Values as Truisms: Evidence and Implications

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Three experiments tested the general hypothesis that values are cultural truisms—that is, beliefs that are widely shared and rarely questioned. Experiment 1 examined specifically whether people lack cognitive support for their values. It was predicted and found that analyzing one's reasons for particular values caused the values to change, a finding that would be expected only if individuals lack cognitive support for their values. Experiment 2 verified that analyzing reasons caused value change only when participants were not provided with cognitive support for their values. Experiment 3 found that the effect of analyzing reasons generalized across a range of individual-differences variables. Experiment 3 also showed that analyzing reasons resulted in value ratings that were less predictive of relevant attitudes than pre-reasons-analysis value ratings, but only for high self-monitors.

We deliberate not about ends but about means. For a doctor does not deliberate whether he shall heal, nor an orator whether he shall persuade, nor a statesman whether he shall produce law and order, nor does anyone else deliberate about his end. They assume the end and consider how and by what means it is to be attained.

—Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*

Helpfulness and law and order can be considered examples of values, which are abstract goals that people consider to be important guiding principles in their lives (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). Values are cited in discussions of a variety of important social issues, such as child rearing, criminal punishment, education, equal rights, health care, immigration, and social welfare. Values have even been used to justify war. During war, the enemy is often portrayed as lacking morals and threatening basic values (e.g., freedom), and this threat to values becomes a rallying cry.

Such appeals to values suggest that people attach great importance to their values and that people will vigorously defend their values. Consistent with this idea, many social psychologists consider values to be among people's most important evaluative beliefs (e.g., Feather, 1990; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992; Seligman & Katz, 1996). For example, Rokeach (1968) suggested that values occupy central positions in cognitive networks of attitudes and beliefs. This thesis was supported by Rokeach's (1968, 1973) seminal research, which showed that rankings of the importance of values (e.g., equality and freedom) can predict a large variety of different attitudes and behavior (see also Maio, Roese, Seligman, & Katz, 1996).

Interestingly, the centrality of values has been reflected in social psychological research on a variety of topics, including attitude ambivalence (Katz & Hass, 1988), attitude function (e.g., Herek, 1986; Katz, 1960; Maio & Olson, 1994, 1995b, in press; Shavitt, 1989), cognitive dissonance (Steele, 1988), ideological reasoning (Tetlock, 1986), moral judgment (Eisenberg, Lennon, & Pascenack, 1985), personality (e.g., authoritarianism: Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950), persuasion (Johnson & Eagly, 1989; Maio & Olson, 1995a), prejudice (Esses, Haddock, & Zanna, 1993; Maio, Esses, & Bell, 1994), prosocial behavior (Schwartz, 1977), and racism (e.g., McConahay, 1986; Sears, 1988). Such research documents the potential importance of values.

In this article, we propose a new, though not incompatible, perspective on values. Specifically, we suggest that the concept of truisms is a valid metaphor for values. That is, despite their importance and centrality (which we do not deny), values may be widely shared, rarely questioned, and, therefore, relatively bereft of cognitive support. Thus, we suggest that values may function like truisms, in addition to being important motivators of behavior.

What Do We Mean by Truisms?

To adequately describe the concept of truisms, it is important to examine McGuire's (1964) seminal research. Although McGuire did not give a precise definition of truisms, he ascribed two basic characteristics to them. Specifically, people should agree highly with truisms, and people should lack cognitive support for truisms. Both of these characteristics occur because truisms are accepted without question. Because truisms are not questioned, people do not perceive a need to qualify or moderate their endorsement of the truisms, and, consequently, the truisms are confidently and extremely held. Similarly, the lack of questioning prevents people from perceiving a need to generate arguments supporting the truisms. Therefore, the widespread acceptance of truisms causes people to fail to build arguments supporting their views.
According to McGuire (1964), one example of a cultural truism is the belief that it is a good idea to visit the doctor regularly for a physical examination. This belief is a truism because it is widely shared and rarely questioned by most people. Consequently, people do not build reasons for why it is important to get a medical checkup. In contrast, one example of a nontruistic belief is the belief that ownership of certain kinds of guns should be restricted. This belief is controversial, and reasons both for and against firearm restrictions are presented in the media.

We believe that, in general, values are noncontroversial, even though the media frequently present conflicts over issues that are related to values. For example, the media may show debate over whether affirmative action policies should be implemented, but they do not show debate over whether equal opportunity is a desirable value per se. That is, the use of affirmative action to attain equality may be debated, but the desirability of the end state is rarely challenged. Therefore, people may agree strongly with the value but be unaware of reasons supporting or opposing it.

It is important to note that this hypothesis is not inconsistent with the notion that values are central constructs. That is, although people might base many of their attitudes and behaviors on their values, they might not consider the basis of their values. Thus, values might be central and important despite being truisms.

Theory and Evidence Pertaining to the Values-as-Truisms Hypothesis

Despite the plethora of research on values, little is known about the extent to which people form arguments to support their values. Philosophers have long debated whether people have or should have reasons for their values (e.g., Frondizi, 1971; Rescher, 1993), and, in the social psychological literature, it is possible to find both supportive and nonsupportive statements concerning the hypothesis that people possess few reasons for their values.

On the one hand, people exert cognitive effort to assess their positions on issues that are important or relevant to them (see, e.g., Chaiken, Liberman, & Eagly, 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). It might be expected that people will similarly exert cognitive effort to assess the validity of their values. Such cognitive effort should lead to the production of arguments in support of values, which should be accessible if people are forced to defend their values.

In fact, Rokeach's (1973) influential discussion of values is consistent with this view. Rokeach (1973) indicated that as people mature, they engage in highly complex cognitive processes to assess the relative importance of different values:

As a child matures and becomes more complex, he is increasingly likely to encounter social situations in which several values rather than one value may come into competition with one another, requiring a weighing of one value against the other—a decision as to which value is the more important. In this particular situation, is it better, for instance, to seek success or to remain honest, to act obediently or independently, to seek self-respect or social recognition? Gradually, through experience and a process of maturation, we all learn to integrate the isolated, absolute values we have been taught in this or that context into a hierarchically organized system, wherein each value is ordered in priority or importance relative to other values. (p. 6)

Presumably, during this extensive integration of values, people should become aware of reasons for preferring various values over others, which can then be used as support for the values.

Recently, Schwartz (1992) also seemed to contradict the hypothesis that values are truisic. He stated that the variability in value importance across individuals indicates that values are more like personal standards than shared cultural ideals. If shared cultural ideals are conceptually similar to cultural truisms, his argument would suggest that values are not truisms.

On the other hand, there are reasons to suspect that values might be formed and held without a great degree of prior thought. For example, although people's rankings of the importance of their values in one context tend to be stable across time, their rankings tend to be unstable across situations (Seligman & Katz, 1996). This value instability might occur because people lack a consistent set of reasons to support their values, which causes them to adjust their values to different situations.

Also, the nature of value formation might lead to minimal cognitive support. Specifically, values are learned, at least in part, through uncritical socialization processes, such as compliance and internalization (see Kelman, 1974). Although Rokeach (1973) attached importance to the cognitive integration of values, he also indicated that rigid socialization processes contribute to the formation of values:

It may be suggested that the enduring quality of values arises mainly from the fact that they are initially taught and learned in isolation from other values in an absolute, all-or-none manner. Such-and-such a mode of behavior or end-state, we are taught, is always desirable. We are not taught that it is desirable, for example, to be just a little bit honest or logical, or to strive for just a little bit of salvation or peace. Nor are we taught that such modes or end-states are sometimes desirable and sometimes not. It is the isolated and thus the absolute learning of values that more or less guarantees their endurance and stability. (p. 6)

Interestingly, Schwartz (1992) also emphasized an aspect of values that might produce a truistic acceptance. He suggested that values serve basic, universal, human needs and that it is the drive to fulfill these needs that causes values to be important. If values serve universal needs, they should be widely shared, and, therefore, people may rarely question or reconsider their values.

To summarize, the prevalence of complex reasoning about values is unclear. Researchers have not directly tested the extent to which people possess extensive cognitive support for their values. (In contrast, a great deal of research has examined the motivational basis of values, such as Schwartz's, 1992, model, which gives a theoretically derived and empirically supported taxonomy of the motivational dimensions underlying values.) Our hypothesis that values are truisms represents a novel perspective on the cognitive basis of this important construct.

Empirical Criteria for the Hypothesis
That Values Are Truisms

As indicated earlier, McGuire (1964) identified two characteristics of truisms: People agree very highly with them, and
people do not build arguments supporting them. Given these features, it is possible to test whether various beliefs are truisms. First, people can be asked to rate the extent to which they agree with the beliefs. For example, McGuire and Papageorgis (1961) asked participants to rate their agreement with the following beliefs about health practices: “Everyone should get a physical examination each year in order to detect serious illness (e.g., cancer, arteriosclerosis) in its early stages,” “The effects of penicillin have been of great benefit to humankind,” “Most forms of mental illness are not contagious,” and “Everyone should brush his or her teeth after every meal if at all possible.” McGuire and Papageorgis (1961) found that respondents’ mean agreement with these beliefs was 13.26 on a 15-point scale from 1 (definitely false) to 15 (definitely true).

Determining whether people lack arguments supporting their beliefs is more complex, however. McGuire (1964) suggested that a lack of arguments supporting beliefs should cause beliefs to be vulnerable to attack, because people cannot counterargue effectively. McGuire and Papageorgis (1961) demonstrated this heightened vulnerability for the four health beliefs that they studied. These researchers found that participants’ endorsements of the beliefs weakened dramatically after participants were exposed to attacks against the beliefs. For example, participants who read a brief antitoothbrushing message believed that the efficacy of toothbrushing was uncertain or probably false ($M = 6.42$ on the 15-point scale), whereas participants who did not read the antitoothbrushing message believed that the efficacy of toothbrushing was probably or definitely true ($M = 12.69$ on the 15-point scale). This effect of the arguments was eliminated only when participants received a prior message that motivated and enabled them to generate reasons to support the truisms.

It may be important, however, that the health beliefs examined by McGuire and Papageorgis (1961) were simple and uninvolving. In general, it is much easier to change uninvolving beliefs than it is to change beliefs that are important or ego relevant (see Johnson & Eagly, 1989; Rokeach, 1968). Ego-relevant beliefs may be more difficult to change because of the emotional conviction with which they are held (see Abelson, 1988). Thus, important ego-relevant truisms (such as values, we would argue) might not demonstrate susceptibility to attack, but they could be bereft of cognitive support nonetheless. That is, some beliefs might not be especially vulnerable to attack even though they are truisms.

How, then, can one test whether there is little cognitive support for a suspected truism? An obvious method would simply be to ask people to list their reasons for endorsing the belief. Unfortunately, this reasons-listing technique is limited by the fact that people might sometimes list few reasons to support a belief but might consider these reasons to be supremely important. In such a case, one or two reasons would constitute strong support for the belief. Also, just as the presence of few reasons may be inconclusive because the reasons may be strong, the presence of many reasons can also be inconclusive because the reasons may be weak. Thus, the number of reasons per se might not be a valid indicator of whether people possess weak support for their beliefs.

If weak cognitive support is to be convincingly demonstrated, it must be shown that people report only reasons that are weak or poorly articulated justifications of the belief. Fortunately, a finding in the attitudes literature suggests a possible technique for testing whether people’s reasons provide a strong basis for their beliefs or are simply a collection of their accessible thoughts. Specifically, Wilson and his colleagues have found that analyzing reasons for attitudes causes attitude change, and, importantly, this effect of analyzing reasons occurs primarily for attitudes that have a “strong, amorphous affective component with few supporting cognitions” (Wilson, Dunn, Kraft, & Lisle, 1989, p. 308). This effect tends not to occur for cognitively based attitudes “that are phrased in a logical, verbal code” (Wilson, Dunn, et al., 1989, p. 309). In particular, this effect occurs only when people lack knowledge about the attitude object and not when people possess a lot of knowledge about the attitude object (Wilson, Dunn, et al., 1989; Wilson, Kraft, & Dunn, 1989; see also Erber, Hodges, & Wilson, 1995; Wilson et al., 1993).

According to Wilson and his colleagues (Wilson, Dunn, et al., 1989; Wilson, Kraft, et al., 1989; Wilson et al., 1993), individuals who lack cognitive support for an attitude tend to randomly access a subset of their most accessible and easy to verbalize reasons when they are asked about their reasons (cf. Levine, Halberstadt, & Goldstone, 1996), and these reasons often imply a slightly more unfavorable or favorable attitude than the person normally expresses. This random access occurs because these individuals do not know exactly why they feel the way that they do—their attitudes are not strongly associated (in memory) with a set of reasons. Thus, these individuals access reasons that are temporarily accessible and possibly not consistent with their original attitude. In contrast, people with a well-thought-out, cognitively based attitude tend to access reasons that are consistent with their original attitude. Because of the strong association between their reasons and their attitude, these individuals can access the reasons when asked. Because the expressed reasons are likely to be consistent with the original attitude, their expression does not cause people to change their attitude. Consequently, analyzing reasons for an attitude causes the attitude to change if the attitude is primarily affective but not if people “have worked out carefully how they feel by deliberating about the attributes of the attitude object” (Wilson, Dunn, et al., 1989, p. 309).

These findings are interesting beyond their implications for attitudes. Given Wilson, Dunn, et al.’s (1989) findings, it seems likely that analyzing reasons for a truism will cause it to change because people’s reasons should simply be a collection of their most accessible and easy to verbalize thoughts, rather than a strong set of reasons firmly anchored to the belief. Thus, people should access reasons that are at least somewhat inconsistent with the truism, and these reasons should imply a slightly different belief than would otherwise be expressed.

In summary, values should meet two criteria if they are to be classified as truisms: They should be strongly endorsed and bereft of cognitive support. Level of endorsement can easily be ascertained by asking people to rate their agreement with values. Level of cognitive support can be assessed by testing whether analyzing reasons for values causes them to change. Although neither of these tests alone provides definitive evidence that values are truisms, together they provide stronger, necessary
evidence. Thus, one major purpose of the present research was to use both of these tests to examine whether values are truisms. In our research on this topic, we have focused exclusively on self-transcendence values, which are values that involve promoting the welfare of others (e.g., helpfulness and protecting the environment; see Schwartz, 1992, 1996). Eventually, the findings for these values can be compared with findings for other types of values that involve different motivations (e.g., self-enhancement values, openness values, and conservation values; see Schwartz, 1992).

To test whether there is high agreement with self-transcendence values, we conducted a pilot study. Following the pilot study, we conducted three larger studies that tested the more complex assertion that people lack cognitive support for their self-transcendence values.

Pilot Study

It may seem self-evident that people will agree with self-transcendence values because values, in general, are defined as ideals that people consider to be important guiding principles in their lives (e.g., Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992, 1996). Because values are defined this way, contemporary value surveys contain only values that have been preselected to be important for most people (e.g., Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992).

Nevertheless, we wanted to compare the degree of agreement for these values with the degree of agreement with McGuire's (1964) truisms. Thus, 21 undergraduates were asked to rate their agreement with statements about four self-transcendence values: "It is important to be helpful," "Honesty is important," "It is important to be forgiving," and "It is important to treat others equally." An additional 21 participants rated their agreement with the four health-related or medical truisms used by McGuire and Papageorgis (1961; discussed previously). As in McGuire and Papageorgis's study, these ratings were made by using a scale from 1 (definitely false) to 15 (definitely true).

We expected that participants would agree highly with both the self-transcendence values and the medical truisms and that participants would indicate as much agreement with the values as with the medical truisms. Results confirmed both predictions. Participants rated the self-transcendence values to be very important (\(M = 13.89, SD = 0.93\), on the 15-point scale). In fact, participants showed even stronger agreement with the self-transcendence values than with the medical truisms (\(M = 12.96, SD = 1.72, F(1, 39) = 4.68, p < .04\). Thus, as expected, there was high agreement with the self-transcendence values.\(^1\)

Experiment 1

In this experiment, our principal aim was to test whether analyzing reasons for self-transcendence values causes the values to change. We also examined the direction of value change and the extent to which individual-differences variables moderated the effect of analyzing reasons.

Value Change

To examine the effect of analyzing reasons on value change, we manipulated whether or not participants were asked to analyze their reasons for five self-transcendence values. Before and after the manipulation, participants rated the importance of the self-transcendence values, as well as the importance of five openness values, which are values that involve following one's "intelectual and emotional interests in uncertain directions" (Schwartz, 1992, p. 43). Openness values are unrelated to self-transcendence values (Schwartz, 1992) and were included so that we could show that analyzing reasons for self-transcendence values specifically affects those values.

In accordance with the hypothesis that people lack arguments supporting their values, we predicted that participants who analyzed their reasons for their self-transcendence values would change those values more than participants who did not analyze their reasons. Because analyzing reasons should cause people to access reasons that are mostly specific to self-transcendence values, no effect of analyzing reasons on ratings of the openness values was expected.

Direction of Value Change

We also examined the direction of value change because previous research indicates that thinking about one's attitude regarding a topic can cause the attitude to polarize (Tesser, 1978). This thought-induced polarization appears to occur especially when people possess strong schemas that are evaluatively consistent with the initial attitude (Chaiken & Yates, 1985; Tesser & Leone, 1977; see also Tesser, 1978). According to Tesser (1978), schema-guided thought causes beliefs to become more evaluatively consistent, which causes the relevant attitude to polarize.

We tested whether analyzing reasons for values cause value polarization (i.e., change in one direction only—toward greater agreement with the values). If analyzing reasons for values were to produce value polarization, it would be ambiguous whether the effect of analyzing reasons was occurring because people lack support for their values, as in Wilson's research (Wilson, Dunn et al., 1989), or because people possess strong schemas that guide their thinking about their values, as in Tesser's (1978) research. In contrast, if value change were to occur without polarization (i.e., both increases and decreases in agreement), as in past research using the analyzing reasons manipulation (Wilson, Dunn et al., 1989), the results would provide clearer support for the proposition that it is the absence of strong cognitive support that is driving the effect of analyzing reasons on value change.

Individual-Differences Variables

We were also interested in assessing whether the effects of analyzing reasons on value change are moderated by individual-differences variables. First, we tested whether people who consider self-transcendence values to be highly important exhibit a different effect of analyzing reasons than those who consider

\(^1\) It is important to note that prior research has found that ratings of values are not influenced by tendencies to respond in a socially desirable manner (see Rokeach, 1973). Thus, it is unlikely that the high agreement with self-transcendence values occurs because of socially desirable responding.
self-transcendence values to be less important. It might be predicted that analyzing reasons should have a weaker effect on those who consider the values to be important because these individuals will have thought more extensively about the reasons for their values. In contrast, our values-as-truisms hypothesis implies that value importance does not result from extensive thought about arguments to support the values. Thus, we did not expect that value importance would play a moderating role.

Nevertheless, values surely cannot be truisms for all people. One relevant personality dimension might be self-monitoring (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986). Although high self-monitors and low self-monitors both exhibit relations between their values and their attitudes (Maio & Olson, 1994), only low self-monitors consciously use their values to justify their attitudes (Kristansen & Zanna, 1988; see also Snyder & Campell, 1982; Snyder & DeBono, 1985). Thus, low self-monitors probably think about their values more often than do high self-monitors, which might make low self-monitors' values less truisic. Consequently, it might be predicted that high self-monitors would exhibit a stronger effect of analyzing reasons than low self-monitors. Such a finding would qualify, but not refute, the hypothesis that values are truisms. Therefore, we tested whether self-monitoring moderated the effect of analyzing reasons.

Method

Participants

Participants were 77 undergraduate psychology students (23 men and 54 women) who participated for course credit.

Procedure

Participants took part either alone or in groups of 2 or 3. They were told that they would be participating in several different studies dealing with a number of different topics. The experimenter stated that each study was short, and, therefore, all of the studies were being combined into the same session.

In the first study, participants completed a measure of five self-transcendence values (altruism, equality, forgiving, helpful, and protecting the environment; Liebrand & Mcclintock, 1988; Schwartz, 1992) and five openness values (an exciting life, creativity, freedom, independent, and a varied life). In the second study, participants completed the Survey of Student Behaviors, which was actually the measure of self-monitoring (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986). In the third study, the experimental manipulation was conducted. Participants in the experimental condition were asked to analyze their reasons for considering the five self-transcendence values to be important or unimportant, whereas participants in the control condition were asked to analyze their reasons for liking or disliking five different beverages (coffee, colas, diet colas, milk, and orange juice). In the fourth study, participants completed a "new" value survey. This value survey contained 27 values, 10 of which were the same as in the first value survey. Finally, participants were probed for suspicion and debriefed.

Experimental Manipulation

Reasons for self-transcendence values. Participants in the experimental condition were asked to analyze their reasons for considering the five self-transcendence values to be important or unimportant to them. For each value, participants were given a page to list their reasons. All five pages were presented in a booklet that contained the following instructions, which were modeled after instructions used by Wilson, Dunn, Bybee, Hyman, and Rotondo (1984; Wilson, Dunn, et al., 1989):

In the following pages, several different values are listed. Please take a few minutes to think about why you think each value is important or unimportant to you, as a guiding principle in your life. That is, go over in your mind what makes each value important or unimportant to you. Analyze your reasons very carefully, and then write your reasons on the lines beneath each value. Be as specific as possible, and list as many reasons as possible.

Following Wilson et al. (1984; Wilson, Dunn, et al., 1989), participants were told that they were being asked to analyze their reasons in order to help them organize their thoughts for a questionnaire to be presented at the end of the session. They were told that they would not be asked to hand in the booklet. Participants were given 20 min to list their reasons. After 20 min, the experimenter placed the booklets in a recycling bin and proceeded to the next study. (In fact, the booklets were collected in a fixed order, so that the experimenter could later retrieve and code the booklets. During our debriefing, participants were told that we would like to examine their reasons. No participants objected.)

Control. The instructions in the control condition were similar to the instructions in the experimental condition. The primary difference was that participants in the control condition were asked to analyze their reasons for liking or disliking five different beverages, rather than their reasons for considering self-transcendence values to be important or unimportant to them. Participants were given a page to list their reasons for liking or disliking each beverage.

Self-Monitoring

The self-monitoring questionnaire (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986) contains 18 statements, which respondents indicate are either true or false descriptions of them. Higher scores indicate higher levels of self-monitoring (α = .73).2

Dependent Measures

To prevent participants from suspecting that we were studying value change from one survey to the next, it was necessary to create a cover story. Participants were (falsely) told that the first value survey was created 20 years ago by a professor named Milton Rokeach. They were told that the "Rokeach Survey" is a standard survey for measuring people's values and that the experimenter was interested in using it to measure students' values.

In this survey, each of the 10 values was printed beside a definition of the value (e.g., altruism: helping others even if it costs oneself). Participants were asked to rate each value in terms of its importance as a guiding principle in their life. They rated the values by using a 9-point scale that was marked with the following scale labels: −1 (opposed to my values), 0 (not important), 3 (important), 6 (very important), and 7 (extremely important). The rationale for these scale labels is described by Schwartz (1992).

To ensure that participants carefully thought about each value rating,

2 Previous research has indicated that participants' responses to the self-monitoring questionnaire load on two separate factors (Other-Directedness and Public Performance), which can reveal different relations with the same psychological variable (Briggs & Cheek, 1988). In all three of the current experiments, supplementary analyses replicated these two factors. Participants' scores on the two factors did not show different relations to the dependent variables in our experiments, however. Consequently, the results in the text describe the findings only for participants' overall self-monitoring scores.
they were asked to read the entire list of values before rating any of the values. In addition, participants were asked to take their time and to make sure that each rating most accurately reflected their values.

Participants were told that the second value survey was a new survey, called the "Schwartz Survey," which added 17 values to the 10 values measured in the Rokeach Survey. The experimenter stated that he was interested in the factor structure of the Schwartz Survey. He also stated that the Schwartz Survey was separated from the Rokeach Survey in the session because the Schwartz Survey's factor structure could be influenced if people filled it out immediately after the Rokeach Survey.

In the Schwartz Survey, each of the 27 values was printed beside a definition of the value. Participants were asked to rate each of the 27 values in terms of its importance as a guiding principle in their life. The first 10 values were the ones from the Rokeach Survey, presented in the same order. The values were rated by using the same scales and procedure as in the Rokeach Survey.

**Results**

**Magnitude of Value Change**

For each value that was present in both of the value surveys (i.e., the five self-transcendence and five openness values), we calculated the magnitude (i.e., absolute value) of the difference between each participant's first and second rating of the value. Each participant's average value change was calculated for both the self-transcendence and openness values. These value change scores were then analyzed in a 2 (reasons analysis: self-transcendence values vs. control) × 2 (gender) × 2 (value type: self-transcendence vs. openness) mixed-model analysis of variance (ANOVA), with reasons analysis and gender as between-subjects variables and value type as a within-subjects variable. Results indicated a significant main effect of reasons analysis, F(1, 70) = 17.28, p < .001, such that participants who were asked to analyze their reasons for their self-transcendence values exhibited more total value change (M = 0.56) than did participants in the control (beverage analysis) condition (M = 0.29). This effect was qualified by a Reasons Analysis × Value Type interaction, F(1, 70) = 3.77, p = .056. Examination of this interaction supported our predictions: Self-transcendence values changed significantly more in the values-analysis condition (M = 0.67, SD = 0.48) than in the control condition (M = 0.29, SD = 0.30), t(70) = 4.71, p < .001. In contrast, openness values did not change reliably more in the values-analysis condition (M = 0.45, SD = 0.31) than in the control condition (M = 0.30, SD = 0.24), t(70) = 1.89, p > .06. Furthermore, participants who analyzed reasons for self-transcendence values changed their self-transcendence values more than they changed their openness values, t(70) = 3.15, p < .001, whereas participants who did not analyze reasons for self-transcendence values did not change their self-transcendence values more than they changed their openness values, t(70) = -0.14, ns.

**Direction of Value Change**

We tested whether the manipulation caused self-transcendence values to change in a particular direction. To test for such change, participants' raw ratings of the self-transcendence values were subjected to a 2 (reasons analysis: self-transcendence values vs. control) × 2 (gender) × 2 (trial: before vs. after reasons analysis) mixed-model ANOVA. In this analysis, reasons analysis and gender were between-subjects variables, and measurement trial was a within-subject variable. Results indicated no significant effects.

We also tested whether the manipulation caused participants who originally rated the self-transcendence values as very important to subsequently rate them even more positively, and whether participants who originally rated the self-transcendence values as less important subsequently rated them even lower. To examine this possibility, we divided participants into two groups. One group rated self-transcendence values higher on the first value survey than their mean for all of the values in the survey (n = 29), whereas the other group rated self-transcendence values lower than their mean for all of the values (n = 38). In each group, we conducted a 2 (reasons analysis: self-transcendence values vs. control) × 2 (gender) × 2 (trial: before vs. after reasons analysis) mixed-model ANOVA on participants' first and second ratings of the self-transcendence values. Results indicated no significant effects in either analysis, which supports the conclusion that the analyzing reasons manipulation did not cause value polarization of any sort.

**Magnitude of Value Change: Moderator Analyses**

To test whether the effect of analyzing reasons for values was moderated by the importance of self-transcendence values or by individual differences in self-monitoring, we performed a separate regression analysis for each of these variables. In these regression equations, the magnitude of self-transcendence value change was the predicted variable. The predictor variables were reasons analysis (entered using dummy coding), the potential moderating variable of interest (i.e., mean value rating or self-monitoring score), and the Reasons Analysis × Variable interaction. In these analyses, significant moderation was indicated if the Reasons Analysis × Variable interaction was significant. (Paunonen & Jackson, 1985, described advantages of this technique for examining the moderating effect of a continuous variable.) The Reasons Analysis × Variable interaction was not significant in either regression analysis.

**Supplementary Analysis: Reasons For and Against Self-Transcendence Values**

In the experimental condition, participants had provided reasons for and against each self-transcendence value. These responses were content analyzed. Because many participants gave responses that simply restated the importance of the values (e.g., "It is important to be helpful," and "As human beings we should help others"), a coding scheme was created so that these restatements would not be counted as reasons. Using the coding scheme, one rater counted each participant's reasons supporting or opposing each value. A second rater independently counted 20 participants' reasons. For each value, the net favorability of each participant's reasons (number supporting minus number opposing) was calculated. For all values, there were high corre-

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3 The test of significance for the interaction term is equivalent to testing whether a regression equation that includes this term accounts for significantly more variance than a regression equation that omits this term (Pedhazur, 1982).
lations between the two raters' ratings of the reasons (.65 < rs < .84, all ps < .001).

Next, consistent with past research (e.g., Wilson, Kraft, et al., 1989), we tested whether the direction of participants' value change was related to the reasons that they listed. We expected that values would become more important to the extent that participants listed more reasons supporting than opposing their values. To test this prediction, we correlated the net favorability of participants' reasons for a value with the net change in their ratings of the value (second rating minus first rating). Results indicated that these correlations were positive and significant for the values of forgiveness, \( r(38) = .32, p < .05 \) (one-tailed), and altruism, \( r(37) = .28, p < .05 \) (one-tailed). There were positive, but nonsignificant, correlations for the values of helpfulness, \( r(37) = .23 \), and protection of the environment, \( r(38) = .24 \). The correlation for the value of equality was negative and nonsignificant, \( r(37) = -.12 \). Overall, these correlations weakly supported our predictions.

Interestingly, participants listed an average of only 1.97 reasons \((SD = 0.95)\) supporting the values and 0.16 reasons \((SD = 0.28)\) opposing the values. Thus, participants did not generate many reasons, which may have restricted our ability to obtain strong correlations between reasons and value change.

It is also interesting that participants listed significantly fewer reasons for and against the values \((M = 2.13, SD = 0.88)\) than they listed for and against the beverages \((M = 4.77, SD = 1.75)\). \( F(1, 74) = 68.95, p < .001 \). That is, participants gave more than twice as many reasons for liking or disliking the beverages (e.g., diet colas) as they did for considering the values to be important or unimportant.

**Discussion**

**Value Change**

As expected, participants who analyzed reasons for self-transcendence values changed these values more than participants who analyzed reasons for beverages. Theoretically, if participants had strong cognitive support for their values, analyzing reasons should have caused them simply to access well-articulated reasons that were consistent with their values, which would not have caused value change (Wilson, Dunn, et al., 1989; Wilson, Kraft, et al., 1989). Because analyzing reasons for self-transcendence values caused value change, support was obtained for the hypothesis that, on average, people's values have little cognitive support.

**Direction of Value Change**

Interestingly, analyzing reasons for self-transcendence values did not cause participants' self-transcendence values simply to become more important (e.g., by way of a polarization effect; see Tesser, 1978). This finding indicates that participants did not always bring to mind reasons that implied that the values were more important than they had previously thought. Rather, it appears that, although most of the listed reasons supported the importance of the values, analyzing reasons caused participants to access reasons that implied that the values were both more and less important, which caused the values to change in both directions (e.g., when considering an initially strongly held value, participants may have generated reasons that implied only a slightly favorable rating). In fact, supplementary analyses indicated that, for participants who analyzed reasons, 27% of the self-transcendence values changed to become more important, 20% became less important, and 53% did not change. This result is consistent with the typical pattern of results that is obtained when people are asked to analyze their reasons for their attitudes toward a topic (see Wilson, Dunn, et al., 1989) and indicates that people must have brought to mind some reasons that were inconsistent with their values (e.g., only slightly favorable to the value). Thus, the remainder of the present article focuses on the effect of analyzing reasons on the magnitude of value change, rather than on the direction of value change.

**Individual-Differences Variables**

The effect of analyzing reasons on the magnitude of value change was not moderated by the importance of participants' self-transcendence values or by individual differences in self-monitoring, suggesting that the effect of analyzing reasons is robust. Nevertheless, the discovery of potential moderators of the extent to which values are truisms cannot be accomplished in one experiment. Consequently, Experiments 2 and 3 continue to examine the moderating role of value importance and self-monitoring, as well as other individual-differences variables.

\[ 4 \text{ In all three experiments reported in this article, we also calculated three different indexes of value polarization: binary, algebraic, and trinary. For each self-transcendence value, the binary index was calculated by giving participants a score of 1 if their ratings changed positively and 0 if there was no change; the trinary index (e.g., Millar & Tesser, 1986; Tesser, 1978) was derived by giving participants a score of 1 if their ratings changed positively, 0 if there was no change, or -1 if their ratings changed negatively; and the algebraic index (e.g., Chaiken & Yates, 1985; Tesser, 1978) was calculated by subtracting participants' first value rating from their second value rating. The binary index does not consider the extent to which analyzing reasons elicited greater amounts of polarization than depolarization, which was our focal concern. Nonetheless, analyzing reasons for values should cause values to depolarize and polarize, and the binary index can reveal whether polarization (independent of depolarization) is a significant by-product of analyzing reasons. Indeed, as expected, analyses using the binary index revealed that participants who analyzed reasons for their self-transcendence values polarized their ratings of these values more than did participants in the control condition. This result was not replicated in Experiment 2, but was replicated in Experiment 3. It is important to note, however, that the trinary and algebraic indexes consider the relative magnitude of polarization and depolarization. In each experiment, analyses of participants' scores on these indexes produced the same pattern of results as did analyses that treated measurement trial as a within-subject variable. In Experiments 1 and 2, analyzing reasons did not cause net value polarization. Only in Experiment 3 was there any evidence of analyzing reasons causing value polarization using the algebraic and trinary indexes, but this effect was moderated by gender of participant: Men, who were the smallest group in the sample, exhibited more value polarization than did women in the values-analysis condition, whereas the genders did not differ in the control condition. Overall, then, analyzing reasons did not cause more value polarization than depolarization—analyzing reasons caused bidirectional value change.} \]
Experiment 2

Before accepting that a lack of cognitive support for values produced the findings in Experiment 1, it is necessary to examine the principal assumption in the experiment. Specifically, on the basis of the finding by Wilson and colleagues (Wilson, Dunn, et al., 1989; Wilson, Kraft, et al., 1989; Wilson et al., 1993) that analyzing reasons for an attitude causes attitude change only when people lack cognitive support for their attitudes, we assumed that analyzing reasons for values would cause value change only if people lack cognitive support for their values.

Nevertheless, this assumption should be tested empirically, because values are not conceptually equivalent to attitudes, so findings with attitudes will not necessarily generalize to values. In fact, there are many important differences between values and attitudes. Values are defined as central guiding principles in one's life (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1996), whereas attitudes are simply dispositions to evaluate an attitude object (e.g., ice cream) with some degree of favor or disfavor (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Because of this conceptual difference, values and attitudes are measured differently: Values are rated in terms of their importance as guiding principles in one's life, whereas attitudes are rated by using scales that reflect varying degrees of favorability toward an object. Also, values are assumed to be stable dispositions that guide attitudes, whereas attitudes are more unstable and malleable. In fact, research has shown that priming values can make a variety of value-relevant attitudes more accessible, but priming value-relevant attitudes does not make related values more accessible (Gold & Robbins, 1979; Gold & Russ, 1977; see also Gilchrist, 1995). Thus, it is not surprising that attitudes are often considered to be strong to the extent that they are based in values (e.g., Boninger, Krosnick, & Berent, 1995; Rosenberg, 1968). For all of these reasons, it was important to test our fundamental assumption directly.

Consequently, Experiment 2 tested the assumption that analyzing reasons for values causes value change only if people lack cognitive support for their values. This assumption was tested by manipulating the presence or absence of cognitive support for self-transcendence values. Giving participants cognitive support should reduce or eliminate the effect of analyzing reasons on value change. Of course, before trying to test whether the provision of cognitive support eliminates the effect of analyzing reasons, it was important first to establish that it is even possible for people to have strong cognitive support for their values. To address this issue, we examined more closely the reasons that participants in Experiment 1 provided for supporting or opposing the values. We found that, although each participant listed an average of only 2.13 reasons supporting or opposing the values, 89 different reasons were generated across participants. Examples of these reasons are listed in Table 1. These reasons were very diverse and sometimes very creative. Thus, it is not as though there are no reasons to support values; such potential cognitive support does exist.

Given this potential cognitive support, cognitive support for self-transcendence values was manipulated in Experiment 2 by asking some participants to read and think about the reasons that were provided by Experiment 1 participants. We expected that this task would make participants cognizant of many reasons supporting or refuting their values, most of which they would not have thought of themselves. Clearly, such consideration of reasons for values should make the values less truistic. Consequently, we expected that providing cognitive support would eliminate the effect of analyzing reasons on value change.

This result would provide direct evidence that analyzing reasons causes value change because people lack cognitive support.

Table 1
Examples of Reasons That Were Given for Different Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>Altruistic acts might repay past debts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is a potential for reciprocity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>God or religion says that altruism is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Altruistic acts reflect sympathy for others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>People are equal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The existence of equality would decrease social conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The existence of equality would create a more productive society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The existence of equality will allow for cheaper schooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiving</td>
<td>Forgiving helps oneself emotionally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forgiveness strengthens relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forgiving others builds one's character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others' mistakes are often unintentional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>There is a potential for reciprocity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helping others makes the helper feel good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helpfulness promotes survival of our genes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being helpful can help you procrastinate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting the environment</td>
<td>Protecting the environment helps create fresh air and clean water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A healthy environment means a healthy economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protecting the environment will help protect humanity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The environment is necessary to bring people together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. These examples were randomly selected. God or religion was mentioned as a reason for all five values.
for their values and indirect evidence for our hypothesis that the motivational significance of values does not derive from cognitive support. Of course, another question would remain: If differential cognitive support does not explain the importance of values to individuals, what does make values important?

One possible source of value importance is people's affective support for their values. That is, particular values might become important because people attach strong, positive feelings to them. To examine this possibility, we included a measure of the feelings elicited by values. This measure enabled us to test whether there are strong relations between feelings about values and ratings of the importance of values. Thus, this measure explored the affective correlates of values.

For exploratory purposes, we also tested whether the manipulations affected the extent to which participants are confident about their value ratings. Perhaps, for example, analyzing reasons makes salient the lack of cognitive support for self-transcendence values, which lowers participants' confidence about their ratings of the values. Alternatively, participants' reasons might give them confidence about the validity of their ratings. Both of these effects might occur through self-perception processes (e.g., Bem, 1972; Olson, 1990, 1992). Although either of these findings could be compatible with the values-as-truisms hypothesis, they might have different implications for the behavioral consequences of reasons analysis.

Method

Participants

Participants were 138 undergraduate psychology students (34 men and 104 women), who participated for course credit. Nine additional participants failed to complete both experimental sessions, 6 additional participants were deleted because they failed to complete the experimental manipulation, and 3 additional participants were deleted because of suspicion.

Overview

Participants completed two separate laboratory sessions. In the first session, a manipulation of cognitive support for four self-transcendence values (altruism, equality, forgiving, and helpful) was implemented. One to 4 days later, participants took part in a conceptual replication of Experiment 1, which measured self-monitoring tendencies and manipulated whether participants analyzed their reasons for the four self-transcendence values or for liking or disliking different beverages (coffee, colas, milk, and orange juice). As in Experiment 1, participants rated the importance of the self-transcendence values and several openness values (an exciting life, creativity, freedom, and independent) both before and after the reasons manipulation. Participants then rated their confidence in their value ratings and their feelings about the values. At the end of this replication of Experiment 1, participants were probed for suspicion and debriefed. In the first session, participation occurred in groups of 10 or fewer. In the second session, participation occurred in groups of 4 or fewer.

Experimental Manipulations

Cognitive support for self-transcendence values. In the high cognitive support condition, participants were asked at the first session to read 70 reasons that Experiment 1 participants provided for considering the four self-transcendence values to be important or unimportant (see the examples in Table 1). The experimenter informed participants that these reasons were obtained in a previous study and that participants would discuss the reasons with each other in a brief talk near the end of the session. Participants were also told that, to prepare them for their talk, they should rate the strength (plausibility) of each reason on a 7-point scale ranging from -3 (very weak) to 3 (very strong). Participants were then asked to write out the four strongest reasons for each value. (As indicated earlier, 6 participants did not write any reasons for the values and were therefore deleted from the analyses.)

Next, participants were asked to read a prepared list of reasons that were common to all four values (see Table 2). They rated the strength of each of these reasons by using the same scale as before. Participants then wrote out the four strongest reasons from the list of common reasons.

Participants were then asked to spend 10 min discussing each of the common reasons among themselves. The experimenter left the room during the group discussion. After 10 min, the experimenter returned to the room and asked participants to rate their enjoyment of the discussion on five 9-point (-4 to 4) semantic differential scales anchored by unenjoyable-enjoyable, unpleasant-pleasant, bad-good, punishing-rewarding, and awful-nice. Although these questions were actually filler questions, the experimenter stated that he was primarily interested in the responses to these questions and not what they said during their talk. Participants were then thanked for their participation and were reminded about the second session.

In the low cognitive support condition, participants were asked to read the reasons that Experiment 1 participants provided for liking or disliking the four different beverages. The remainder of the instructions were identical to those in the high cognitive support condition, except participants were asked to rate and discuss reasons for beverages, rather than reasons for considering different values to be important or unimportant.

Reasons analysis. In the second session, we manipulated whether participants analyzed their reasons for their self-transcendence values.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provalue reasons</td>
<td>If you act in accordance with the value, others might also act in accordance with the value. For example, others might reciprocate the kindness that you show them. God or religion says that the value is important. It makes people feel good to behave in accordance with the value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antivalue reasons</td>
<td>If you behave in accordance with the value, others might take advantage of you. You cannot trust others to reciprocate your provalue behavior. The value is an ideal that cannot be attained in many situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The instructions and procedures in the self-transcendence values-analysis condition were identical to those used in Experiment 1, except participants analyzed their reasons for just the four self-transcendence values used in the high cognitive support condition, rather than the five self-transcendence values examined in Experiment 1. The instructions in the control condition were also identical to those used in Experiment 1, except participants analyzed their reasons for their attitudes toward just the four beverages used in the low cognitive support condition.

Self-Monitoring

The self-monitoring questionnaire (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986) again exhibited acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .67$).

Dependent Measures

Values. Values were measured at the beginning of the second session (prior to the reasons-analysis manipulation) and at the end of the second session (immediately after the reasons-analysis manipulation). The measurement of the values was similar to that of Experiment 1.

Confidence in value ratings. After completing the second measure of values, participants rated their confidence that their ratings were accurate reflections of their values. For each value, participants rated their confidence by using a scale ranging from 0 (not at all confident) to 8 (extremely confident).

Feelings about values. After the confidence ratings, participants rated their feelings regarding each of the values included in the second value measure by using a scale ranging from -3 (very awful) to 3 (very nice).

Results

Value Change

Overall analysis. For each of the four self-transcendence and four openness values, the magnitude (i.e., absolute value) of the difference between the first and second ratings of the value was calculated. Each participant's average value change was calculated for both the self-transcendence and openness values. These value change scores were then analyzed in a 2 (cognitive support: high vs. low) $\times$ 2 (reasons analysis: self-transcendence values vs. control) $\times$ 2 (gender) $\times$ 2 (value type: self-transcendence vs. openness) mixed-model ANOVA, with cognitive support, reasons analysis, and gender as between-subjects variables and value type as a within-subject variable. Results indicated only one significant effect: the predicted Cognitive Support $\times$ Reasons Analysis $\times$ Value Type interaction, $F(1, 124) = 3.91, p = .05$.

To interpret this interaction, we conducted pairwise contrasts that tested our a priori prediction that a Reasons Analysis X Value Type interaction would occur in the low cognitive support condition but not in the high cognitive support condition. The relevant means are depicted in Table 3. As expected, in the low cognitive support condition, analyzing reasons for self-transcendence values caused greater change than the control condition in the self-transcendence values, $t(124) = 3.29, p < .005$, but not in the openness values, $t(124) = -0.25, ns$. Furthermore, participants who analyzed reasons for self-transcendence values changed their self-transcendence values more than they changed their openness values, $t(124) = 3.55, p < .001$, whereas participants who analyzed reasons for beverages did not change their self-transcendence values more than they changed their openness values, $t(124) = -0.30, ns$. These results exactly replicated the pattern of findings in Experiment 1.

In contrast, in the high cognitive support condition, analyzing reasons for self-transcendence values did not cause greater change than the control condition in either the self-transcendence, $t(124) = 1.36, ns$, or openness values, $t(124) = 0.22, ns$. In addition, neither participants who analyzed reasons for self-transcendence values nor participants who analyzed reasons for beverages changed their ratings of self-transcendence values more than their ratings of openness values, $t(124) = 0.22, ns$, and $t(124) = 1.31, ns$, respectively.

Moderator analyses. To test whether the effects of the manipulations were moderated by value importance or self-monitoring, we performed a regression analysis for each of these variables. In these regression equations, the magnitude of self-transcendence value change was the predicted variable. The predictor variables were cognitive support, reasons analysis, the potential moderating variable of interest (e.g., value importance), and the interactions among the manipulations and the potential moderating variable. Results indicated no significant interactions in either regression analysis.

Supplementary Analyses

Confidence about value ratings. The confidence ratings were subjected to a 2 (cognitive support: high vs. low) $\times$ 2 (reasons analysis: self-transcendence values vs. control) $\times$ 2 (gender) $\times$ 2 (value type: self-transcendence vs. openness) mixed-model ANOVA. Results indicated no significant effects. Overall, participants were highly confident about both their self-transcendence ($M = 6.25, SD = 1.12$) and openness values ($M = 6.30, SD = 1.05$).

Feelings about values. To examine the extent to which participants' value ratings corresponded to their affective reactions to the values, ratings of the importance of and feelings about the values were correlated. For every 1 of the 27 values that participants rated in the second value survey, this correlation was significant, $r = .37 < rs < .69$, all $ps < .001$. The mean correlation was .53, which indicated that, on average, the feeling ratings explained 29% of the variance in the ratings of value importance. For the 4 focal values only (altruism, equality, forgiving, and helpful), the mean feeling-importance correlation was .63.
Initial ratings of the self-transcendence values. To verify that the manipulation of cognitive support in the first session did not affect participants' self-transcendence values, we tested whether the initial ratings of the importance of the self-transcendence values in the second session differed between the high and low cognitive support conditions. The difference was not significant, $t(142) = 0.46$, ns.

Reasons for self-transcendence values. Using the coding scheme derived from Experiment 1, reasons supporting and opposing each of the self-transcendence values were counted for the participants who had analyzed their reasons for these values. A second rater coded the responses that were given by a randomly selected subset of 25 participants. For both raters, the net favorability of each participant's reasons for each value (number supporting minus number opposing) was calculated. For every value, there was a high correlation between the two raters' net favorability scores ($0.85 < r < 0.97$, $p < .001$).

Next, as in Experiment 1, we correlated the net favorability of participants' reasons for each value with the net change in that value. Results indicated that these correlations were significant for the values of equality, $r(69) = .25$, $p < .03$, and altruism, $r(67) = .29$, $p < .01$. The correlations for forgiveness, $r(68) = .04$, and helpfulness, $r(69) = -.08$, were nonsignificant. As in Experiment 1, these correlations weakly supported our predictions.

In addition, to assess the effectiveness of the manipulation of cognitive support, we calculated for each participant the total number of reasons listed for each value (i.e., reasons for plus reasons against). As expected, participants in the high cognitive support condition listed more reasons ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.45$) than did participants in the low cognitive support condition ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 0.97$), $t(65) = 2.94$, $p < .01$. The same trend was evident for both supporting reasons, $t(65) = 1.73$, $p = .04$ (one-tailed), and opposing reasons, $t(67) = 1.73$, $p < .05$ (one-tailed).

Discussion

The principal findings indicated that analyzing reasons caused value change only when participants were not provided with cognitive support for their values. When participants were provided with cognitive support, a subsequent reasons analysis did not cause value change. These findings strengthen the conclusion that analyzing reasons for self-transcendence values causes the values to change because people lack cognitive support for the values.

Our supplementary analyses and moderator analyses also produced interesting results. First, results indicated that the experimental manipulations did not alter participants' confidence about their self-transcendence values. This (null) result was not unexpected, because, as truisms, values should be confidently endorsed, which might leave little room for people to increase their confidence. Second, the correlations between participants' ratings of the importance of values and their affective responses to the values were strong. These correlations are consistent with the hypothesis that people's feelings provide an important basis for their values. Finally, as in Experiment 1, value importance and self-monitoring did not moderate the impact of reasons analysis on value change. Thus, the importance of values does not appear to be related to the possession of cognitive support for values, and values appear to be equally truistic for both low and high self-monitors.

Experiment 3

Experiment 3 was designed to address several issues. First, we wanted to replicate again the effect of reasons analysis on value change. Second, we wanted to examine whether the effect of analyzing reasons on values was robust across a wider range of individual-differences variables. Two of the additional variables we examined were private and public self-consciousness (Carver & Scheier, 1985; Scheier & Carver, 1983). Private self-consciousness refers to the tendency to think about aspects of the self that are personal in nature and not easily viewed by others. Such hidden aspects include privately held values, beliefs, and attitudes. In contrast, public self-consciousness refers to the tendency to think about aspects of the self that are easily scrutinized by others, such as physical appearance, mannerisms, and behaviors. Previous research has shown that these traits are conceptually distinct and that they can produce independent effects on behavior (e.g., Scheier & Carver, 1985). If thinking about hidden aspects of the self results in more cognitive support for values, then high private self-consciousness might be associated with less truistic values.

Several additional traits were also included, because they are purported to tap the extent to which people rigidly hold various value-laden beliefs. For example, the trait of right-wing authoritarianism (Adorno et al., 1950) partly reflects close adherence to conventional norms and values (Altemeyer, 1988). Insofar as the strong adherence to conventional norms and values inhibits right-wing authoritarians from questioning their values, high right-wing authoritarians might possess values that are more truistic.

Values might also be more truistic for people who score high on the trait of dogmatism (Rokeach, 1956, 1960). Dogmatism reflects rigidity in adherence to either right-wing or left-wing viewpoints. This rigid adherence might reflect a lack of questioning of values, which would cause highly dogmatic individuals to possess values that are more truistic.

Individual differences in people's tendencies to question their religious beliefs may also be relevant (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993). People who score high on the Religion as Quest Scale (Batson et al., 1993) tend to be less dogmatic in their religious beliefs. Because religious beliefs are value laden and are often treated as maxims, the tendency to question such beliefs may also reflect a tendency to question values.

Finally, individual differences in people's analysis of moral issues may be pertinent. According to Forsyth (1980), people can vary in the extent to which they regard moral issues from an absolute perspective. Individuals who view moral issues from an absolute perspective believe that universal principles can be applied to moral issues; others reject the possibility of applying moral rules universally. In addition, people can vary in the extent to which they regard moral issues from an idealistic perspective. Individuals who view moral issues from an idealistic perspective believe that desirable consequences can always be obtained from the right actions; others acknowledge that negative consequences might sometimes accompany right actions. Because of their
more complex ways of thinking about moral issues, it is possible that people low in absolutism, idealism, or both might be less likely to hold truisic values than people who are high on these dimensions.

In addition to testing whether these individual-differences variables moderate the effect of analyzing reasons on values, Experiment 3 also examined the effects of analyzing reasons on the positive utility of values for other constructs. Specifically, we tested how a reasons analysis affected the correlations between participants' values and their attitudes toward behaviors that are relevant to the values. Value-attitude consistency could plausibly either increase or decrease following a reasons analysis. On the one hand, individuals might understand their values more after a reasons analysis, which might increase the extent to which they express values that accurately predict relevant attitudes. On the other hand, if people access reasons that are unrepresentative of their true values, then they might express slightly erroneous values, which do not predict attitudes as well. Finally, if people access an assortment of their salient and easy-to-verbalize thoughts, then change to both more and less accurate values might occur for some individuals, resulting in no overall change in value-attitude consistency across the full sample.

In the attitudes literature, several studies have found that analyzing reasons for an attitude caused lower subsequent attitude-behavior correlations (Wilson, Dunn, et al., 1989). Other research found that analyzing reasons for an attitude caused lower subsequent attitude-behavior correlations when the attitude-relevant behaviors were affectively based than when the behaviors were cognitively based (Millar & Tesser, 1986). Presumably, people who analyzed their reasons expressed subsequent attitudes that were based on their cognitions about the attitude object. If, in contrast, the attitude-relevant behavior was based on individuals' feelings about the attitude object, then the mismatch between the basis for the behavior and the basis for the post-reasons-analysis attitude produced low attitude-behavior correspondence. Thus, consistency between the basis for attitudes and behaviors appears to be an important determinant of the extent to which attitudes predict behavior.

If a reasons analysis for values similarly induces the expression of values that are based on cognitions, then the predictive utility of the values for attitudes may depend on whether the attitudes are cognitively or affectively based. The post-reasons-analysis values might predict cognitively based attitudes better, but affectively based attitudes worse, than values measured before the reasons analysis.

We expect that there are individual differences in the extent to which affect and cognition form the basis for value-relevant attitudes. In particular, because high self-monitors are less likely than low self-monitors to perceive the relevance of their values and beliefs to their attitudes (Kristiansen & Zanna, 1988, 1991; Mellema & Bassili, 1995; see also DeBono & Edmonds, 1989; Snyder & Campbell, 1982; Snyder & DeBono, 1985), high self-monitors should be less likely to form value-relevant attitudes that are based on such cognitions. Thus, high self-monitors' value-relevant attitudes might be more affectively based, causing their post-reasons-analysis (cognitively based) values to predict their value-relevant attitudes less well than their pre-reasons-analysis (affectively based) values.

To explore such possibilities, Experiment 3 examined the effect of analyzing reasons on the relations between participants' ratings of five self-transcendence values (pre- and post-reasons analysis) and their attitudes toward a variety of behaviors relevant to the values. We expected that the reasons analysis would cause lower value-attitude relations within high self-monitors. Because we did not know whether value-relevant attitudes would be more cognitively or affectively based across all participants, we were uncertain about the effects of analyzing reasons for values on value-attitude consistency across the full sample.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were 144 psychology undergraduates (39 men and 105 women), who participated for course credit. Twenty-two of these participants failed to complete the second session, and 3 additional participants were deleted because of suspicion. (Most of the failures to attend the second session occurred at the end of term. At this time, participants may not have needed the course credit from the second session.)

**Overview**

Participants completed two separate laboratory sessions 1 week apart. The first session was a replication of Experiment 1, containing the reasons-analysis manipulation and the pre- and postmanipulation measures of five self-transcendence values (a spiritual life, equality, forgiving, helpful, and protecting the environment), four of which were included in Experiment 1 (a spiritual life replaced altruism).

The replication of Experiment 1 again included the self-monitoring questionnaire (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986) as a filler between participants' first and second value ratings. Immediately before or after (randomly determined) the self-monitoring questionnaire, participants completed the revised Self-Consciousness Scale (Scheier & Carver, 1985).

In the second session, participants indicated their attitudes toward behaviors that promoted the five self-transcendence values. Next, participants completed four questionnaires (presented in a random order) that assessed individual differences relevant to value orthodoxy: dogmatism (Rokeach, 1960; scale from Trolldahl & Powell, 1965), moral absolutism and moral idealism (Forsyth, 1980), religion as quest (Batson et al., 1993), and right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1988; scale from Haddock, Zanna, & Esses, 1993). At the end of the second session, participants were probed for suspicion and debriefed. In both sessions, 1 to 4 participants took part at a time.

**Experimental Manipulation**

The reasons-analysis manipulation in the first session was identical to the manipulation in Experiment 1, except for minor changes in the cover story given to participants.

**Dependent Measures**

**Values.** Values were measured at the beginning and end of the first session, in the same manner as in Experiment 1.

**Value-relevant attitudes.** In the second session, the experimenter stated that he was interested in measuring students' attitudes toward a wide variety of behaviors. Participants were asked to rate their attitudes toward 25 behaviors by using a 7-point scale from -3 *(very unfavorable)* to 3 *(very favorable)*. Five of these behaviors were consistent with each of the five self-transcendence values (see examples in Table 4). For each group of behaviors (e.g., equality-consistent behaviors),
participants' responses were averaged to form an index of their attitudes toward the value-relevant behaviors (.55 < $r_1$ < .92).

**Individual-Differences Variables**

- **Self-monitoring.** As in Experiments 1 and 2, Snyder and Gangestad's (1986) 18-item measure of self-monitoring exhibited acceptable internal reliability ($\alpha = .68$).

- **Self-consciousness.** Scheier and Carver's (1985) revised Self-Consciousness Scale contains 22 items: 9 items assess private self-consciousness ($\alpha = .64$), 7 items assess public self-consciousness ($\alpha = .84$), and 6 items assess social anxiety. The items measuring social anxiety were not relevant to any of our hypotheses and, therefore, were not examined in the analyses.

- **Dogmatism.** Participants completed Troldahl and Powell's (1965) 20-item version of Rokeach's (1956) Dogmatism Scale ($\alpha = .76$).

- **Moral absolutism and idealism.** Moral absolutism and idealism were assessed by using Batson et al.'s (1986) 20-item Ethics Position Questionnaire. Ten of the items assess moral absolutism ($\alpha = .82$), and 10 assess moral idealism ($\alpha = .85$).

- **Religion as quest.** This variable was assessed by using Batson et al.'s (1986) 20-item Ethics Position Questionnaire. Ten of the items assess moral absolutism ($\alpha = .82$), and 10 assess moral idealism ($\alpha = .85$).

- **Right-wing authoritarianism.** This variable was assessed by using Haddock et al.'s (1993) 10-item version of Altemeyer's (1988) Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale ($\alpha = .74$).

**Results**

**Value Change**

**Overall analysis.** As in Experiment 1, each participant's average value change was calculated for both the self-transcendence and openness values. These value change scores were then analyzed in a 2 (reasons analysis: self-transcendence values vs. control) x 2 (gender) x 2 (value type: self-transcendence vs. openness) mixed-model ANOVA, with reasons analysis and gender as between-subjects variables and value type as a within-subject variable. Results indicated a significant effect of reasons analysis, $F(1, 138) = 14.43, p < .001$, such that participants who were asked to analyze their reasons for their self-transcendence values exhibited more value change ($M = 0.49, SD = 0.26$) than did participants in the control (beverage analysis) condition ($M = 0.32, SD = 0.22$). This effect was qualified by a Reasons Analysis $\times$ Value Type interaction, $F(1, 138) = 16.36, p < .001$. Examination of this interaction supported our predictions: Self-transcendence values changed significantly more in the (self-transcendence) values-analysis condition ($M = 0.58, SD = 0.37$) than in the control condition ($M = 0.27, SD = 0.24$), $t(138) = 5.70, p < .001$. In contrast, openness values did not change reliably more in the values-analysis condition ($M = 0.40, SD = 0.32$) than in the control condition ($M = 0.37, SD = 0.33$), $t(138) = 0.53, ns$. Furthermore, participants who analyzed reasons for self-transcendence values changed their self-transcendence values more than they changed their openness values, $t(138) = 3.62, p < .001$. In contrast, participants who did not analyze reasons changed their self-transcendence values significantly less than they changed their openness values, $t(138) = -1.97, p = .05$. No other effects or interactions were significant. These findings replicated the pattern obtained in Experiment 1 and the pattern obtained for participants who had not been given cognitive support for their values in Experiment 2.

- **Moderator analyses.** We tested whether the effect of analyzing reasons on self-transcendence value change was moderated by value importance and the eight individual-differences variables in our experiment (self-monitoring, private self-consciousness, dogmatism, moral absolutism, moral idealism, religion as quest, and right-wing authoritarianism). To test for moderating effects, we performed separate regression analyses for each of these variables. In these regression equations, the magnitude of self-transcendence value change was the predicted variable. The predictor variables were reasons analysis, the potential moderating variable of interest (e.g., value importance), and the Reasons Analysis $\times$ Variable interaction. No significant Reasons Analysis $\times$ Variable interactions were obtained in any of the analyses.

**Value–Attitude Correlations**

**Overall analysis.** For each participant, the five attitude indexes were correlated with the participant's first and second ratings of the five self-transcendence values. In other words, within-subject correlations were calculated across the five pairs of value and attitude ratings, and these correlations were calculated separately for the first and second ratings of the self-transcendence values. These correlations were transformed to Fisher $z$ scores and then submitted to the analyses below. This transformation was performed to correct for nonnormality in the distribution of correlations. In our discussion below, the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A spiritual life</td>
<td>Going to religious services frequently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily prayer or meditation on spiritual issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>Hiring a woman as a firefighter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoiding telling jokes that put down or disparage a minority group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td>Forgiving a friend who lied to you about something important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forgiving a professor who implied that you are stupid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>Going to call a tow truck for someone who has a disabled vehicle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Giving money to cancer research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting the environment</td>
<td>Recycling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buying products that use the least packaging.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
mean z scores were retransformed into correlation coefficients. (Standard deviations are given for the z scores.)

The Fisher z scores were submitted to a 2 (reasons analysis: self-transcendence values vs. control) \times 2 (gender) \times 2 (trial: before vs. after reasons analysis) mixed-model ANOVA, with reasons analysis and gender as between-subjects variables and measurement trial as a within-subject variable. Results indicated a main effect of gender, $F(1, 117) = 4.48, p < .04$, such that women exhibited stronger value–attitude correlations ($M = .65, SD = .75$) than did men ($M = .42, SD = .86$). This effect was qualified by a Condition \times Gender interaction, $F(1, 117) = 4.27, p < .05$. Post hoc comparisons revealed that, in the reasons-analysis condition, value–attitude correlations were higher for women ($M = .72, SD = .66$) than for men ($M = .23, SD = 1.06$), $t(117) = 2.06, p < .05$. In the control condition, women’s value–attitude correlations ($M = .58, SD = .82$) did not differ from men’s value–attitude correlations ($M = .58, SD = .59$), $t(117) = 0.02$, ns. This interaction was not moderated by measurement trial, $F(1, 117) < 1$, ns. Thus, the Reasons Analysis \times Gender interaction was present before and after the reasons-analysis manipulation, making this two-way interaction difficult to interpret.

**Moderator analyses.** To test whether any of the individual-differences variables moderated the impact of the experimental manipulation on value–attitude correlations, a median split was performed on each individual-differences variable. The individual-differences variable was then included in a 2 (reasons analysis: self-transcendence values vs. control) \times 2 (trait: low vs. high) \times 2 (trial: before vs. after reasons analysis) ANOVA, with participants’ Fisher z scores as the dependent variable. (Because of the within-subject “trial” variable, these ANOVAs were more straightforward than the regression analyses that we had used in previous analyses.)

The ANOVA that included self-monitoring as a variable revealed a Reasons Analysis \times Self-Monitoring interaction, $F(1, 114) = 4.46, p < .04$, and a Self-Monitoring \times Trial interaction, $F(1, 114) = 5.53, p < .03$. None of the pairwise contrasts within either of these interactions was significant. Both of these interactions were qualified by a Reasons Analysis \times Self-Monitoring \times Trial interaction, $F(1, 114) = 5.88, p < .02$. The means for this interaction are shown in Table 5.

To interpret the three-way interaction, we conducted pairwise contrasts between participants’ mean second and first trial value–attitude correlations within each experimental condition and level of self-monitoring. Results indicated that, for participants in the control condition, the difference between the second and first trial value–attitude correlations was not significant within either the low self-monitors, $t(114) = 0.06$, ns, or the high self-monitors, $t(114) = 0.13$, ns. In the condition where participants analyzed their reasons for their self-transcendence values, the difference between low self-monitors’ second and first trial value–attitude correlations was not reliable, $t(114) = 1.77$, ns. In contrast, for high self-monitors in the reasons-analysis condition, the second value ratings predicted attitudes significantly less well ($M = .32, SD = .57$) than did the first value ratings ($M = .57, SD = .83$), $t(114) = 2.85, p < .01$. Thus, as predicted, analyzing reasons for values caused high self-monitors’ subsequent value ratings to become less accurate predictors of their attitudes.5

It is important to note that additional analyses also revealed that high self-monitors did not differ from low self-monitors in the means or variances of their first trial value ratings, second trial value ratings, or attitudes. Thus, such differences cannot account for the three-way interaction.

The ANOVA that included private self-consciousness as a variable also revealed a three-way interaction, this time a Reasons Analysis \times Private Self-Consciousness \times Trial interaction, $F(1, 115) = 4.49, p < .04$. Unfortunately, none of the pairwise contrasts between the second and first trial value–attitude correlations was reliable. In the reasons-analysis condition, there was a provocative tendency for participants who were low in private self-consciousness to express attitudes that correlated less strongly with their second trial value ratings ($M = .51, SD = .19$) than with their first trial value ratings ($M = .62, SD = .81$), but this trend was not statistically significant, $t(115) = 1.39$, ns.

**Supplementary Analysis: Reasons For and Against Self-Transcendence Values**

The reasons coding scheme used in Experiments 1 and 2 was expanded to include reasons regarding the value of a spiritual life. For the participants who had analyzed reasons for their self-transcendence values, one rater counted their reasons supporting or opposing each value. A second rater independently counted the reasons that were given by a subset of 20 participants. For each value, there was a high correlation between the two raters’ scores of the net favorability (number supporting minus number opposing) of the participants’ reasons (.54 < rs < .89, ps < .001).

Next, as in Experiments 1 and 2, we correlated the net favorability of participants’ reasons with the change in their values. Results indicated that these correlations were positive and sig-

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5 We also conducted an exploratory analysis that tested whether high self-monitors and low self-monitors exhibited different effects of reasons analysis on their between-subjects value–attitude correlations. This examination was exploratory because contrasts of between-subjects correlations are low in statistical power. These analyses did not reveal any significant effects of analyzing reasons on between-subjects value–attitude correlations, for both low and high self-monitors.

| Table 5 | Value–Attitude Correlations as a Function of Reasons Analysis, Self-Monitoring, and Trial |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Value measurement trial | First | Second |
| Self-monitoring and condition |  |  |
| Low self-monitors |  |  |
| Self-transcendence value analysis | .68 (27) | .77 (27) |
| Control | .52 (34) | .53 (34) |
| High self-monitors |  |  |
| Self-transcendence value analysis | .57 (28) | .32 (28) |
| Control | .64 (29) | .65 (29) |

*Note. Numbers in parentheses represent the number of participants contributing to the adjacent mean correlation.*
significant for the values of helpfulness, \( r(65) = .29, p < .02 \), and equality, \( r(68) = .35, p < .005 \). The correlations were positive and nonsignificant for the values of protecting the environment, \( r(67) = .16, \) and having a spiritual life, \( r(69) = .06 \). There was a negative and nonsignificant correlation for the value of forgiveness, \( r(68) = -.16 \).

**Discussion**

**Value Change**

As in Experiments 1 and 2, analyzing reasons for self-transcendence values caused the values to change. Further, we found that the effect of analyzing reasons was not moderated by individual differences in value importance, self-monitoring, private or public self-consciousness, dogmatism, right-wing authoritarianism, religion as quest, moral relativism, or moral idealism. Thus, because the effect of analyzing reasons reflects a lack of cognitive support for values, the values-as-truisms hypothesis seems generalizable across many different individual-differences variables.

**Value-Attitude Relations**

Given that analyzing reasons for values causes the values to change, an interesting question is whether participants’ post-reasons-analysis values reflect their value-relevant attitudes more or less accurately than their pre-reasons-analysis values. Across all participants, the reasons analysis did not produce value ratings that differed in predictive utility from pre-reasons-analysis value ratings. This null result suggests that participants’ reasons were, in general, an assortment of their accessible and easy-to-verbalyze thoughts, which were sometimes consistent and sometimes inconsistent with their value-relevant attitudes. Thus, on average, participants’ value-attitude correlations were similar before and after analyzing their reasons.

A significant effect of the reasons analysis was uncovered, however, when high self-monitors’ value-attitude correlations were examined. Specifically, as expected, the values that high self-monitors reported after analyzing their reasons correlated less strongly with their attitudes than did the values that they reported before analyzing their reasons. It appears that high self-monitors generated reasons that were mostly inconsistent with their value-relevant attitudes, causing their values to become less predictive of such attitudes. This finding is consistent with the notion that high self-monitors’ attitudes are more affectively based than cognitively based. Presumably, a reasons analysis produces value ratings that are predominantly based on cognitions (reasons). If value-relevant attitudes are affectively based, then the post-reasons-analysis “cognitive” values will not predict attitudes as well as the pre-reasons-analysis values (Millar & Tesser, 1986). High self-monitors think about their internal states (such as attitudes and values) relatively rarely, so these concepts are probably affectively based under normal circumstances. The impact of a reasons analysis on value-attitude correlations for high self-monitors therefore suggests that these persons’ values are even more truistic than the values of other individuals.

Of course, self-monitoring did not moderate the effect of a reasons analysis on value change, so high self-monitors’ values are more truistic only in a limited sense. They might have similar, minimal amounts of cognitive support for their values, but their cognitive support is less consistent with their value-relevant attitudes than is the case for most other people. Future research should explore more systematically the nature of the differences between the values of high and low self-monitors.

**General Discussion**

Together, the results of the pilot study and the three experiments provide evidence that self-transcendence values meet the two empirical criteria for truisms. The pilot study showed that people agree highly with self-transcendence values, and the three experiments provided evidence that people lack cognitive support for the values. In particular, Experiment 1 showed that analyzing reasons for self-transcendence values causes the values to change. Experiment 2 replicated this effect of analyzing reasons and showed that it is eliminated if people are provided with cognitive support for the values. Experiment 3 replicated the effect of analyzing reasons on self-transcendence values yet again, while showing that this effect is robust across many individual-differences variables. Experiment 3 also showed that, for high self-monitors, analyzing reasons caused them to express values that predicted value-relevant attitudes less strongly than did values expressed before the reasons analysis. This finding suggests that the self-transcendence values of high self-monitors are especially truistic.

The suggestion that values lack cognitive support might seem incongruent with the idea that they are strong, central concepts in people’s motivational hierarchies. Indeed, in a classic paper, Rosenberg (1968) suggested that attitudes lacking cognitive support are vacuous, or unreal. In contrast, however, we are suggesting that values are real and psychologically important, but their importance does not derive from cognitive support. Thus, the values-as-truisms hypothesis does not suggest that values are vacuous.

How, then, do values derive their strength? Our findings suggest that values do not derive their strength from cognitive support, because focusing people on the reasons for their values results in value change. Instead, we suspect that values are supported primarily by affective information (feelings about values) and, secondarily, by behavioral information (recollections of value-affirming behavior). That is, values are important in large part because people attach strong feelings to their values, presumably because values are taught as moral absolutes during socialization. The hypothesis that affective information

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*Across all three experiments, 6 out of the 14 correlations between reasons listed and value change were in the predicted direction and significant, whereas the remaining 8 correlations were nonsignificant (although 5 of these were in the predicted direction). We believe that this weak pattern occurred because participants listed predominantly supportive reasons, restricting the range of reasons that could be used in the correlations. In addition, such positive reasons should not always cause participants to change their values in a positive direction. For example, a reason might support a value’s importance, but nonetheless connote less importance to the value than the participant had initially indicated. Thus, some positive reasons might have induced negative value change.*
contributes to values was supported in Experiment 2, in which strong correlations were obtained between participants' ratings of their values and their feelings about their values. The notion that behavioral information also contributes to values is consistent with our examination of participants' reasons for their values. In developing our scheme for coding participants' reasons, we noted that participants frequently described their past behaviors regarding a value (e.g., "I go to church each Sunday") in their lists of reasons for their values. Thus, past behaviors often came to mind when participants thought about their values. Future research should examine the affective and behavioral bases of values more extensively.

If such research supports our hypothesis that values derive their strength from affect, it would be interesting to examine the effects that might occur if values are given cognitive support, which people lack. Presumably, the provision of cognitive support strengthens values. This hypothesis was supported in Experiment 2, in which providing participants with cognitive support caused the values to be resistant to the effects of a reasons analysis. This strengthening effect may be important because of the centrality of values. That is, by strengthening values, large networks of value-relevant attitudes might be affected. In other words, building the cognitive basis of values might make them have more influence on attitudes and behavior. For example, when considering whether to donate money to a charity, people might be more willing to donate if they possess strong cognitive support for the value of being helpful. Cognitive support might make the value more accessible as a guide for relevant behaviors, such as donating. Cognitive support might also motivate increased helpfulness directly by counterbalancing the many reasons that people have for not helping (e.g., keeping their money to pay bills). 7

In fact, providing cognitive support for values might also make values resistant to direct attacks. In the introduction to this article, we described McGuire's (1964) research showing that truisms are especially vulnerable to attack, except when people are first induced to form cognitive support for their truismatic beliefs. Perhaps attacks against values might also be less successful when prior cognitive support is given for the values. For example, people who are given cognitive support for their values might be less influenced by the brainwashing techniques that are sometimes used by certain groups that try to change values (e.g., cults).

These possible effects of providing cognitive support for values help underscore an important feature of our hypothesis that values are truisms: We do not argue that values must always be truisms. We simply suggest that values are currently truisms for many people and will probably remain so until individuals begin to think carefully about why the values are important to them. Perhaps open-minded questioning of values may never occur, because values are metaphysical absolutes, that is, doctrines that are taught with the sanctity of tradition and that are necessary for the smooth running of society (Le Dantec, 1918, as cited by Allport, 1969). According to Le Dantec, the Ten Commandments of Judeo-Christian religions are examples of metaphysical absolutes (e.g., "Thou shalt not steal"). Society cannot permit the questioning of such doctrines because anarchy might result if people were to abandon them. Future research will be necessary to assess whether the truistic nature of values is intransigent in society.

From a narrower perspective, cultural factors could certainly influence whether values are truisms. For example, the ideological heterogeneity present in people's social environment might affect their motivation to critically examine their values. Specifically, the presence of many conflicting ideologies might motivate people to analyze the reasons for their own beliefs and values more than the presence of a single ideology. For example, various countries in Europe (e.g., Italy) continually experience debate between radically different political ideologies (e.g., communism or socialism vs. capitalism), whereas the United States has maintained the same political ideology for over 200 years. Thus, values might be more truistic for people who live in the United States than for people who live in Europe. Future research could test whether such differences affect the extent to which values are truisms.

In addition, it is possible that values are less truistic among older people than among young people. We used university students as participants in our experiments. Perhaps people who are older have had more time to reflect on their values and consider reasons for them. For example, the experience of parenthood might cause many older adults to develop an appreciation of reasons for self-transcendence values, such as helpfulness. This possibility could be tested in cross-generational research.

Finally, future research should examine the extent to which other categories of values function like truisms (e.g., openness values). We believe that the uncontroversial nature of most values means that they will function like the self-transcendence values in our research. We expect that people do not consider their reasons for their openness values (e.g., freedom and creativity), conservatism values (e.g., tradition and national security), or self-enhancement values (e.g., ambition and success)—the desirability of these values is assumed.

Nevertheless, we suspect that it is possible that some specific values within these categories are not truisms, because they are controversial, debated, or both. For example, respect for tradition is a value that might not be shared by young people. Similarly, the value of power might not be widely shared, because people often ascribe to the cliche "absolute power corrupts absolutely." Consequently, these two values might not be truisms.

Whatever the outcome of research testing the generalizability of our findings, we have shown that at least one type of value exhibits the characteristics of truisms. As such, our findings call for further examination of the psychological bases of values. Through such exploration, researchers will gain a better understanding of the factors that support values. Given the importance of values in social psychological theory and in real-world issues, this endeavor seems worthwhile.

7 In contrast, we expect that the provision of affective support for values would have little effect, because people already possess substantial affective support for their values. That is, people's feelings about their values are strong and unambiguous, making it difficult to strengthen them further.
References


VALUES AS TRUISMS


Received September 11, 1996
Revision received March 28, 1997
Accepted April 10, 1997