambivalence are uncommon (e.g., 1998; 2002; 2003), but an examination of their findings suggests that their results might be better described as “mixed.”

In their first ambivalence study (1995), which dealt with abortion, they found that people who can articulate arguments on both sides of the abortion debate (their measure of conflicting considerations on this issue) display greater error variance on “hard” abortion questions but not “easy” ones. They assume that some abortion circumstances are no-brainers because most people favor them (e.g., protecting the health of the mother, or when she has been raped, or when the baby would be defective) and that others are hard because most people oppose them (e.g., when the mother is single, does not want more children, or wants the abortion “for any reason”). They find that people able to articulate both sides of the debate are more ambivalent on what they consider difficult circumstances than the easy ones.

Similarly, in another study (2002), they find ambivalence about the permissibility of suicide under a variety of circumstances. Here they tested the association of four value conflicts and the variability of opinions of suicide. These conflicts included a belief in a good world vs. normlessness, feminism vs. belief in a good world, and feminism vs. normlessness. They found a significant relation between the good world—feminism conflict and variability of opinion of suicide under three conditions: when a person is tired of life, has been dishonored, or faces
financial bankruptcy. Thus, feminists who believe in the inherent goodness of humanity and the world are more ambivalent about suicide, and therefore the issue of suicide, under these circumstances, can be described as an ambivalent issue, an issue about which many people are ambivalent. Although it is not clear why or how these values might be related to the issue of suicide or why or how this conflict might be likely to occur (the authors do not address the theoretical basis for the analysis), their measure of conflict between these values and the error variance was indeed statistically significant.

They also found that opinions toward laws that would make English the official language are characterized by ambivalence (Alvarez, Brehm, and Wilson 2003). In this study, they found that people who are conflicted between traditional morality and a negative perception of blacks tend to be more variable in their attitudes toward English-only laws. Again they do not address why or how the values might be associated with the issue or why or how the conflict might occur, but again their measure of conflict was associated with the error variance.

They also found countervailing and mixed evidence. They found no significant ambivalence on the issues of euthanasia (2002) and school prayer (2003). On abortion, in a recent study (2003), consistent with their “easy” versus “hard” distinction, they found that people who are conflicted between feminism and a “fear of God” are more variable in their opinions of allowing abortions “for any reason,” which, according to their typology, is a hard choice. But they also found that these conflicted individuals are not more variable in their opinions of the other supposedly-hard abortion questions, which include whether abortion should be legal
when the mother is single or does not want more children, and they are more variable in their opinions of the supposedly-easy issue of legal abortion when the mother’s health is in danger. In this analysis their “easy vs. hard” distinction breaks down and the pattern of ambivalence is unclear.

They also present mixed results on ambivalence about racial issues, particularly the controversial issue of affirmative action. The Katz and Hass research program suggests that many people are conflicted over affirmative action and Federico (2004) shows that this is particularly true of conservatives. In their first study of racial issues (1998), Alvarez and Brehm failed to uncover a relation between value conflict and variability of opinion toward affirmative action, federal set aside programs, and other racial issues. To the contrary, they found that information was negatively associated with the error variance, which implies that people who are variable in their attitudes toward racial issues are ignorant rather than ambivalent. If they simply had more factual information their attitudes would be less variable and more crystallized.

However, more recently (2003), they found that attitudes toward affirmative action are characterized by ambivalence, as reflected in a positive association between value conflict (equality vs. negative affect toward blacks) and error variance associated with opinions of affirmative action. In short, their evidence of ambivalence toward affirmative action is also mixed.

Alvarez and Brehm (2003) say that a goal of their research on ambivalence is to characterize the amount or presence of ambivalence (which they say implies value conflict) in American public opinion. Based on their evidence, what
conclusions can be drawn? They found that opinions of suicide and English-only laws are characterized by value conflict and ambivalence, that opinions of euthanasia and school prayer are not, and opinions of abortion and racial issues are—and are not—characterized by value conflict and ambivalence. Though the results are mixed at best, Alvarez and Brehm emphasize the negative. They assert that “contrary to much of the longer tradition in the field, we found little evidence that multiple predispositions are in conflict over these diverse areas of policy” (2003, p. 182) and even suggest that “ambivalence is rare” (2002, p. 99). Their results would seem to defy clear interpretation and call for further research, yet their “argument is that [the] simultaneous consideration of multiple predispositions only rarely induces internalized conflict.” (2002 p. 220).

Steenbergen and Brewer (in press) also use data from the NES to assess the presence of value conflict in American public opinion. Like Alvarez and Brehm, they assess multiple issues and several possible conflicts. Steenbergen and Brewer’s analysis is particularly noteworthy for four reasons. First, they are more thorough in conceptualizing and measuring value conflict and ambivalence than previous value conflict studies. Previous studies are often ad hoc in measuring value conflict and ambivalence. Zaller and Feldman (1992; see also Zaller 1992 and Feldman and Zaller 1992) and Alvarez and Brehm, for example, employ multiple measures of value conflict and ambivalence but do not say why they do so or discuss how the different measures relate to each other, or which, if any, is best. As measures of value conflict and conflicting considerations, Alvarez and Brehm have used participants’ ability to articulate reasons that some people favor and oppose an issue
(1995), the absolute value of the difference between two values (1998), and the interaction of two values (2003). Steenbergen and Brewer begin by considering how value conflict can and should be measured. I will return to this issue of measuring value conflict in the next chapter.

A second innovation of Steenbergen and Brewer is that they deal with more policy issues and value conflicts than most previous studies. With the exception of Alvarez and Brehm, most value conflict research is piecemeal, employing one or two issues and one or two value conflicts and from them drawing fairly broad conclusions. Steenbergen and Brewer deal with four issues: abortion, affirmative action, gay rights, and welfare. For each of these issues, they have at least one, and in some cases several, forms of value conflict. For example, on the issue of gay rights, they assume that attitudes toward this issue are driven in part by conflicts between support for equality and limited government, equality and traditional morality, and limited government and traditional morality. Although the theoretical bases of the conflicts they use is not always clear, they deal with more of them than has been typical.

Steenbergen and Brewer’s third innovation is that they consider several forms of ambivalence, in addition to “value ambivalence,” which they consider to be one form of ambivalence. They criticize previous research on ambivalence as being too focused on value conflict, suggesting instead that value conflict is but one of many forms of ambivalence. In addition to value conflict, they deal with affective ambivalence, cognitive ambivalence, affective-cognitive ambivalence, and conflicts between values and emotions (affect) and between values and cognitions. On the
issue of gay rights they look at conflicts between support for limited government and affect toward gays and support for traditional morality and affect toward gays. For any one policy opinion they deal with as many as ten different conflicts. Although the large number and forms of ambivalence that they investigate does itself raise serious potential problems of collinearity and over-specification, their study is innovative in going beyond value conflict to address “other” forms of ambivalence.

Finally, Steenbergen and Brewer test several possible consequences of value conflict. These consequences include the same variability or unpredictability of opinion as investigated by Alvarez and Brehm, over-time opinion stability, and horizontal and vertical attitude constraint. Horizontal constraint is the correlation of policy attitudes that would be expected to “go together” if people adhered to an ideology. Vertical constraint is the correlation between values and attitudes. Although it is not clear why or how value conflict should be expected to diminish either form of constraint—Steenbergen and Brewer test the association but do not lay out a theoretical argument for why it might or should—their study is nevertheless more thorough than most in measuring value conflict and more extensive than most in investigating its possible consequences.

Steenbergen and Brewer find little evidence of value conflict, and what little conflict exists they find exists in a rather narrow range. With their measure of value conflict scaled to range from 0 to 1, they find that value conflict ranged from a low of .29 (equality-limited government) to a high of .42 (equality-moral traditionalism), with a mean of .37, well below the midpoint. They interpret this as indicating that “the typical citizen experiences only mild to moderate levels of ambivalence” (p. 118).
“Such a configuration of orientations,” they argue, “hardly possesses the severity and intensity of conflict that is often suggested by studies of ambivalence in public opinion” (p. 116). While certainly some people are conflicted between some values associated with some issues, “more impressive than this ambivalence, in our mind, is the fact that it is not more prevalent. For people who live in a political culture of ambivalence, Americans appear to be remarkably non-ambivalent” (p. 118).

In addition to finding little ambivalence (of which value conflict is one type), what little there is has few consequences for public opinion. In general, they find that people who are high in value conflict “hold opinions that are no less stable and coherent than those who score low, and their responses to survey questions are no less predictable. Indeed, in the face of conflicting considerations, people seem to do a remarkable job in piecing together consistent opinions” (p. 134).

Recent research on values and value conflict by William Jacoby (2002, 2003) tells a similar story. Jacoby’s work, like much of the traditional research on values and value conflict in social and political psychology, focuses on sets of values, on values as the building blocks of political belief systems. Values, Jacoby reminds us, do not exist in isolation. People possess multiple values, any number of which may be relevant to a particular issue, and some of which may conflict. In contrast to the present study, this body of work, as well as Jacoby’s, maintain that people resolve these conflicts as they arise. People come to know which values are more important to them, which values are not, and can, and do, make fine distinctions between them.
Although this assumption dominates much research on values it has never been put to the test empirically. Jacoby proposes to conduct the first test of whether or not people’s values are, in fact, rank ordered, which is to say, structured hierarchically. Jacoby’s work on values is particularly relevant to the study of value conflict because if people’s values are neatly hierarchical, if they can choose with precision the more important of any two values, if they can and routinely do resolve value conflicts as they arise, permanently, then value conflict is likely to be rare indeed. Jacoby’s study is important, then, not just for our understanding of values as components of belief systems, but for our understanding of the prevalence of value conflict in public opinion.

If people’s values are structured hierarchically, the appropriate strategy for measuring them is a ranking task. Rokeach (1973) gave his research participants a list of values and asked them to rank these values from most important to least important. Almost all participants were willing and able to comply with his request. He found that people’s rankings of values (such as freedom and equality) were associated in predictable ways with issue opinions, partisanship, and participants’ stated ideology, suggesting quite naturally that the values rankings reflect meaningful differences. Moreover, methodological studies (e.g., Alwin and Krosnick 1985) support the idea that rankings may be better for measuring values than ratings, the most common alternative to rankings, because ratings are more prone to random responding or nondifferentiation. For these reasons, rankings have been preferred over ratings as the method of choice for measuring the importance that people place on values.
However, rankings present a problem for the study of value conflict. Rankings do not allow participants the opportunity to say that two (or more) conflicting values are equally important. Some research (e.g., Tetlock 1984) has assumed that conflicting values will be closely ranked—say, first and second in a list of three. Still, when a value is ranked more highly than another, the presence of conflict is ambiguous at best. The problem with previous research on value conflict, Jacoby suggests, is that most past research has used methods that prevent such “tied” value choices from occurring. Most measurement instruments (including Rokeach’s Values Survey) simply ask people to rank-order a prespecified set of values according to their importance. Experimental subjects and survey respondents are usually willing to comply cheerfully with interviewers’ instructions, regardless of whether their overt responses are truly indicative of some meaningful underlying psychological trait. In other words, some people may specify that one value is more important than another simply because there is no way to indicate that two values are equally important. The failure to measure value ambivalence is a serious shortcoming, precisely because the inability to choose between competing values may have systematic consequences. … Thus, the actual prevalence and impact of value ambivalence remains largely unknown at present.  

Jacoby suggests that we can measure the presence and prevalence of value conflict, as well as value hierarchies, by asking participants to choose the more important value of two values in a series of pairwise comparisons. Using data from the 1994 Multi-Investigator Study conducted at the University of California at Berkley, Jacoby had interviewers define for participants a series of values. For example, participants were told that “by EQUALITY we mean narrowing the gap in wealth and power between the right and the poor,” and that “by LIBERTY we mean a guarantee of the widest freedom possible for everyone to act and think as they consider most appropriate.” For each possible pair of values, participants were then
asked to say which of the two values is more important. In this example, participants were asked: “In your opinion, as things stand right now, which is more important for our country—liberty or equality.”

If people’s value systems are structured hierarchically, Jacoby suggests, then they should give transitive pairwise value rankings. For example, if a person says that equality is more important than freedom, that freedom is more important than national security, and that equality is also more important than national security, we can infer that this person has a rank-ordered set of values: Equality is the most important, followed by freedom, followed by security.

Jacoby says that if people are conflicted between values, this conflict will be evident in one of two ways. First, people who are conflicted may refuse to choose between two equally important values. When asked by the interviewer to say which of the two values is more important, the respondent would refuse, insisting that the values are equally important. Second, they should be likely to display intransitivity in the choices among the values pairs. If a person is not conflicted between the values of equality and freedom, he or she can say without much difficulty which of the two is more important. However, if the person is conflicted between equality and freedom then the choice between them, if made at all, is essentially arbitrary. The person may prefer to say that the two values are both equally important, but, again, not give that opportunity, he or she assumedly chooses arbitrarily between the two. The result, when one takes into account other values irrelevant to this conflict, is intransitivity in pairwise rankings.

Citations omitted. Italics in original.
Let's say the person is conflicted between equality and freedom. Assume further that he or she is presented with these two values along with a third value, national security, which he or she views as less important than the first two. Asked to rank order the values in pairwise fashion, he or she would choose arbitrarily between equality and freedom, then choose equality over security, and then, because he or she is conflicted, choose security over freedom. The person is conflicted and the conflict results in intransitive values rankings.

Based on these measures, Jacoby finds little evidence of value conflict in American public opinion. He finds that very few people refuse to choose the more important of two values and a large majority of people are transitive in their pairwise orderings of values. Like Steenbergen and Brewer, Jacoby considers value conflict to be a type of ambivalence. Like these authors and Alvarez and Brehm, he questions the prevailing view among values researchers that value conflict is common, suggesting instead that “value ambivalence is not a serious problem for most citizens” (Jacoby 2002, p. 188). “Citizens do have coherent preferences for particular values,” he argues, “there is not very much ambivalence to be found” (Jacoby 2002, 178).

Jacoby also investigated the consequences of value conflict. In particular, like these other authors, he examines whether his measures of value conflict are associated with less predictable, which is to say more variable, policy attitudes. Here too, his findings are null. His measures of value conflict—refusal to rank values and intransitivity in rankings—are not associated with the error variance of policy opinion questions. “The empirical results,” he suggests, “raise some
questions about the relevance of theories that posit value conflict as a fundamental influence on subsequent attitudes and behavior” (Jacoby 2002, 188).

**Value Conflict and Public Opinion**

These two schools of thought present conflicting views of value conflict in American politics. One suggests that value conflict is common and has important consequences for public opinion while the other says essentially the opposite. In this study I engage this debate. Based on this body of work and my own theorizing on the experience of value conflict, I argue that value conflict is neither pervasive nor rare, but that it exists and in sufficient amounts to influence the expression of political attitudes in predictable ways. In the next section I discuss my hypothesis of the experience, prevalence, and effects of value conflict.

**Hypotheses**

*Experience of Value Conflict*

Where previous studies have tended to deal only with latent or potential value conflict, I hypothesize that there are two kinds of value conflict, latent and subjective, and that latent conflict significantly predicts or causes subjective value conflict. This hypothesis is derived from research on ambivalence that suggests that we should expect a modest association between the two forms of conflict. A number of studies have examined latent and subjective ambivalence and assessed the relation between them (e.g., McGraw, Hasecke and Conger 2002; Newby-Clark, McGregor, and Zanna 2002; Priester and Petty 1995, 2001; Thompson, Zanna and Griffin 1995). These studies show relatively weak correlations between the two types of
ambivalence. It thus seems worth not only differentiating between latent and subjective value conflict, but testing whether or not they are, in fact, positively related. The supposition here is straightforward: People who endorse conflicting values in the abstract should be likely to feel conflicted when using those values to give an opinion on an issue. As straightforward as this hypothesis is, it is by no means obvious that just because a person endorses conflicting values in the abstract that he or she will necessarily feel conflicted when considering an issue associated with the two values. The person may be high in potential conflict, and the conflict may even affect the judgment, but he or she may not feel torn or conflicted, perhaps because he or she has resolved the conflict in his or her own mind. In chapter 2 I develop measures of latent and subjective value conflict and assess empirically the hypothesis that latent value conflict predicts subjective value conflict.

Where previous studies have also tended to treat value conflict and ambivalence as synonymous, I differentiate empirically between them. Although some studies have suggested or implied that they are separate constructs (e.g., Alvarez and Brehm 2002; Craig, Kane, and Martinez 2002; McGraw 1995), this is the first to test empirically whether or not the subjective experiences of value conflict and ambivalence are distinct. I discuss this test in chapter 2 as well.

In chapter 2 I also address the debate about the prevalence of value conflict in public opinion by measuring the two forms of conflict in a mass sample and assessing how much of both types of value conflict are out there. Conclusions drawn from this analysis are limited by the representativeness of the issues, values, and sample. These caveats aside, my results suggest a middle ground: Value
conflict is neither common nor rare, but it does occur, and perhaps in sufficient amounts to have important consequences for public opinion.

*Effects of Value Conflict*

In chapters 3 and 4 I test six hypotheses about the consequences of the two forms of value conflict. First, in chapter 3 I test the hypothesis that value conflict and ambivalence are not merely distinct, but that value conflict is a prime antecedent or cause of ambivalence. The idea here is that the conflicting feelings and beliefs that constitute ambivalence are likely to be derived, at least in part, from value conflict. The person who thinks freedom is important is likely to feel “worried” about expanding the government’s powers to spy on domestic soil, the person who endorses security is likely to feel more “relaxed” or “optimistic” about winning the war against terrorism, and the person who endorses both values is likely to feel both worried and optimistic at the same time. I argue that value conflict causes ambivalence.

Second, in chapter 3 I test the hypothesis that value conflict is associated with opinion instability over time. The classic work on opinion stability is Philip Converse’s “Belief Systems in Mass Publics” (1964). Converse found that people often give inconsistent opinions over time, and he attributed this opinion instability to random responding, which he dubbed “nonattitudes.” He said that many people lack true preferences on issues, and when asked to give their opinion, they give an essentially random response, a nonattitude. Over time, this random responding manifests itself as opinion instability. The “opinions” of some, perhaps many people,
move to and fro, this way and that, as if at random because they are, in fact, essentially random.

The studies of the association between value conflict and cross-sectional attitude variability by Alvarez and Brehm (e.g., 2002), Steenbergen and Brewer (in press), and Jacoby (e.g., 2003) imply that value conflict, if it is to be consequential, should be associated with instability, since value conflict indicates that a person has more than one position on an issue. Since these studies use estimates of hypothetical cross-sectional variability or heterogeneity as a proxy for actual attitude variability, which can only be measured directly as instability, these are proxy-studies of attitude stability. These studies suggest that the expressed policy attitudes of value-conflicted individuals are no more variable—and thus presumably no more unstable—than those of people who are not conflicted. In this study I deal with over-time stability rather than cross-sectional variability because stability provides a measure of actual attitude change rather than theoretical attitude variation. My argument is as follows.

Value conflict does perforce imply that a person who is conflicted is pulled in different directions at the same time. His or her endorsement of freedom pulls him or her toward opposing wiretapping, but his or her endorsement of security has the opposite effect, pulling in the opposite direction, toward opposition. Faced with giving an evaluation of the issue, the person must choose between these to ultimate ends. As difficult as it is, most people inevitably side, however tentatively, with one value at the expense of the other. But the stated attitude is tenuous because in satisfying the demands of one value he or she has, in effect, negated the other.
Some time later, faced with making the same difficult judgment, some conflicted respondents undoubtedly choose to side with the other value. Having sided with freedom at time one, some will, perhaps arbitrarily, perhaps influenced by context, side with security. This instability might otherwise look like a thoughtless nonattitude. My argument is that it is caused by value conflict.

This thesis is in large measure derived from, and in that respect beholden to, Zaller and Feldman (1992) and Zaller’s (1992) seminal work on ambivalence. They showed that ambivalence (though not necessarily value conflict) causes attitude instability. Although my thesis is similar to Zaller and Feldman’s, this study goes beyond theirs in two ways.

First, I use measures of value conflict and ambivalence that reflect our understanding of how people experience these states better than those of Zaller and Feldman. In their studies of ambivalence (Zaller and Feldman 1992; Zaller 1992) their measure of ambivalence is problematic in a way that confounds the interpretation of their results. Like most ambivalence studies, the conceive ambivalence as occurring when a person has inconsistent feelings and beliefs about something. These conflicting considerations pull the person in different directions at the same time. Like value conflict, ambivalence happens at a specific moment in time, in the here-and-now, when the person considers or thinks about the attitude object. Ambivalence is not something that happens across time. A person would be ambivalent about wiretapping if he or she felt both “worried” and “optimistic” about it today, yesterday, or at some other point in time. The person would not be ambivalent if he or she was worried (but not optimistic) about it last month and
optimistic (but not worried) about it this month. No doubt this person has conflicting considerations—on one day feeling good about the issue and on another day feeling bad about it—which would result in attitude instability. But such seesawing does not reflect ambivalence because the person is pulled in different directions at different times rather than at the same time. Over some period the person has had conflicting views of the issue, but the change cannot be said to reflect ambivalence.

And yet that is precisely what Zaller and Feldman argue. Their measure of ambivalence confounds genuine ambivalence—conflicting considerations at the here and now—with the “ambivalence” in the form of conflicting considerations that occurs across time. According to their measure of ambivalence, a person who today has five positive beliefs and five negative beliefs about wiretapping is just as ambivalent as a person who had five positive beliefs (and no negative beliefs) about the issue last month and five negative beliefs (and no positive ones) about it this month. The first person is ambivalent, the second is perhaps disjointed and certainly unstable in his or her opinion, but not ambivalent. Their measure of ambivalence is thus confounded by this over-time “ambivalence.” The measurement error introduced by this might not be a problem were it not for the fact that, as they indicate in their analysis, the association between ambivalence and instability disappears when the “over time ambivalence” is removed from their measure of ambivalence. In short, their results may not, in fact, show that ambivalence is associated with over time opinion instability. Instead, what their results may show is that people who have fairly consistent considerations at one time, and fairly consistent, yet different, considerations at another time, are likely to change their opinion about the issue
between the two time periods. They show that changes in considerations over time are associated with changes in opinions over time. While interesting, these results do not allow us to answer the question of whether ambivalence is associated with opinion instability. In this study, I correct for this problem by measuring value conflict and ambivalence at a specific point in time and then assessing whether value conflict is associated with opinion instability across time.

The second way that this study goes beyond those of Zaller and Feldman is that whereas they deal with ambivalence generally, and do not measure value conflict directly, I separate value conflict from ambivalence and assess specifically the effect of value conflict on stability while controlling for ambivalence. Feldman and Zaller (1992) deal extensively with value conflict between humanitarianism and individualism on the issue of social welfare spending, but do not specifically incorporate value conflict into their analyses of opinion instability (Zaller and Feldman 1992; Zaller 1992). I distinguish between value conflict and ambivalence, develop measures of each, and assess the independent effects of both forms of value conflict on opinion stability.

In recent years, a number of scholars have argued that value conflict leads to responsiveness to persuasion or persuadability (e.g., Bassili and Fletcher 1991; McGraw 1995; Peffley, Kniggle, and Hurwitz 2001; Sniderman et al. 1996). The rationale here is similar to that of opinion instability. Seeing merit in both sides of the debate, being pulled in different directions at the same time, the conflicted person sees arguments on both sides of the debate as not only reasonable but compelling. The person who is not conflicted, who tends to side with one value over the other
when potential conflicts involving the two values present themselves, is unlikely to be persuaded when a reason is offered for why he or she might want to change his or her mind on the issue. Such arguments do not compel change, they do not persuade. But the person who is conflicted, whose values pull in opposite directions, recognizes valid reasons for taking a position on either side of the issue, and so is likely to be persuaded. In chapter 3 I add to this literature by testing my third hypothesis of the consequences of value conflict, that the two forms of value conflict are associated with persuasion.

Studies have also suggested that value conflict is associated with attitudes about which people feel less certain (e.g., Tetlock 1986) or confident (Feather 2002). People who are conflicted between core values relevant to an issue are more likely to admit to feeling less firm, sure, or certain about their opinion of it. In political science, as in economics, the dominant assumption is that uncertainty is driven by, and in fact is often defined as reflecting, a lack of information or knowledge about the issue. While controlling for information or knowledge, in chapter 4 I add to this body of work by testing the fourth hypothesis, that people who are pulled in different directions by value conflict at either the latent or subjective level are likely to admit to feeling uncertain about their opinion on it.

A number of studies also suggest that value conflict leads to the expression of more moderate attitudes (e.g., Fletcher and Chalmers 1991; Liberman and Chaiken 1991; Peterson 1995). In chapter 4 I address this, my fifth supposition, as well. At any given time, when asked to give an opinion on an issue that evokes value conflict, the conflicted individual implicitly splits the difference between the
implications of the two values by taking a moderate stand on the issue. Taking a moderate position on the issue satisfies the implications of both values to the extent possible without negating either one. Latent and subjective value conflict should be associated with the expression of more moderate, or less extreme, attitudes.

Finally, researchers have often suggested that value conflict produces psychological dissonance, tension, and discomfort (e.g., Hochschild 1981; Rokeach 1973; Tetlock 2000) but few (e.g., Hass et al. 1992) have tested this assumption empirically. The sixth hypothesis, which I address in chapter 4, is the widely held view that people find value conflict psychological aversive.
CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE AND PREVALENCE OF VALUE CONFLICT

America is a land of value conflict. These conflicts are evident in the American creed, the culture war, and current debates about the proper balance between civil liberties and national security. But the mere fact of conflicting values in America does not perforce imply conflicts within individual Americans. Nor does it imply, if such conflicts exist, that people feel conflicted. In this chapter I assess empirically how people experience value conflict and the prevalence of value conflict in public opinion.

I begin by discussing how I measured latent and subjective value conflict. For this analysis, I rely on data collected from a sample of undergraduates at Ohio State University in 2003. I show that the two forms of conflict are not coterminous, as evident in the significant but modest correlation between them, but that they are related. People who endorse conflicting values in the abstract are more likely to feel conflicted when faced with an issue that implicates both values.

Then I assess the prevalence of value conflict in the mass public. For this analysis, I turn to data collected from a large sample representative of residents of
Ohio. The results provide the opportunity to address the question, much debated in value conflict scholarship, about whether value conflict is pervasive, rare, or something in between.

I conclude the chapter by discussing what the analysis tells us about value conflict in American public opinion. The results demonstrate that we can, and I suggest we should, distinguish between latent and subjective value conflict. The results also show that people who view conflicting values as highly important and nearly equally important in the abstract do tend to feel conflicted when using those values to give an opinion on an issue. On the question of how much value conflict is out there, the results suggest a middle ground: I find there is neither “a lot of,” nor “a little” value conflict, but “some.”

Laboratory Study Design and Measures

Study Design

Participants were undergraduates from Ohio State University enrolled in a political science course. The study involved a two-wave panel design. The 232 participants in wave 1 received extra course credit for participating and the 104 participants who returned to participate in wave 2 received $10. Wave 1 was conducted during the winter of 2003 and wave 2 was conducted during the early spring of the same year. I conducted the study in the political psychology laboratory of the political science department at OSU. Participants completed the study on computer workstations in the lab.
The study dealt with three policy issues: government wiretapping as a response to terrorism, protections for homosexuals against job discrimination, and human cloning for biomedical research. It included measures of conflicting values relevant to each of these three issues. For wiretapping, the conflicting values were freedom and national security. Studies conducted near the end of the Cold War (e.g., Tetlock 1986; Liberman and Chaiken 1991) show that these values do, or at least did, produce value conflict on the issue of government wiretapping to protect the country from foreign spies. Based on this evidence, and the reasonable supposition that civil libertarians (people who place much emphasis on liberty or freedom) tend to oppose expanded wiretapping while security hawks (who place more emphasis on protecting the country from attacks) tend to favor it, I used freedom and security as my conflicting values relevant to this issue.

For job protections for gays, the values were equality and traditional morality. Previous studies show that opinions of gay rights policies are conditioned by these values, which have opposite implications for this issue: Egalitarians see no reason that homosexuals should be treated differently than heterosexuals because of their sexual orientation and so tend to support policies that extend protections and rights to gays, while traditional moralists tend to condemn homosexuality and oppose policies that would extend protections and rights based on sexual orientation.

For human cloning, the values were humanitarianism and, here also, traditional morality. Humanitarians should be expected to favor cloning because the issue to date has usually been framed in public debate in humanitarian terms.
Scientists wish to clone human embryos and use them in research because it could lead to cures for debilitating and chronic diseases. Humanitarians should be likely to favor cloning because it may help to relieve human suffering. People who espouse traditional morality should oppose this issue for the same reason they oppose abortion—it does inevitably involve the destruction of the embryos used in the research. Traditional moralists tend to oppose human cloning because, they believe, it inevitably involves taking a human life.

Although there are good theoretical reasons to expect that these values are associated with these issues, in the results to follow, I do not simply assume these associations, but test them empirically.

The first two of these three issues, wiretapping and job protections for homosexuals, appeared on both waves of the study, while the third issue, human cloning, appeared only on wave 2. This was necessary in order to keep both waves to a manageable length. Except where otherwise mentioned, the analysis presented in this chapter is based on wave 1 data for the issues of wiretapping and gay job protections and wave 2 data for human cloning.

Values

Since the earliest empirical research on values, researchers have assumed that values are structured hierarchically in people’s minds (e.g., Rokeach, 1973). Value rankings therefore have been the preferred method of measurement because rankings are assumed to reflect the psychological structure of values. Values rankings have also been preferred over value ratings—the primary alternative
method of measuring values—because rankings produce better-quality data than rankings (Alwin and Krosnick, 1985; Krosnick and Alwin, 1988). Although ratings have practical benefits—rating questions are less time consuming and easier for participants to answer—ratings are prone to acquiescence response and social desirability biases because most values used in social science research are desirable and viewed positively in isolation. These response effects manifest themselves in nondifferentiation among the value ratings and attenuated relationships between values and related constructs. Value rankings, in contrast, force people to concentrate on the task of comparing the importance of the values to one another, resulting in greater differentiation and stronger relationships between values and related constructs.

Yet there are also distinct disadvantages to values rankings, particularly for the study of value conflict. Ranked data are ipsative and so analysis of them requires nonparametric statistics. More importantly, as Jacoby (2002, 2003) suggests, rankings do not allow participants to indicate that values as equally important to them. This is problematic because individuals who are highly conflicted are forced to make distinctions they otherwise would choose not to make.

I resolved this dilemma by measuring the importance that participants place on the values using McCarty and Shrum’s (2000) most-least ranking and rating method. Their strategy draws on the strength of both while minimizing their weaknesses. The rank-then-rate method has participants first rank a series of values in the order of personal importance and then rate the values on an importance scale. The initial ranking encourages participants to consider the values in comparative...
perspective, and provides anchors for the subsequent ratings, which increases
differentiation (McCarty and Shrum, 2000; Schwarz and Wyer, 1985; Sudman,

Wave 1 included only the values relevant to wiretapping (freedom and
national security), and job protections for gays (equality and traditional morality).
Wave 2 included these four values as well as humanitarianism, which is relevant to
human cloning. For the sake of simplicity, here I discuss the procedure that included
all five values from wave 2. The procedure and wording of the values from wave 1
were identical except that they excluded humanitarianism (defined for participants
here as “helping others”).

Near the outset of the study, participants were presented with this
introduction.

Now let's think about some values or goals including equality, national
security, traditional morality, freedom, and helping others. People disagree
about whether these values are important or not important.

We will explain to you what we mean by each of these five values. After we
do that, we’re going to ask you to rank these values from most important to
least important.

The definitions of the values appeared separately, in succession, and in
random order, on participants’ computer screens.

By freedom we mean people in society being able to say and do whatever
they please, so long as it does not directly harm anyone else.

By national security we mean keeping our country safe from attacks.

By equality we mean everyone in society has an equal chance to succeed.

By traditional morality we mean putting more emphasis on traditional moral
values.

By helping others we mean helping people in need.
Next, participants were presented with a pop-up window that contained these instructions:

Now, please click on and drag each of these five values from the left side of the screen to the right side of the screen and arrange them from top to bottom in the order of importance to YOU PERSONALLY. Place the value that is most important to you at the top, the value that is least important to you at the bottom, and the other three in between, based on their importance to you. When you are done, click "continue" below.

After reading the instructions, participants clicked the “OK” button on the pop-up instructions window, which then disappeared. The left side of the screen was grey and the right side was white. The five values were listed from top to bottom in random order on the left (grey) side of the screen, each in its own white box. The wording of the five values for the ranking task was as follows:

- Equality: Everyone in society has an equal chance to succeed
- National security: Keeping our country safe from attacks
- Traditional morality: Putting more emphasis on traditional moral values
- Freedom: People in society being able to say and do whatever they please, so long as it does not directly harm anyone else
- Helping others: Helping people in need

On the right side of the screen, near the top, was the phrase “Most Important to Me.” At the bottom was the phrase “Least Important to Me.” Participants used their computer mouse to drag each value from the left to the right side and rank them in order of personal importance. After finishing the ranking task and clicking a button for “continue,” a pop-up box appeared with these words:

Is this ranking correct? Make any changes necessary and then click “continue” to proceed.
Participants then clicked “OK,” made any changes that were necessary, and moved on to the values ratings. For example, the equality rating asked

How important is equality to YOU PERSONALLY?

The response choices were “Extremely Important,” “Very Important,” “Somewhat Important,” “Not Too Important,” and “Not at all Important.” The personal importance rating questions were presented in succession in random order. The frequencies of these values ratings are presented in Table 2.1. These are the wave 1 frequencies for freedom, national security, equality, and traditional morality, and the wave 2 frequencies for humanitarianism.

The table shows that personal importance differed across the five values. This sample of students viewed freedom as particularly important, with equality, security, and humanitarianism also viewed as at least very important, with somewhat greater variance on traditional morality. This high level of endorsement for most of the values is consistent with previous research on the substance and measurement of values.

Policy Opinions and Framing Manipulations

After answering the values questions participants were presented with a block of items dealing with either wiretapping in response to terrorism or protecting homosexuals from job discrimination (in wave 1) or human cloning for biomedical research (in wave 2). The order of the wave 1 issues was counterbalanced.
Participants answered the items dealing with wiretapping and then the items dealing with gay job protections or in the opposite order, with gay job protections first followed by wiretapping.

Participants began each block by reading a fictitious newspaper article about the issue. The article was presented as part of a framing experiment. Then they answered a series of questions on the issue. For all three issues, the framing experiment included four conditions. Condition 1 was the control condition. Here participants did not read a newspaper article. Instead, they skipped directly to the questions about the issue. Condition 2 framed the issue as relevant to the liberal value (freedom for the wiretapping issue, equality for the gay job protections issue, and humanitarianism for the human cloning issue). Condition 3 framed the issue as relevant to the conservative value (national security for wiretapping and traditional morality for gay job protections and human cloning). Condition 4 framed the issue as relevant to both the liberal and conservative values.

For each issue, the article was presented under the guise that “we are interested in how much information is available about political issues in Ohio newspapers.” Each article appeared on participants’ monitor exactly as if it had been downloaded from the news search engine Lexis-Nexis.

The rationale of the framing manipulations was that the framing or context of the issue should affect value conflict and the association between latent and subjective value conflict. The conditions that frame the issue as relevant to one value or the other should, by linking the issue to just one value, diminish subjective conflict and the association between the two forms of conflict. The reason for this is
that because the article links the issue to just one value, people who are otherwise conflicted are given a rationale for choosing sides, to take the side of the “framed” value. The framing manipulation provides the tie-breaking reason for siding with one value rather than seeking to honor both values. The “both” condition—where both values are highlighted as relevant to the issue—should be likely to increase subjective conflict and moderate the association between the two forms of conflict. Because it suggests that both values are relevant, it should enhance subjective conflict, and this should be especially likely for people who think both values are important.

Wiretapping in Response to Terrorism  The wiretapping article purportedly appeared in the Akron Beacon-Journal on January 7, 2002. The fictitious Lexis-Nexis search terms, which appeared at the top of the screen (as is typical of the Lexis-Nexis database), were “government, wiretapping, 2002, Ohio.” The exact wording of the four conditions is presented in Figure 2.1. Here, to make the comparison of the three versions easier, they are listed side by side with differences in wording in bold. In condition 2, which framed the issue as a threat to freedom, a fictitious expert is quoted as saying that “people’s right to be free from government intrusions into their personal lives must take precedence over other considerations.” In condition 3, which framed the issue in terms of national security, the expert is quoted as saying “the need to keep the country safe from terrorist attacks must take precedence …” In condition 4, which framed the issue as relevant to both principles, the expert is quoted as saying “we must balance the competing values of personal freedom and national security.”
After reading the article, participants were asked a decoy question consistent with the purported rationale of the study. Following this they were asked to provide a thought-listing on the issue of government wiretapping in response to terrorism and to rate each of their thoughts on separate “positive” and “negative” scales. I included the thought-listing and thought-ratings with the intention of assessing the presence of ambivalence based on participants’ open-ended remarks. As it happened, I found that measures of ambivalence based on participants’ thought-listings did not produce significant effects over and above the measures of objective and subjective ambivalence discussed below. For this reason, I did not include them in the analysis and do not discuss them further.

Following this participants were asked to give their opinion on wiretapping.

As part of the war on terrorism, would you favor or oppose allowing the government to listen to people’s telephones without their knowledge?

The response options for this question were “favor strongly,” “favor somewhat,” “neither favor nor oppose,” “oppose somewhat,” and “oppose strongly.”

After answering this question, participants answered the other questions relevant to the issue, including the items used to measure ambivalence, value conflict, etc. I return to these items momentarily. For now, let me turn to the framing manipulation dealing with job protections for gays.

**Protections for Homosexuals Against Job Discrimination** Participants who received the block of items dealing with wiretapping first were then presented with
the block of items dealing with protecting gays from job discrimination. Again participants were asked to read a fictitious article under the guise of assessing the information available in newspaper articles. The article purportedly reported on a hearing held by a committee of the Ohio state legislature. It claimed to have appeared in the *Dayton Daily News* on August 23, 2002. The fictitious Lexis-Nexis search terms were “government, gay rights, 2002, Ohio.” The wording of the four conditions is presented in Figure 2.2 with differences in wording again in **bold**. In the first condition, the control condition, participants did not read an article. The second condition framed the issue as relevant to the value of equality. A fictitious law professor is quoted as saying “It’s shameful in this day and age that we allow gays and lesbians to be denied the same basic equality as other minority groups.” The third condition framed the issue as relevant to the value of traditional morality. Here the expert is quoted as arguing that “There is a big difference between tolerating private behavior between consenting adults and endorsing immoral behavior by granting it special legal protection.” The fourth condition framed the issue as relevant to both values. The expert is quoted as saying “we must balance these competing values when deciding on this issue.”

[FIGURE 2.2 HERE]

After reading the article, participants were again asked the decoy question about whether or not the article was informative, listed their thoughts on the issue, and rated their thoughts on positive and negative scales. Participants then gave their opinion on the issue.
Do you favor or oppose laws to protect homosexuals against job discrimination?

The response options again ranged from “favor strongly” to “oppose strongly.”

Wave 1 included the framing manipulations and policy-attitude questions dealing with wiretapping and protecting gays from job discrimination. To assess attitude stability, wave 2 included these policy questions but without the framing manipulations.

**Human Cloning for Biomedical Research** Wave 2 included a framing manipulation and questions dealing with the issue of human cloning. Here the fictitious article purportedly appeared in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* on February 16, 2003. It dealt with a report of the (fictitious) Council for Biomedical Ethics in Bethesda, Maryland. The fictitious search terms were “cloning, cloned, Ohio.”

[FIGURE 2.3 HERE]

Again the experiment had four conditions. The wording of the four conditions is listed in Figure 2.3. Condition 1 was the control. Condition 2 framed the issue in terms of humanitarianism. Here the report said the council supports cloning for research because cloning “may offer uniquely useful ways of treating many chronic debilitating diseases and disabilities.” Condition 3 framed the issue in terms of traditional morality. In this condition the story reported that council opposes cloning because cloning “presents moral objections from the routine creation, exploitation, and destruction of nascent human life.” Condition 4 framed the issue as relevant to both values. Participants were asked the decoy question about the informativeness
of the article, listed and rated their thoughts on the issue, and responded to the following opinion question, again using the fully-labeled five-point scale.

Do you favor or oppose human cloning for biomedical research?

Political Knowledge

In the analyses to follow I control for general and domain specific political information or knowledge. I control for information to account for the possibility that the hypothesized consequences of value conflict—ambivalence, persuadability, stability, moderation, and uncertainty—may be due to low levels of knowledge rather than value conflict. The idea here is that people may have inconsistent views on an issue, change their position on it, have a middle-of-the-road attitude, or perceive themselves as uncertain because they lack information rather than because they are conflicted.

My measure of general political knowledge is based on the scale developed by Delli Carpini and Keeter (1993). It includes four of their five general political knowledge items. The fifth item deals specifically with civil liberties, so I included it in my measure of knowledge of civil liberties and the courts, which is specific to the issue of wiretapping in response to terrorism. The general political knowledge scale includes these four items and began with this introduction.

Here are a few questions about government and public affairs.

1. What job or political office is currently held by Dick Cheney?
2. How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a presidential veto?
3. Which political party currently has a majority of members in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington? *(R chooses Democratic Party, Republican Party, or Don’t Know)*

4. Which political party is more conservative at the national level? *(R chooses Democratic Party, Republican Party, or Don’t Know)*

The political knowledge items were included on wave 1 of the study only. For this reason, I have measures of domain-specific knowledge related to civil liberties for the issue of wiretapping and related to gay rights for the issue of protecting gays from job discrimination, but not related to human cloning.

The measure of domain specific knowledge for wiretapping included these four items.

1. Whose job is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not? Is it the president, the Congress or the Supreme Court?

2. What is the name of the current Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court?

3. Does a member of the Communist Party have the right to run for president of the United States? *(R chooses Yes, No, or Don’t Know)*

4. What are the first 10 Amendments to the U.S. Constitution called?

The measure of domain specific knowledge related to the issue of protecting gays from job discrimination included these four items.

1. The U.S. government’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy allows homosexuals to serve in a particular area of government or particular types of jobs. As far as you recall, in what area of government, or what types of jobs, does the U.S. government’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy allow homosexuals to serve?

2. What does PFLAG stand for?

3. The U.S. Supreme Court decided a court case dealing with the question of whether or not the Boy Scouts must allow homosexuals to serve as scout leaders or "scoutmasters." As far as you can recall, did the Supreme Court decide that the Boy Scouts MUST ALLOW homosexuals to serve as scoutmasters, or did the Supreme Court decide that the Boy Scouts...
Scouts are NOT REQUIRED to allow homosexuals to serve as scoutmasters?

4. The U.S. Congress passed, and the president signed into law legislation dealing with homosexual marriage. As far as you can recall, does this law seek to promote or discourage homosexual marriage?

I coded each of the three knowledge scales to range from 0 to 4, based on the number of correct responses. Participants who answered all four questions incorrectly received a score of “0” and those who answered all four correctly received a score of “4.” I then recoded the scale to range from 0 to 1.

[TABLE 2.2 HERE]

The frequencies of the three knowledge scales are presented in Table 2.2. They show substantial variation in general political knowledge and especially specific knowledge relevant to wiretapping and gay rights. A majority of participants answered all four general items correctly, which is higher than in typical mass samples and likely reflects the fact that the participants are college students enrolled in political science courses. Still, a substantial proportion did get one or more of these factual questions wrong, as did a majority on the domain-specific knowledge scales.

Effects of Values on Policy Attitudes

Value conflict occurs when a pair of values have conflicting implications for an opinion on an issue. For value conflict to occur, we must assume that the values are of consequence for the issue at hand. If freedom or security are irrelevant to the issue of wiretapping, we can hardly expect people to be conflicted between them.
But if it can be demonstrated that both are relevant, then value conflict is more likely to occur. Here I test the independent effects of the values on the issues.

I did this by regressing the policy opinions on the related values, framing manipulations, and, as a control, political knowledge. The policy-opinion items are ordinal so I conducted the analysis using ordered logit. For the framing manipulations, the excluded category is the control condition, where participants did not read an article. In these models, for the sake of simplicity, one value in each pair is labeled “liberal” and the other is labeled “conservative” and the framing conditions are similarly labeled “liberal,” “conservative,” and “both.” The liberal values are freedom (for the wiretapping model), equality (for the gay job protections model), and humanitarianism (for the human cloning model). The conservative values are national security (wiretapping) and traditional morality (gay job protections and cloning). The results are presented in Table 2.3.

[TABLE 2.3 HERE]

The results of the three models suggest that these value pairs are likely to generate conflict because they have the hypothesized opposing effects and are significant in every case but one. The results of the wiretapping model in the first column show that, as theorized, personal importance of freedom (the liberal value in this model) diminishes support for wiretapping and personal importance of national security (the conservative value) increases support for it. The results of the gay jobs protections model in the second column show that, also as predicted, equality (the liberal value)
enhances support for gay job protections while traditional morality (the conservative value) diminishes support.

In contrast to these significant results, the results of the human cloning model in column 3 provide only partial confirmation of expectations. As expected, traditional morality (the conservative value) is associated with opposition to human cloning for biomedical research, but humanitarianism (the liberal value) is not associated with support for it. This is a surprise because to date the public debate about this issue has focused on the potential benefits of cloning in terms of curing debilitating diseases and disabilities and has tended to downplay or ignore the potential negative consequences of manipulating and destroying human embryos. In any case, while keeping this lack of association in mind, in the next section I proceed with the analysis assuming conflict between humanitarianism and traditional morality with respect to human cloning. The strong associations between the values and policy attitudes for the other two issues means that the results to come based on these issues provide a baseline of comparison for those based on cloning. If the cloning results are similar to those of the other two issues, this will substantiate my use of the cloning data despite this lack of association in the aggregate between humanitarianism and human cloning.

Another surprise in Table 2.3 is the lack of association between the framing conditions and policy attitudes. Though disappointing, these non-effects are fortunately not central to this analysis, which is focused on value conflict and its effects. Moreover, the fact that the framing manipulations did not affect the policy opinions does not necessarily suggest that they did not affect subjective value
conflict or the relation between latent and subjective value conflict, which was the reason I included them in the study in any case. I test these hypothesized associations below. Also, let me mention that, as shown in Table 2.3, general and domain-specific political knowledge were generally, though not uniformly, inconsequential in these models. They were significant, but with incongruously opposite effects, in the wiretapping model.

Having assessed the associations between the framing manipulations, values, and policy attitudes, I now turn to the measures of value conflict.

**Measuring Value Conflict**

Previous studies have measured value conflict in a variety of ways. Some studies of value conflict don’t measure it at all (e.g., Grant and Rudolph 2003), while a few discern subjective value conflict from research participants’ open ended remarks (e.g., Hochschild 1981) or spontaneous expressions of ambivalence (e.g., “That’s a tough question” in Zaller and Feldman, p. 588, 1992).

Most use a measure of value conflict derived from participants’ scores (usually ratings or rankings) on the two conflicting values. These measures have included multiplicative interaction terms (e.g., Alvarez, Brehm, and Wilson 2003; Fletcher and Chalmers 1991; Katz and Hass 1988; Keele and Wolak 2003; Schnell 1993); correlations of conflicting values (e.g., Braithwaite 1994), conjoint analysis (Shamir and Shamir 1995); crosstabulations of Likert scale ratings (Craig, Kane, and Martinez, 2002; Feather 2002; McGraw, 1995); the average importance ascribed to the two values (Kristiansen and Matheson, 1990); participants’ placement of
themselves on a bipolar continuum between the two values (Suedfeld, Bluck, Lowen, and Elkins 1994); the square root of the less strongly endorsed value divided by the more strongly endorsed value (Bassili, 1996); the absolute value of the difference between the two values (Alvarez and Brehm 1998, 2002; Liberman and Chaiken 1991); the interaction of the average importance and the difference between the two values (Tetlock, 1986); the interaction between the average importance and the reciprocal of the difference between them (Peterson, 1995); the number of times each of the conflicting values is chosen in a series of pairwise rankings (Jacoby, 2002); and participants’ transitivity in ranking two conflicting values relative to a third (irrelevant) value (Jacoby 2003). It would be only a slight exaggeration to suggest that there are almost as many measures of value conflict as there are studies of it.

But which is best? The best measure of value conflict, or the measures of value conflict, is the one, or are the ones, that reflect most closely our understanding of how people experience it. Several studies have sought to determine the best measure of ambivalence (e.g., Breckler 1994; Cacioppo and Bernston 1994; Kaplan 1972; Priester and Petty 1996; Thompson, Zanna, and Griffin 1995), examining in minute detail the merits and demerits of ambivalence measures, but only one published study to date has tried to develop an optimal measure of value conflict. This study, by Steenbergen and Brewer (in press), assesses various measures of value conflict in order to determine empirically which best reflects their theoretical understanding of value conflict. These authors settle on a measure that adapts Thompson and her colleagues’ (1995) measure of latent ambivalence to value conflict. This measure incorporates participants’ value ratings into this formula:
Value Conflict = \frac{\text{Value 1} + \text{Value 2}}{2} - |\text{Value 1} - \text{Value 2}| \]

According to this formula, value conflict is a function of the average extremity or importance of the two values (the first term in the equation) and the similarity in importance, represented by the absolute value of the difference between them (the second term). The equation models value conflict as an increasing linear function of the extremity or importance of the values and their degree of similarity in magnitude. By this measure, value conflict increases as a person views both values as highly important and nearly equally important. Other researchers, including Federico (2004) and Peffley, Kniggle, and Hurwitz (2001) have recently adapted this measure to value conflict.

Steenbergen and Brewer’s methodological analysis shows that this measure outperforms the alternatives as a measure of latent or potential value conflict. The other measures they tested have empirical inconsistencies or irregularities that make them problematic as measures of value conflict.\(^5\) This formula comes closest to reflecting how, or perhaps when, we should expect people to experience value conflict—when the conflicting values are viewed as important and nearly equally so.

**Latent Value Conflict**

I use this formula to generate my measures of latent or potential value conflict. I did this by entering the relevant values into the formula which produced an index of latent conflict for each of the three policy issues. I then rescaled each to

\(^5\) Readers interested in the specifics can consult Steenbergen and Brewer (in press).
range from 0 to 1. Higher values on the scale reflect higher levels of latent or potential conflict between the two values. Since the values relevant to wiretapping and gay job protections were included on both waves of the study, I was able to create measures of latent conflict relevant to these issues for both waves, which allows me to assess the test-retest reliability of these measures. Selected summary statistics are presented in Table 2.4.

|TABLE 2.4 HERE|

These statistics reveal several characteristics of latent value conflict in this sample. First, as shown in column 1 of Table 2.4, the means are similarly situated near the middle of the scale. Wave 1 conflict between freedom and national security has a higher mean than the others, at .71 on the 0-1 scale, but it declined to .58 at wave 2. All the other measures are within the .5 to .6 range. The standard deviations are also very similar, averaging about .25. Whether the typical mean of latent value conflict near the midpoint of the scale reflects a high, medium, or low level of latent conflict is a matter of interpretation. Moreover, the level of conflict depends on the characteristics of the sample (which is not representative of any larger group) and the wording and measurement of the values. But it does suggest that there is at least some potential for latent value conflict in this group of participants.

The test-retest correlations are fairly high, which suggests that the measure is reliable. The Pearson correlation coefficients are .58 for latent conflict between freedom and security across the two waves of the study and .75 for latent conflict
between equality and traditional morality. Of course, these measures do not allow me to address the question of how much latent value conflict is out there, because the sample is not representative. I address that question below. For now, let me turn to my measures of subjective value conflict.

Subjective Value Conflict

I measured subjective value conflict directly, by asking participants how conflicted they feel between the two values when thinking about the related policy issue. My subjective value conflict scale included seven items. Since no previous studies have measured subjective value conflict directly, I developed these seven items based on my theoretical understanding of how some people should be likely to feel conflicted when presented with an issue that implicates conflicting values. To be subjectively conflicted, people should recognize the opposing implications of the two values for the issue and feel like these opposing implications pull them in different directions at the same time. Participants were asked these seven items for each of the three policy issues on both waves of the study. The first item in the scale was a categorical question. Again using wiretapping as an example, this question asked

1. When thinking about this issue, some people feel like their views on freedom and national security pull them in different directions. These people feel conflicted about this issue. Other people don’t feel conflicted at all about it. Do your views on freedom and national security make you feel extremely conflicted, very conflicted, somewhat conflicted, or not at all conflicted about this issue?

The wording of this question was the same for gay job protections and human cloning except that the relevant values were inserted in place of freedom and
national security. The other six indicators of subjective value conflict asked
participants how much they agreed or disagreed with each of six statements. Three
of the statements were worded so that a positive response indicates value conflict
and the other three were worded so that a negative response indicates value
conflict. The order of all seven items was randomized. For wiretapping, the six
agree-disagree subjective value conflict items were worded as follows.

2. My views on national security make me feel like I should favor this issue,
but my views on freedom make me feel like I should oppose it.

3. When I think about this issue, my views on national security and freedom
are extremely consistent. (reverse coded)

4. When I think about this issue, my views on national security pull me in
one direction but my views on freedom pull me in a different direction.

5. My views on national security do NOT contradict my views on freedom
when it comes to my opinion on this issue. (reverse coded)

6. When I think about this issue, my views on national security and freedom
make me feel like I could EITHER favor OR oppose this issue.

7. My views on national security are in complete agreement with my views
on freedom when it comes to my opinion on this issue. (reverse coded)

Participants responded to each of these statements using a fully-labeled seven-point
scale: “Agree Very Strongly,” “Agree Strongly,” “Agree Somewhat,” “Neither Agree
nor Disagree,” “Disagree Somewhat,” “Disagree Strongly,” and “Disagree Very
Strongly.” The three items that were worded so that a negative response indicated
more value conflict were reverse coded so that for them, and thus for all seven
items, higher values reflect higher levels of value conflict. I coded all seven items to
range from 0 to 1.
I assessed the adequacy of the subjective value conflict scale for each of the three policy issues by assessing the correlations among the indicators, conducting confirmatory factor analyses, and by assessing each scale’s internal reliability. For wiretapping and gay job protections, which appeared on both waves of the study, I was also able to assess test-retest reliability.

[TABLE 2.5 HERE]

Table 2.5 shows the average correlations among the seven indicators for the wave 1 wiretapping and gay rights subjective value conflict items and the wave 2 cloning subjective value conflict items. These average correlations show that the seven indicators of subjective value conflict are highly correlated and suggest that they reflect a single subjective value conflict dimension. This would seem particularly the case given that three of the six agree-disagree items were reverse coded. If all the items had been worded in the same direction then the high correlations could be confounded by the tendency among some people to acquiesce on agree-disagree questions. But that does not appear to be the case here since three of the seven items are worded in the opposite direction. The weakest of the seven correlations is the fifth one (“My views on national security do NOT contradict my views on freedom …”), which tends to correlate less well with the other items.

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6 Because the correlations were similar across the three issues, to keep this chapter to a manageable length, and to avoid redundancy, I present the average correlations of the indicators for the three issues rather than the separate correlations for each of the three issues. I omitted the wave 2 correlations for wiretapping and gay job protections from this average to avoid confounding the assessment of the internal consistency of the scale items with test-retest reliability. (The wave 2 correlations were similar in any case)
Even so, it is obviously correlated with the other six and theoretically related to them as well, so I retain it in the analysis.

I further assessed the dimensionality of the subjective value conflict items using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). I estimated CFA’s of the wave 1 wiretapping and gay job protections scales and the wave 2 cloning scale in LISREL using maximum likelihood. I identified the models by standardizing the latent factors. The results of the three CFA’s are presented in Table 2.6.

[TABLE 2.6 HERE]

The CFA’s in Table 2.6 show that for each issue all seven indicators load highly on the subjective value conflict factor. Although there is some variation in the factor loadings across the three issues, for each issue, all seven items scale well, even the fifth one.

I assessed internal reliability by calculating the Chronbach’s alpha coefficient for each scale. The alphas were .89 for both wave 1 wiretapping and gay job protections and .94 for wave 2 human cloning.

I assessed test-retest reliability by calculating the correlation of subjective value conflict at wave 1 with subjective value conflict at wave 2. The test-retest correlations were .58 for wiretapping and .77 for gay job protections. Note that these test-retest reliabilities of the subjective value conflict scales are nearly identical to the test-retest reliabilities of the latent value conflict scales.

In summary, the seven indicators of subjective value conflict are highly correlated, load on the same factor, and have high internal and test-retest reliability.
These results support the conclusion that these seven items reflect well the theorized dimension of subjective value conflict.

The CFA models do, however, present one notable problem. The problem lies in the overall model fit statistics, which are poor in each case. The chi-squares are large given the number of degrees of freedom and the other measures of overall fit, particularly the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), also suggest a mediocre fit at best. A good model fit is generally indicated by an RMSEA of less than .05 and a CFI and NNFI close to 1.0. In these models, the RMSEA ranges between .15 and .20, which suggests particularly poor fit, while the CFI and NNFI are all above .90, which suggests a somewhat better fit. The poor overall fit of these models may reflect in part the small sample sizes and the modest number of indicators. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that these overall fit statistics are appropriately viewed as general guidelines or rules of thumb rather significance tests. Moreover, in assessing the overall fit it is well to keep in mind the fact that CFA’s of the political values scales routinely included in the biennial National Election Study also show rather poor overall model fit (see Feldman 1988).

I created three subjective value conflict scales, one for each policy issue, by averaging together responses to the seven items. The scale ranges from 0 to 1. For wiretapping and gay job protections, I created separate scales for waves 1 and 2. The summary statistics for the subjective value conflict scales are presented in Table 2.7.
What is notable about these subjective conflict scales is that the averages are of a somewhat lower magnitude than the latent conflict scales in Table 2.4. The standard deviations are nearly identical to those of the latent conflict scales, and, as I mentioned, the test-retest correlations are also nearly the same. This cursory comparison suggests that there is at least some conflict among these participants—some are highly conflicted, others moderately conflicted, and some hardly conflicted at all.

**The Relation Between Latent and Subjective Value Conflict**

I assessed the relation between latent and subjective value conflict, first, by assessing the correlation between the two forms of conflict, second, by regressing subjective on latent conflict, and, third, by regressing subjective on latent and the interaction of latent conflict with the framing manipulations.

Table 2.8 presents the correlations between latent and subjective conflict and between both forms of value conflict and latent and subjective ambivalence. For now, I leave the associations with ambivalence aside and focus on the correlation between latent and subjective value conflict for the three issues in the second column of Table 2.8. The issue-labels are listed in the “latent value conflict” column and the correlation between the two forms of value conflict are listed in the “subjective value conflict” column.
These correlations show that latent and subjective value conflict are significantly correlated, particularly on the issue of job protections for homosexuals, but not highly so overall. The average correlation for the three issues is a significant but modest .26. Latent and subjective value conflict are correlated but are not interchangeable.

To obtain a fuller view of the association, for each of the three issues I regressed subjective value conflict on latent value conflict. In these regressions I controlled for a number of factors that might influence subjective value conflict and confound the relation between the two types of conflict. First, I controlled for general political knowledge and, where possible, domain-specific political knowledge. I did this to address the competing hypothesis that the measure of subjective value conflict may not reflect a competition of values but uncertainty due to lack of information.\(^7\) Second, I controlled for the component values to account for the possibility that the individual values themselves, rather than latent conflict, affect subjective conflict. Subjective value conflict may be prevalent among people high (or low) on one or the other of the component value dimensions rather than latent conflict between them.\(^8\) Finally, I included the framing manipulations, which I theorize enhance subjective value conflict.

\(^7\) Recall that I have measures of domain-specific knowledge for wiretapping and gay job protections but not human cloning.

\(^8\) Here again, the liberal values are freedom in the wiretapping model, equality in the gay job protections model, and humanitarianism in the human cloning model. The conservative values are national security in the wiretapping model and traditional morality in the gay job protections and cloning models.
The results of these models are presented in Table 2.9. The dependent variable, subjective value conflict, is continuous, so these are OLS models. All variables are coded to range from 0 to 1.

[TABLE 2.9 HERE]

The results support my hypothesis that latent value conflict is associated with subjective value conflict. For each of the three issues, latent conflict significantly predicts, and to a similar degree, subjective conflict. The relation is somewhat less statistically significant ($p = .07$) in the human cloning model (column 3). The larger standard error here may be accounted for by the smaller sample size. Note that with just one exception (the liberal value, equality, in the gay job protections model in column 2), none of the component values, framing manipulations, or knowledge variables are significantly associated with subjective value conflict. Overall, then, these results provide consistent support for the hypothesis that people who endorse conflicting values in the abstract are more likely than not to feel conflicted by the opposing implications of the values for the opinion.

Effect of Context on the Relation Between Latent and Subjective Value Conflict

I hypothesized that the context of the decision about a policy issue may highlight the relevance of competing values for the judgment and, in so doing, increase the association between the two forms of conflict. Here I test this hypothesis by regressing subjective value conflict on latent value conflict and the
interaction between latent conflict and the framing manipulations. Again I control for
the effects of the component values and, where possible, general and domain-
specific political knowledge. For this analysis I mean-centered latent value conflict in
order to reduce collinearity and to allow for more substantive interpretation of its
main effect. The mean-centered variable notwithstanding, all variables in the model
are coded to range from 0 to 1.

TABLE 2.10 HERE

The results are presented in Table 2.10. Because of the interaction terms,
and because latent value conflict is mean-centered, the main effect of latent conflict
is the mean effect of this variable on subjective value conflict. It shows that, on
average, latent conflict has a statistically significant effect on subjective conflict for
the issues of wiretapping (column 1) and human cloning (column 3) but not gay job
protections (column 2). For the interaction terms, the baseline category is the
control condition of the framing manipulation—participants not exposed to a framing
argument. The coefficient on the interaction between latent conflict and the liberal
frame shows that the liberal frame enhanced the relation between latent and
subjective value conflict in two of the three models. In the gay job protections and
human cloning models, the coefficient for this interaction is positive and statistically
significant. For these two issues at least, then, where the context highlights the
relevance of the liberal value, people high in latent conflict tend to feel more

9 Recall that the sample size is smaller for the cloning model because it appeared only on wave 2
of the study.
conflicted. The same cannot be said about the conservative frames, however, which were not significant in any case.

Most importantly, the coefficient on the interaction between latent conflict and the condition that highlighted the relevance of both values had no effect for the wiretapping issue and differential effects for the other two issues. The gay job protections model in column 2 shows that the “both” frame significantly increases the relation between latent and subjective value conflict but the human cloning model in column 3 suggests the opposite, that it decreases the relation.

These results and those presented in Table 2.9 thus fail to confirm my suppositions about the effects of context or framing on value conflict. These null results are among the most disappointing of this study, because they fail to demonstrate what seems intuitively likely to be the case—that context or framing “matters” when it comes to value conflict.

The Prevalence of Value Conflict in Public Opinion

So far I have shown that the two forms of conflict are separate but related, but these findings raise the question, central to recent value conflict research: Just how much value conflict is out there? Here I address this question empirically.

With so many different values, issues, and measures of value conflict, and comparatively little attention to how people experience it, perhaps it is no wonder that researchers arrive at different conclusions about how prevalent it is. In this section I suggest that the different conclusions drawn about the prevalence of value conflict derive from differences in measurement. I argue that previous research on
this question fails to address adequately how value conflict occurs. To understand how much conflict is out there we need to take account of the values that come in conflict, the issues that generate the conflict, and, most importantly, the extent to which people actually feel conflicted. Though I do not propose to resolve this debate here—the number of potential conflicts in American politics is large and I address only two issues and value pairs—by measuring both forms of conflict in a mass sample I am able to present results that shed light on the debate over the prevalence of value conflict in public opinion.

*Research on the Prevalence of Value Conflict Revisited*

The two schools of thought on value conflict disagree about whether value conflict is common or uncommon. The difference of opinion seems likely to derive, at least in part, from the typical measurement strategies of the two groups. Among those studies that argue that value conflict is common, the most cited use measures of conflict or ambivalence based on participants’ extemporaneous and open-ended remarks (e.g., Feldman and Zaller 1992; Hochschild 1981; Zaller 1992). These studies measure conflict largely based on participants’ own articulated views about feeling torn or conflicted. Those who argue that value conflict is uncommon or rare typically do so based on measures of latent or potential conflict derived from participants’ endorsement of conflicting values in the abstract, without reference to the issue thought to generate the conflict (e.g., Alvarez and Brehm 2002; Jacoby 2003; Steenbergen and Brewer in press).
Although the “common” studies would seem to come closer than the “uncommon” studies to tapping the subjective experience of value conflict, they have a notable shortcoming of their own. They are based on participants’ ability to articulate value conflict, and to do so in ways that allow us to differentiate it from other processes, such as uncertainty, ignorance, or even-handedness. This is an important concern because it is not obvious that people are able or inclined to volunteer feeling conflicted in ways that are clear and transparent to us as researchers. It may be difficult for people to express value conflict in their own words. As Hochschild (1981) found, conflict and ambivalence can leave people tongue-tied. Where people seem to vacillate, waffle, deny, or, in her words, “grind to a halt in frustration,” (Hochschild 1981, p. 238) value conflict may be difficult to discern in peoples’ stammering open-ended remarks.

This method of measuring value conflict also assumes that people are able to articulate their thoughts well enough that they can be interpreted as reflecting value conflict and not lack of information. It may be possible to control for political awareness and talkativeness, as Zaller and Feldman (1992) do, but these studies do not, perhaps cannot, control for articulation skills. The indecision that appears to be value conflict may derive from ignorance.

At the other end of the information spectrum, participants aware of arguments on both sides of the debate may articulate considerations on both sides in an effort to appear knowledgeable, impartial, or thoughtful, though their views are on one side. Zaller and Feldman (1992) measure ambivalence based on “opposing
remarks” and “two-sided comments,” but these apparently conflicting considerations can be misleading.

Spontaneous expressions of conflict or ambivalence are similarly ambiguous. Zaller and Feldman also tap ambivalence based on such expressions as “that’s a tough question” and “depends,” but such measures may also reflect processes other than ambivalence or conflict.

To measure value conflict well it is best to measure it directly. In this analysis, I overcome these problems using standard measures latent and subjective value conflict to address the prevalence of value conflict in public opinion.

Data and Measures

The data come from a random-sample telephone survey of 503 adult Ohioans conducted during the spring of 2002. The study included questions about wiretapping as a response to terrorism and an issue not dealt with in the lab study, social welfare spending. I included this issue because it has been prominent in value conflict research (e.g., Feldman and Zaller 1992; Hochschild 1981) and related to conflicting values of the American creed (e.g., McClosky and Zaller 1984). A large body of work suggests that social welfare issues provoke conflict between the values equality and self-reliance among many Americans so I included measures of these

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10 The interviews were conducted by professional interviewers at the Ohio State University Center for Survey Research. The items for this analysis were added to the Buckeye State Poll, a monthly survey of Ohioans. A random sample of computer-generated telephone numbers (n = 1,859) was used to reach households with both listed and unlisted numbers. Of those numbers, 1,247 were presumed to reach a household in Ohio with an eligible respondent. From those households, interviews were completed in 40% of the cases. This study was conducted with Kathleen McGraw and supported by a grant to her from the Center for Survey Research and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Ohio State.
values in the study. For wiretapping, the values were again freedom and national security.

Values I measured the personal importance of the four values using McCarty and Shrum’s (2000) “most-least” rank-then-rate method. Interviewers defined for participants the four values—freedom, national security, equality, and self-reliance—in random order at the outset. The values of freedom, security, and equality were defined in the same way as in the laboratory study. Self-reliance was defined as “people solving their own problems by taking responsibility for themselves.” After listening to each of the definitions, participants were asked which of the four values is “most important to you personally,” followed by a question that asked which of the remaining three values is “least important to you personally.” McCarty and Shrum showed that the most-least ranking provides data of essentially the same quality as a full ranking, and is more viable and cost-efficient in a telephone survey.

After selecting their most and least important values, respondents rated all four values on the same five-point personal importance scale used in the laboratory study. The order in which participants received the importance rating items matched the order in which the values were initially defined for them.

After answering the values items respondents were randomly assigned to answer either the wiretapping block of questions followed by the welfare spending block of questions or the two blocks in the reverse order.

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11 In their methodological research on measuring values, McCarty and Shrum (2002) showed that this most-least method is adequate to achieve the goal of increasing differentiation among the values ratings.
Wiretapping Opinion  Participants were asked essentially the same wiretapping opinion question used in the lab study. It read as follows.

Next, I'd like your views on an (another) issue being discussed in this country today. This is an issue intended to reduce the threat of terrorism by allowing the government to listen to people's telephone calls without their knowledge. Would you strongly favor, favor, neither favor nor oppose, oppose or strongly oppose allowing the government to listen to people's telephone calls without their knowledge?

As in the lab study, participants were randomly assigned to conditions that manipulated how the issue was framed. Roughly one-third of respondents were assigned at random to this version of the question. The other two-thirds were assigned to a version that included the same wording as above but with the inclusion of two statements that highlight the relevance of freedom and national security to the issue. This question read:

… This is an issue intended to reduce the threat of terrorism by allowing the government to listen to people's telephone calls without their knowledge. Some people think that the freedom of ordinary citizens should be protected at all costs. Others think that law enforcement authorities should have maximum flexibility to do whatever is necessary to ensure public safety. Would you strongly favor, favor, neither favor nor oppose, oppose or strongly oppose allowing the government to listen to people's telephone calls without their knowledge?

For respondents who answered this version of the question, the order of the two framing statements was counterbalanced.

Welfare Spending Opinion  Participants were asked a question that measured their opinion of social welfare spending.

Next, I'd like your views on an (another) issue being discussed in this country today, namely government spending on social programs. If you had a say in making up the federal budget this year, would you like to see government spending on social programs in areas such as helping homeless people, welfare, aid to the poor, and food stamps decreased a lot, decreased somewhat, kept the same as it is now, increased somewhat, or increased a lot?
The question asks about “government spending on social programs” and mentions four spending areas in particular. The question is balanced in that two of the target areas are popular (helping homeless people and providing aid to the poor) and two are unpopular (welfare and food stamps). Although this question is formally “quadruple-barreled,” I felt it was important to put the issue of government social spending in a specific context by defining it in terms of specific spending areas. As with the wiretapping opinion question, about one-third of participants were randomly assigned to this base version and the other two-thirds answered the question with statements framing it as relevant to the values of equality and self-reliance.

... namely, government spending on social programs. Some people think that government social programs should help everyone to have an equal chance to succeed. Others think that people should solve their own problems by taking responsibility for themselves. If you had a say in making up the federal budget this year, would you like to see government spending on social programs in areas such as helping homeless people, welfare, aid to the poor, and food stamps decreased a lot, decreased somewhat, kept the same as it is now, increased somewhat, or increased a lot?

The order of the framing statements was again counterbalanced.

**Latent Value Conflict** I created measures of latent value conflict between freedom and national security (for wiretapping) and equality and self-reliance (for social welfare spending) using the same measure of latent value conflict that I used in the lab study.

**Subjective Value Conflict** After giving their opinion on each of the two policy issues, participants were asked a question that taps subjective value conflict toward the issue. For wiretapping, this question was worded as follows.

---

12 An alternative would have been to ask people’s opinion of each spending area separately. Financial constraints limited us to one welfare opinion question rather than four.
When thinking about this issue, some people feel like their views on freedom and national security pull them in different directions. These people feel conflicted about this issue. Other people don’t feel conflicted at all about it. Do your views on freedom and national security pull make you feel extremely conflicted, very conflicted, somewhat conflicted, or not at all conflicted about this issue?

The wording was identical for welfare, except that the relevant values of equality and self-reliance replaced freedom and national security. This is the same categorical question used in the value conflict scale in the lab study. Practical and financial constraints made it necessary to measure subjective conflict with this single item. It does a good job reflecting the theoretical idea of how people should be expected to experience value conflict, correlated well with the other subjective value conflict indicators in the lab study, and because it is categorical (rather than in the agree-disagree format), it is the most appropriate of the lot to ask in a telephone survey.

External Validity

The validity of this analysis hinges, in part, on the representativeness of the sample, the values, and issues presumed to generate conflict. The sample is representative of Ohio residents but its applicability beyond the state is open to question. Though not foolproof, this can be addressed informally by comparing the Ohio sample with a national sample. I do this here by comparing the Ohio sample with the 2002 National Election Study on key political and demographic variables.

Table 2.11 compares the Ohio sample with the NES on partisanship, ideology, sex, race, and education. On these variables, Ohio and the nation are similar. The two studies have similar proportions of Democrats (45% in the Ohio study, 48% in the NES), Republicans (44% vs. 45%), liberals (30% vs. 37%), and conservatives (52% vs. 45%). Both over-represent women (60% vs. 65%), as is
typical in surveys, and are predominantly white (84% vs. 79%). The national sample is somewhat more educated (66% have at least some college) than the Ohio sample (58%), but the two studies are broadly comparable.

[TABLE 2.11 HERE]

Results

How much value conflict is there on these two issues? Table 2.12 shows the means and standard deviations of latent value conflict. Scaled to range from 0 to 1, it shows that latent conflict is .79 between freedom and security and .69 between equality and self-reliance. Both are well above the midpoint, suggesting substantial potential for value conflict to occur between these pairs of values.

[FIGURE 2.4 HERE]

Figure 2.4 shows the frequency distribution of subjective conflict between freedom and security as they relate to wiretapping in response to terrorism. The modal response here is “not at all conflicted,” which indicates clearly that the subjective experience of value conflict is not pervasive, at least not for this issue. Even so, a majority (58 percent) feel at least “somewhat conflicted” and nearly a fifth (18 percent) feel “very” or “extremely” conflicted between these two values when thinking about the issue.

[FIGURE 2.5 HERE]
The distribution of subjective conflict between equality and self-reliance in relation to social welfare spending is presented in Figure 2.5. Here, too, the modal response is “not at all conflicted,” and here those in this category form a majority (57 percent). Here again, however, a substantial proportion (43 percent) feel at least somewhat conflicted, though few (5 percent) feel very or extremely conflicted.

What do these results suggest about the prevalence of value conflict? At least with respect to these values and issues, they provide evidence for both sides of the debate. On one hand, those who say that value conflict is common can point to the substantial amounts of potential conflict between the value pairs and the substantial proportions of people who say they feel at least somewhat conflicted—a majority in one case, a large minority in the other—between the conflicting values. On subjective value conflict in particular, though some people feel no conflict many others feel some, and still others, particularly on the issue of wiretapping, feel very conflicted. Judging from these issues and values, value conflict is not the norm but neither is it uncommon.

On the other hand, those who contend that value conflict is unusual can point to the large proportions of respondents who admit to no conflict whatsoever. Even on the issue of wiretapping, 42 percent feel no conflict between freedom and security. And whatever conflict exists over social welfare, these results show it is at best mild. The results suggest some conflict but do perhaps call into question the notion that conflict over welfare issues is widespread.

These results thus point to a middle ground. Value conflict may not be as widespread as sometimes asserted, particularly on the issue of social welfare, but
neither is it rare. When addressing the question, central to the literature, of how much value conflict is out there, these results suggest that the answer is neither “a lot” nor “a little” but “some.”

Discussion

In this chapter I dealt empirically with how people experience value conflict and the prevalence of value conflict in public opinion. I began with the assumption that this study is on stronger footing if I can show that specific values are associated with the issues thought to precipitate conflict. I addressed this by regressing the policy attitudes on the related values and framing manipulations. I found support for the supposed value—issue relations in all cases but one, that between humanitarianism and human cloning. Proceeding, the results vindicated the inclusion of human cloning in the analysis as value conflict associated with this issue behaved in the same way as the others in the study. Perhaps it is not necessary for values to have independent associations with the policy attitude in the aggregate for value conflict to occur at the level of the individual.

More surprising were the insignificant effects of the framing manipulations. I hypothesized that framing the issue as relevant to the conflicting values would enhance value conflict and moderate the relation between the two forms of conflict. But the results did not support this claim. The failure to manipulate value conflict is problematic because it makes it that much more difficult to show, in the chapters to follow, that value conflict has specific causal effects. To understand value conflict more fully, establish it as a viable social science construct, distinguish it from other
constructs (such as ambivalence), and determine its causes and consequences, future research will have to find ways to manipulate it effectively.

In this chapter I developed empirical measures of latent and subjective value conflict. My measure of latent conflict drew from previous research on the measurement of values (e.g., McCarty and Shrum 2000) and value conflict (Steenbergen and Brewer in press). Recent value conflict studies (e.g., Federico 2004; Peffley, Kniggle, and Hurwitz 2001) have used similar measures. I developed a scale measure of subjective value conflict, the first of its kind. This scale is one of the primary contributions of this study. Future studies may wish to make this distinction between the two forms of conflict and use these measures of them.

Assessing the relation between the two types of conflict, consistent with theory, I found that latent conflict is associated with subjective conflict. People who endorse conflicting values in the abstract are more likely to feel conflicted when presented with an issue that implicates both values.

Finally, I addressed empirically the question, central to recent research on value conflict, of how much value conflict is out there. The results are subject to a number of assumptions and caveats—that I measured the correct values correctly, that the value conflicts and policy issues are typical of those in American politics, and that the Ohio sample is generalizable outside the state. Taking these points as given, the results suggest a middle ground between the two sides of the debate. They suggest that value conflict is neither uncommon nor omnipresent, but that it does occur, and perhaps in sufficient quantity to affect political attitudes in any
number of ways. Latent and subjective value conflict occur but are neither unusual nor the norm.

This study adds to our understanding of the nature and prevalence of value conflict but is hardly the last word on either subject. Looking at how people experience it, work remains to be done on the measurement of both types of conflict. Measuring latent value conflict depends on how the values themselves are measured. Measuring latent conflict well requires that the values themselves be measured well. Though much attention has been paid to the conceptualization and measurement of values, much remains to be done in both areas.

For us to have confidence in values research, researchers must be clear about what specific values mean. Values such as freedom, security, and equality mean different things to different people; they can be defined in different ways, such as the notable difference between equality of opportunity and equality of results. Though many recognize this, researchers often do not take it into account. Working with values in empirical research requires clear definitions of values. Researchers also have yet to resolve the best way to measure values. Research has variously argued in favor of values rankings (e.g., Rokeach 1973; Krosnick and Alwin 1988; rank-then-rate (e.g., McCarty and Shrum 2000), ratings based on multiple indicators (e.g., Feldman 1988) and pairwise comparisons between two different values (e.g., Sniderman et al. 1996; Jacoby 2003). Is one method best, and if so, why? Or are they interchangeable? The adequacy of any measure of latent value conflict depends on how these questions are answered. Before we can have confidence in
our measures of latent value conflict we must be confident in our definitions and measures of values.

My subjective value conflict scale performed well, especially given that this is the first measure of its kind, but work remains to be done. In particular, the scale stands to be improved on its overall empirical fit. The individual scale items scale well and reflect theoretically the underlying construct, but the overall model fit was modest at best. Future research might improve the subjective value conflict scale by adding or refining the indicators.

Also, in this study I largely did not address the question of what types of people tend to be “value conflicted.” One cannot assume that just because a person endorses conflicting values in the abstract that he or she necessarily feels conflicted. The results suggest, in fact, that latent conflict explains little of the variance in subjective conflict. This study would seem to be the tip of the iceberg when it comes to addressing the predictors of subjective conflict. What, other than endorsing conflicting values in the abstract, produces the subjective experience of value conflict? Future research might address this question by exploring the effects of individual differences in personality (such as need for cognition, need to evaluate, and preference for consistency), demographic characteristics (such as sex or age), political attitudes, and ideology, on subjective value conflict.

Finally, the results of this study are limited in their ability to shed light on the propensity of value conflict in the U.S. because this study included a sample, issues, and values that may not be representative of the types of values that come in conflict in American politics and the types of issues that generate conflict. Though it would
seem that careful attention to how value conflict is measured must precede the question of “how much,” future research will have to broaden the scope of the analysis to include more issues, values, and a nationally-representative sample.
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<tr>
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<th>National Security</th>
<th>Equality</th>
<th>Traditional Morality</th>
<th>Humanitarianism</th>
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<td>(103)</td>
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<td>(45)</td>
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Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.

Table 2.1: Personal Importance Ratings of Values
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<th>General Political Knowledge</th>
<th>Courts &amp; Civil Liberties</th>
<th>Gay Rights</th>
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<tr>
<td>None Correct</td>
<td>.4% (1)</td>
<td>.4% (1)</td>
<td>5% (12)</td>
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<td>One Correct</td>
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<td>9.9% (23)</td>
<td>21.6% (50)</td>
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<td>Two Correct</td>
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<td>17.2% (40)</td>
<td>38.4% (89)</td>
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<td>Three Correct</td>
<td>27.2% (63)</td>
<td>34.9% (81)</td>
<td>29.3% (68)</td>
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<td>All Four Correct</td>
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<td>37.5% (87)</td>
<td>5.6% (13)</td>
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Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.

Table 2.2: Political Knowledge Scales
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<th>Gay Job Protections</th>
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<td>(.92)</td>
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<td>(.59)</td>
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<td>(1.12)</td>
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<td>(.55)</td>
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<td>Pseudo R-square</td>
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<td>.10</td>
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<td>104</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01. Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study. Ordered logit Models. Standard Errors in parentheses. Cutpoints omitted. Liberal values are freedom (wiretapping model), equality (gay job protections), and humanitarianism (human cloning). Conservative values are national security (wiretapping) and traditional morality (gay job protections and human cloning).

Table 2.3: Effects of Values, Framing Manipulations, and Political Knowledge on Policy Attitudes
| Freedom—National Security (wave 1) | .71 | .22 | 0-1 | |
| Freedom—National Security (wave 2) | .58 | .27 | 0-1 | .58 |
| Equality—Traditional Morality (wave 1) | .57 | .25 | 0-1 | |
| Equality—Traditional Morality (wave 2) | .50 | .26 | 0-1 | .75 |
| Humanitarianism—Trad. Morality (wave 2) | .55 | .24 | 0-1 | |

Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.

Table 2.4: Summary Statistics of Latent Value Conflict Scales
Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.

Table 2.5: Average Correlations of Subjective Value Conflict Scale Items

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<th>item 1</th>
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<td>Item 1</td>
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<td>2.71 ** (.25)</td>
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</table>

Ch-Square (df) | 116 (14) | 84 (14) | 49 (14) |
RMSEA | .20 | .15 | .16 |
CFI | .93 | .96 | .97 |
NNFI | .90 | .94 | .96 |
N | 232 | 232 | 104 |

Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.

Table 2.6: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Subjective Value Conflict Scale Items
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>S.D.</th>
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<td>.56</td>
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<td>0-1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiretapping: Freedom—National Security (wave 2)</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Job Protections: Equality—Traditional Morality (wave 1)</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gay Job Protections: Equality—Traditional Morality (wave 2)</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Cloning: Humanitarianism—Trad. Morality (wave 2)</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.

Table 2.7: Summary Statistics of Subjective Value Conflict Scales
### Table 2.8: Correlations Among Latent Value Conflict, Subjective Value Conflict, Latent Ambivalence, and Subjective Ambivalence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent Value Conflict</th>
<th>Subjective Value Conflict</th>
<th>Latent Ambivalence</th>
<th>Subjective Ambivalence</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wiretapping</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Job Protections</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Cloning</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Wiretapping</td>
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<td>.75**</td>
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<td>Gay Job Protections</td>
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<td>.76**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Cloning</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.79**</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiretapping</td>
<td></td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td></td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Job Protections</td>
<td></td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td></td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Cloning</td>
<td></td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: + p ≤ .10; * p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01. Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study. Entries are Pearson correlation coefficients.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wiretapping</th>
<th>Gay Job Protections</th>
<th>Human Cloning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latent Value Conflict</td>
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<td>.29 **</td>
<td>.33 †</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.13)</td>
<td>(.10)</td>
<td>(.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Value</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.17 *</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.10)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td>(.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Value</td>
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<td>.05</td>
<td>-.11</td>
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<td>(.08)</td>
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<td>.04</td>
<td>-.03</td>
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<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
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<td>-.02</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(.04)</td>
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<td>Both Frame</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Political Knowledge</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>-.14</td>
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<td>(.07)</td>
<td>(.14)</td>
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<td>Domain-Specific Knowledge</td>
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<td>-.04</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.46 **</td>
<td>.37 **</td>
<td>.51 **</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(.09)</td>
<td>(.16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-square</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<td>104</td>
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Notes: † p = .07; * p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01. Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study. OLS Models. Standard Errors in parentheses. Liberal values are freedom (wiretapping model), equality (gay job protections model), and humanitarianism (human cloning model). Conservative values are national security (wiretapping models ) and traditional morality (gay job protections and human cloning models).

Table 2.9: Effect of Latent Value Conflict on Subjective Value Conflict
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wiretapping</th>
<th>Gay Job Protections</th>
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<td>Latent Value Conflict</td>
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<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.10)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td>(.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Value</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.13)</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>(.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.04</td>
<td>-.01</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Frame</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Political Knowledge</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td>(.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain-Specific Knowledge</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent VC X Liberal Frame</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.47 **</td>
<td>.67 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.17)</td>
<td>(.16)</td>
<td>(.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent VC X Cons. Frame</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.19)</td>
<td>(.15)</td>
<td>(.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent VC X Both Frame</td>
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<td>.38 **</td>
<td>-.64 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.17)</td>
<td>(.14)</td>
<td>(.28)</td>
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<td>.53 **</td>
<td>.72 **</td>
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<td>(.11)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes: † p = .07; * p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01. Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study. OLS Models. Standard Errors in parentheses. Liberal values are freedom (wiretapping model), equality (gay job protections model), and humanitarianism (human cloning model). Conservative values are national security (wiretapping models) and traditional morality (gay job protections and human cloning models).

Table 2.10: Effect of Latent Value Conflict on Subjective Value Conflict with Interaction Between Latent Value Conflict and Framing Conditions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2002 Value Conflict Study (N)</th>
<th>2002 NES (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Party Identification</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat or Leaning Democrat</td>
<td>45% (219)</td>
<td>48% (704)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure Independent</td>
<td>11% (51)</td>
<td>7% (102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican or Leaning Republican</td>
<td>44% (213)</td>
<td>45% (671)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>30% (141)</td>
<td>27% (339)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>19% (89)</td>
<td>27% (240)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>52% (247)</td>
<td>45% (566)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60% (304)</td>
<td>65% (847)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40% (199)</td>
<td>44% (664)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16% (78)</td>
<td>21% (318)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>84% (425)</td>
<td>79% (1182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School or Less</td>
<td>42% (213)</td>
<td>34% (505)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College or More</td>
<td>58% (289)</td>
<td>66% (993)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number of observations in parentheses.

Table 2.11: Summary Statistics of 2002 Ohio Value Conflict Study and 2002 National Election Study
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Conflict Scales</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freedom—National Security</td>
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<td>.20</td>
<td>0-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality—Self Reliance</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>0-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.

Table 2.12: Summary Statistics of Latent Value Conflict Scales. 2002 Ohio Value Conflict Study
### CHAPTER 2 FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washington – A proposal to expand federal wiretapping powers as part of the war on terrorism has civil libertarians worried about government violations of personal freedoms and civil liberties. The proposal being circulated among lawmakers in Washington would make it easier for federal authorities to get a search warrant allowing them to wiretap telephones – to listen to people’s telephone calls without their knowledge. It would likely lead to greater use of wiretapping by federal authorities. Justice Department officials say the proposed wiretapping policy is necessary to fight the war on terrorism. <strong>Critics</strong> of the proposal say it would violate civil liberties by allowing the government to pry into people’s private lives. “Wiretapping threatens personal freedom because it could lead to this country becoming a police state,” warned Michael Fletcher, executive director of the Coalition for American Democracy, in a speech before the National Press Club. “People’s right to be free from government intrusions into their personal lives must take precedence over other considerations.”</td>
<td>Washington – A proposal to expand federal wiretapping powers as part of the war on terrorism has national security proponents optimistic about government efforts to protect the country from terrorist attacks. The proposal being circulated among lawmakers in Washington would make it easier for federal authorities to get a search warrant allowing them to wiretap telephones – to listen to people’s telephone calls without their knowledge. It would likely lead to greater use of wiretapping by federal authorities. Justice Department officials say the proposed wiretapping policy is necessary to fight the war on terrorism. <strong>Proponents</strong> of the proposal say it would strengthen national security by helping law enforcement to protect the country from terrorist attacks. “Terrorism threatens national security because it could lead to the deaths of many more thousands of Americans,” warned Michael Fletcher, executive director of the Coalition for American Democracy, in a speech before the National Press Club. “The need keep the country safe from terrorist attacks must take precedence over other considerations.” However, both critics and proponents agree that it is important to balance these competing values. “Wiretapping threatens personal freedom because it could lead to this country becoming a police state,” warned Michael Fletcher, executive director of the Coalition for American Democracy, in a speech before the National Press Club. “But terrorism threatens national security because it could lead to the deaths of many more thousands of Americans,” he said. “So when deciding on this issue we must balance the competing values of personal freedom and national security.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.1: Wiretapping Framing Manipulation. In Condition 1, the Control Condition, Participants Did Not Read a Newspaper Article</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition 2:</td>
<td>Condition 3:</td>
<td>Condition 4:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equality Condition</strong></td>
<td><strong>Traditional Morality Condition</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dual Equality-Morality Condition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus – The Ohio House of Representatives is considering a bill that would protect homosexuals from job discrimination based on their sexual orientation.</td>
<td>Columbus – The Ohio House of Representatives is considering a bill that would protect homosexuals from job discrimination based on their sexual orientation.</td>
<td>Columbus – The Ohio House of Representatives is considering a bill that would protect homosexuals from job discrimination based on their sexual orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The bill was discussed at a hearing of the House Committee on Labor and Commerce on Thursday. Current state law prohibits private and public employers in Ohio from discriminating against job applicants based on race, sex, age, and religion. The proposal would extend nondiscrimination to homosexuals.</td>
<td>The bill was discussed at a hearing of the House Committee on Labor and Commerce on Thursday. Current state law prohibits private and public employers in Ohio from discriminating against job applicants based on race, sex, age, and religion. The proposal would extend nondiscrimination to homosexuals.</td>
<td>The bill was discussed at a hearing of the House Committee on Labor and Commerce on Thursday. Current state law prohibits private and public employers in Ohio from discriminating against job applicants based on race, sex, age, and religion. The proposal would extend nondiscrimination to homosexuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Shafer, a law professor at Ohio State University who spoke at the hearing, said that supporting the policy would demonstrate Ohio’s commitment to equality.</td>
<td>Henry Shafer, a law professor at Ohio State University who spoke at the hearing, said that rejecting the policy would demonstrate Ohio’s commitment to traditional values.</td>
<td>Henry Shafer, a law professor at Ohio State University who spoke at the hearing, said the policy presents a choice between competing values. Supporting the policy would demonstrate Ohio’s commitment to equality, while rejecting the policy would demonstrate the state’s commitment to traditional values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It’s shameful in this day and age that we allow gays and lesbians to be denied the same basic equality as other minority groups,” he said.</td>
<td>“There is a big difference between tolerating private behavior between consenting adults and endorsing immoral behavior by granting it special legal protection,” he said.</td>
<td>“Some would argue it’s shameful that in this day and age we allow gays and lesbians to be denied the same basic equality as other minority groups,” he said. “Protection and assurance of full equality under the law must extend to homosexuals as well.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In his remarks, Shafer said that existing employment laws are insufficient because they allow employers to discriminate against homosexual job applicants based on sexual orientation.</td>
<td>In his remarks, Shafer said that existing employment laws are sufficient because homosexual job applicants are already protected by the same employment laws as everyone else.</td>
<td>“But others would say that there is a big difference between tolerating private behavior between consenting adults and endorsing immoral behavior by granting it special legal protection,” Shafer remarked. “Laws granting people who engage in homosexual acts the same legal protection as racial and religious minorities would only legitimize and encourage a lifestyle that most Americans find deeply offensive.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The civil rights movement demonstrates that it is necessary for the government to protect groups that face unjust discrimination and barriers to full equality,” he said. “Protection and assurance of full equality under the law must extend to gays and lesbians as well.” Therefore, “we must rely on our commitment to equality rather than other views when deciding on this issue.”</td>
<td>“Granting people who engage in homosexual acts the same legal protection as racial and religious minorities would only legitimize and encourage a lifestyle that most people find deeply offensive,” he said. “It would be wrong to protect and promote the homosexual lifestyle by granting it special legal protection.” Therefore, “we must rely on our commitment to traditional values rather than other views when deciding on this issue.”</td>
<td>Shafer said that given these opposing considerations, “we must balance these competing values when deciding on this issue.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.2: Gay Job Protections Framing Manipulation. In Condition 1, the Control Condition, Participants Did Not Read a Newspaper Article

111
Figure 2.3: Human Cloning Framing Manipulation. In Condition 1, the Control Condition, Participants Did Not Read a Newspaper Article
Figure 2.4: Wiretapping, Subjective Value Conflict Between Freedom and National Security. 2002 Ohio Value Conflict Study
Figure 2.5: Social Welfare, Subjective Value Conflict Between Equality and Self-Reliance. 2002 Ohio Value Conflict Study
CHAPTER 3

VALUE CONFLICT, AMBIVALENCE, AND ATTITUDE CHANGE

In this chapter I begin to test the theorized consequences of value conflict. I test my suppositions that value conflict is associated with attitude ambivalence and two types of attitude change—attitude instability over time and responsiveness to persuasion. In chapter 1 I differentiated theoretically between value conflict and ambivalence and argued that value conflict is likely to cause ambivalence. I begin this chapter by testing these suppositions empirically. I discuss my measures of latent and subjective ambivalence, show that subjective ambivalence and subjective value conflict are empirically distinct, correlated, and that both types of value conflict enhance both types of ambivalence. Then I test my suppositions that value conflict is associated with attitude instability and persuasion. I conclude the chapter by discussing the implications of the results for our understanding of public opinion.

Ambivalence

I examined the association between value conflict and ambivalence using data from the laboratory study discussed in the last chapter. Here I discuss the measures of latent and subjective ambivalence.
Measuring Latent Ambivalence

Participants were asked a series of closed-ended questions that tap their feelings and beliefs about each of the three policy issues. The feelings and beliefs items were presented in separate blocks. The order of the blocks was counterbalanced and within each the order of the feelings and beliefs items was randomized.

Feelings Questions

1. How hopeful does this issue make you feel?
2. How proud does this issue make you feel?
3. How satisfied does this issue make you feel?
4. How optimistic does this issue make you feel?
5. How relaxed does this issue make you feel?
6. How discouraged does this issue make you feel?
7. How disgusted does this issue make you feel?
8. How angry does this issue make you feel?
9. How worried does this issue make you feel?
10. How uneasy does this issue make you feel?

Beliefs Questions

1. How well does the word appropriate describe this issue?
2. How well does the word just (as in "justice") describe this issue?
3. How well does the word reasonable describe this issue?
4. How well does the word useful describe this issue?
5. How well does the word inappropriate describe this issue?
6. How well does the word unfair describe this issue?
7. How well does the word unreasonable describe this issue?
8. How well does the word useless describe this issue?

Note that half of the items were positive and half were negative. Participants placed each feeling on a five-point scale that was labeled “extremely (e.g., hopeful), “very ...,” “somewhat ...,” not too ...,” and “not at all ....” Participants placed each belief
on a five-point scale labeled “extremely well,” “very well,” “somewhat well,” not too well,” and “not at all well.”

I calculated participants’ latent ambivalence by entering their responses to these questions into the latent ambivalence formula developed by Thompson, Zanna, and Griffin (1995).\(^\text{13}\)

\[
\text{Latent Ambivalence} = \frac{\text{Positive} + \text{Negative} - | \text{Positive} - \text{Negative} |}{2}
\]

I then rescaled the index to range from 0 to 1. This is the formula that other researchers and I have adapted to measure latent value conflict. It has been used to measure latent ambivalence by Lavine (2001), McGraw and her colleagues (2002), Meffert, Guge, and Lodge (in press), and others. Table 3.1 presents the summary statistics for this measure for each of the three policy issues and across both waves.

[TABLE 3.1 HERE]

The summary statistics in Table 3.1 show that for this sample, the mean of latent ambivalence, like that of value conflict, is generally near the middle range of the index. Across the three issues and two waves the mean of latent ambivalence ranges from .54 to .63 on a 0-1 scale. The test-retest reliability is substantial but

\(^{13}\) Consistent with most previous ambivalence research, this formula incorporates both feelings and beliefs. Including both in the measure could be problematic if affective and cognitive ambivalence reflect separate constructs or have independent effects. To guard against this possibility, I created separate measures of cognitive and affective ambivalence, assessed the relation between the two, and, in the analyses, assessed their independent consequences. I found that the separate measures of cognitive and affective ambivalence were highly correlated and their effects on public opinion were redundant. For this reason, I included the indicators of both cognitive and affective ambivalence in my single measure of latent ambivalence.
somewhat lower than that of latent value conflict, with a correlation of .65 between the two waves for wiretapping and .68 for gay job protections.

Measuring Subjective Ambivalence

The measure of subjective ambivalence included nine items. Like subjective value conflict, I developed these items based on my theoretical conception of how I expect that people perceive themselves as feeling torn between conflicting feelings and beliefs about an issue. These nine items were asked for all three issues, in random order, and on both waves. As with the subjective value conflict scale, the first item was categorical. This question asked:

1. Some people feel that there are only good things or bad things about this issue. Their feelings are consistent. Other people feel that there are both good things and bad things about this issue. Their feelings are INconsistent. Thinking about your own views, would you say that your feelings about this issue are extremely consistent, very consistent, somewhat consistent, somewhat INconsistent, very INconsistent, or extremely INconsistent?

Like the subjective value conflict scale, the other eight items were in the agree-disagree format. Four were worded so that a positive response indicates ambivalence and four were worded so that a negative response indicates ambivalence. Item 2 of this subjective ambivalence scale is similar to the subjective ambivalence question used by McGraw, Hasecke, and Conger (2002). Item 7 is similar to a measure of subjective ambivalence used by Newby-Clark, McGregor, and Zanna (2002).

2. I have both positive and negative feelings about this issue at the same time.
3. When I think about this issue, I do NOT feel like I could move back and forth between favoring and opposing this issue; my position is firmly on one side. (reverse coded)
4 When I think about whether I favor or oppose this issue, I feel like I could go either way.
5 My views on this issue are extremely consistent. *(reverse coded)*
6 When I think about whether I favor or oppose this issue, I think both sides of the debate over this issue are equally correct.
7 I do NOT find myself feeling torn between favoring and opposing this issue, my feelings go in one direction only. *(reverse coded)*
8 I feel extremely ambivalent about this issue.
9 I feel strongly that one side of the debate over this issue is completely right and the other side is completely wrong. *(reverse coded)*

Participants placed these eight items on the same fully-labeled seven-point scale that was used for subjective value conflict. I coded the items worded in a negative direction so that higher values indicate greater ambivalence. I then recoded all seven items to range from 0 to 1. As with subjective value conflict, I assessed the subjective ambivalence scale by examining, for each of the three issues, the correlations among the indicators, their loadings in confirmatory factor analyses, and their internal and, where possible, test-retest reliability. The average correlations among the nine items are listed in Table 3.2.

[TABLE 3.2 HERE]

The average correlations are generally high. Most are near or above .50. The notable exception is item 8, which correlates poorly with all the other items. At first blush this is surprising because this item would seem to be the most direct measure of subjective ambivalence since it asked participants to respond to the statement “I feel extremely ambivalent about this issue.” I examined the frequencies of this item and compared them to those of the other subjective ambivalence indicators (not shown). I found that on this item, for each of the three issues and
both waves of the study a large plurality of participants—close to half the sample in most instances—placed themselves at the middle of the scale, at “neither agree nor disagree.” This was not true of the other items. Participants were not otherwise offered an alternative response that would have allowed them to opt out of the question such as “don’t know.” This suggests that a substantial proportion of participants were unclear about the meaning of the word “ambivalent.” Anecdotally, I was alerted to this problem when, during an experiment session, a participant stopped to ask the experimenter what the word “ambivalent” means. In any case, the exceptionally weak correlations between this item and the other items show that asking people directly whether or not they feel ambivalent is clearly and ironically a poor indicator of subjective ambivalence. For this reason, I omitted this item from further consideration in constructing the subjective ambivalence scale.

I tested the remaining eight indicators of subjective ambivalence in confirmatory factor analyses (CFA’s), which are presented in Table 3.3. As with subjective value conflict, I estimated these models in LISREL using maximum likelihood with all the indicators scaled 0-1 and the latent factor standardized to identify the model. The CFA’s for wiretapping and gay job protections are from wave 1 and the CFA for human cloning is from wave 2. The results show that the items scale well on the subjective ambivalence factor. The overall model fit statistics—the Chi-square, RMSEA, CFI, and NNFI—all suggest a better overall fit than the subjective value conflict scales.
I created a subjective ambivalence index for each of the three policy issues (and at each wave for wiretapping and gay job protections) based on the average of the eight items. The summary statistics for these scales are presented in Table 3.4. The means are somewhat lower than that of latent ambivalence, though with an average of .45 on a 0-1 scale, again near the middle. The subjective ambivalence scales have high levels of internal and test-retest reliability. The alpha coefficients were .91 for wiretapping, .93 for gay job protections, and .94 for human cloning. The over-time correlations were .66 for wiretapping and .71 for gay job protections. These results provide confidence that the scale is a good measure of subjective ambivalence.

**Value Conflict and Ambivalence**

In making this theoretical distinction between value conflict and ambivalence, I hypothesized a causal relation—that value conflict enhances ambivalence. However, several studies suggest, usually implicitly, that value conflict and ambivalence are not merely related but are the same thing. The subjective experiences of value conflict and ambivalence are, after all, similar, and at this subjective level there may not be a genuine empirical distinction between the two. In this section I test the dimensionality of subjective value conflict and ambivalence, whether or not they are, empirically, separate constructs or the same construct. Finding them separate, I then test the theorized association between them.
One way to test the hypothesis that value conflict and ambivalence are separate dimensions is to estimate two CFA’s, one where the two factors are separate (but allowed to correlate), one where they are constrained to be equal—constrained to reflect a single construct rather than two—and then conduct a chi-square difference test to determine whether the two factor model provides a better fit to the data than the one factor model. If the two factor model provides a better fit, we can conclude that subjective value conflict and ambivalence reflect two dimensions rather than one.

To conduct the chi-square difference test, I estimated two models for each of the three policy issues, one where the subjective value conflict and ambivalence indicators loaded on separate factors and one where they loaded on the same factor. The critical value of the test at alpha = .001 and one degree of freedom is 10.83. The difference between the chi-squares was 208 for wiretapping, 251 for gay job protections, and 198 for human cloning—far exceeding the critical value in each case. For each issue the two factor model provides a statistically-significant better fit. On this basis, I conclude that subjective value conflict and ambivalence, while likely related, are not the same thing.

I assessed the association between value conflict and ambivalence by evaluating the correlations between them and by regressing the two forms of ambivalence on the two forms of value conflict. First I discuss the relation between
the two forms of value conflict and latent ambivalence and then I discuss the relation
between the two forms of conflict and subjective ambivalence.

The Relation Between Value Conflict and Latent Ambivalence

The top portion of the third column of Table 2.8 presents the correlations
between latent value conflict and latent ambivalence for the three issues. These
correlations are quite weak, especially for wiretapping and human cloning. The
average is a mere .10. At this zero-order level, they are all but uncorrelated.

It is important, however, not to read too much into these zero-order
correlations, for two reasons. First, these correlations do not account for other
factors that may be associated with latent ambivalence, such as the component
values, political knowledge, and the framing manipulations. Second, these
correlations do not account for the possibility that the effect of latent value conflict on
latent ambivalence is mediated by subjective value conflict. Mediation occurs when
the relation between an independent variable and a dependent variable is accounted
for by an intervening third variable that explains the process or mechanism by which
the independent variable affects the dependent variable. I theorize that latent value
conflict predicts subjective value conflict, that both forms of conflict predict latent
ambivalence, and that both forms of conflict and latent ambivalence predict
subjective ambivalence. Figure 3.1 shows these theorized relations. The theorized
association between latent and subjective ambivalence is consistent with prior
research on ambivalence. The possibility of mediation must be taken into account
because if it is not the results may be misleading, suggesting null results when in
fact a significant association exists. Here, if mediation is not taken into account, the coefficient on latent conflict would be statistically insignificant, suggesting that latent conflict does not influence latent ambivalence, when in fact it does, as mediated by subjective conflict. By testing for mediation, the question I address here is this: Does latent value conflict affect latent ambivalence directly, or is it only by virtue of the subjective experience of value conflict that some people feel?

[FIGURE 3.1 HERE]

There are a number of methods that allow one to account for mediation.\footnote{For a review, see MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, and Sheets (2002).} The two most prevalent in the social sciences are the approach developed by Baron and Kenny (1986; Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger 1998) and the estimation of a system of equations with one or more endogenous dependent variables in a system of structural equations (e.g., Bollen 1989).

In this analysis, I rely on the latter approach for three reasons. First, the Baron and Kenny method requires the estimation of three statistical models for each theoretical model. In the present example, where latent ambivalence is the primary dependent variable, subjective value conflict is the endogenous dependent variable that predicts latent ambivalence, and latent value conflict is the exogenous variable that predicts both dependent variables, this would require the estimation of three models for each of the three issues, for a total of nine models. The estimation of nine models rather than three is not terribly inconvenient, but this method would quickly become cumbersome in subsequent sections, where there are multiple
endogenous dependent variables. In anything other than the simplest of models, the
Baron and Kenny method is unwieldy. The benefit of using structural equation
models (SEM’s) to conduct mediation analysis is that it allows one to estimate a
system of equations that correspond with the effects of predictor variables on several
endogenous dependent variables in a single, simultaneous model that is easily
presented and interpreted.

Second, although the Baron and Kenny method can tell us whether the effect
of one variable is significantly mediated by another, it cannot not give us an estimate
of the magnitude of the mediated effect. We know that the one variable significantly
mediates the other, but not by how much. Estimating SEM’s provides an estimate of
both the magnitude and significance of the direct, indirect (mediated), and total
effects of the predictor variables on the dependent variables. It allows one to assess
not only whether one variable mediates another variable, but how much of the effect
is mediated and how much is direct.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, the Baron and Kenny method is
statistically weaker than other methods, including SEM, leading more often to Type I
error, where a genuine mediated effect is rejected (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman,
West, and Sheets 2002). Overall, then, using SEM’s in this analysis is more
empirically tractable and appropriate for testing for mediation.

In this analysis, the structural models did, however, present a problem, in that
they did not converge when the framing manipulations were controlled. For this
reason, in order to obtain empirical estimates, it was necessary to exclude the
framing manipulations from the analysis. While this could present a problem of
misspecification, thorough analysis of this possibility, presented in the appendix to this chapter, suggests that it did not. In this analysis, as elsewhere, the framing manipulations were uniformly statistically and substantively insignificant.

Table 3.5 shows the results of the SEM model that estimates the relations among latent and subjective value conflict and latent ambivalence for each of the three issues controlling for the component values and both general and domain specific political knowledge. There are three separate models in Table 3.5, one for each policy issue. The results of each are separated into the direct (unmediated), indirect (mediated), and total (sum of direct and indirect) effects of each predictor on latent ambivalence. In these models, I theorize that subjective value conflict has a direct effect only; its effect is unmediated by latent value conflict or anything else in the model, thus it has a single coefficient, a "total effect" only. I theorize that latent value conflict may be mediated in part by subjective value conflict, thus its effect is partitioned into direct, indirect, and total effects. The component values and political knowledge are treated as exogenous (determined outside the model), so their effects may be direct or mediated by the two forms of value conflict.

These results show that, for each of the three issues, both latent and subjective value conflict have independent and highly significant effects on latent ambivalence. The effect of subjective value conflict is nearly the same in magnitude across the three issues. The total effect of latent value conflict is also highly significant, and it is larger in magnitude than subjective value conflict. Although the
effect of latent value conflict is significantly mediated by subjective value conflict for each of the three issues, the bulk of the effect is direct and unmediated. In contrast to the zero-order correlations presented in Table 3.8, the results in Table 3.5 suggest that latent ambivalence is highly associated with latent conflict. The substantive implication of this result is that the unfelt conflict between core values, rather than the subjective experience of conflict, produces inconsistent feelings and beliefs about an issue.

The Relation Between Value Conflict and Subjective Ambivalence

Column 4 of Table 2.8 shows the correlations between both forms of value conflict, latent ambivalence, and subjective ambivalence. The correlations between latent value conflict and subjective ambivalence, and between latent ambivalence and subjective ambivalence, are moderate, with averages of .37 and .24, respectively. Subjective value conflict and subjective ambivalence are, in contrast, highly correlated, with an average of .77. People who feel pulled in different directions by the opposing implications of conflicting values are more likely to perceive themselves as seeing merit in both sides of the debate over the issue. Subjective value conflict and ambivalence, though distinct, are highly correlated.

[TABLE 3.6 HERE]

Table 3.6 shows the results of the SEM model that estimates the effects of both types of conflict and latent ambivalence on subjective ambivalence (as reflected in Figure 3.1) for the three issues, again controlling for the component values and
political knowledge. The results are again separated into the direct, indirect, and total effects of each predictor variable on the focal dependent variable, subjective ambivalence. The results are listed in the order of the theorized relations, with latent ambivalence at the top and subjective value conflict and latent value conflict below them.

The effect of latent ambivalence on subjective ambivalence is listed in the “total effect” column because this effect is not mediated by anything else in the model. The effect of subjective value conflict may be direct or indirect, as mediated by latent ambivalence, and the effect of latent value conflict may be mediated by subjective value conflict and latent ambivalence. Finally, the component values and political knowledge may have direct or indirect effects. I discuss the results in the order of the hypothesized relations, beginning with latent ambivalence followed by the two forms of value conflict.

Beginning at the top of Table 3.6, the results show that for each of the three issues latent ambivalence has a highly-significant and, across the three models, substantively-similar effect on subjective ambivalence. Consistent with prior work on ambivalence, these results show that people who have inconsistent feelings and beliefs about an issue are more likely to perceive themselves as feeling ambivalent about it.

Subjective value conflict also has a highly-significant association with subjective ambivalence in each model and the results are again of similar magnitude for the three issues. People who feel torn by the opposing implications of the values for the issue are substantially more likely to feel like they have inconsistent views on
it. Although the indirect (mediated) effect of subjective value conflict—that part that occurs by virtue of it’s impact on latent ambivalence—is statistically significant in all three models, the magnitude if this effect is small (coefficient = .07, p ≤ .01 in all three models). Almost all of the effect of subjective value conflict on subjective ambivalence is direct and unmediated.

The table shows that latent value conflict has a highly significant effect on subjective ambivalence, although here for each issue a majority of the effect is mediated rather than direct. For two of the three issues (wiretapping in columns 1-3 and human cloning in columns 7-9) the overall effect of latent value conflict is larger than that of subjective value conflict. The unconscious experience of value conflict, more than the subjective feeling of being pulled in different directions by the opposing implications of competing values, would seem to have a greater impact on the subjective experience of ambivalence.

The control variables in the model are again largely insignificant. The one consistent exception here is the conservative value for each of the three issues (national security in the wiretapping model and traditional morality in the gay job protections and human cloning models), which has a consistently negative, though substantively small, effect. It would seem that doves and moral progressives are more likely to feel ambivalent about these issues than hawks and moral traditionalists.
Measuring Responsiveness to Persuasion

After taking a position on each policy issue, participants were presented with four persuasive reasons for why they might wish to change their minds. For each persuasive reason they were asked if under this particular circumstance they would be willing to change their position on the issue. They were presented in random order. For wiretapping, participants who said they favor wiretapping were asked

Would you still favor government wiretapping if …

1. … it violates the personal freedom of many Muslim American citizens?
2. … it violates the personal freedom of many ordinary American citizens?
3. … it leads to government control over our lives?
4. … it leads to the U.S. becoming a police state?

Participants who opposed wiretapping were asked

Would you still oppose government wiretapping if …

1. … it makes it more difficult for law enforcement to fight the war on terrorism?
2. … it makes the U.S. more vulnerable to terrorist attacks?
3. … it puts your family’s safety at risk?
4. … it leads to the deaths of many more thousands of Americans?

After giving their opinion on job protections for gays, participants who favored job protections were asked

Would you still favor laws to protect homosexuals from job discrimination if …

1. … it promotes the decline of morality in America?
2. … it encourages the homosexual lifestyle?
3. … it grants special legal protection to people based on their sexual behavior?
4. … it violates the rights of employers who believe that homosexuality is deeply sinful?
Participants who opposed protecting gays from job discrimination were asked

Would you still oppose laws to protect homosexuals from job discrimination if …

1. … it allows employers to discriminate against gays and lesbians based on their sexual orientation?
2. … it denies gays and lesbians the same basic rights as other minority groups?
3. … it means that gays and lesbians will face unjust discrimination?
4. … it encourages hatred and violence toward gays and lesbians?

After giving their opinion on human cloning, participants who favored cloning were asked

Would you still favor human cloning if …

1. … it leads to designer babies, where parents choose the physical and mental characteristics of their children?
2. … it leads to eugenics, where scientists breed human beings with the intention of creating a superior race of people?
3. … it leads to genetic mastery of one generation over the next?
4. … it destroys a human life?

Participants who opposed cloning were asked

Would you still oppose human cloning if …

1. … it limits our ability to relieve human suffering?
2. … it limits our ability to cure chronic diseases?
3. … it limits our ability to save lives?
4. … it limits our ability to cure genetic disabilities?

Participants answered “yes” or “no” to each question. Note that for each issue participants who initially took the position of “neither favor nor oppose” were not asked these items.

This is the same “counterargument” technique used by Sniderman and his colleagues (e.g., Sniderman et al. 1996) and others who study persuasion. One notable difference between this study and most others that use this technique, however, is that here I have four persuasion items for each issue rather than the
typical one item. This allows me to create, for each issue, a “responsiveness to persuasion” index. This index reflects the number of times participants were persuaded to move away from their original position. It runs from 0, for participants who did not change their position in response to any of the four queries, to four, for participants who changed their position in response to all four. Table 3.7 presents the frequencies of the persuasion scale for the three policy issues.

[TABLE 3.7 HERE]

As shown in Table 3.7, the persuasion indexes have substantial variance, with a plurality of participants saying “yes” to two items for wiretapping, none of the items for gay job protections, and nearly equal proportions to none and all four items for human cloning. I recoded the persuasion scales to range from 0 to 1.

The Relation Between Value Conflict and Persuasion

I predicted that value conflict leads to responsiveness to persuasion. Table 3.8 shows the results of the models that estimate the relations among both forms of value conflict, both forms of ambivalence, and persuasion on the three policy issues. Note that for these three models the sample sizes are smaller than in the other models because only participants who took a side on the issue were presented with persuasive reasons for changing their minds. Participants who took the middle position were excluded. In these models, I allowed for the same hypothesized relations among the two forms of value conflict and ambivalence as above. I discuss the results in the order of the hypothesized relations.
The results presented at the top of Table 3.8 show that subjective ambivalence has a substantial and highly significant effect on persuasion for each of the three issues. The highly significant effect of subjective ambivalence in the wiretapping model (column 3) is similar to that of the gay jobs protections model (column 6) and especially large and significant in the human cloning model (column 9). These results show that people who perceive themselves as having inconsistent feelings and beliefs about these issues are more likely to switch sides when presented with a persuasive appeal. Subjective ambivalence enhances responsiveness to persuasion.

The results also show that latent ambivalence has a substantial and highly significant overall effect on persuasion for two of the three issues. In these models, latent ambivalence has direct, indirect, and total effects because its effect on persuasion may be mediated in part by subjective ambivalence. In the wiretapping (columns 1-3) and gay job protections (columns 4-6) models latent ambivalence has significant direct, mediated, and overall effects. In the cloning model (columns 7-9) the indirect or mediated effect is significant but this effect negated by the lack of significance of the total effect. Two of the three models thus suggest that latent ambivalence is associated with greater persuasion, and this effect appears to be mediated in part by subjective ambivalence.

Table 3.8 presents the direct, indirect, and total effects of subjective value conflict on persuasion. These results are consistent. For each of the three issues,
the direct effect of subjective value conflict on persuasion is statistically insignificant and, for two of the three issues (gay job protections and human cloning), has the wrong (negative) sign.\textsuperscript{15} However, in all three models the indirect and total effects are substantial, in the hypothesized (positive) direction, and highly significant. These results show that subjective value conflict enhances persuasion, and this effect is mediated entirely by the two forms of ambivalence. Participants who feel torn between the opposing implications of conflicting values for a policy choice are more likely to be persuaded to change their minds on the issue, and this association occurs by virtue of the inconsistent feelings and beliefs they have about it.

Although less conclusive, the results in Table 3.8 suggest that latent value conflict is associated with persuasion. Like subjective conflict, latent conflict may have direct, indirect, and total effects. The results of the human cloning model show that latent conflict has significant indirect and total effects on persuasion. For this issue, the significant effect of latent conflict on persuasion occurs by way of subjective conflict and ambivalence. The wiretapping model is similar. It shows that latent conflict has an insignificant direct effect, a substantial and highly significant mediated effect, and a marginally-significant ($p = .08$) total effect. Although marginally significant, these results confirm those of the human cloning model—latent value conflict increases persuasion as mediated by other factors in the model. However, in the gay job protections model, despite a highly significant indirect effect, the total effect of latent conflict is not significant. For this issue, the significant

\textsuperscript{15} In the gay job protections model the direct effect of subjective value conflict on persuasion is marginally significant but has the wrong (negative) sign.
results of the other two models are not confirmed. Taken together, however, the results suggest that latent value conflict is positively associated with persuasion.

The control variables in these three models again include the component values and general and domain-specific knowledge. These controls provide little in the way of substantive interpretation. A few achieve statistical significance, but none consistently enough to provide for substantive interpretation. Thus it seems unlikely that persuasion is caused by these factors in any regular or systematic way.

Value Conflict and Attitude Stability

I theorized that people who are torn between the opposing implications of competing values are more likely to change their positions on issues over time. Having measured opinions of two of the three issues (wiretapping and job protections for gays) at both waves of this study, I tested this hypothesis empirically. I did this by calculating the correlation between each participant’s opinion of each issue at time one with his or her opinion of the same issue at time two at different levels of value conflict. For both forms of value conflict, I split value conflict at its median, resulting in two groups—participants “low” and “high” in value conflict. I assessed the association between value conflict and attitude stability by comparing the stability correlation of participants in the low group with those in the high group. Operationally, my hypothesis states that participants in the high conflict group will have lower stability correlations than participants in the low conflict group.

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16 It is not possible to conduct an analysis that produces stability coefficients and accounts for measurement error because there are only two waves to this study and such a model would, under these conditions, be unidentified.
In conducting this analysis, I used partial correlation coefficients to control for latent and subjective ambivalence, general and domain specific political knowledge, and the framing manipulations. I control for these factors because doing so helps me to isolate the effect of value conflict on stability and rule out the possibility that these factors, if omitted, confound the association.

[TABLE 3.9 HERE]

The results are presented in Table 3.9. I discuss the association between latent conflict and stability followed by that between subjective conflict and stability.

The upper left portion of the table shows the stability correlations of wiretapping opinions for participants low and high in latent value conflict. As hypothesized, it shows that participants low in latent conflict have more stable opinions toward wiretapping \( r = .76 \) than participants high in latent conflict \( r = .61 \). However, the difference between these partial correlations is not statistically significant, with a p-value of .18.\(^\text{17} \)

The lower left portion of the table shows the stability correlations of opinions of job protections for homosexuals for participants low and high in latent conflict. On this issue, the stability correlations also show that participants low in latent conflict have more stable opinions \( r = .81 \) than participants high in latent conflict \( r = .60 \), and the difference between these correlations is significant at \( p = .04 \). These results, while not conclusive given the marginally significant difference between the wiretapping stability correlations, provide limited

\(^{17}\) In the stability analysis I tested the significance of the difference between the correlations using Cohen and Cohen’s (1983) two-tailed test of equality of correlations.
support for my hypothesis that latent value conflict is associated with attitude instability.

The upper right portion of Table 3.9 shows the stability correlations of wiretapping opinions for participants low and high in subjective value conflict. Consistent with expectations, participants low in subjective conflict have opinions of wiretapping twice as stable ($r = .84$) as participants high in subjective conflict ($r = .42$), a difference that is significant at $p = .00$. The lower right portion of the table shows the stability correlations of opinions of gay job protections for participants low and high in subjective conflict. Here again, the results show that participants low in subjective conflict have more stable opinions ($r = .84$) than participants high in subjective conflict ($r = .66$), and this difference is statistically significant, at $p = .03$. Overall, these results provide consistent support for my hypothesis that subjective value conflict is associated with attitude instability. People who are, either implicitly or explicitly, pulled in different directions by the opposing implications of conflicting values for a policy issue, are more likely to change their opinion on the issue over time, even in the absence of an overt persuasive message.

The results of the stability analysis support my hypothesis that value conflict diminishes attitude stability. For both types of value conflict and both policy issues, participants high in value conflict have less stable attitudes than those low in value conflict. This association is statistically significant in three of the four cases and marginally significant in the fourth. The marginal significance of the fourth, the association between latent value conflict and stability of opinion toward wiretapping, may be due in part to the small sub-sample size of participants above the median in
latent value conflict associated with this issue (n = 33) and because participants below the median in latent conflict on this issue are themselves less stable in their opinions toward this issue (r = .76) than participants below the median in latent value conflict associated with the other issues in the table (average r of the other three = .83). In other words, the lack of a statistically-significant association between latent value conflict and stability of wiretapping attitudes may be due in part to the fairly small number of people conflicted between the values of freedom and national security in this small sample and the greater overall instability of wiretapping attitudes relative to attitudes of job protections for homosexuals.

These results, while not uniformly statistically significant, are uniformly consistent in showing that both latent and subjective value conflict are associated with attitude instability. People who are conflicted between core values are torn between two goal orientations, and thus could go either way on an issue. Being pulled in different directions, their conflicting impulses lead to over-time response instability.

**Discussion**

These results have implications for our understanding of ambivalence and attitude change. With respect to ambivalence, the results support my contention that value conflict and ambivalence are separate constructs and that value conflict causes ambivalence. Particularly in their subjective forms, I showed that value conflict and ambivalence are empirically distinct and I showed that both forms of
value conflict predict both forms of ambivalence. Future research may seek to buttress these findings in at least four ways.

First, research may further show the separateness of value conflict and ambivalence by showing that ambivalence can be manipulated independently of value conflict. Let us assume, for example, that some people may be ambivalent about expanded use of wiretapping in response to terrorism because they have inconsistent feelings about the targets of anti-terrorism policies or beliefs about the efficacy of these policies. To the extent this is true, one should, in theory, be able to manipulate ambivalence experimentally in ways that do not affect value conflict. Future research should work to find ways to manipulate ambivalence independent of value conflict in order to demonstrate that these are separate constructs.

Second, the theorized association between value conflict and ambivalence would be increased if one could demonstrate causation rather than correlation. The results presented here show that they covary in the theorized way but do not provide an airtight case that value conflict causes ambivalence. Future research may come closer to demonstrating causality by showing that manipulating value conflict produces changes in ambivalence. I attempted to do this in this study with the framing manipulations. I attempted to manipulate value conflict, and the association between value conflict and ambivalence, by framing the issues in ways that would draw attention to the conflicting values and, in consequence, produce value conflict, and allow us to see whether or not the manipulation of value conflict is associated with changes in ambivalence. The experiments came to naught. Future research
might devise better experiments that successfully manipulate value conflict in ways that lead to subsequent changes in ambivalence.

Third, assuming value conflict causes ambivalence, future research might address the question of what types of conflicted individuals are more or less likely to experience ambivalence. Just as some people may be more likely than others to experience value conflict, either generally or in specific issue domains, so might some conflicted individuals be more likely to have mixed feelings and beliefs about certain issues. Having demonstrated the connection between value conflict and ambivalence, future work may explore the variables that limit or enhance the association.

Finally with respect to ambivalence, future work may turn to more specific questions about this association, such as which types of issues and value conflicts produce the most ambivalence. It may be that certain issues or specific values tend to produce mixed feelings and beliefs more than others.

The results showed that value conflict is associated with two types of attitude change—responsiveness to persuasion and instability over time. This finding differs from the traditional view of attitude change in political science, that instability results from the expression of meaningless or near-meaningless nonattitudes. The results of this study suggest an alternative explanation for attitude change. Vacillating attitudes occur not merely as a function of lack of thought, ignorance, or the whimsical expression of nonattitudes, but as genuine yet genuinely conflicted attitudes. Apparently random or shallow attitudes, attitudes that seem to go this way and that, whether in response to a persuasive message or otherwise, may not be as
thoughtless or vacuous as previously thought, but occur because people are pulled in different directions by conflicting values.

The results support this explanation but would be also be enhanced by further research because here, too, I showed correlation rather than causation. If future work is able to manipulate value conflict, this will allow for a better test of causality between value conflict and attitude change. If manipulated changes in value conflict produce changes in attitudes, this will buttress the argument that value conflict causes opinion change. Also, future work might attempt more systematically to control for alternative explanations of persuasion and instability, most particularly nonattitudes and measurement error. In this analysis I addressed nonattitudes to some extent by controlling for political knowledge. Both the nonattitudes and measurement error explanations might be addressed in future work by measuring opinion questions with multiple indicators and conducting the change analysis with three or more waves. This would allow one to factor out measurement error before assessing the association between value conflict and attitude change.
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Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.

Table 3.1: Summary Statistics of Latent Ambivalence Scales
Table 3.2: Average Correlations of Subjective Ambivalence Scale Items

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<td>.59</td>
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Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.
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<td>1.33 ** (.11)</td>
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<td>1.31 ** (.11)</td>
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<td>Item 5</td>
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<td>1.41 ** (.08)</td>
<td>1.73 ** (.13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item 6</td>
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<td>1.27 ** (.15)</td>
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<td>1.91 ** (.14)</td>
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<td>1.20 ** (.10)</td>
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Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.

Table 3.3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Subjective Ambivalence Scale Items
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Test-Retest r (wave 1—wave 2)</th>
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<td>.22</td>
<td>0-1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiretapping (wave 2)</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Job Protections (wave 1)</td>
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<td>.22</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Job Protections (wave 2)</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Cloning for Research (wave 2)</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.

**Table 3.4: Summary Statistics of Subjective Ambivalence Scales**
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Wiretapping</th>
<th>Gay Job Protections</th>
<th>Human Cloning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Direct Effect</td>
<td>Indirect Effect</td>
<td>Total Effect</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.27** (.05)</td>
<td>.25** (.05)</td>
<td>.27** (.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent Value Conflict</td>
<td>1.39** (.18)</td>
<td>.21** (.08)</td>
<td>1.60** (.19)</td>
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<td>Liberal Value</td>
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<td>.00 (.01)</td>
<td>-.06** (.02)</td>
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<td>-.03* (.01)</td>
<td>-.32** (.04)</td>
</tr>
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<td>General Political Knowledge</td>
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<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.01 (.00)</td>
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<td>Domain-Specific Knowledge</td>
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<td>.00 (.01)</td>
<td>-.02 (.01)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R-Square: .34, .26, .18
N: 232, 232, 104

Notes: Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study. Covariance structure parameters based on maximum likelihood estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. + p ≤ .10; * p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01. Liberal values are freedom (wiretapping model), equality (gay job protections model), and humanitarianism (human cloning model). Conservative values are national security (wiretapping models) and traditional morality (gay job protections and human cloning models).

Table 3.5: Effects of Latent and Subjective Value Conflict on Latent Ambivalence
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Wiretapping</th>
<th>Gay Job Protections</th>
<th>Human Cloning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct Effect</td>
<td>Indirect Effect</td>
<td>Total Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent Ambivalence</td>
<td>.26** (.07)</td>
<td>.28** (.06)</td>
<td>.25** (.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Value Conflict</td>
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<td>.07** (.02)</td>
<td>.78** (.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent Value Conflict</td>
<td>.36+ (.20)</td>
<td>.96** (.22)</td>
<td>1.32** (.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Value</td>
<td>-.01 (.02)</td>
<td>-.02 (.02)</td>
<td>-.03 (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Value</td>
<td>- .06 (.04)</td>
<td>-.17** (.05)</td>
<td>-.23** (.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Political Knowledge</td>
<td>.01 (.01)</td>
<td>.00 (.01)</td>
<td>.00 (.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain-Specific Knowledge</td>
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<td>-.01 (.02)</td>
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<td>R-Square</td>
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</tr>
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<td>N</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study. Covariance structure parameters based on maximum likelihood estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. + p ≤ .10; * p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01. Liberal values are freedom (wiretapping model), equality (gay job protections model), and humanitarianism (human cloning model). Conservative values are national security (wiretapping models) and traditional morality (gay job protections and human cloning models).

Table 3.6: Effects of Latent Value Conflict, Subjective Value Conflict, and Latent Ambivalence on Subjective Ambivalence
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Job Protections for Homosexuals</th>
<th>Human Cloning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>22% (46)</td>
<td>31% (63)</td>
<td>33% (33)</td>
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<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>15% (31)</td>
<td>18% (37)</td>
<td>7% (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>28% (60)</td>
<td>23% (48)</td>
<td>11% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>17% (36)</td>
<td>16% (33)</td>
<td>18% (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12% (25)</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
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Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.

Table 3.7: Persuasion Index
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<th></th>
<th>Human Cloning</th>
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<td>Indirect Effect</td>
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<td>Indirect Effect</td>
<td>Total Effect</td>
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<td>2.99</td>
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<td>(.94)</td>
<td>(3.03)</td>
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<td>(.90)</td>
<td>(.71)</td>
<td>(.62)</td>
<td>(.25)</td>
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<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
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<td>(.12)</td>
<td>(.27)</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td>(.46)</td>
<td>(.35)</td>
<td>(.55)</td>
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<td>-.32**</td>
<td>.53+</td>
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<td>(.55)</td>
<td>(.27)</td>
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<td>(.08)</td>
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</table>

Note: Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study. Covariance structure parameters based on maximum likelihood estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. + p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01. Liberal values are freedom (wiretapping model), equality (gay job protections model), and humanitarianism (human cloning model). Conservative values are national security (wiretapping models ) and traditional morality (gay job protections and human cloning models).

Table 3.8: Effects of Value Conflict and Ambivalence on Persuasion
Table 3.9: Effect of Value Conflict on Attitude Stability: Partial Correlation Between t₁ & t₂ Policy Opinion by Level of Value Conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Latent Value Conflict (Median Split)</th>
<th>Subjective Value Conflict (Median Split)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low Value Conflict</td>
<td>High Value Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiretapping</td>
<td>.76 (.77)</td>
<td>.61 (.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Job Protections</td>
<td>.81 (.67)</td>
<td>.60 (.37)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1: Theorized Association Between Value Conflict and Ambivalence
CHAPTER 4

OTHER CONSEQUENCES OF VALUE CONFLICT

Three theorized consequences of value conflict remain to be tested. In this chapter I test the supposition that value conflict is associated with, first, the expression of moderate, in the sense of being less extreme, attitudes. Second, that value conflict leads to subjective uncertainty. And finally, that value conflict is associated with psychological tension and discomfort.

Attitude Extremity

Attitude extremity is the position of an attitude on a bipolar evaluative continuum. Like ambivalence, extremity is a structural dimension of attitude strength because it relates to the theoretical mental representation of the attitude (Petty and Krosnick 1995). Operationally, an extreme attitude is one that deviates substantially from the scale midpoint, while a moderate attitude is one that lies at or near the midpoint. Moderation is the opposite of extremity.

For people conflicted between core values, implicit efforts to weigh and calibrate the conflicting impulses should be likely to impel them toward a moderate policy opinion. Being pulled in different directions at the same time, they implicitly
split the difference between the values, satisfying the dictates of both to the extent possible in forming an opinion, which results in taking a position at or near the middle of the response scale—a moderate attitude.

For each of the three issues, I measured extremity by folding the five-point opinion item at its midpoint and then rescaled it to range from 0 to 1, where 0 is the middle and most moderate position, .5 is taking a position on either side but not strongly, and 1 is an extreme position on either side of the issue. Table 4.1 presents the summary statistics of this variable for the three issues. It shows that for all three issues, the average position is to be moderately on one side or the other, with a relatively large standard deviation and, for the two issues for which I have over-time data, fairly high test-retest reliability.

[TABLE 4.1 HERE]

*Value Conflict and Attitude Extremity*

I tested the association between value conflict and attitude extremity by regressing extremity on both forms of value conflict and ambivalence, the component values, and political knowledge. I included knowledge in this analysis to account for the possibility that people take a middle or near-middle position because they lack information about politics or the issue rather than because they are conflicted. I conducted the analysis using SEM again to account for possible mediation. I allow for the same theorized relations as I did in the analysis of persuasion. The results, presented in Table 4.2, are again partitioned into the direct,
indirect (mediated), and total or overall effects of each variable on extremity. I
discuss them in the order of the hypothesized relations.

[TABLE 4.2 HERE]

Consistent with expectations, subjective ambivalence is associated with a
more moderate opinion on each of the three issues. People who feel like they could
go either way on the issue are more likely to split the difference by adopting a more
moderate stand on it. Latent ambivalence also has highly significant direct, indirect,
and total effects in all three models, with the bulk of the total effect of latent
ambivalence being unmediated. People who have feelings and beliefs on both sides
of the issue are more likely to express a moderate attitude, regardless of subjective
feelings of ambivalence.

As hypothesized, the results show that both forms of value conflict produce
moderate policy attitudes. These effect are almost entirely mediated by
ambivalence. Looking first at the effects of subjective conflict, in the wiretapping
(columns 1-3) and human cloning (columns 7-9) models, the direct effect of
subjective conflict on extremity is not significant but the mediated and overall effects
are highly significant. In the gay job protections model (columns 4-6), the direct,
indirect, and total effects are each highly significant. Even here, however, most of
the overall effect is mediated. Thus it is largely by virtue of their inconsistent feelings
and beliefs about an issue—both those based on objective measures and subjective
experience—that subjective value conflict engenders the expression of a more
moderate attitude.
The effect of latent value conflict is also consistently significant and, for two of the three issues, mediated by other variables in the model. In the wiretapping and human cloning models, latent conflict has highly significant indirect and overall effects but an insignificant direct effect. In these two models the effect of latent conflict on extremity is entirely mediated by subjective conflict and the two forms of ambivalence. In the gay job protections model, the mediated and overall effects of latent conflict are highly significant, but the direct effect is significant but in the wrong (positive) direction. This result was unexpected and would seem to defy substantive explanation. Rather than implying the opposite of my hypothesis, this backward result seems more likely to be an example of negative suppression. A suppressor variable is an independent variable in a multiple regression model that correlates with another independent variable in the model, and with the dependent variable, yet receives, usually unexpectedly, a regression coefficient of the opposite sign predicted. Negative suppression in particular occurs when independent variables correlate positively with each other and with the dependent variable, yet one of the independent variables receives a negative regression coefficient (Maasen and Bakker 2001). Negative suppression is common in SEM and can account for the counter-intuitive direct effect of latent value conflict in the human cloning model. This seems particularly likely because when the other value conflict and ambivalence variables are removed it has a negative and significant effect. In any event, the overall effect of this and the other two models in Table 4.2 are consistent in showing that latent value conflict has a negative, highly significant, and largely mediated effect on extremity.
The effects of the control variables are largely insignificant or inconsistent. General political knowledge has a small and significant overall effect in two of the three models (wiretapping and gay job protections), but with opposite signs. Domain-specific political knowledge has a significant effect in the gay job protections model but not the other two models. The one consistent effect is that of the conservative values—national security in the wiretapping model and traditional morality in the gay job protections and human cloning models. In each case the conservative value is significantly associated with a more extreme opinion on the issue, and this effect is mediated by ambivalence. Recall that in the models that predicted latent and subjective ambivalence the conservative value had a consistent (though in some cases substantively small and marginally significant) effect on the two forms of ambivalence. Thus people who are security hawks and moral traditionalists, by virtue of the consistency of their considerations, are more extreme in their attitudes. It bears mentioning, however, that relative to the effects of value conflict and ambivalence, the substantive effect of the conservative values is small.

Taken together, the results of these three models provide evidence as consistent as any in this study. People who are conflicted between core values that relate to an issue and, partly in consequence, are ambivalent about it, implicitly weigh and balance these opposing inclinations, which results in a moderate summary opinion. Value conflict is associated with the expression of a more moderate attitude.
Attitude Certainty

Subjective certainty reflects the confidence, conviction, or firmness that a person perceives in his or her opinion of something. In contrast to extremity, ambivalence, and other structural dimensions of attitude strength, it is subjective because it is based on individuals’ introspective perceptions of their attitudes rather than the theorized structure of the attitude itself. Subjective certainty can be differentiated from certainty defined a priori as reflecting information or knowledge about the attitude object (cf. Down 1957). The supposition here is that people conflicted between core values, because they are pulled in different directions, should report feeling less certain of their attitudes than otherwise.

For each policy issue, I measured subjective certainty using four indicators. I adopted them from a study on attitude strength by Krosnick, Boninger, Chuang, Berent, and Carnot (1993). These items were presented in random order and, using wiretapping as an example, worded as follows.

Still thinking about your views on government wiretapping in response to terrorism ...

1. How certain are you about your opinion on this issue?
2. How confident are you about your opinion on this issue?
3. How sure are you that your opinion on this issue is right?
4. How firm is your opinion on this issue?

Participants answered each question using a fully labeled five-point scale that ran from “not at all …” to “extremely ….” Consistent with the work of Krosnick and his colleagues, I found that for each issue the four items were highly correlated, loaded
well on the same factor, and had high internal reliability (the average alpha for the scale, across the three issues, was .94). I created an index based on the average of these four items, which I recoded to range from 0 to 1. Higher values reflect greater certainty.

[TABLE 4.3 HERE]

The summary statistics of the scale, presented in Table 4.3, show that for each issue the mean is again near the middle, reflecting predominantly neither certainty or uncertainty. For this scale I do not have test-retest reliability estimates because for wiretapping and gay job protections these questions were asked only on wave 1.

Value Conflict and Attitude Certainty

As with extremity, I assessed the association between value conflict and certainty by estimating a SEM for each of the three issues, again incorporating the hypothesized structural relations between the two forms of value conflict and ambivalence and controlling for the component values and political knowledge. Table 4.4 presents the results. Here again I discuss the results in the order of the hypothesized relations.

[TABLE 4.4 HERE]

As expected, the results of all three models in Table 4.4 show that subjective ambivalence diminishes certainty. People who perceive themselves as having
conflicting considerations about an issue report feeling less certain of their attitude of it. Similarly, the results show in each case that latent ambivalence has negative and highly significant direct, indirect, and total effects on certainty. Though the mediated effects are highly significant, the majority of the effect of latent ambivalence is, in each case, direct. People who have inconsistent feelings and beliefs about an issue feel less certain of their opinion of it.

The results in Table 4.4 are also consistent in showing that subjective value conflict diminishes certainty. All three models show that the mediated and total effects of subjective value conflict on certainty are negative and highly significant. Two of the three models (wiretapping in columns 1-3 and human cloning in columns 7-9) also have significant direct effects, while the third (gay job protections in columns 4-6) has an insignificant direct effect. In all three models most of the relation between subjective value conflict and certainty is mediated by the two forms of ambivalence. People who feel like their values pull them in different directions when thinking about a policy issue feel less firm, sure, or confident in their opinion of it, and this effect occurs primarily by virtue of their inconsistent feelings and beliefs about it. Subjective value conflict diminishes certainty, and this effect is mediated by ambivalence.

The results show that latent value conflict also generates uncertainty. In two of the three models (wiretapping and human cloning) latent conflict has highly significant mediated and overall effects but insignificant direct effects, while in the third (gay job protections) it has significant direct, mediated, and total effects. In all three models, the bulk of the effect of latent conflict on certainty is indirect or
mediated. The results are consistent in showing that people who view as personally important values that, in the abstract, conflict when brought to bear on a policy choice, tend to perceive their opinions on the issue as less firm than people who are not so conflicted. Latent value conflict, like subjective value conflict, produces uncertainty.

An alternative hypothesis might suggest that uncertainty derives from a lack of information about the issue. People may perceive themselves as lacking sufficient knowledge to give an informed opinion and, on that basis, admit to feeling uncertain. I addressed this possibility by controlling for general and domain-specific political knowledge. The results fail to support this view. In each of the three models, the effects of both domain specific and general political knowledge are miniscule and statistically insignificant, although in the gay job protections model the tiny mediated and overall effects are marginally significant (p ≤ .10). Researchers may define certainty as a function of knowledge, but clearly ordinary people do not see it in these terms. For them, uncertainty arises, at least in part, from the inconsistent feelings and beliefs derived from conflicting core values.

The results in Table 4.4 also show that the conservative values (national security in the wiretapping model and traditional morality in the other two models) are positively associated with certainty. The magnitude of the coefficients is small but the effect is consistent. Just as security hawks and moral traditionalists are marginally less ambivalent, less responsive to persuasion, and more extreme in their views, so are they a bit more certain of their opinions of these issues. Here, however, the same is true for the liberal value in two (wiretapping and gay job
protections) of the three models, though here the magnitude of the effects is even smaller. Value proponents, especially proponents of conservative values, are more sure of their attitudes.

**Psychological Tension and Discomfort**

A tradition of theory in social psychology suggests that inconsistency among beliefs reflects imbalance (Heider 1946; Abelson 1959), incongruity (Osgood and Tannenbaum 1955), or dissonance (Festinger 1957) that generates psychological tension and discomfort. Extended to the study of value conflict by Rokeach (1973), conflicting values, when activated by a policy issue, are thought to make a person feel uncomfortable. Few studies, however, have tested this supposition empirically. The studies involving participants’ open-ended expressions of value conflict suggest that some people may find such conflicts aversive (e.g., Hochschild 1981; Feldman and Zaller 1992) but the evidence for this is largely anecdotal. One of Katz and Hass and their colleagues’ studies on value conflict over racial issues found that such conflicts are associated with discomfort. However, given the emotional an provocative nature of racial issues in American politics, it seems worthwhile to investigate whether or not this association extends to issues other than those involving race. I used the values and issues from the laboratory study to conduct an experiment designed to test the hypothesis that value conflict causes psychological tension and discomfort.
Participants were presented with 14 mood items designed to tap the underlying tension that might arise as a result of value conflict. These items began with this introduction.

People have good days and bad days. We want to know how you are feeling today. For each of the following words, please use your mouse to click the choice that corresponds with how you feel right now.

Participants were then presented with the mood items in random order.

Positive Mood Items

1. How at ease are you feeling right now?
2. How calm are you feeling right now?
3. How comfortable are you feeling right now?
4. How content are you feeling right now?
5. How peaceful are you feeling right now?
6. How relaxed are you feeling right now?
7. How tranquil are you feeling right now?

Negative Mood Items

8. How anxious are you feeling right now?
9. How bothered are you feeling right now?
10. How nervous are you feeling right now?
11. How stressed are you feeling right now?
12. How tense are you feeling right now?
13. How uncomfortable are you feeling right now?
14. How uneasy are you feeling right now?

Participants answered these questions using a fully-labeled five-point scale that ranged from “I am not at all …” to “I am extremely ….” I conducted a CFA on the items and found that all loaded highly on the same factor, with adequate internal reliability (alpha = .9), and modest but adequate overall fit (chi-square = 495(77); RMSEA = .17; CFI = .92; IFI = .92). I recoded the negative items so that for all 14 items higher values reflect positive mood and lower values indicate negative mood. I
then created a mood index based on the average of them, which I recoded to range from 0 to 1.

**Value Conflict and Psychological Tension**

The experiment involved manipulating when participants answered the mood questions. Participants were randomly assigned to answer them either at the outset of the study or after the first issue block of questions. The experiment was on wave 1, so these items were presented either at the beginning of the study or after participants answered the block of questions dealing with either wiretapping or gay job protections, depending on which issue participants received first.

The rationale of the experiment was that the issue and value conflict questions should prime value conflict, particularly for participants high in value conflict, resulting in psychological tension and discomfort, as made evident by more negative mood. Participants, and especially those high in value conflict, should report greater discomfort—more negative mood—in the “after” condition than in the “before” condition because participants in the after condition have had value conflict primed by the questions on values and the associated policy issue. Participants who received the mood items at the outset are the control condition, since value conflict has not yet been primed. For them, the mood items reflect their mood at the time they entered the experiment. Participants who received the mood items after the issue block should report more negative mood, since for them the issue questions have primed value conflict, and this should be true especially for participants high in value conflict. Participants high in value conflict who are in the high conflict condition
should be especially likely to feel discomfort because the conflict has been primed. Operationally, this implies a possible main effect (the issue items prime value conflict for everyone, resulting in psychological tension and discomfort as made evident by a lower score on the mood scale) and an interaction between value conflict and the manipulation (where the effect is greater for participants high in value conflict).

I began the analysis by calculating the correlations between psychological discomfort and the two types of value conflict and ambivalence. In calculating the correlations I divided the data by issue and, within each issue, the experimental manipulation. Thus for each issue Table 4.5 shows the correlations between value conflict (ambivalence) and discomfort for both issues and, within issue, separately for participants in the low and high conflict conditions. If value conflict is associated with psychological discomfort, then participants should experience more negative mood in the high conflict condition than in the low conflict condition, as reflected in a more negative correlation between value conflict and mood in the high condition.

In general, the results presented in Table 4.5 fail to support this hypothesis. Although for the wiretapping issue participants high in subjective value conflict who are in the high conflict condition have greater discomfort than those in the low condition, the association is weak, statistically insignificant, and not replicated by the subjective value conflict correlations for the gay job protections. Moreover, the wiretapping correlations for latent value conflict show essentially no correlation between latent conflict and mood in either condition, while the gay job protections
correlations for latent conflict indicate that participants in the high conflict condition have more *positive* mood, the opposite of what is expected. The results betray inconsistent associations between value conflict and discomfort.

The results also fail to suggest an association between ambivalence and discomfort. On subjective ambivalence, for both issues there is not a significant difference between the two conditions—participants in the high conflict condition do not report greater subjective ambivalence. And while there is not a significant correlation between latent ambivalence and mood in either condition for wiretapping, for gay job protections there is again the opposite of is anticipated—participants in the low condition report significantly more negative mood than those in the high condition.

The results fail to confirm expectations and to an extent point in opposite directions. For wiretapping, subjective conflict is weakly associated with greater discomfort. For gay job protections, latent conflict and latent ambivalence are weakly associated with less discomfort. At the same time, most all of the correlations range between small and negligible. Based on these zero-order correlations, perhaps the clearest statement that can be made about the results is that they, do not suggest that value conflict (or ambivalence) are associated with tension or discomfort.

**[TABLE 4.6 HERE]**

I investigated the hypothesis further by regressing, for each issue, the mood scale on the manipulation (coded 0 = mood items presented before the issue items,
1 = mood items presented after the issue items), both forms of value conflict, both forms of ambivalence, the interaction of the manipulation with both types of conflict and with both types of ambivalence, the component values, and the framing manipulations. The value conflict and ambivalence variables are mean-centered so the main effects of these variables are their mean effects on mood and the interactions are the increase in the effects of these variables that occur as a result of the experimental manipulation.

The results of the regressions are presented in Table 4.6. They show that for both issues, the mean effect of the manipulation was not significant. All else equal, participants in the high conflict condition did not experience more discomfort than those in the low conflict condition. They also show that at their means, neither form of value conflict is significantly associated with tension or discomfort and that the manipulation did not interact with value conflict to increase discomfort. In fact, the results of the gay job protections model suggest that for latent conflict the manipulation had the opposite effect, diminishing discomfort, which is inconsistent with theory but consistent with the results of Table 4.5. Controlling for value conflict the effects of ambivalence on mood were largely null, both in their main effects and interactions with the manipulation, although the main effect of latent ambivalence was significant and, consistent with theory, negative in the gay job protections model. The component values and framing manipulations were also not associated with mood.

What conclusions can be drawn from the experiment? Perhaps the only firm conclusions that can be drawn are that the results are inconclusive at best and the
hypothesis that value conflict produces tension and discomfort is not confirmed. The results point weakly in different directions. Based on these this experiment and these data, it cannot be said that value conflict affects mood one way or the other.

It may be that the common wisdom is wrong—that value conflict does not generate discomfort. But there are other possibilities. One possibility is that the experiment may have failed to uncover a relation not because there is not one but because the experiment itself failed. The validity of the experiment hinges on the assumption that the issue block of questions primed value conflict. If it did not, then the manipulation cannot be expected to result in negative mood, either by itself or interacting with value conflict. The results of the framing experiments demonstrate that it is difficult to manipulate value conflict. Given that the framing manipulations failed to affect value conflict, it seems possible, perhaps even likely, that the issue and value conflict questions might also have failed to prime value conflict. Future research that finds a way effectively to manipulate value conflict will be able to address more effectively than this study the question of whether or not value conflict generates psychological tension and discomfort. Even so, the lack of association between value conflict and discomfort calls into question the assumption that they occur together.

**Discussion**

In this chapter I tested the hypotheses that value conflict is associated with moderation, subjective uncertainty, and psychological tension and discomfort. The relation between value conflict and moderation (the opposite of extremity) was based
on the supposition that when individuals are faced with a value conflict, needing somehow to resolve it, they implicitly split the difference between the values, resulting in an opinion at or near the midpoint of the response scale—a moderate attitude. The results provided consistent support for the hypothesis. I found that both latent and subjective value conflict increase moderation (or decrease extremity) and the effects are almost entirely mediated ambivalence. At the same time, the results suggest that support for one or the other value in any given values divide may tend in the opposite direction, toward extremity.

These countervailing effects of values and value conflict have interesting implications for American politics. They suggest that the values-based discourse in the value conflicts of American politics may tend political attitudes both toward the extremes and moderation, depending on people’s value priorities. People who adhere to one side of a values divide are more extreme while those who cling to both values are more moderate. This finding may provide an answer to the question of why, in American politics, even the most heated issues rarely result in violence and usually result in compromise. In addressing this issue, political scientists usually look to the structure of American political institutions which, by design, promote inefficiency and compromise, or the content of the political culture, which reflects conflicting values. These results provide a psychological foundation for the culture argument. They suggest that American politics is (by historical and international comparison) conflicted in its values and, as a result, measured, moderate, and open to compromise because Americans themselves are conflicted and, as a result, moderate in their views, and themselves open to compromise. Future research
might explore this implication by drawing the connections, both theoretically and empirically, between the American political culture and Americans’ value priorities.

Future research might also address how this finding can be reconciled with the finding that value conflict is associated with attitude instability. The moderation hypothesis and instability hypothesis would appear to be inconsistent. Does value conflict cause people to swing from one side to the other or stake a middle ground? Or can it do both at the same time? These findings can be reconciled if we consider that value conflict may lead to unstable attitudes that vary around a moderate mean. Conflicted individuals are not likely to swing wildly from one side of the issue to the other (as Zaller and Feldman suggest) but to move back and forth tentatively, with uncertainty, and within a narrow range of the attitude scale. They are both moderate and unstable in their attitudes at the same time, perhaps moving, for example, between weak support for wiretapping, the middle position, and weak opposition, and then back again. Unfortunately, there are simply not sufficient data in this study to address this question directly—the sample size is too small—so it will have to wait for further research.

In this chapter I also found that latent and subjective value conflict are associated with subjective uncertainty. The logic is similar to that of moderation. Feeling torn between conflicting impulses, conflicted individuals are likely to feel less confident, sure, firm, or, in a word, certain of their attitudes than people who are not so conflicted. This prediction is at odds with another conception of uncertainty, popular in economics and popularized in political science by Anthony Downs, which states that certainty increases with information or knowledge. The results of this
chapter show that subjective uncertainty is associated with value conflict and not with information.

Finally, in this chapter I tested empirically the assumption, common to value conflict research, that value conflict produces discomfort. The results were inconsistent and not supportive of the theory. And while these results may well have occurred to due methodological flaws, the results, particularly the results of the gay job protections issue in Table 4.5, hint at the possibility of an alternative and opposite hypothesis, that value conflict (and ambivalence) diminish lead to less, rather than more, discomfort. If this were found to be true, it would be consistent with the consistency and dissonance theories if participants were found already to have resolved the value conflict and so do not feel at all discomfited when presented with manifestations of the conflict. Having resolved the conflict, they may report less discomfort, perhaps even feeling relieved at having overcome this mental obstacle. However, even if this were true, it may not explain an association between value conflict and discomfort because people who have resolved a value conflict are not, by definition, conflicted.
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Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.

Table 4.1: Summary Statistics of Attitude Extremity
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+ p ≤ .10; * p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01. Liberal values are freedom (wiretapping model), equality (gay job protections model), and humanitarianism (human cloning model). Conservative values are national security (wiretapping models) and traditional morality (gay job protections and human cloning models).

Table 4.2: Effects of Latent and Subjective Value Conflict and Ambivalence on Extremity of Opinion
### Table 4.3: Summary Statistics of Attitude Certainty

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Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study.
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<td>General Political Knowledge</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>(.01)</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>(.01)</td>
<td>.01**</td>
<td>.02**</td>
<td>.02**</td>
<td>(.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain Political Knowledge</td>
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<td>(.02)</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01+</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>.01+</td>
<td>.01+</td>
<td>.01+</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
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<td>R-Square</td>
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<td>.50</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
<td>.59</td>
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</table>

Notes: Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study. Covariance structure parameters based on maximum likelihood estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. * p ≤ .10; ** p ≤ .05; *** p ≤ .01. Liberal values are freedom (wiretapping model), equality (gay job protections model), and humanitarianism (human cloning model). Conservative values are national security (wiretapping models ) and traditional morality (gay job protections and human cloning models).

Table 4.4: Effects of Latent and Subjective Value Conflict and Ambivalence on Subjective Certainty
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wiretapping</th>
<th></th>
<th>Gay Jobs Protections</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low Conflict Condition</td>
<td>High Conflict Condition</td>
<td>Sig. of Difference</td>
<td>Low Conflict Condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent Value Conflict</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>p = .91</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Value Conflict</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>p = .05</td>
<td>-.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latent Ambivalence</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>p = .48</td>
<td>-.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Ambivalence</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>p = .31</td>
<td>-.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>(76)</td>
<td>(55)</td>
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<td>(43)</td>
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Table 4.5: Correlations Between Mood and Value Conflict and Between Mood and Ambivalence by Experimental Manipulation
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<th>Gay Job Protections</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.03 (.03)</td>
<td>.02 (.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
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<td>-.03 (.17)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Subjective Value Conflict</td>
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<td>-.02 (.17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latent Value Conflict</td>
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<td>.09 (.16)</td>
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<td>Subjective Ambivalence</td>
<td>-.21 (.22)</td>
<td>-.37 * (.19)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Latent Ambivalence</td>
<td>-.12 (.23)</td>
<td>.03 (.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation X Subjective VC</td>
<td>-.12 (.15)</td>
<td>.26 + (.23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manipulation X Latent VC</td>
<td>.00 (.13)</td>
<td>.26 + (.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation X Subjective Ambivalence</td>
<td>.10 (.23)</td>
<td>-.08 (.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation X Latent Ambivalence</td>
<td>-.01 (.21)</td>
<td>.32 (.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Value</td>
<td>-.09 (.10)</td>
<td>-.03 (.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Value</td>
<td>-.13 (.15)</td>
<td>-.11 (.10)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Liberal Frame</td>
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<td>-.07 (.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Frame</td>
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<td>.02 (.05)</td>
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<td>Both Frame</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.90 ** (.16)</td>
<td>.79 ** (.13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adj. R-square</td>
<td>-.05 (</td>
<td>.01 (</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: + p ≤ .10; * p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01. Source: 2003 Value Conflict Study. OLS models. Standard Errors in parentheses. Liberal values are freedom (wiretapping model) and equality (gay job protections). Conservative values are national security (wiretapping) and traditional morality (gay job protections).

Table 4.6: Effect of Value Conflict on Psychological Tension and Discomfort
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

What is clear is that values clash ... Values may easily clash within the breast of a single individual; and it does not follow that, if they do, some must be true and others false. ... These collisions of values are of the essence of what they are and what we are. If we are told that these contradictions will be solved in some perfect world in which all good things can be harmonized in principle, then we must answer, to those who say this, that ... the world in which what we see as incompatible values are not in conflict is a world altogether beyond our ken; that principles which are harmonized in this other world are not the principles which, in our daily lives, we are acquainted; if they are transformed, it is into conceptions not known to us on earth. But it is in earth that we live, and it is here that we must believe and act. ... We are doomed to choose, and every choice may entail an irreparable loss.


I end this study as I began it, with a quotation from Isaiah Berlin on the difficult fact of value conflict. At the outset it was unclear whether or not Berlin’s conflict, the value conflict of the political philosophers, is mirrored in the minds of ordinary citizens. It was unclear whether or not ordinary people wrestle with values in the same way and, if they do, just how it might affect their political viewpoints. The research to date on these topics has produced mixed results and pointed to different conclusions. This study has sought to address this debate and extend our
understanding of how citizens experience value conflict and how this experience affects their political attitudes.

The results have implications for our understanding of public opinion and the role and capacity of citizens in American democracy. For public opinion, the results show that people can and do experience value conflict, that this conflict can be latent or subjectively felt, and that it affects political attitudes in ways that political psychologists have wrestled with for years, including ambivalence, uncertainty, moderation, and especially attitude change. The traditional view of attitude change in public opinion research, and instability in particular, goes back to the pioneering work of Philip Converse (1964), who argued that attitude instability often results from random responding or nonattitudes. The results presented here provide an alternative explanation—that apparently weak or unstable opinions may actually be rooted in deeply held but conflicting core values. Converse’s finding that many people express nonattitudes cast doubt on the ability of ordinary citizens to hold genuine opinions and to participate effectively in a democracy. This study helps to rehabilitate our understanding of the capacity of the citizens in American democracy by suggesting that citizens can and sometimes do have changeable political attitudes, but these apparently weak attitudes sometimes result from value conflict.

As much as it contributes in both of these areas, this study leaves important questions unanswered and points to avenues for further research. It is best viewed as a contribution to the topic of value conflict rather than the last word. In this concluding chapter I discuss the broader implications and significance of the results,
what they tell us about the role of value conflict in American politics, what we have yet to learn, and how future research might extend these horizons.

The Meaning, Manipulation, and Occurrence of Value Conflict

One of the most important contributions of this research to the study of public opinion and political psychology is the distinction between the two types of value conflict. Almost all previous research assumes that value conflict is subjectively felt but this research almost invariably measures latent rather than subjective conflict. The studies that have tapped subjective conflict directly have relied on participants’ open-ended and often extemporaneous remarks, remarks easily confounded and confused with other processes and phenomena such as uncertainty and ignorance. In evaluating people’s open-ended comments, it can be difficult to differentiate reliably value conflict from these other variables. This is the first empirical research to measure the subjective experience of value conflict in a way that is direct, standardized, and not prone to such confounds. It will allow future research to quantify subjective value conflict more effectively and draw more accurate conclusions about the prevalence and effects of value conflict.

This distinction is new, important, and may prove useful but it raises its own questions about the experience of value conflict. First, it raises the question of what it means to be conflicted at a “latent” level. Subjective conflict is fairly straightforward—The opposing values make the person feels like he or she is being pulled in two different directions at once. The meaning of latent conflict is less clear. It occurs when the person views the values as highly and nearly equally important,
which would suggest that he or she is likely to be conflicted, hence my reference to it as “potential” conflict. This terminology is consistent with research on latent and subjective ambivalence. In this research, latent ambivalence is considered inert until it is actualized as subjective ambivalence. But the results presented here show that latent value conflict is more than merely potential since it has consistent and predictable consequences over and above those of subjective conflict. When latent conflict leads to ambivalence, instability, persuasion, etc., it is no longer potential but actual conflict with real consequences.

With subjective value conflict controlled, what exactly is latent value conflict? One possibility is that it reflects unconscious value conflict. The person is conflicted but is not introspectively aware of the conflict. Value conflict occurs but outside of conscious awareness. A large and growing body of research in social and political psychology shows that much information processing is non-cognitive in the sense that it occurs at an unconscious level. There is no reason to believe that value conflict might not also occur outside of awareness. The results presented here are consistent with this explanation but do not demonstrate it directly. Future research can explore the presence of unconscious conflict using a semantic priming task, the Implicit Association Test, or other methods of studying unconscious processing.

Second, it raises questions about what values and issues are prone to generate conflict, the types of people likely to feel conflicted, and the factors that enhance or diminish the association between the two types of conflict. Certain types of issues and values may be more likely to produce value conflict than others. New issues with overt connections to important values, such as human cloning and
wiretapping as a response to terrorism, are less likely to be familiar to people than older value-laden issues of which people are more likely to have come in contact, such as abortion or the death penalty. People may be less likely to have evaluated the new issues and be more open to considering the implications of conflicting values. High-profile and emotional issues involving core values of the American creed (such as freedom and equality) or morality (such as the progressive-traditionalist value continuum) may be more likely to lead to value conflict than less-central values involving, say, the size or scope of government which, for most people, are further removed.

Just as some issues and values may be more likely to lead to conflict, so might some people be more likely to experience it. People who like to think (Cacioppo Petty, Feinstein and Jarvis 1996), have opinions on issues (Jarvis and Petty 1996), or are willing to tolerate inconsistency (Webster and Kruglanski 1994) may be more prone to feel conflicted than others. Though my preliminary analysis, discussed in chapter 2, did not support these suppositions, it seems likely that research will show that some people are prone to feel conflicted, perhaps in combination with certain specific types of values or issues. Some of these same factors might also enhance the relation between latent and subjective conflict. I showed that value conflict can be latent or subjective and that the former is associated with the latter, but this is only the first step in exploring how value conflict occurs.

Third, and similarly, it would be worthwhile to examine whether people resolve value conflicts, and if they do, how. Traditional psychological theory on
cognitive dissonance suggests that people resolve value conflicts as they arise. Political psychologists such as Rokeach (1973) and Jacoby (2003) have adopted this perspective. However, no value conflict research has investigated this supposition. Future research might address whether and what types of people do in fact resolve value conflicts, the means by which they do it, and the types of issues and values likely to achieve resolution.

Fourth, our understanding of value conflict would be increased if it could be demonstrated empirically that subjective value conflict is more likely to occur in some situations than others. One of the biggest disappointments of this study is the failure of the framing manipulations to affect value conflict or the relation between the two types of conflict. Where two values conflict in relation to a policy issue, the values are primed, and the person is confronted with the issue, he or she should feel conflicted, and this should be especially true among people high in latent conflict. But the manipulations failed to support this view. Finding a way to manipulate value conflict is important because it will allow value conflict researchers to move closer to demonstrating causality rather than mere correlations between value conflict and its hypothesized consequences.

Finding a way effectively to manipulate value conflict would also provide opportunity to take another look at whether or not people find value conflict psychologically aversive to the extent that it produces tension and discomfort. The results of the experiment here suggest that it does not, but the experiment was based on the assumption that thinking about the issue and values primed value conflict. Given the results of the framing manipulations, it is questionable that the
manipulation worked as intended. When it can be shown that value conflict is manipulated this will provide an opportunity to examine with greater confidence the supposition that value conflict makes people feel uncomfortable.

Fifth, it draws our attention back to the debate in the literature over the prevalence and consequences of value conflict. A tradition of research in political science going back to the middle of the 20th century suggests that Americans are united on the most important values such as liberty, equality, and democracy (e.g., Hartz 1955; Hofstadter 1955; Lipset 1979; McClosky 1964). While true to an extent—American are more supportive of these values than citizens of any other society (Huntington 1981)—what the consensus theorists often overlook are differences on these and other values and conflicts between them. Most people think freedom and security are important to some extent, but conflicts arise over which value should give way to the other and when. More recent research has emphasized these conflicts but, with the notable exception of welfare (Hochschild 1981; Feldman and Zaller 1992), failed to assess just how prevalent they are. Welfare notwithstanding, future research might devote greater attention empirically to the types of value conflicts that tend to occur in American politics. The few recent studies that have investigated this question look at latent conflict, not subjective conflict, and so any conclusions drawn from them about the prevalence of value conflict are limited.

This study addresses this issue, albeit in a limited way. I measured both forms of conflict in a sample representative of a large Midwestern state. The results suggested a middle ground between the two sides of the debate—value conflict is
occurs among a significant proportion of the public but is neither the norm nor the exception. One cannot, from these results, make broad generalizations about the prevalence of value conflict because the data are limited to two issues and pairs of values. Much work thus remains to be done to address the prevalence of value conflict in American public opinion.

The Consequences of Value Conflict Revisited

On the other side of establishing how, when, and for whom value conflict occurs is the effects of value conflict. I examined five such effects on political attitudes: ambivalence, uncertainty, moderation, responsiveness to persuasion, and instability. Insofar as each of these is a dimension or feature of attitude strength, the results suggest that for these dimensions at least value conflict is associated with the expression of weaker attitudes. The finding that value conflict is associated with ambivalence contrasts with the dominant perspective in the field, which conflates the two, usually considering value conflict to be one type of ambivalence. I argued that they are conceptually distinct and showed that empirically subjective value conflict and ambivalence are separate dimensions. While the results are consistent with this supposition, further experimental research would help to buttress this distinction. Demonstrating experimentally that changes in value conflict are associated with changes in ambivalence would enhance the causal argument. Demonstrating that ambivalence can be manipulated independent of value conflict would increase our confidence in the argument that they are separate and distinct.
The finding that value conflict is associated with uncertainty also contrasts with the dominant perspective in political science, which conceives of uncertainty as reflecting a lack of information. At the subjective level, the results show this clearly not to be the case. Value conflict is associated with subjective uncertainty while information is not. I do not wish to overemphasize this point, however, since most research that considers certainty a function of information defines certainty as a matter of information rather than arguing that the one causes the subjective experience of the other. The important point here is that at the subjective level of the individual certainty is a matter of value conflict rather than information. People perceive themselves as uncertain because they are conflicted rather than because they lack knowledge.

The results showing that value conflict is associated with moderate attitudes have implications for our understanding of the contours of American politics. Scholars who study American politics in comparative perspective often note the stability and moderation of the American case relative to much of the rest of the world. The U.S. has been much less riven by violent ideological or political conflict than other states. With the notable exception of the Civil War, only rarely, and then locally, has political conflict led to violence in the United States. Researchers have pointed to two main reasons for this American exceptionalism, as it is usually referred to in the literature—The structure of the American political system or the structure of American political values. Some scholars identify the framework of American government—the Constitution’s separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism, where “ambition [is] made to counteract ambition,” in
Madison’s famous phrase from *Federalist* 51—as the primary source of the stability and moderation of American politics. American politics is relatively calm because the system is designed to institutionalize political conflicts and keep them from getting out of hand. Others point to the most prominent American principles of the American Creed on which there is basic consensus. Recent values research, however, has been just as likely to note the disharmony of the American political culture and the prominent value conflicts of the culture war, where politicians and groups line up behind one value or another in any given values divide (Himmelfarb 1999; Hunter 1991; Huntington 1981; Layman 2001; White 2003). Assuming some truth to these arguments, the question arises, why is American politics moderate and stable when there is often deep disagreement on the values?

The results presented here help to link the values argument with individual-level political psychology. I found that the component values and value conflict move attitudes in opposite directions, with extremity on one value or the other leading to a more extreme attitude and value conflict moving the attitude in the opposite direction, toward moderation. This finding provides this link by suggesting that the very conflict of the political culture also occurs within individuals, and whereas the former moves American politics toward the extremes, the latter moves it toward the center. The conflicts that have erupted over issues such as abortion, the death penalty, and affirmative action may stop short of resulting in violence because the value conflicts that occur between political groups are reflected as value conflicts within individuals. These moderate individuals, in turn, become the median voters to which vote-seeking candidates feel compelled to appeal. The ironic point is that the
instability of values within individuals may help to maintain the stability and moderation of the American political system.

My finding that value conflict is associated with attitude change also challenges the traditional and perhaps still dominant perspective on this topic, that unstable or changeable attitudes result from random responding, the expression of nonattitudes. The results presented here provide an alternative explanation, suggesting that attitudes that are receptive to persuasion or unstable over time may actually be rooted in value conflict.

This finding speaks to our understanding of the role and capacity of citizens in American democracy. Democratic theory is predicated on citizen input and participation. Converse’s finding that many people express nonattitudes cast doubt on the ability of ordinary citizens to hold genuine opinions and to participate effectively in a democracy. Converse portrayed ordinary Americans as uninterested, lacking in anything approaching a genuine belief system, and changeable in their political attitudes, often responding to opinion poll questions as if at random. This damning portrait of the American citizen suggested that American democracy is a farce insofar as many people do not have stable attitudes even on the important issues of the day.

Perhaps the most important implication of this study is that it helps to rehabilitate the democratic citizen. While not denying the presence or importance of ignorance or nonattitudes, the results of this study suggest that opinion change in the form of responsiveness to persuasion and instability may actually be the result not of shallow attitudes but of value conflict. Future research may test this finding.
more directly, finding ways to model directly both value conflict and random responding. As it is, this study suggests that American democracy may be on a sounder footing than many had previously thought.
APPENDIX A

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3

In the LISREL models estimated in this chapter, the models did not converge when the framing manipulations were included. To guard against the possibility that omitting the framing manipulations produced misspecified models, I conducted two sets of analyses, one using LISREL and the other using the more laborious and cumbersome Baron and Kenny method. I conducted two sets of analyses rather than one to see whether or not the results of the Baron and Kenny method, which included the framing manipulations, confirm the results of the LISREL analysis, which did not include the framing manipulations. If so, then I may safely proceed with the analysis and discussion of the LISREL models that excluded the framing manipulations. I found that the results of the Baron and Kenny method did in fact confirm the results of the LISREL analysis. Specifically, I found that

1. The framing manipulations did not independently affect subjective value conflict, latent ambivalence, or subjective ambivalence.

2. The framing manipulations did not independently affect persuasion, stability, or (relevant to the next chapter) extremity or certainty of opinion.

3. The framing manipulations did not moderate the effect of latent value conflict on subjective value conflict.
4. The framing manipulations did not moderate the effects of latent or subjective value conflict on latent or subjective ambivalence.

5. The framing manipulations did not moderate the effect of latent ambivalence on subjective ambivalence.

In short, the framing manipulations did not significantly affect any of the dependent variables in the models or moderate the relations between variables in the models. Thus, I am on solid ground proceeding with the analysis and discussion of the SEM results.
LIST OF REFERENCES


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presentation at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.


