Are Principled Opinions More Likely to Stick?

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Abstract

Many scholars worry that democracy lacks a meaningful foundation in public opinion. These worries are largely predicated on the fact that many citizens' policy opinions fluctuate wildly over time. Since Converse, scholars have assumed that unstable opinions are shallow, whereas stable ones are "principled" or rooted in deeper values. Yet, almost no study has directly tested this assumption, and recent research suggests that partisanship—not values— may drive opinion stability. Within two high-quality panel datasets ($n > 22,000$), I search for compelling empirical evidence that stable opinions are substantially more principled. I do not find it. Instead, my findings are more consistent with stable opinions reflecting partisan mimicry rather than value-consistency. These findings challenge the old and popular assumption that democratic representation can be evaluated by the stability of citizens' opinions. Insofar as scholars wish to judge the meaningfulness of public opinion, they must find other methods.

Can citizens' policy opinions provide meaningful guidance to policymakers? Many political scientists fear that the answer is no: While citizens are often willing to voice opinions about public policies, these "opinions" shift substantially over time, leading scholars to conclude that they are superficial (Converse 1964) and unreliable indicators of what citizens truly value (Zaller and Feldman 1992). In this view, the stability of an opinion signals whether it is *principled*—i.e., a meaningful representation of a citizen's underlying values (Peffley and Hurwitz 1993). Yet, unfortunately, most citizens' opinions appear strikingly unstable on many issues.

This argument has dire implications for democratic representation. Across the world, citizens routinely vote on policy referendums, of which many are consequential (e.g., the Brexit referendum in the UK). Moreover, citizens' policy opinions appear to strongly influence which political candidates they support (Ansolabehere et al. 2008; Mummolo et al. 2021). If citizens' policy opinions are unstable over time—and thus a faint simulacrum of their values—citizens may commonly vote for policy referendums and political candidates that disserve them (e.g., Lau and Redlawsk 1997). In Achen's (1975) famous words, "[d]emocratic theory loses its starting point" (1220). Reflecting such democratic anxieties, scholars have spent decades debating the frequency with which citizens change their policy opinions (Ansolabehere et al. 2008; Converse 1964).

However, almost no research has tested the assumption that motivates this important work: that *stable* opinions are more likely to be *principled* (Peffley and Hurwitz 1993). Without this assumption, the normative significance of opinion stability largely collapses. And there are good reasons to question it: Recent studies suggest that citizens may hold on to opinions—not because they reflect their values, but—because they mirror the positions of their political party's leaders (Elder and O'Brian 2022; Freeder et al. 2019). If so, stability would not signal meaningful opinions that politicians ought to represent. Instead, stable opinions would act like a distorted reflection of politicians' own rhetoric, offering policymakers little independent guidance about which policies truly align with what citizens value.

This article offers a straightforward test of whether opinion stability signals how principled an opinion is. Across two high-quality panel datasets ($n > 22,000$), I identify pairs of basic values and policy issues wherein the value (e.g., compassion for others) entails a particular opinion about the issue (e.g., support for welfare). I then examine whether citizens are more likely to hold on to opinions that align with their basic values, comparing this association to that between stability and agreeing with one's party. I do not find compelling evidence that stable opinions are substantially more principled. Instead, my findings imply that stable opinions reflect partisan mimicry much more than value-consistency. When a citizen's opinion matches their party's position, it usually sticks—even if that opinion conflicts with their values. By contrast, principled opinions are relatively unstable when they are out of step with a citizen's political party.

These results challenge the dominant understanding of the decades-long literature on opinion

stability. There is no compelling evidence that scholars can judge the quality of democratic representation by whether citizens' opinions are stable. Stable opinions are not substantially more likely to reflect citizens' values. In fact, opinion stability may even signify the opposite—partisan mimicry that offers policymakers little independent guidance. Insofar as scholars want to judge whether citizens hold principled opinions—and thus provide a meaningful foundation for democracy—researchers must find other ways to evaluate citizens' opinions.

Why Worry About Opinion Stability?

For six decades, political scientists have wrestled with a seemingly simple question: How much do individuals' policy opinions vary over time? This debate began in 1964 with Converse's "black and white" model, which provocatively suggested that large swaths of the public shift their policy opinions at random over time. Eleven years later, Achen (1975) pushed back by arguing that much of the apparent change in citizens' policy opinions could be attributed to measurement error from ambiguous survey questions. After statistically correcting this error, citizens' policy opinions are much more stable. Subsequently, wave after wave of researchers—armed with better data, newer models, and softer assumptions—have tried to decompose true opinion change from mere statistical noise, each arriving at a different balance (Ansolabehere et al. 2008; Erikson 1979; Feldman 1989; Hill 2001; Lauderdale et al. 2018; Zaller and Feldman 1992).

But why has opinion stability received so much attention? It is not because opinion stability is necessarily important in itself.[1] Scholars care about opinion stability because it is taken to indicate whether a citizen holds a *principled* opinion about an issue—i.e., an opinion that meaningfully reflects their values. Indeed, this assumption can be seen in the very first study of opinion stability: In his seminal article, Converse (1964) argued that, if a policy opinion fluctuates over time, it is "*prima facie* evidence" (47) that the opinion is unconstrained by "some superordinate value or posture toward man and society" (7). Instead, unstable opinions are either "non-attitudes" invented on the spot to satisfy researchers (Converse 1964) or expressions of whichever considerations happened to be top-of-mind at the moment a question was asked (Zaller and Feldman 1992). As shown in Table 1, similar ideas continue to motivate scholars' interest in how much citizens' opinions change over time.

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1. That said, one might argue that stability indicates which opinions have influence in politics: A policy opinion can only influence a citizen's political behavior as long as it sticks around (Luttrell and Togans 2021). Alternatively, one might say that the stickier citizens' policy opinions are, the easier it is for policymakers to represent them. Yet, while individual policy opinions may be unstable, the percentage of citizens that supports a specific policy is usually more stable (Page and Shapiro 1992).

Table 1: Suggestions That Stable Opinions Are "Principled" or Grounded in Citizens' Values

Quote	Source
"Another likely reason for the enhanced stability of important policy attitudes is linkage between these attitudes and core values."	Krosnick 1990, 68
"[G]eneral orientations—under most conditions—should be fairly stable. And if these beliefs structure more specific attitudes… orientations like militarism may provide the very stabilizing 'anchors' to policy attitudes…"	Peffley and Hurwitz 1993, 63
"[T]he ease with which [citizens] can be blown from one side of an issue to the other suggests that the positions they take are far from securely anchored in underlying, enduring principles."	Sniderman and Theriault 2004, 133–134
"Positions tend to be… stable over time to the extent they are congruent with basic political orientations."	Sniderman and Bullock 2004, 337
"Political scientists commonly distinguish issues that are moral from ones that are not. The distinction is taken to be important for understanding persuadability, the stability of opinions…"	Ryan 2014, 380
"[A]re [citizens'] opinions based on ideological convictions or group loyalty? If issue positions are deeply held, then people's views on those issues should be far less likely to move…"	Barber and Pope 2019, 38
"[T]he more people moralize an attitude, the less they tend to change that attitude in response to persuasive arguments…"	Luttrell and Togans 2021, 552

The logic for using an opinion's stability to gauge its "principledness" goes like this: Citizens do not enter political debates as blank slates. They possess general ideals—discrete values, if not integrated systems of values (e.g., ideologies)—that can influence their political opinions (Feldman 2003; Zaller 1992). When citizens realize that a policy debate relates to their values, they adopt or switch to an opinion that matches their values, to maintain consistency among their various attitudes (Festinger 1962). And because values are relatively stable over time (Milfont et al. 2016; Vecchione et al. 2016; Vecchione et al. 2020), opinions anchored to these values are also stable.

Indeed, Converse (1964) expected the relationship between an opinion's principledness and stability to be strong. Summarizing the stability of citizens' opinions, he wrote that "only about thirteen people out of twenty [65%] manage to locate themselves even on the same side of the controversy in successive interrogations," (45). By contrast, he expected much greater opinion stability among members of Congress, whose opinions are presumably well-grounded in their underlying values: "[I]n sharp contrast to a mass sample, eighteen out of twenty congressmen [90%] would be likely to take the same positions on the same attitude items after a two-year interval," (45).

In some cases, scholars have judged whether citizens hold principled opinions by directly comparing these opinions to citizens' stated values, checking for inconsistencies (for a review, see Feldman 2003). Yet, often, scholars lack data on citizens' values or do not know which values apply to the issue at hand. In these cases, scholars have often used the stability of citizens' opinions to infer whether those opinions are principled (e.g., Converse 1964; Ansolabehere et al. 2008).

If instability signals shallow opinions, then opinion stability—and the principled opinions it is thought to mark—becomes foundational to a well-functioning democracy (Lippmann 1922). Though scholars debate the proper ends of democracy, many agree it is desirable for governments to enact policies that reflect citizens' values (Mansbridge 1983; Miller and Stokes 1963; Price and Neijens 1997). Yet, realizing this ideal depends on whether citizens translate their values into concrete, actionable policy opinions. If citizens cannot apply their values to the political world, they are ill-equipped to

vote for policy referendums and political candidates that uphold these values (Ansolabehere et al. 2008; Mummolo et al. 2021).

In short, more than 60 years of research has examined how much citizens' policy opinions change over time. These studies are motivated, in large part, by the assumption that opinion stability indicates whether citizens have formed "principled" opinions, defined as opinions that align with citizens' values.

But... Are Stable Opinions More Principled?

However, there is good reason to doubt that stable opinions are necessarily more principled. First, while many studies quantify how stable citizens' opinions are, only one has directly tested whether value-consistent opinions are more stable over time (Peffley and Hurwitz 1993). Yet, this study only examined changes in foreign policy attitudes over a year, among 301 residents of a small U.S. city, and so the generalizability of its findings is unclear. Moreover, the authors focused on correlations between citizens' policy opinions and *political values*—i.e., their "overarching normative principles and belief assumptions about government, citizenship, and American society" (McCann 1997, 565). Yet, as discussed later, political values may not be exogenous to partisanship or citizens' policy opinions (e.g., Connors 2020).

Other evidence suggesting that stable opinions are more principled is indirect and mixed. For instance, some studies suggest that the opinions of the politically knowledgeable are more stable over time (Converse 2000; Converse and Pierce 1986; Dean and Moran 1977; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Feldman 1989; Jennings 1992; Kinder and Kalmoe 2017). However, other studies show that there is little difference in opinion stability by political knowledge (Achen 1975; Ansolabehere et al. 2008; Erikson 1979). Moreover, it is unclear *why* knowledgeable citizens may have more stable opinions. Certainly, one possibility is that knowledgeable citizens are more likely to form principled opinions (Zaller 1992; cf. Goren et al. 2022). Yet, this difference can also be explained by other facts—namely, that knowledgeable citizens are better at motivated reasoning (Bakker et al. 2020; Taber and Lodge 2006). In other words, knowledgeable citizens may have stickier opinions because they are better at defending their views, regardless of whether those views are principled.

Other studies correlate opinion stability with "meta-perceptions" that might accompany principled opinions. For example, Krosnick (1988, 1990) finds that opinion stability is positively correlated with *issue importance*—i.e., how personally important a citizen considers a policy issue. He partly attributes this relationship to "the linkage between these attitudes and core values" (Krosnick 1990, 68). However, when examining a wider range of panel datasets, Leeper (2014) finds that the relationship between issue importance and opinion stability is small and statistically unreliable. In a related vein, Luttrell and Togans (2021) find that opinion stability is correlated with *moral conviction:* the sense that an opinion is rooted in one's notions of right and wrong. Yet, psychological studies suggest that people

are unreliable in reporting the reasons behind their opinions (for a review, see Pronin 2009). Indeed, some researchers argue that many citizens misunderstand how their values should inform their policy opinions (Zaller 1992; cf. Goren et al. 2022). Others argue that it is common for citizens' values to influence their opinions outside of their conscious awareness (Jost 2021). Simply put, perceiving an issue to be grounded in one's values (or not) does not mean that it is (or is not).

A second reason to doubt that an opinion's stability strongly indicates its "principledness" is that values are just one of several predispositions that can anchor citizens' policy opinions (for a review, see Mintz et al. 2021). Among these predispositions, the most obvious source of stable but unprincipled opinions is *partisanship* (Elder and O'Brian 2022; Freeder et al. 2019). That is, citizens often feel emotionally attached to their political parties (Huddy et al. 2015), and this attachment compels them to conform to party norms as dictated by party leaders (e.g., Bakker et al. 2020). Citizens may hold stable opinions because they imitate the positions of their party leaders, who rarely change their opinions. If so, this imitation-induced stability would have very different normative implications than stability caused by values.

Indeed, an abundance of experiments shows that citizens readily adopt policy opinions, regardless of their ideological content, when their political party endorses them (for a review, see Bullock 2020).[2] For example, Barber and Pope (2019) show that Republicans—and especially self-identified conservatives—rush to support liberal policies when those policies are endorsed by Donald Trump. Because of studies like these, partisanship has often been regarded as a major source of opinion *in-stability*. Yet other experiments reveal that partisanship can also make citizens *resist* changing their opinions, so long as they already agree with their party (Bolsen et al. 2014; Guay and Johnston 2022; Taber and Lodge 2006). These studies may better capture real-world conditions: Citizens typically agree with their parties (Dalton 2017), parties rarely shift positions (Adams et al. 2004; Koedam 2022), and citizens rarely change parties (Franklin and Jackson 1983). Under these circumstances, following one's party should make opinions *more* stable over time.

Recent evidence is consistent with this idea. Freeder et al. (2019) find that citizens who knowingly disagree with their party show very low opinion stability across survey waves (average inter-wave correlations below 0.2), whereas those who agree with their party exhibit much higher stability (correlations near 0.8). Similarly, Elder and O'Brian (2022) show that, among Americans who recognize that Republicans are more conservative than Democrats, those who agree with their party hold substantially more stable opinions (see page 14 of their appendix).

Importantly, however, these studies do *not* rule out the possibility that stable opinions are more

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2. To be clear, this evidence does not necessarily imply that citizens "mindlessly" ape their party leaders; citizens may follow party leaders because they assume those leaders share their values (Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Sniderman and Stiglitz 2012). Still, that citizens depend so much on party leaders to decide how they feel about policy issues may undermine democratic representation. If citizens do not independently scrutinize policy issues, their parties may lead them to endorse policies that conflict with their values.

principled. As Freeder et al. (2019) note, their results are open to multiple interpretations. On one hand, they appear "most consistent with widespread following, or voters adopting views consistent with their preferred political party or leader" (288). This interpretation implies that stable opinions are not principled. On the other hand, the authors acknowledge that "individuals who care deeply about a policy issue and have stable opinions about it will learn the political parties' and candidates' positions in order to support the party and candidate who holds the same issue position" (275). In other words, citizens *first* form principled opinions and *then* join the political party that agrees with them.

Assessing which mechanism better explains opinion stability—principled position-taking or partisan mimicry—requires a direct comparison of how stability correlates with citizens' values and partisanship. If principled opinions are stable over time—even when they clash with a citizen's party—it would suggest that values are the primary source of opinion stability (Peffley and Hurwitz 1985). However, if party-aligned opinions are stable—regardless of whether that opinion is consistent with a citizen's values—it implies that policy opinions are stable when citizens follow their parties (Lenz 2012). If so, stable opinions may not reflect meaningful preferences that politicians ought to follow, as existing studies have commonly assumed (see Table 1). Instead, stable opinions may act like a distorted reflection of politicians' own rhetoric, offering policymakers little independent guidance about which policies truly align with citizens' values.

In short, the belief that stable opinions are more principled rests on surprisingly thin empirical ground. Moreover, past studies suggest that partisanship can anchor opinions just as firmly as values. The remainder of this article seeks out compelling empirical evidence that stable opinions are indeed more principled.

Which Opinions Are Principled?

To test whether stable opinions are more principled, one first needs a way to identify which opinions reflect citizens' deeper values. Here, I review the two main strategies scholars have used to make that determination: one that relies on citizens' ideological self-labels and another that relies on citizens' stated values.

The first strategy treats opinions as principled when they match citizens' self-reported ideology—e.g., when a "conservative" opposes universal healthcare or when a "progressive" supports it (Kinder and Kalmoe 2017; Groenendyk et al. 2022). However, this approach faces two problems. First, many citizens misunderstand what terms such as "conservative" and "progressive" mean (Ellis and Stimson 2012). Thus, identifying with either label might not provide a strong signal about a citizen's underlying values (cf. Goren et al. 2020). Second, ideological self-labels may function less as value summaries than as group identities to which citizens are emotionally attached. Indeed, self-identified conservatives (or

progressives) are prone to endorse *any* policy that is labeled conservative (or progressive), regardless of the actual substance of those policies (Malka and Lelkes 2010).

A second, more direct approach to judging the "principledness" of citizens' opinions involves comparing them to citizens' professed values (for a review, see Feldman 2003). For instance, scholars might compare citizens' endorsements of statements such as "It is very important to you to help the people around you" with their opinions on welfare policies (e.g., Goren et al. 2016). Formally defined, values are abstract beliefs about which behaviors (e.g., charity or murder) or states of the world (e.g., prosperity or famine) are right or wrong (Rokeach 1973). They are the moral standards that people use to evaluate different courses of action, including their choices about which public policies to support (e.g., Tetlock 1986).

Political scientists distinguish between "political" and "basic" values. *Political values* apply narrowly to particular policy domains. For example, *militarism* represents a citizen's "desire that the government assume an assertive posture through military strength" as opposed to "a more flexible, accommodating stance through negotiations" (Peffley and Hurwitz 1993, 68). As such, this political value predicts foreign policy opinions such as support for increased defense spending (ibid.). Yet, because political values so closely resemble policy opinions, some scholars question whether they are distinct from, or exogenous to, policy opinions (Arceneaux et al. 2024). For instance, these values may summarize domain-specific views rather than guide them. Additionally, politicians can shape citizens' political values just as they shape their policy opinions (Connors 2020; Goren 2005; Vecchione et al. 2013).

Table 2: High-Order Values (Schwartz et al. 2012)

Focus	Name	Description
Social	Self-Transcendence	Prioritizes the well-being of others, especially those different than themselves, and the natural environment. Expressed through *universalism* and *benevolence*, this value directs behavior toward collective welfare rather than individual advantage.
	Conservation	Emphasizes stability, order, and continuity. Rooted in *security*, *conformity*, and *tradition*, it favors self-restraint and preservation of existing arrangements over rapid change.
Personal	Self-Enhancement	Centers on personal success, status, and control over resources or people. Linked to *power* and *achievement*, it advances self-interest even when in tension with the needs of others.
	Openness to Change	Values independence, novelty, and variety. Grounded in *self-direction*, *stimulation*, and *hedonism*, it encourages freedom, exploration, and the pursuit of new experiences.

For these reasons, recent work has focused on *basic values* (e.g., Schwartz et al. 2014). The most accepted psychological theory, developed by Shalom Schwartz, identifies four high-order values that are fundamental to people's moral outlooks (see Table 2; Schwartz et al. 2012). Of particular interest to political scientists are the two "social" values of *self-transcendence* and *conservation* (Goren et al. 2016). These values deserve special attention because they dictate "how one relates socially to others and affects their interests" (Schwartz 2012, 13–14), and citizens tend to form policy opinions based on what they think is best for society as a whole (Kinder and Kiewiet 1981; Sears and Funk 1991).[3] In particular, self-

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3. Indeed, Goren et al. (2016) finds that the effect of "personally focused" values on policy opinions is weaker and less consistent. Relatedly, many studies have examined the effect of self-interest on citizens' policy opinions. These studies find that self-interest has a substantial influence on citizens' policy opinions in some circumstances—e.g., when one's personal stakes in an issue are

transcendence values capture a person's basic concern for the welfare and interests of others, especially those who are different from them. By contrast, conservation values encapsulate a person's desire for physical safety, social order, and the preservation of cultural customs.

Unlike political values, basic values are plausibly exogenous to both partisanship and policy opinions. These values transcend specific political cultures and politics in general, guiding peoples' attitudes and behaviors across all domains of life (Sagiv et al. 2017; Schwartz et al. 2012). Basic values also develop earlier than policy opinions—emerging by age eleven, before most political socialization occurs (Döring et al. 2015; Brown et al. 2023)—and are largely rooted in genetics (Cieciuch et al. 2016; Knafo and Spinath 2011; Schermer et al. 2008; Uzefovsky et al. 2016; Vukasović and Bratko 2015). Finally, basic values are reasonably stable over long periods of time (Milfont et al. 2016; Vecchione et al. 2016; Vecchione et al. 2020) whereas policy opinions are not (e.g., Converse 1964).

Basic values are also reasonably comprehensive, in the sense that they subsume nearly all of the values that people tend to espouse. After testing his theory in 97 samples across 44 countries, Schwartz (1994) concluded that "virtually all the items found in the lists of specific values from different cultures" could be classified under the four high-order values of conservation, self-transcendence, self-enhancement, and openness to change (22). For instance, in the political domain, basic values strongly predict virtually all of the political values that have been examined in public opinion research, including moral traditionalism, limited government, and equality (Jung and Clifford 2024; Schwartz et al. 2014). Remarkably, despite over 30 years of widespread use and scholarly scrutiny, Schwartz's framework of four high-order values has never been expanded.

Furthermore, as shown in the print appendix at the bottom of this article, the basic values of self-transcendence and conservation strongly predict citizens' policy opinions in a wide range of domains (e.g., Schwartz et al. 2014; Goren et al. 2016; Rathbun et al. 2016). For instance, self-transcendence values predict support for economic redistribution, racial equality, immigration, and the prioritization of civil liberties over societal security (e.g., Schwartz et al. 2014). By contrast, conservation values predict support for strict crime policies, military interventions abroad, and the prioritization of societal security over civil liberties (ibid.) They also predict opposition to changes in society's rules and/or composition: immigration, attempts to increase racial equality, and progressive social policies such as gay marriage (ibid.). These relationships are remarkably consistent across political cultures, suggesting these values and policy opinions are "naturally" aligned.

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obvious and large (Doherty et al. 2006; Hall and Yoder 2022; Haselswerdt 2020; Horowitz and Levendusky 2011; Green and Gerken 1989). However, most citizens do not have a clear and substantial self-interest in the resolution of many policy issues (for a review, see Sears and Funk 1991).

Table 3: Panel Datasets Used in the Analysis

Panel	Country	Panelists Used	Policy Items Used	Waves Used	Period Covered
GLES	Germany	21,243	43	20	Feb. 2017 – Dec. 2021
LISS	Netherlands	1,321	11	10	Dec. 2013 – Dec. 2023

Methods

To test whether principled opinions are more stable over time, I use two high-quality panel datasets: the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) and the Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social Sciences (LISS) from the Netherlands (see Table 3). GLES participants were recruited via a combination of random sampling from local population registers and quota-matched sampling from opt-in panels.[4] LISS participants were drawn as a random sample of Dutch households from population registers.[5] Both panels periodically added stratified "refreshment" samples to counteract attrition and maintain representativeness. To my awareness, GLES and LISS are the *only* panel datasets with suitable measures of partisanship, basic values, and related policy opinions.

Fortunately, these countries are useful cases for my test. In these countries, political parties are not well-sorted by their basic values (see Online Appendix H). Indeed, in the GLES, the intra-class correlation between partisanship and values is .04 for conservation values and .09 for self-transcendence values. In the LISS, the intra-class correlation between partisanship and values is .19 for conservation values and .10 for self-transcendence values. Because the relationship between partisanship and values is modest, it is easier to parse variation in values from variation in partisanship.

Additionally, these countries represent contexts wherein values are likely to stabilize policy opinions. Citizens in Germany and the Netherlands appear relatively knowledgeable about politics (Fortunato et al. 2016), meaning that more of them have the information needed to align their policy opinions with their values (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Zaller 1992). Also, party identification and affective polarization in these countries are relatively low compared to places like the United States (Bankert et al. 2017; Boxell et al. 2024; Reiljan 2020; Reiljan et al. 2024). As such, partisanship should have a relatively weak effect on citizens' policy opinions (Huddy et al. 2018). If principled opinions are only slightly more stable in these countries—or if partisanship is more predictive of stability—it would strongly suggest that opinion stability is a poor signal of principledness.

If principled opinions are more stable over time, how might we observe this relationship in a panel dataset? One straightforward expectation would be that opinions that align with a citizen's values in one wave should change less when measured again in the next. To illustrate, imagine some time period t. At the beginning of t, we observe a value and opinions about a related policy issue. At the end of t, we

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4. For information on the GLES panel, see https://search.gesis.org/research_data/ZA6838.
5. For information on the LISS panel, see https://www.lissdata.nl/methodology.

observe opinions about the same policy issue again. In one scenario, depicted in Figure 1A, a citizen's policy opinion (in blue) is highly consistent with a related value (in red). In this scenario, we would expect the individual's policy opinion to change little over period t. In another scenario, depicted in Figure 1B, the citizen's opinion is less consistent with the value. In this scenario, an individual's policy opinion should change more over period t.

Figure 1: Empirical Expectations
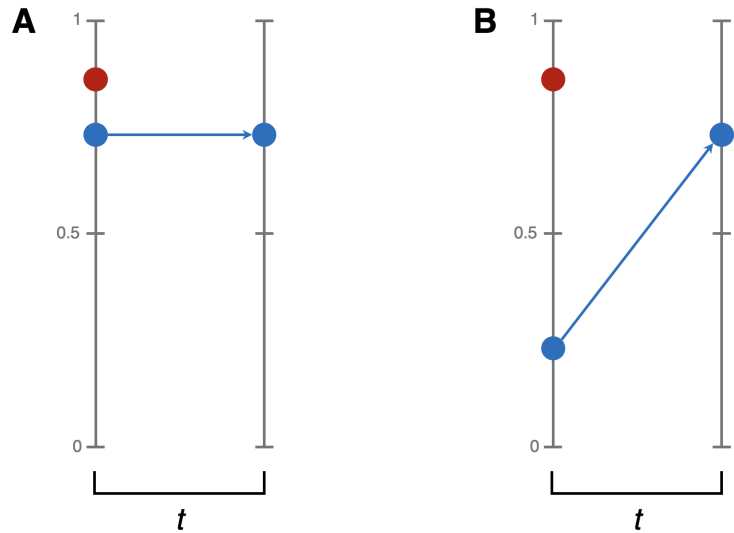
A stylistic depiction of my empirical expectations. The red point represents a panelist's position on some value at the beginning of period t. The blue points represent the same panelist's position on a related policy opinion at the beginning and end of period t.

This is the intuition that I will test in my empirical models. Specifically, I restructure the GLES and LISS panel datasets so each row captures a panelist's (i) attitudes toward a particular policy issue (p) and value (v) over a specific period (t), where each period represents a pair of consecutive waves (e.g., $t = w_1 \rightarrow w_2$). Then, I examine whether citizens who hold principled opinions at the beginning of a period are less likely to change their opinions by the end of that period. Observations from different panelists, values, policies, and periods are stacked atop one another, and I use fixed effects for each pairing of value and policy issue, as well as time period, to control for differences between cases (see "Statistical Models" below).

Measurement

In each panel, I measure self-transcendence ($\alpha = .70 - .78$) and conservation ($\alpha = .59–.69$) values by averaging items from an existing, validated measure (Schwartz et al. 2001). Question wordings are provided in Online Appendices A and B. Both panels measured these values once per panelist, whenever he or she joined the panel. Consistent with past research, I assume that panelists' basic values remain

stable throughout their time in the panel (Milfont et al. 2016; Vecchione et al. 2016; Vecchione et al. 2020). I use additional panel data to validate this assumption in Online Appendix C, showing that basic values remain stable over time, especially compared to most policy opinions. Additionally, in the same appendix, I run robustness checks to ensure that value change does not bias my results.[6]

For ease of interpretation, I measure whether an opinion is principled with a binary indicator for whether a citizen's opinion sits on the correct side of a policy scale, given their position on a related value. For instance, consider the following policy item from the LISS panel:

> *"It should be made easier to obtain asylum in the Netherlands." (Answers: Fully disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and fully agree)*

If a citizen high in self-transcendence values—i.e., high in concern for those who look different than themselves—*fully agreed* or *agreed* with the above policy, they would be coded as holding a principled opinion. By contrast, if they *fully disagreed* or *disagreed* with this policy, they would be coded as holding an unprincipled opinion.

Judgments about which values match which policy opinions were made according to a thorough review of existing studies on the links between basic values and policy opinions (see the print appendix). I only considered relationships that manifested consistently across existing studies (see Online Appendix D for further details). That said, in Online Appendix E, I replicate my analyses after taking an empirical approach to defining "what goes with what," by regressing policy opinions on basic values. My results there are substantively similar to those I present below.

Opinion stability is coded in two ways, again for ease of interpretation. First, I generate a binary variable that indicates whether a citizen's opinion was *exactly the same* at the beginning and end of a period. As an example, consider the LISS "asylum" item again. If a panelist indicated that they *fully agreed* with the policy at the beginning and end of period t, this indicator would equal one. If the panelist offered any other response at the end of period t—even if they indicated that they *agreed* with the policy—this indicator would equal zero. This represents perhaps the simplest measure of test-retest reliability. However, it may contain significant measurement error, depressing estimates of stability and collapsing potential differences in stability between principled and unprincipled opinions.

To address these concerns, I generate a second binary variable that indicates whether a citizen stood on the *same side* of a policy issue at two consecutive waves. That is, if a panelist *fully agreed* with the LISS "asylum" item at the beginning of period t but only *agreed* with the policy by the end of t, this indicator would still equal one. However, if the panelist became ambivalent by the end of t—indicating that they *neither agree nor disagree* with the policy—this indicator would equal zero. Likewise, if the panelist came to *disagree* with the policy by the end of t, the indicator would be coded as zero.

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6. In short, the effect of values on policy opinions does not decline as value measures become increasingly out-of-date, suggesting that values are stable over time. My results are also qualitatively similar when limiting my analyses to individuals whose values are especially unlikely to change (i.e., the middle-aged).

Statistical Models

To estimate the relationship between opinion stability and value-consistency, I run logistic regressions of the following form:

$$OpinionStable_{i,p,t} = \beta_1 * Principled_{i,p,v,t} + Controls + \epsilon_{i,p,v,t}$$

In this model, $OpinionStable$ indicates whether a panelist's (i) opinion about some policy issue (p) was stable over period t. $Principled$ indicates whether a panelist's policy opinion was consistent with a particular value (v) at the beginning of period t. $Controls$ represents a matrix of control variables. These include individual-level traits that might increase opinion stability: political interest, education, and age (e.g., Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). I also control for how extreme each panelist's opinion was at the beginning of period t—i.e., the distance between the panelist's opinion and the scale midpoint—as some evidence suggests that extreme opinions may be less stable over time (Klein and Stavrova 2023). Finally, the model includes fixed effects for each value–policy pairing under consideration, as well as for the period in which opinions were measured. In all analyses, I use inverse weights such that each value-policy pair is given equal weight.

This modeling approach has several advantages. First, it allows me to estimate one coefficient (β_1) that represents a general tendency for principled opinions to be more stable over time. Second, running a regression, as opposed to looking at simple inter-wave correlations (e.g., Converse 1964), allows me to control for other causes of opinion stability.[7] For example, the period fixed effects in my model account for differences in the length of time between panelists' responses, as well as the possibility that certain periods (e.g., political campaigns) saw more opinion change. Third, by construction, my dependent variable is always measured months after my independent variables. This alleviates concerns about reverse causality.

Before turning to my analysis, I offer a brief note on evidentiary burden. As noted above, scholars care about stable opinions largely because these are presumed to be causally downstream of citizens' values. For this reason, I took several steps to strengthen the case that my independent variables (e.g., principledness) cause my dependent variable (e.g., opinion stability). Still, establishing causality with panel data is notoriously difficult, since unobserved confounders remain a concern (though see Vishwanath 2025). The goals of this article, however, are more pragmatic: Rather than offering dispositive proof of causality, I ask whether the best available data are *consistent with* a world in which stability reliably signals principledness. If the evidence for such a relationship proves underwhelming, that alone should caution scholars against treating stability as a gauge of principledness.

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7. Looking at inter-wave correlations would also be unwieldy, given the number of waves and policy items in my panels.

Main Results

Stability of Principled and Unprincipled Opinions

Figure 2 visualizes the relative stability of principled and unprincipled opinions, averaging across different policy issues, values, and periods. The left side of the figure depicts the percentage of panelists who voiced the same exact opinion in two consecutive waves, whereas the right side depicts the percentage who stood on the same side of a policy scale at two consecutive waves.

Figure 2: Average Stability of Principled and Unprincipled Policy Opinions
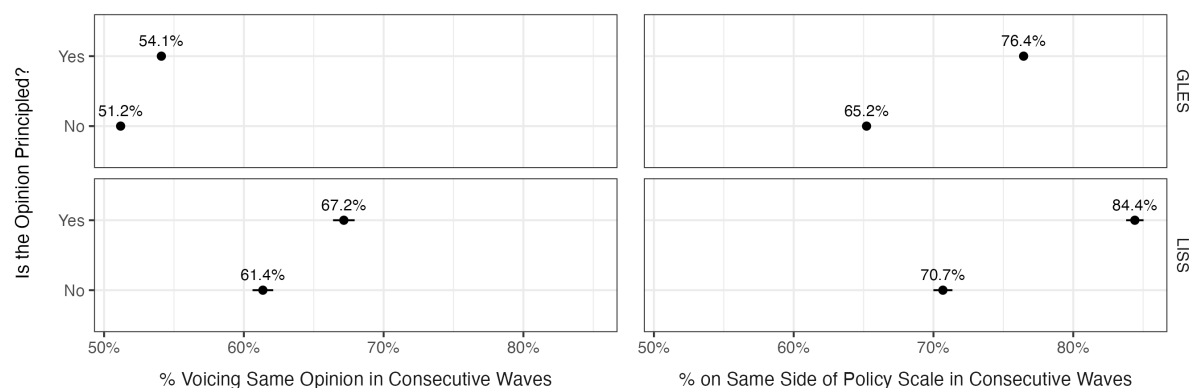
The relative stability of principled and unprincipled opinions, averaging across different policy issues, values, and periods. The left side of the figure depicts the percentage of panelists who voiced the same exact opinion in two consecutive waves, whereas the right side depicts the percentage who stood on the same side of a policy scale at two consecutive waves. Lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Data weighted to give each value-policy pair equal weight.

As seen on the left side of Figure 2, panelists are only slightly more likely to voice the same opinion in consecutive waves when their opinions began as principled versus unprincipled. This is true in both the GLES and LISS panels. For instance, in the GLES panel, 51.2% (*95% CI 51.0–51.4*) of panelists who voiced an unprincipled opinion at one wave voiced the same opinion at the next. By contrast, 54.1% (*95% CI 53.9–54.4*) of panelists who voiced a principled opinion at one wave voiced the same opinion at the next wave—an increase of just two percentage points ($p < .001$). However, as noted earlier, measurement error by itself can prevent policy opinions from looking identical in back-to-back survey waves. This measurement error may depress estimates of stability and collapse differences in stability between principled and unprincipled opinions.

For these reasons, I also examine which panelists stand on the same side of a policy issue in consecutive waves. Looking to the right side of Figure 2, the "stability gap" between principled and unprincipled opinions is somewhat larger when operationalizing stability in this way. Again, results are consistent across the GLES and LISS panels. For example, in the LISS panel, 70.7% (*95% CI 70.0–71.3*) of panelists who voiced an unprincipled opinion at one wave stood on the same side of that policy issue

at the next wave. However, 84.4% (*95% CI 83.8–85.0*) of panelists who voiced a principled opinion at one wave stood on the same side of that policy issue at the next wave. This amounts to a difference of 13.7 percentage points ($p < .001$)—roughly *half* the difference that Converse (1964) expected to observe between those who hold principled opinions and those who do not.[8]

In Online Appendix F, I show that the association between opinion principledness and stability is positive across most pairs of values and policy issues. Though less intuitive to interpret, I also estimated models that include panelist fixed effects, along with fixed effects for value-policy pairs and periods. This model leverages within-person differences in the principledness and stability of citizens' opinions across issues and periods. For instance, the model would take advantage of instances where, within the same period, a citizen has a principled opinion about one policy issue but not another. It would also leverage cases where the same person had an unprincipled opinion about an issue at one period but a principled opinion about the same issue at another period. The results of these models, presented in Online Appendix J, are very similar to those presented above.

Comparing Principledness and Party Agreement

Thus far, the motivating assumption behind research on opinion stability appears to have some validity: Principled opinions are more stable than unprincipled opinions. However, the size of this stability gap is relatively modest. Values, furthermore, are just one of several predispositions that can stabilize citizens' policy opinions. Partisanship may also stabilize citizens' opinions, but this source of opinion stability has very different normative implications. If opinion stability signals whether an opinion is partisan—more so than whether it is principled—that alone would suggest that stability is an unreliable signal of how principled citizens' opinions are.

To see whether opinion stability tracks principledness or party agreement, I modify my previous model in two ways. First, I add a binary indicator for whether the panelist's (i) opinion matches the policy stance (p) of their party at the beginning of period t ($AgreeParty$).[9] This is operationalized as the position taken by the majority of party members who hold a position on a policy issue.[10] Second, I interact this indicator with that for whether an opinion is principled at the start of period t ($Principled$).

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8. The average amount of time between consecutive waves is approximately 206 days (SD = 247.80 days) in the GLES and 403 days (SD = 142.45) in the LISS. Though the length of time between waves does affect average levels of opinion stability, it does not affect the stability gap between principled and unprincipled opinions. That is, there is not a significant two-way interaction between principledness and time between waves in either the GLES or the LISS data.

9. One might object to modeling partisanship and values together: If partisanship mediates the effects of values on opinion stability, then controlling for partisanship when modeling the effects of values could produce over-control bias. However, the extent of such bias should be minor. As mentioned above, between-party variation in values accounts for little of the total variation in values. In Germany, the intra-class correlation between partisanship and values is .04 for conservation values and .09 for self-transcendence values. In the Netherlands, the intra-class correlation between partisanship and values is .19 for conservation values and .10 for self-transcendence values. Moreover, modeling the effects of partisanship and values separately confirms that partisanship has a greater effect on opinion stability than principledness.

10. I disregard "don't knows" and midpoint responses, and I only consider cases where the percentage of party members supporting (opposing) a policy is statistically distinguishable from 50%.

Thus, the revised model is:

$$OpinionStable_{i,p,t} = \beta_1 * Principled_{i,p,v,t} + \beta_2 * AgreeParty_{i,p,t} +$$

$$\beta_3 * Principled_{i,p,v,t} * AgreeParty_{i,p,t} + Controls + \epsilon_{i,p,v,t}$$

Figure 3 depicts the results of this model when stability is operationalized as whether a panelist stood on the same side of a policy issue in consecutive waves. White points represent cases where a panelist disagreed with their party on a policy issue, whereas black diamonds represent cases where a panelist agreed with their party on a policy issue. The conclusion of Figure 3 is visually stark: Party agreement predicts opinion stability to a much greater extent than principledness. When panelists disagree with their party, principled opinions remain noticeably more stable than unprincipled ones. For instance, in the GLES panel, principled opinions are 6.6 percentage points more likely to remain on the same side of a policy scale in consecutive waves than unprincipled opinions ($p < .001$). However, when panelists agree with their political party, the stability gap between principled and unprincipled opinions is negligible ($\beta_{GLES} = 2.3pp$, $p < .001$).

Figure 3: Comparing Principledness and Party Agreement
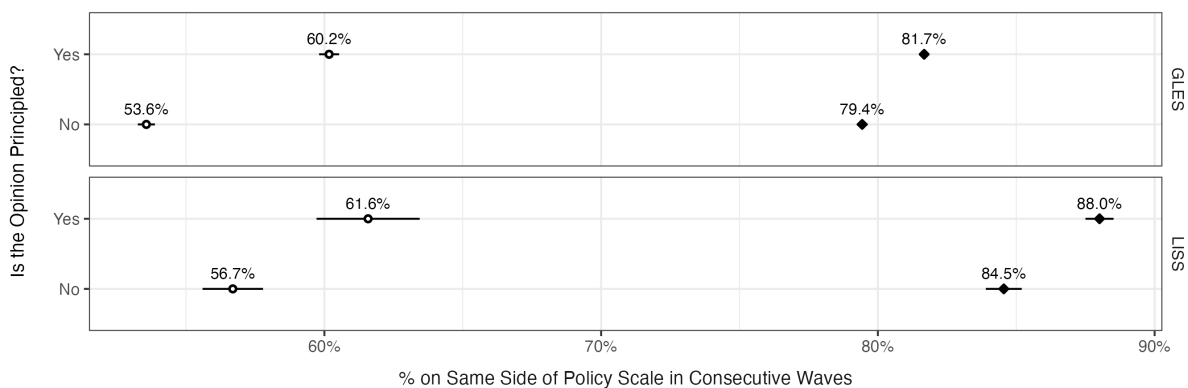
The association between principledness, party agreement, and opinion stability. White points represent cases where a panelist disagreed with their party on a policy issue, whereas black diamonds represent cases where a panelist agreed with their party on a policy issue. Lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Data weighted to give each value-policy pair equal weight.

By contrast, the association between party agreement and opinion stability is remarkably strong, regardless of whether an opinion is principled or not. Looking again at the GLES panel, among panelists who hold an unprincipled opinion, party-aligned opinions are 25.8 percentage points more stable than party-unaligned opinions ($p < .001$). That gap is only somewhat smaller when panelists hold principled opinions. In that case, party-aligned opinions are 21.5 percentage points more stable than party-unaligned opinions ($p < .001$). As shown in Online Appendix J, a model that includes panelist fixed effects produces similar results.

Exploring Alternative Explanations

To ensure the robustness of my findings, I explore several alternative explanations in this section: (1) errors in value measurements, (2) awareness of how values and policy opinions align, and (3) value importance. My findings are robust to all three alternative explanations.

Error in Value Measurements

Readers may worry that errors in my value measurements may attenuate the association between principledness and opinion stability. As noted above, the GLES and LISS panels only measured each panelist's values once, when he or she joined the panel. These data limitations force me to use these initial measures to impute citizens' values at subsequent waves. This choice could bias my estimates of the association between opinion principledness and stability. In particular, if values and policy opinions tend to shift in the same direction over time (as seems likely) the estimated association would be attenuated.

However, these concerns are likely unwarranted. Basic values are stable over long periods (Milfont et al. 2016; Vecchione et al. 2016; Vecchione et al. 2020), suggesting that any error in my value measurements would be minor. Moreover, I include several additional analyses in the online appendix to assuage concerns. In Online Appendix C1, I use another German panel dataset to show that values vary little over time—and much less than policy opinions. In Online Appendix C2, I test whether values changed in the GLES and LISS panels by leveraging a simple assumption: If panelists' values shifted substantially over the course of the panels, we should expect the association between values and policy opinions to weaken as these measures become increasingly out-of-date. I find no evidence for this. Finally, in Online Appendix C3, I leverage the fact that individuals from 40–60 years old are the least likely to exhibit changes in their values, and thus the least likely to be affected by error in my value measurements (Milfont et al. 2016). When re-running my analyses just on panelists from 40–60 years old, my results are qualitatively similar to those I report above.

Awareness of How Values and Policy Opinions Align

One might expect that the association between opinion principledness and stability is somewhat underestimated in the above analyses: Though a citizen may hold a principled opinion, that does not mean that they *realize* their opinion is principled. The fact that their opinion aligns with their values may be happenstance. Indeed, knowledge of policy issues tends to be low (e.g., Gilens 2001), suggesting that many citizens may not recognize which policy opinions are consistent with their values (Zaller 1992). If one focused on individuals who were most likely to understand these connections, one might find that the association between principledness and stability is larger.

Unfortunately, neither the GLES nor LISS panels consistently measure panelists' political knowl-

edge across waves. As such, I use the best available proxies of political knowledge: education and political interest (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996).[11] The top two-thirds of Figure 4 depict the associations between principledness and party agreement, respectively, and opinion stability among panelists who are in the top tercile of education (Figure 4A) and political interest (Figure 4B). As in Figure 3, white points represent cases where a panelist disagreed with their party on a policy issue, whereas black diamonds represent cases where a panelist agreed with their party on a policy issue. The results in each sub-figure are qualitatively similar to those I report above: Party agreement predicts opinion stability to a much greater extent than principledness.

Value Importance

As shown in the print appendix, self-transcendence and conservation values are an important source of structure in citizens' policy opinions. Nonetheless, readers might worry that the association between principledness and opinion stability is modest because these values are unimportant to some. To address this concern, I calculate a common proxy for value importance: the extent to which a person's agreement (disagreement) with a value is more extreme than their agreement (disagreement) with other values (Schwartz et al. 2001).

To do this, I first calculate each participant's average level of agreement with all basic values measured in the GLES and LISS, not just self-transcendence and conservation values. Then, I subtract this cross-value average from the panelist's ratings of self-transcendence and conservation values, respectively, and take the absolute value. Then, for each pairing of value and policy issue, I subset to those panelists who rate the value as highly important—i.e., those who are in the top tercile of value importance. Finally, I re-estimate the relationships between opinion stability, principledness, and party agreement. The results are displayed in Figure 4C. Once again, party agreement predicts opinion stability to a much greater extent than principledness.

Discussion: Why Are Principled Opinions Only Slightly Stickier?

How could it be that principled opinions are not substantially more stable over time, even among citizens who care deeply about the value in question? Furthermore, how does the small association between opinion principledness and stability co-exist with the robust, cross-sectional associations between values and policy opinions (see the print appendix)? One possible reason is that, while values rarely change over time, the *implications* of these values change more frequently. The relationship between values and policy opinions is not absolute; values are translated into policy opinions via particular circumstances. For example, consider a typical policy item from the GLES panel:

11. Validating the assumption that educated and politically interested individuals better recognize which values and policy opinions are aligned, citizens were more likely to form principled opinions if they were more educated or politically interested (see Online Appendix I).

Figure 4: Exploring Alternative Explanations
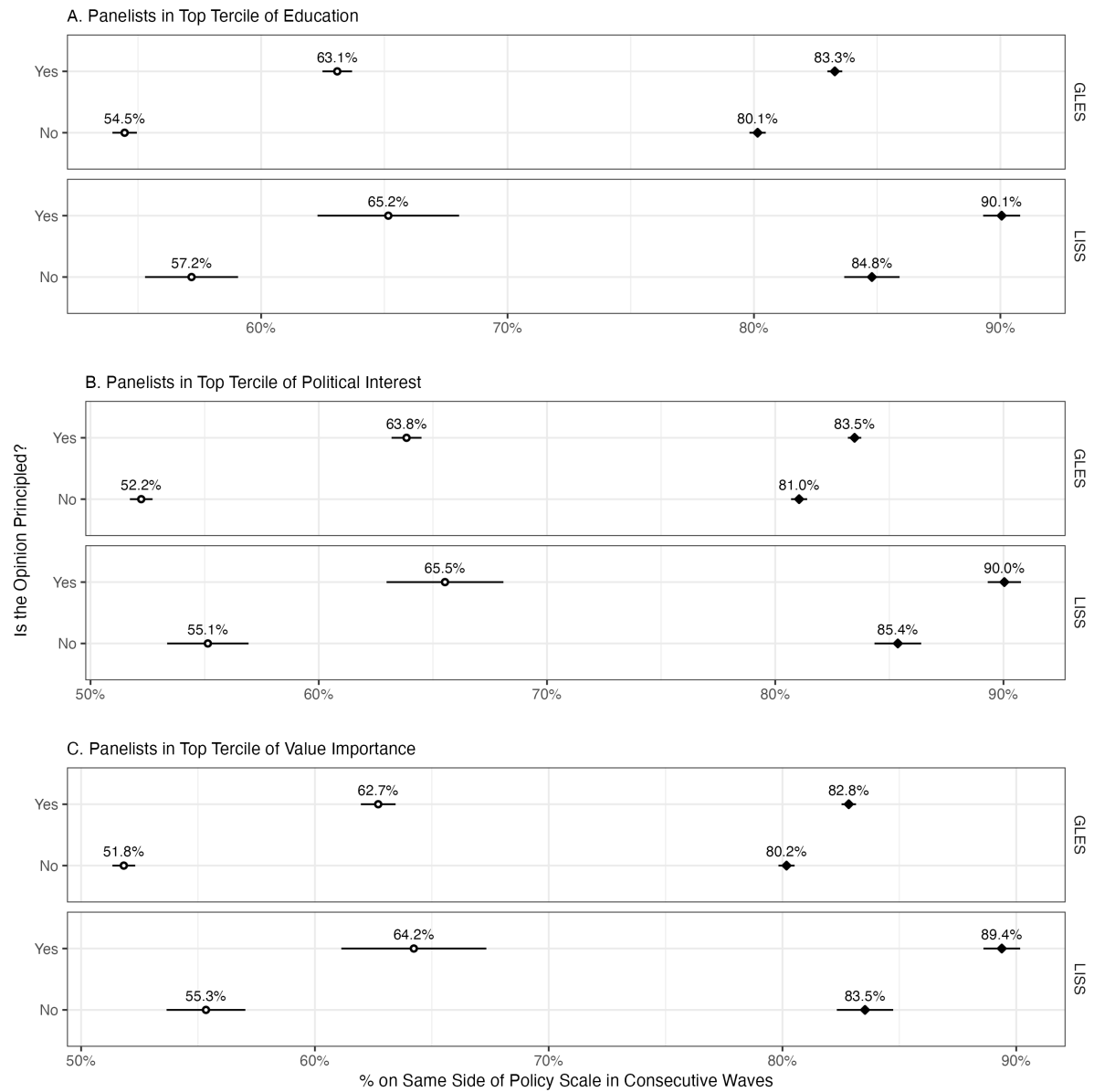
The association between principledness, party agreement, and opinion stability within particular sub-groups. Sub-figure A depicts these associations among those in the top tercile of education. Sub-figure B depicts these associations among the top tercile of political interest. Sub-figure C depicts these associations among those in the top tercile of value importance. White points represent cases where a panelist disagreed with their party on a policy issue, whereas black diamonds represent cases where a panelist agreed with their party on a policy issue. Lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Data weighted to give each value-policy pair equal weight.

What is your opinion on the following statement? "Germany's defence expenditure should be increased over the next few years." (Answers: Fully disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and fully agree)

Given a particular time and place, we would rightly expect that those higher in conservation values—i.e., those who care more about societal security, among other things—will be more likely to agree with this statement. And, indeed, the cross-sectional association between conservation values and support for defense spending is consistently positive across countries, circumstances, and samples (Goren et al. 2016; Rathbun et al. 2016; Schwartz et al. 2010; Schwartz et al. 2014).

Yet, this does not imply that principled opinions about defense spending should never change. One can readily imagine circumstances in which support for defense spending aligns more or less with conservation values. Suppose, for instance, that Germany has recently increased its defense spending by a large amount. In such a context, there is less of a *need* for additional defense spending. Alternatively, imagine that Russia—in response to Germany increasing its defense spending—begins to ramp up its own defense spending. In this situation, conservation-minded Germans might reasonably believe that further defense spending will heighten the risk of escalation, rather than enhance security. In response to these changes in circumstances, one might rightly expect principled opinions to shift, contrary to the idea that they should remain stable over time.

The basic point is this: In order for these citizens to maintain principled opinions, they may very well need to adjust these opinions as circumstances evolve. Thus, the expectation that stable opinions should be more principled is misguided. Empirically demonstrating that citizens' opinions respond to changing circumstances in sensible ways, given the values that they hold, is beyond the scope of this article (though see Page and Shapiro 1992, for similar arguments). Still, it is important to acknowledge that there are intuitive reasons to doubt that principled opinions should be more stable, even if values consistently predict policy opinions cross-sectionally.

Conclusion

Past studies of the stability of citizens' policy opinions are some of the most thoughtful, rigorous, and well-cited within political science. They are also well-motivated: If most citizens lack principled opinions about most policy issues, it is unclear whether citizens can guide their governments toward policies that uphold their values. However, this article suggests that these studies are built on a questionable assumption: that the durability of a policy opinion signals its grounding in citizens' basic values. While principled opinions tend to be somewhat more stable over time, the association between stability and values is far weaker than the association between stability and partisanship.

These findings complicate decades of work that has treated opinion stability as indicative of prin-

cipled thinking about policy issues. Stability does not uniquely mark the translation of values into policy opinions. Indeed, it appears to be a far better signal of the tendency for citizens to imitate their party leaders. Thus, it is improper to judge the quality of democratic representation simply on the basis of whether citizens' policy opinions are stable over time.

Naturally, this study is not without its weaknesses. If we assume that citizens' values drive them to join different political parties, the observed association between partisanship and opinion stability may partly reflect unmeasured values that correlate with partisanship. In that case, the normative interpretation of the relationship between party agreement and opinion stability would change. This is a fair critique. On the other hand, 30 years of research have proven the four high-order values of conservation, self-transcendence, self-enhancement, and openness to change to be quite comprehensive (Jung and Clifford 2024; Schwartz 1994; Schwartz et al. 2014).

Relatedly, one might argue that partisanship functions differently in Europe versus the United States, where most research on opinion stability has been conducted. Europeans are thought to select their political parties based on their policy opinions, whereas Americans are thought to choose policy opinions based on an emotional attachment to their political parties. In other words, Europeans are more likely to be "instrumental" partisans, whereas Americans are more likely to be "expressive" partisans. Yet, recent studies suggest that many Europeans are emotionally attached to their political parties and behave as expressive partisans, even if the number of party identifiers is lower in Europe than in the United States (Huddy et al. 2018).

Even if principled opinions *were* stickier, it is unclear that democracy requires citizens to hold principled opinions for long periods of time. This article has argued that policy opinions matter, in large part, because they limit what policies a democracy can pass—through votes on referendums and for political candidates—and help keep government policy aligned with what citizens value. Yet, insofar as this is why they matter, citizens only need to hold principled opinions about the policies that are currently "on the ballot" in some way. Put simply, what is the democratic value of having a principled opinion about a policy issue, if that issue is not on the political agenda?

Nonetheless, when there are policy decisions to be made, researchers ought to be concerned about whether citizens form principled opinions about these issues. How, then, should we judge whether citizens' opinions are principled? One approach may be to evaluate whether citizens have the skills to form principled policy opinions when they need to. As I describe elsewhere, this approach enjoys several advantages over existing approaches to evaluating citizens' opinions (Dias 2025). For one, this approach does not impose the unrealistic requirement that citizens hold policy opinions that are perennially principled.

Political scientists have long questioned whether citizens can meet the demands of democracy. In particular, a broad consensus suggests that citizens often fail to translate their values into principled

opinions about policy issues. This article has argued that, insofar as this consensus rests on claims about how much citizens' opinions vary over time, it needs reconsideration. Over-time stability tells us very little about whether citizens hold principled opinions. If we wish to judge whether citizens hold principled opinions—as well we should, if we care about democratic representation—researchers must find better methods for evaluating citizens' opinions.

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Appendix: Associations Between "Social" Values and Policy Opinions

Policy Area	Effect of Values		Sources
	Conservation	Self-Transcendence	
Restricting civil liberties (e.g., restricting freedom of movement to limit terrorism)	+	–	Schwartz et al. 2010; Schwartz et al. 2014
International cooperation (e.g., membership in the EU)	–	+	Goren et al. 2016; Rathbun et al. 2016
Economic equality and redistribution (e.g., higher taxes on the rich)	Mixed	+	Goren et al. 2016; Schwartz et al. 2010; Schwartz et al. 2014
Environmental protection (e.g., raising taxes on CO2 emissions)	–	+	Davidov and Meuleman 2012; Grunert and Juhl 1995; Milfont and Gouveia 2006; Nilsson et al. 2004; Schwartz 2012; Steg et al. 2005; Steg et al. 2011; Stern et al. 1995; Stern et al. 1998
Free enterprise (e.g., nationalizing businesses)	Mixed	–	Schwartz et al. 2010; Schwartz et al. 2014
Isolationism (e.g., rejecting country's involvement in NATO)	+	Null	Rathbun et al. 2016
Law and order (e.g., crime policy)	+	–	Schwartz et al. 2010; Schwartz et al. 2014
Military interventions (e.g., defense spending)	+	–	Goren et al. 2016; Rathbun et al. 2016; Schwartz et al. 2010; Schwartz et al. 2014
Multi-racialism (e.g., immigration, aid to racial minorities)	–	+	Davidov et al. 2008; Goren et al. 2016; Grigoryan and Schwartz 2021; Schwartz 2007a; Schwartz 2007b; Schwartz et al. 2010; Schwartz et al. 2014
Nuclear power	+	–	Whitfield et al. 2009
Social mores (e.g., gay marriage)	+	Mixed	Dobewall and Rudnev 2014; Goren et al. 2016; Kuntz et al. 2015; Schwartz 2012; Schwartz et al. 2010; Schwartz et al. 2014

Online Appendix for
"Are Principled Opinions More Likely to Stick?"

Nicholas C. Dias

September 15, 2025

Contents

A Translated Question Wordings (GLES)

Parentheses contain questions' unique identifiers. Answer choices for Likert items sit beside their unscaled numerical values (i.e., the values these choices corresponded to before I rescaled variables to range between zero and one.)

Age (2290). Please enter the year you were born in.
   [TEXT BOX] *(To calculate age, the survey-wave year was subtracted from the panelist's birth year.)*

Education (2320). What's your highest level of general education?
   1. Still at school
   1. Finished school without school leaving certificate
   2. Lowest formal qualification of Germany's tripartite secondary school system, after 8 or 9 years of schooling ("Hauptschulabschluss, Volksschulabschluss")
   3. Intermediary secondary qualification, after 10 years of schooling ("Mittlere Reife, Realschulabschluss or Polytechnische Oberschule mit Abschluss 10. Klasse")
   4. Certificate fulfilling entrance requirements to study at a polytechnical college/university of applied sciences ("Fachhochschulreife (Abschluss einer Fachoberschule etc.)")
   5. Higher qualification, entitling holders to study at a university ("Abitur or Erweiterte Oberschule mit Abschluss 12. Klasse (Hochschulreife)")

Sex (2280). Please state your gender. [sic]
   - Male
   - Female

Party Identification (2090). In Germany, many people lean towards a particular party for a long time, although they may occasionally vote for a different party. How about you, do you in general lean towards a particular party? If so, which one?
   - CDU/CSU (Christlich Demokratische Union/ Christlich-Soziale Union)
   - CDU (Christlich Demokratische Union)
   - CSU (Christlich-Soziale Union)
   - SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)
   - FDP (Freie Demokratische Partei)
   - Bündnis 90/Die Grünen
   - Die Linke
   - AfD (Alternative für Deutschland)
   - Other party

Political Interest (010). Quite generally, how interested are you in politics?
   1. Not interested at all
   2. Not very interested
   3. In between
   4. Somewhat interested
   5. Very interested

Self-Enhancement Values ($\alpha = .76$). In what follows, several people are described on the basis of what is important to them. Please indicate how much each person is or is not like you.

Value Statements:
   (3320b) It is important to him/her to be rich. He/she wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.
   (3320d) It is important to him/her to show his/her abilities. He/she wants people to admire what he/she does.
   (3320l) Being very successful is important to him/her. He/she hopes people will recognise his/her achievements.
   (3320o) It is important to him/her to get respect from others. He/she wants people to do what he/she says.

Answer Choices:

1. Not like me at all
2. 2
3. 3
4. 4
5. 5
6. Very much like me

Openness-to-Change Values ($\alpha = .77$). In what follows, several people are described on the basis of what is important to them. Please indicate how much each person is or is not like you.

Value Statements:
(3320a) Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him/her. He/she likes to do things in his/her own original way
(3320f) He/she likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. He/she thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life
(3320g) Having a good time is important to him/her. He/she likes to "spoil" himself/herself. *(This item was not asked in Wave a2.)*
(3320i) It is important to him/her to make his/her own decisions about what he/she does. He/she likes to be free and not de- pend on others
(3320r) He/she seeks every chance he/she can to have fun. It is important to him/her to do things that give him/her pleasure. *(This item was not asked in Wave a2.)*
(3320s) He/she looks for adventures and likes to take risks. He/she wants to have an exciting life.

Answer Choices:
1. Not like me at all
2. 2
3. 3
4. 4
5. 5
6. Very much like me

Self-Transcendence Values, Conservation Values, and Matched Policy Items. *Each row in Table A1 below corresponds to the set of items used to measure a particular value (left side) and the policy items that were compared to that value in my analyses (right side). For brevity, I have omitted the answer choices for the policy items. These can be found here: https://search.gesis.org/research_data/ZA6838.*

Table A1: Self-Transcendence Values, Conservation Values, and Matched Policy Items

Value	Related Policy Items
Self-Transcendence ($\alpha = .78$**)** (3320c) He/she thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. He/she believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life. (3320h) It is important to him/her to listen to people who are different from him/her. Even when he/she disagrees with them, he/she still wants to understand them. (3320k) It is very important to him/her to help the people around him/her. He/she wants to care for their well-being. (3320p) It is important to him/her to be loyal to his/her friends. He/she wants to devote himself/herself to people close to him/her. (3320u) He/she strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him/her.	(060b) The main business enterprises must be nationalized. (060e) Under certain circumstances, a dictatorship is the better form of government. (060i) It should be made clear to troublemakers that they are not wanted in society. (1090) Some people prefer lower taxes, although this results in less social services. Others prefer more social services, although this results in raising taxes. What is your opinion on this issue? (1130) Should it be easier or more difficult for foreigners to immigrate? (1210) Some people think that foreigners should completely assimilate to the German culture. Others think that foreigners should be able to live according to their own culture. (1250) Should the European unification be pushed further in order to establish a joint government soon or has the European unification already gone too far? (1290) Some say that the fight against climate change should definitely take precedence, even if it impairs economic growth. Others say that the economic growth should definitely take precedence, even if it impairs the fight against climate change. (1411) Some people think that the state should interfere without restrictions in the privacy and freedom of movement of citizens in order to combat terrorism. Others think that the privacy and freedom of movement of citizens should always be protected even if it hampers the fight against terrorism. The use of military force is never justified. (1483a) The use of military force is never justified. (1483d) In international crises, Germany and its allies should agree on a common position. (1483e) Germany should play a more active role in global politics. (1483f) War is sometimes necessary to protect a country's interests.

Table A1: Self-Transcendence Values, Conservation Values, and Matched Policy Items (Continued)

(1483g) Germany should take care of its security primarily on its own.

(2880aa) The European Union should reduce funding for member states that refuse to take in refugees.

(2880ae) EU accession negotiations with Turkey should be broken off.

(2880af) All EU member states should adopt the euro as a common currency.

(2880ak) A tax should be introduced on the emission of carbon dioxide (CO2).

(2880al) The European Union should do more to protect its external borders.

(2880ao) The European Union should do more to harmonise living conditions between EU countries.

(2880ap) In order to limit the power of corporations, expropriations should also be carried out.

(2880b) Refugees who come to Germany for economic reasons should be deported.

(2880bb) In emergency situations, it is justified for the state to restrict civil liberties.

(2880bc) Health protection must take priority over promoting economic growth.

(2880c) Islamic communities should be subject to surveillance by the state.

(2880d) The state should take measures to reduce differences in income levels.

(2880f) The exercise of the Islamic faith should be restricted in Germany.

(2880g) The state should stay out of the economy.

(2880h) State powers in the fight against crime should be extended, even though this will lead to increased surveillance of citizens.

(2880j) Rich citizens should pay more taxes in the future than they do now.

(2880l) Germany should provide financial support for EU member states experiencing great economic and financial difficulties.

(2880t) The state should save companies with many jobs from insolvency.

(2880u) The power supply should be secured even by the use of nuclear power.

(2880w) From 2030 onwards, no new cars with petrol or diesel engines should be registered in Germany.

(2880x) Germany needs an annual upper limit ("Obergrenze") for refugees.

(2880y) Germany's defence expenditure should be increased over the next few years.

Conservation ($\alpha = .69$)	(060e) Under certain circumstances, a dictatorship is the better form of government.
(3320e) It is important to him/her to live in secure surroundings. He/she avoids anything that might endanger his/her safety.	(060i) It should be made clear to troublemakers that they are not wanted in society.
(3320j) It is important to him/her to be humble and modest. He/she tries not to draw attention to himself/herself.	(060k) Traditions should definitely be fostered and preserved.
(3320m) It is important to him/her that the government ensures his/her safety against all threats. He/she wants the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens.	(1130) Should it be easier or more difficult for foreigners to immigrate?
	(1210) Some people think that foreigners should completely assimilate to the German culture. Others think that foreigners should be able to live according to their own culture.
(3320n) It is important to him/her always to behave properly. He/she wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.	(1250) Should the European unification be pushed further in order to establish a joint government soon or has the European unification already gone too far?
(3320q) He/she thinks people should follow rules at all times. He/she believes that people should do what they're told.	(1290) Some say that the fight against climate change should definitely take precedence, even if it impairs economic growth. Others say that the economic growth should definitely take precedence, even if it impairs the fight against climate change.
(3320t) It is important to the person to preserve the customs that he/she has learned. He/she thinks it is best to do things the traditional way.	(1411) Some people think that the state should interfere without restrictions in the privacy and freedom of movement of citizens in order to combat terrorism. Others think that the privacy and freedom of movement of citizens should always be protected even if it hampers the fight against terrorism.
	(1483a) The use of military force is never justified.
	(1483b) Germany shouldn't deal with global issues but should focus on its domestic problems.

(1483d) In international crises, Germany and its allies should agree on a common position.

(1483e) Germany should play a more active role in global politics.

(1483f) War is sometimes necessary to protect a country's interests.

(1483g) Germany should take care of its security primarily on its own.

(2880a) Homosexual civil partnerships should also have the right to adopt children as well.

(2880aa) The European Union should reduce funding for member states that refuse to take in refugees.

(2880ae) EU accession negotiations with Turkey should be broken off.

(2880af) All EU member states should adopt the euro as a common currency.

(2880ag) The global integration of markets should be pushed forward further.

(2880ak) A tax should be introduced on the emission of carbon dioxide (CO2).

(2880al) The European Union should do more to protect its external borders.

(2880b) Refugees who come to Germany for economic reasons should be deported.

(2880bb) In emergency situations, it is justified for the state to restrict civil liberties.

(2880bg) Same-sex partnerships should not be allowed to adopt children.

(2880bh) The use of gender-neutral language (e.g. Bürger*innen) should be encouraged by the state.

(2880c) Islamic communities should be subject to surveillance by the state.

(2880f) The exercise of the Islamic faith should be restricted in Germany.

(2880h) State powers in the fight against crime should be extended, even though this will lead to increased surveillance of citizens.

(2880u) The power supply should be secured even by the use of nuclear power.

Table A1: Self-Transcendence Values, Conservation Values, and Matched Policy Items (Continued)

(2880u) The power supply should be secured even by the use of nuclear power.

(2880v) All things considered, globalisation is a good thing.

(2880w) From 2030 onwards, no new cars with petrol or diesel engines should be registered in Germany.

(2880x) Germany needs an annual upper limit ("Obergrenze") for refugees.

(2880y) Germany's defence expenditure should be increased over the next few years.

B   Translated Question Wordings (LISS)

Parentheses contain questions' unique identifiers. Note that some questions have multiple identifiers, as their identifier changed across waves. Answer choices for Likert items sit beside their unscaled numerical values (i.e., the values these choices corresponded to before I rescaled variables to range between zero and one.)

Age (gebjaar). Please enter the name, gender [sic] and birth date of every member of your household, including yourself. Also enter this information for members not participating in the panel. Further on in this questionnaire you can indicate which of these persons are participating and which are not.
[TEXT BOX] *(To calculate age, the survey-wave year was subtracted from the panelist's birth year.)*

Education (oplmet). In the table below, please indicate the educational level of the members of your household... [S]elect the highest level that this person has already completed (with a diploma or certificate).
1. Has not (yet) started any education *This choice stopped being offered in December 2008.*
1. Has not (yet) completed any education
2. Primary school
3. VMBO, LBO, MULO, ULO and MAVO (various forms of lower/intermediate secondary education, US: junior high school)
4. HAVO and VWO, HBS (higher and pre-university secondary education; US: senior high school)
5. MBO (intermediate professional education)
6. HBO (higher professional education)
7. University
NA. other

Sex (geslacht). Please enter the name, gender [sic] and birth date of every member of your household, including yourself. Also enter this information for members not participating in the panel. Further on in this questionnaire you can indicate which of these persons are participating and which are not.
- Male
- Female
- Other

Party Identification (233, 235, 309, 310). Which political party are you an adherent of?
- VVD (liberal party)
- PvdA (labor party)
- PVV (Wilders freedom party)
- SP (socialist party)
- CDA (Christian democrat party)
- D66 (social-liberal party)
- ChristenUnie (Christian union party)
- GroenLinks (green party)
- SGP (Christian Reformed party)
- Partij voor de Dieren (animal welfare party)
- 50Plus (fifty plus party)
- Other party, specify... [TEXT BOX]

Political Interest ($\alpha = .80$). *Political interest was measured by averaging panelists' responses to four questions (after rescaling).*

(008) Are you very interested in the news, fairly interested or not interested?
1. Not interested
2. Fairly interested
3. Very interested
NA. I don't know

(009) If the newspaper reports national news, for example about government issues, do you read that?
1. Seldom or never
2. Occasionally
3. Often

4. Almost always

(011) If the newspaper reports international news, for example about tensions or talks between different countries, how often do you read that?
    1. Seldom or never
    2. Once in a while
    3. Often
    4. Almost always

(012) Are you very interested in political topics, fairly interested or not interested?
    1. Not interested
    2. Fairly interested
    3. Very interested

Self-Enhancement Values ($r = .48$). Below is a short description of some people. Please indicate for each description whether that person is very much like you, like you, somewhat like you, not like you, or not at all like you?

Value Statements:
    (hz12a076) It is important to this person to be rich; to have a lot of money and expensive things.
    (hz12a081) Being very successful is important to this person; to have people recognize one's achievements.

Answer Choices:
    1. Not at all like me
    2. Not like me
    3. A little like me
    4. Somewhat like me
    5. Like me
    6. Very much like me
    NA. don't know

Openness-to-Change Values ($r = .31$). Below is a short description of some people. Please indicate for each description whether that person is very much like you, like you, somewhat like you, not like you, or not at all like you?

Value Statements:
    (hz12a075) It is important to this person to think up new ideas and be creative; to do things one's own way.
    (hz12a082) Adventure and taking risks are important to this person; to have an exciting life.

Answer Choices:
    1. Not at all like me
    2. Not like me
    3. A little like me
    4. Somewhat like me
    5. Like me
    6. Very much like me
    NA. don't know

Self-Transcendence Values, Conservation Values, and Matched Policy Items. *Each row in Table B1 below corresponds to the set of items used to measure a particular value (left side) and the policy items that were compared to that value in my analyses (right side). For brevity, I have omitted the answer choices for the policy items. These can be found here: https://www.dataarchive.lissdata.nl/study-units/view/22.*

Table B1: Self-Transcendence Values, Conservation Values, and Matched Policy Items

Value	Related Policy Items
Self-Transcendence ($\alpha = .70$) (hz12a079) It is important to this person to do something for the good of society. (hz12a080) It is important for this person to help the people nearby; to care for their well-being. (hz12a084) Looking after the environment is important to this person; to care for nature and save life resources.	(q102) Some people believe that euthanasia should always be forbidden. Others feel that euthanasia should be permitted if the patient expresses that wish. Still others hold an opinion that lies somewhere in between. (q103) Some people believe that differences in income should increase in our country. Others feel that they should decrease. Still others hold an opinion that lies somewhere in between. (q104) In the Netherlands, some people believe that immigrants are entitled to live here while retaining their own culture. Others feel that they should adapt entirely to Dutch culture. (q105) Some people and political parties feel that European unification should go a step further. Others think that European unification has already gone too far. (q116) It is good if society consists of people from different cultures. (q118) It should be made easier to obtain asylum in the Netherlands. (q119) Legally residing foreigners should be entitled to the same social security as Dutch citizens. (q120) There are too many people of foreign origin or descent in the Netherlands.
Conservation ($\alpha = .59$) (hz12a077) Living in secure surroundings is important to this person; to avoid anything that might be dangerous. (hz12a083) It is important to this person to always behave properly; to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong. (hz12a085) Tradition is important to this person; to follow the customs handed down by one's religion or family.	(q102) Some people believe that euthanasia should always be forbidden. Others feel that euthanasia should be permitted if the patient expresses that wish. Still others hold an opinion that lies somewhere in between. (q104) In the Netherlands, some people believe that immigrants are entitled to live here while retaining their own culture. Others feel that they should adapt entirely to Dutch culture. (q105) Some people and political parties feel that European unification should go a step further. Others think that European unification has already gone too far. (q116) It is good if society consists of people from different cultures. (q118) It should be made easier to obtain asylum in the Netherlands.

Table B1: Self-Transcendence Values, Conservation Values, and Matched Policy Items (Continued)

	(q119) Legally residing foreigners should be entitled to the same social security as Dutch citizens.
	(q120) There are too many people of foreign origin or descent in the Netherlands.
	(q125) People that want to have children should get married.
	(q127) It is perfectly fine for a couple to live together without marriage intentions.
	(q130) It is all right for a married couple with children to get divorced.

C   Gauging Amount of Error in Value Measurements

As discussed in the main paper, readers may worry that error in my value measurements may attenuate the estimated effects of principledness on opinion stability. As noted above, the GLES and LISS panels only measured each panelist's values only once, when they joined the panel. These data limitations force me to use these initial measures to impute citizens' values at subsequent waves. This choice could inject bias into my estimates of principledness's effects. In particular, if values and policy opinions tend to shift in the same direction over time (as seems likely) the estimated effect of principledness would be attenuated.

To assuage these concerns, I run several additional analyses in this appendix. First, I use another German panel dataset to show that values vary little over time—and much less than panelists' policy opinions. Second, I test whether values changed in the GLES and LISS panels by leveraging a simple assumption: If panelists' values shifted substantially over the course of the panels, we should expect the effect of values on policy opinions to decline as these measures become increasingly out-of-date. I find no evidence for this. Third, I leverage the fact that individuals from 40–60 years old are the least likely to exhibit changes in their values, and thus the least likely to be affected by error in my value measurements (Milfont et al. 2016). When re-running my analyses just on panelists from 40–60 years old, my results are qualitatively similar to those I report above.

C1   Relative Stability of Values and Policy Opinions (GESIS)

How much do basic values vary, say, relative to policy opinions? To answer this question, I compiled data from another high-quality panel in Germany: the Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (GESIS) panel. This dataset measured 6,956 panelists' basic values on eleven different waves. Additionally, the panel contains repeated measures of 31 policy opinions. This allows me to directly compare the stability of basic values and policy opinions among German adults.[1]

To gauge each variable's stability, I first rescaled all variables to range between zero and one. Then, for each variable and panelist, I calculated the average absolute difference between a panelist's responses at consecutive waves, rescaled to account for differences in the amount of time between waves. For instance, imagine that a panelist gave responses on the same variable three times (at w_1, w_2, and w_3). This would yield two pairs of consecutive waves ($w_1 \rightarrow w_2$ and $w_2 \rightarrow w_3$). For each pair of consecutive waves, I calculated the absolute change in the variable (e.g., $|v_1 - v_2|$) and divided this quantity by the number of "months" (30-day periods) between the waves. For example, if a value rose from 0 to 1 in 60 days, it would be adjusted to 0.5 to estimate change over one month. Finally, I averaged these differences at the individual level.

Figure C1 displays the average absolute change between consecutive waves for different variables. White points represent the value indexes, whereas black diamonds represent policy opinions. As shown in Figure C1, self-transcendence and conservation values changed very little over time: Over a typical 30-day period, these variables are estimated to change less than 1% of the variable scale. By comparison, policy opinions changed considerably more (*Average = 3.5% of the variable scale*). Indeed, only three policy opinions are (slightly) more stable than conservation values, the less stable of the two values.

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1. This GESIS panel was not included in my main analyses because it lacks sufficiently frequent measures of partisanship.
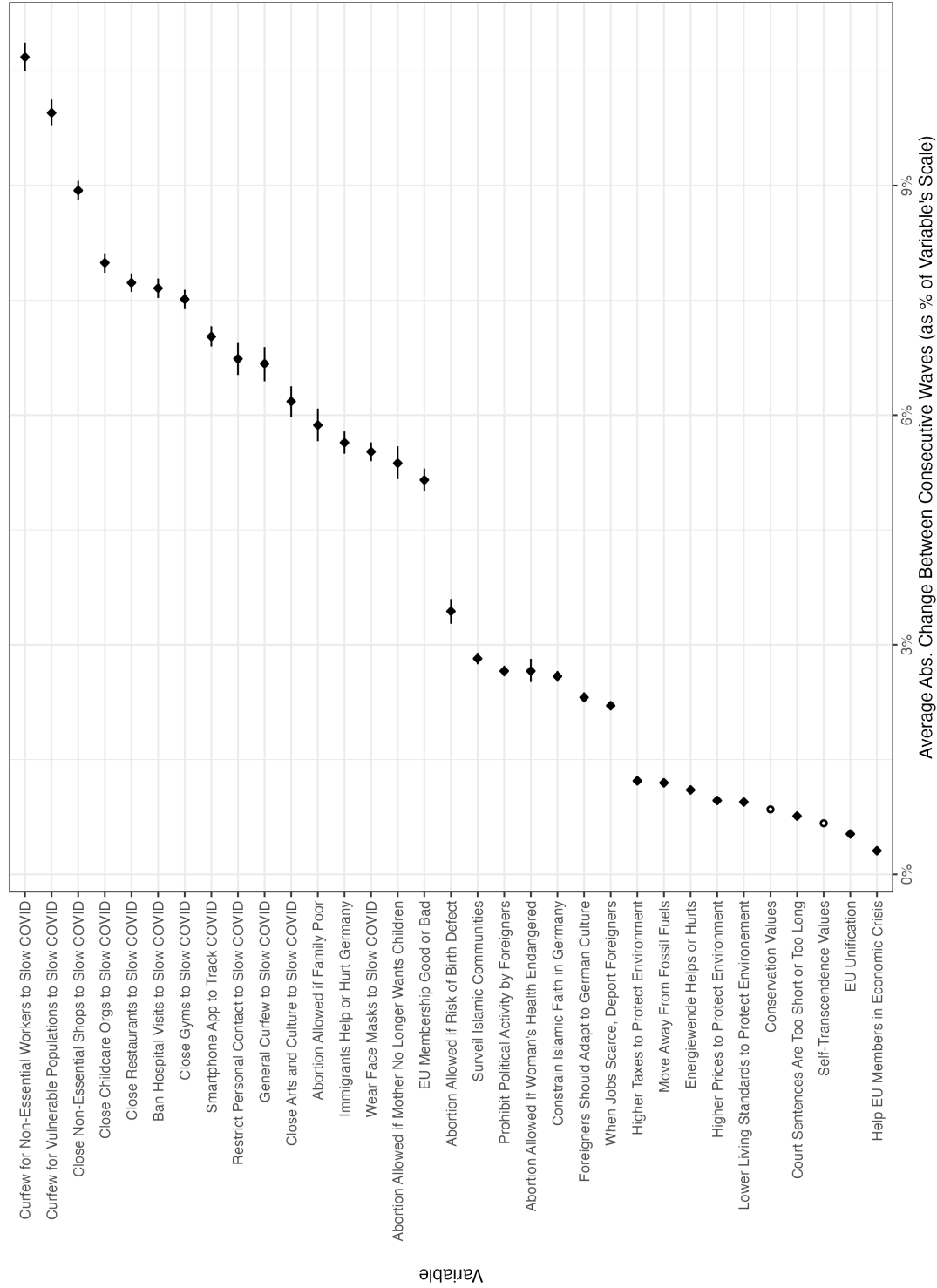
Figure C1: Average absolute change between consecutive waves for different variables in the GESIS Panel. White points represent the value indexes, whereas black diamonds represent policy opinions. Lines represent bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals.

C2 Effect of Values on Policy Opinions By Time (GLES and LISS)

The GLES and LISS panels only measured each panelist's values only once, when they joined the panel. As such, I cannot independently verify that self-transcendence and conservation values were stable over the course of the panel. However, I can test an implication of these values changing: If panelists' values shifted substantially over the course of these panels, we should expect the effect of values (measured at each participant's first wave) on policy opinions to weaken as these measures become increasingly out-of-date. I ran the following model on the GLES and LISS datasets:

$$PolicyOpinion_{i,p,t} = \beta_1 * Value_{i,v} + \beta_2 * YearsSinceValueMeasured_{i,v} +$$
$$\beta_3 * Value_{i,v} * YearsSinceValueMeasured_{i,v} + \theta_i + \gamma_p + \psi_v + \epsilon_{i,p,v,t}$$

In this model, $PolicyOpinion_{i,p,t}$ represents a panelist's (i) opinion about a particular policy issue (p) at a certain point in time (t). $Value_{i,v}$ represents the panelist's endorsement of a related value (v; self-transcendence or conservation). $YearsSinceValueMeasured_{i,v}$ represents the number of years between when $PolicyOpinion_{i,p,t}$ and $Value_{i,v}$ were measured. Finally, θ_i, γ_p, and ψ_v represent vectors of panelist, policy issue, and value fixed effects, respectively.

If panelists' values changed substantially over the course of the panel, we should expect β_3 to be negative and significant. However, as shown in Table C1, this is not the case for either the GLES or LISS data. For both datasets, β_3 is statistically insignificant and small. To put the size of this effect in perspective, moving from the minimum to the maximum value of $YearsSinceValueMeasured_{i,v}$ in the GLES data—a difference of over five years—reduces the effect of $Value_{i,v}$ from 0.215 to 0.209. In other words, 97% of the effect of $Value_{i,v}$ persists after five years.

Table C1: Effects of Values on Policy Opinions By Time

	GLES	LISS
Value	0.215*	0.167*
	(0.003)	(0.011)
Years Since Value Was Measured	0.001*	−0.002
	(0.000)	(0.001)
Value * Years Since Value Was Measured	−0.001+	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Num.Obs.	5 599 794	211 664
R2 Adj.	0.264	0.346
R2 Within Adj.	0.017	0.018
RMSE	0.27	0.24

This model controls for panelist and value-policy pair fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by panelist.

C3 Re-Estimating Main Models Within the Middle-Aged (GLES and LISS)

There is one last way to test whether over-time changes in values are attenuating my estimates of the effect of values on opinion stability. That is to subset to panelists whose values are unlikely to have changed over the course of the panel. If my results are qualitatively similar, this would suggest that over-time changes in values are not a reason for concern. According to past research, individuals from 40–60 years old are the least likely to exhibit changes in their values (Milfont et al. 2016). As shown in Figure C2, when re-running my models on just those individuals who were between 40 and 60 years over the entire panel, I see results that are very similar to those I report in the main paper.
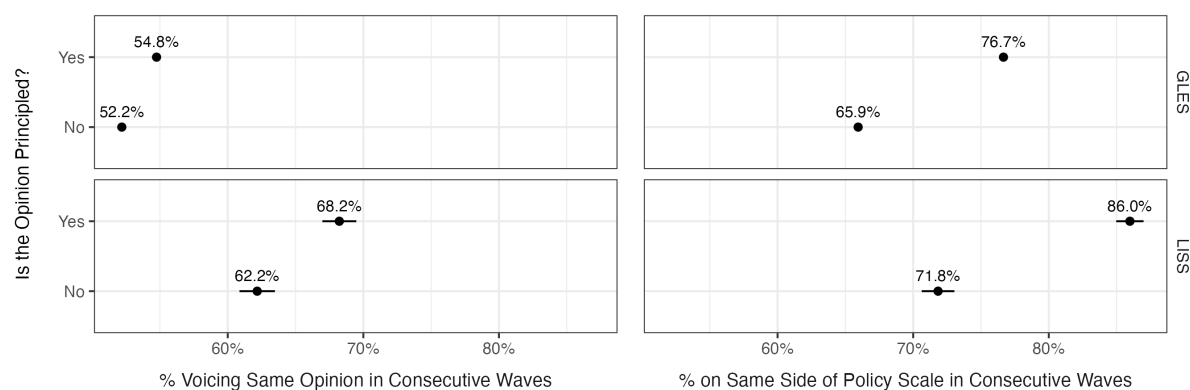
Figure C2: The relative stability of principled and unprincipled opinions among the middle-aged, averaging across different policy issues, values, and periods. The left side of the figure depicts the percentages of panelists who voiced the same exact opinion in two consecutive waves, whereas the right side depicts the percentage who stood on the same side of a policy scale at two consecutive waves. Lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Data weighted to give each value-policy pair equal weight.

D   Identifying Value-Policy Pairs for Analysis

A preliminary step toward the analyses in the main paper was to identify those policy opinions in the GLES and LISS panels that should be related to conservation and self-transcendence values. This was accomplished in several steps.

First, I searched the following query in Google Scholar: *schwartz AND values AND (self-transcendence OR conservation OR "openness to change" OR self-enhancement OR self-direction OR universalism OR benevolence OR humility OR conformity OR tradition OR security OR face OR power OR achievement OR hedonism OR stimulation) AND (political OR policy) AND (attitudes OR beliefs OR opinions)*. This query was designed to surface all English-language publications that mention Schwartz, the term "values," one of Schwartz's high-order values or the lower-order values that constitute them, and some reference to policy opinions.

Second, I manually reviewed the abstracts of all publications returned by the query, to identify those that indeed discussed the relationships between basic values and policy opinions. This process yielded 39 citations. Third, I reviewed the full text of all 39 publications to identify those which contained relevant empirical analyses—that is, associations (whether correlations or regression slopes) between basic values and policy opinions. This filtered the publication list down to 21. Fourth, I noted the direction and significance of those associations reported in these publications, as well as descriptions of the types of policy opinions underlying each association.

Some studies reported effects for high-order values (e.g., conservation) and the lower-order values that constitute them (e.g., tradition, security). In these cases, I referred to the associations between high-order values and policy opinions. Other studies only examined the associations between lower-order values and policy opinions. Where this was true, I recorded an effect for the high-order value if the lower-order values did not have significant, oppositely signed effects. For example, the high-order value of *conservation* is made up of three lower-order values: *conformity*, *tradition*, and *security*. If all three lower-order values were positively associated with a policy opinion, I considered conservation values to have a positive association with that policy opinion. Likewise, if two lower-order values were positively associated with the policy opinion, but one value was unrelated to the opinion, I considered the high-order value to be positively associated with the opinion. However, if there were significant, oppositely signed associations between the lower-order values and the policy opinion, I recorded the relationship as "mixed."

Fifth and finally, I identified which associations were consistent across studies and sub-groups of respondents. Consistent associations were defined as those that, when statistically significant, always pointed in the same direction. That is, it was "okay" if an association was significant in one study but not significant in another, as null effects may reflect a lack of statistical power. However, it was not "okay" if, for example, conservation values were positively associated with economic conservatism in one study (or sub-group of respondents) but negatively associated with economic conservatism in another study (or sub-group of respondents). The results of this process are presented in the printed appendix.

E Empirically Defining Value-Policy Relationships

Some readers may worry that the findings from my main paper may hinge on my decisions about what values go with what policy opinions. To assuage these concerns, I replicated my analyses after taking a purely empirical approach to identifying what values go with what policy opinions. For each policy opinion, I ran the following regression:

$$Opinion_{i,t} = \beta_1 * SelfTranscendence_i + \beta_2 * Conservation_i + Controls + \epsilon_{i,t}$$

In this model, $Opinion_{i,t}$ represents a particular panelist's (i) opinion about the issue at a particular survey wave (t). $SelfTranscendence_i$ and $Conservation_i$ represent the panelist's endorsement of self-transcendence and conservation values, respectively. Finally, $Controls$ represents vectors of control variables. These include wave fixed effects as well as the panelist's endorsement of self-enhancement and openness-to-change values, partisanship, approximate age, sex, and level of education. The effects from these models are provided in Table E1. To account for multiple comparisons, the statistical significance of these effects ($\alpha < .05$) was adjusted using the Holm (1979) method.

If a value had a significant effect on a policy opinion, after adjusting for multiple comparisons, the direction of that effect dictated the "proper" direction of the association. That is, I re-coded $Principled_{i,p,v,t}$ according to these associations and re-ran the models from the main paper. The results, shown in Figures E1 and E2, are qualitatively similar to those I present in the main paper.

Table E1: Effects of Values on Policy Opinions

Dataset	Value	Policy Item	Beta	SE	t	Significant Post-Correction?
GLES	Conservation	060b	0.07	0.01	4.74	Yes
GLES	Conservation	060e	0.18	0.01	14.81	Yes
GLES	Conservation	060i	0.46	0.01	38.09	Yes
GLES	Conservation	060k	0.57	0.01	43.26	Yes
GLES	Conservation	060l	0.17	0.01	12.72	Yes
GLES	Conservation	1090	−0.13	0.01	−11.64	Yes
GLES	Conservation	1130	0.47	0.01	39.50	Yes
GLES	Conservation	1210	−0.31	0.01	−32.22	Yes
GLES	Conservation	1250	0.27	0.01	20.14	Yes
GLES	Conservation	1290	0.20	0.01	19.07	Yes
GLES	Conservation	1411	−0.44	0.01	−35.93	Yes
GLES	Conservation	1483a	−0.03	0.01	−1.88	No
GLES	Conservation	1483b	0.37	0.01	25.70	Yes
GLES	Conservation	1483c	0.15	0.01	13.40	Yes
GLES	Conservation	1483d	0.09	0.01	8.42	Yes
GLES	Conservation	1483e	−0.02	0.01	−1.27	No
GLES	Conservation	1483f	0.07	0.01	5.09	Yes
GLES	Conservation	1483g	0.29	0.01	21.23	Yes
GLES	Conservation	1483h	0.06	0.01	5.25	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880a	−0.25	0.02	−13.21	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880aa	−0.02	0.02	−1.23	No
GLES	Conservation	2880ab	0.15	0.02	7.28	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880ac	0.15	0.02	9.27	Yes

Continued on next page

GLES	Conservation	2880ad	0.36	0.02	15.19	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880ae	0.14	0.02	9.38	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880af	0.01	0.02	0.60	No
GLES	Conservation	2880ag	0.00	0.01	0.41	No
GLES	Conservation	2880ah	0.20	0.01	16.14	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880ai	−0.02	0.01	−1.76	No
GLES	Conservation	2880ak	−0.19	0.02	−10.81	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880al	0.43	0.01	34.24	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880ao	−0.08	0.01	−6.35	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880ap	−0.02	0.02	−1.01	No
GLES	Conservation	2880b	0.44	0.02	28.34	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880ba	−0.06	0.01	−4.99	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880bb	0.18	0.01	12.51	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880bc	0.07	0.01	6.78	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880bg	0.28	0.02	14.38	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880bh	−0.11	0.02	−5.78	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880bt	0.18	0.01	12.33	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880c	0.42	0.01	31.37	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880d	0.03	0.01	3.14	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880e	0.25	0.01	17.98	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880f	0.53	0.02	31.76	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880g	0.08	0.01	7.74	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880h	0.53	0.01	40.73	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880j	0.04	0.01	3.05	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880k	0.18	0.02	11.57	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880l	−0.22	0.01	−16.85	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880m	0.16	0.01	10.77	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880t	0.15	0.01	12.92	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880u	0.29	0.02	18.35	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880v	−0.05	0.01	−3.89	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880w	−0.20	0.02	−11.41	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880x	0.59	0.02	30.17	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880y	0.22	0.01	15.01	Yes
GLES	Conservation	2880z	0.12	0.02	5.85	Yes
GLES	Conservation	3103c	0.25	0.01	18.10	Yes
GLES	Conservation	3103f	0.22	0.01	16.34	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	060b	0.04	0.01	3.02	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	060e	−0.27	0.01	−19.96	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	060i	−0.13	0.01	−9.76	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	060k	−0.07	0.01	−5.04	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	060l	−0.12	0.01	−8.38	Yes

Table E1: Effects of Values on Policy Opinions (Continued)

GLES	Self-Transcendence	1090	0.27	0.01	22.78	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1130	−0.48	0.01	−38.91	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1210	0.28	0.01	27.60	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1250	−0.37	0.01	−26.05	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1290	−0.46	0.01	−40.53	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1411	0.15	0.01	12.05	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1483a	0.26	0.02	16.36	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1483b	−0.34	0.02	−22.44	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1483c	−0.07	0.01	−5.91	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1483d	0.19	0.01	16.58	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1483e	0.18	0.01	13.47	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1483f	−0.24	0.02	−15.61	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1483g	−0.20	0.01	−13.88	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	1483h	0.16	0.01	13.43	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880a	0.41	0.02	19.36	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880aa	0.20	0.02	10.03	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880ab	0.01	0.02	0.40	No
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880ac	−0.08	0.02	−4.89	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880ad	−0.18	0.03	−7.11	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880ae	−0.01	0.02	−0.59	No
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880af	0.20	0.03	8.02	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880ag	0.12	0.01	9.45	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880ah	−0.10	0.01	−7.67	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880ai	0.03	0.01	2.24	No
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880ak	0.35	0.02	18.93	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880al	−0.20	0.01	−14.96	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880ao	0.36	0.01	24.70	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880ap	0.12	0.02	6.37	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880b	−0.33	0.02	−20.86	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880ba	0.10	0.01	7.18	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880bb	0.15	0.02	9.88	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880bc	0.26	0.01	21.98	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880bg	−0.38	0.02	−16.94	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880bh	0.25	0.02	12.19	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880bt	0.10	0.02	6.27	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880c	−0.25	0.01	−17.50	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880d	0.34	0.01	28.76	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880e	0.00	0.01	0.12	No
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880f	−0.53	0.02	−30.16	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880g	−0.17	0.01	−15.20	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880h	−0.15	0.01	−11.11	Yes

GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880j	0.25	0.01	18.09	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880k	−0.08	0.02	−4.40	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880l	0.36	0.01	26.80	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880m	0.00	0.02	−0.18	No
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880t	0.13	0.01	10.11	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880u	−0.44	0.02	−25.80	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880v	0.17	0.01	13.24	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880w	0.34	0.02	18.22	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880x	−0.46	0.02	−22.75	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880y	−0.15	0.02	−9.08	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	2880z	−0.11	0.02	−5.06	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	3103c	−0.05	0.02	−3.58	Yes
GLES	Self-Transcendence	3103f	−0.10	0.01	−7.11	Yes
LISS	Conservation	q102	−0.13	0.03	−5.04	Yes
LISS	Conservation	q103	−0.05	0.03	−1.71	No
LISS	Conservation	q104	0.16	0.03	5.69	Yes
LISS	Conservation	q105	0.09	0.04	2.39	No
LISS	Conservation	q116	−0.14	0.03	−5.30	Yes
LISS	Conservation	q118	−0.14	0.03	−4.51	Yes
LISS	Conservation	q119	−0.11	0.03	−3.71	Yes
LISS	Conservation	q120	0.24	0.03	7.29	Yes
LISS	Conservation	q125	0.29	0.04	8.03	Yes
LISS	Conservation	q127	−0.16	0.02	−6.82	Yes
LISS	Conservation	q130	−0.13	0.03	−3.99	Yes
LISS	Self-Transcendence	q102	0.01	0.03	0.30	No
LISS	Self-Transcendence	q103	0.10	0.03	3.04	Yes
LISS	Self-Transcendence	q104	−0.20	0.03	−5.89	Yes
LISS	Self-Transcendence	q105	−0.11	0.05	−2.48	No
LISS	Self-Transcendence	q116	0.21	0.03	6.09	Yes
LISS	Self-Transcendence	q118	0.13	0.03	3.77	Yes
LISS	Self-Transcendence	q119	0.18	0.04	5.03	Yes
LISS	Self-Transcendence	q120	−0.20	0.04	−5.25	Yes
LISS	Self-Transcendence	q125	−0.04	0.04	−1.13	No
LISS	Self-Transcendence	q127	0.03	0.02	1.36	No
LISS	Self-Transcendence	q130	−0.02	0.04	−0.61	No

Figure E1: Average Stability of Principled and Unprincipled Policy Opinions
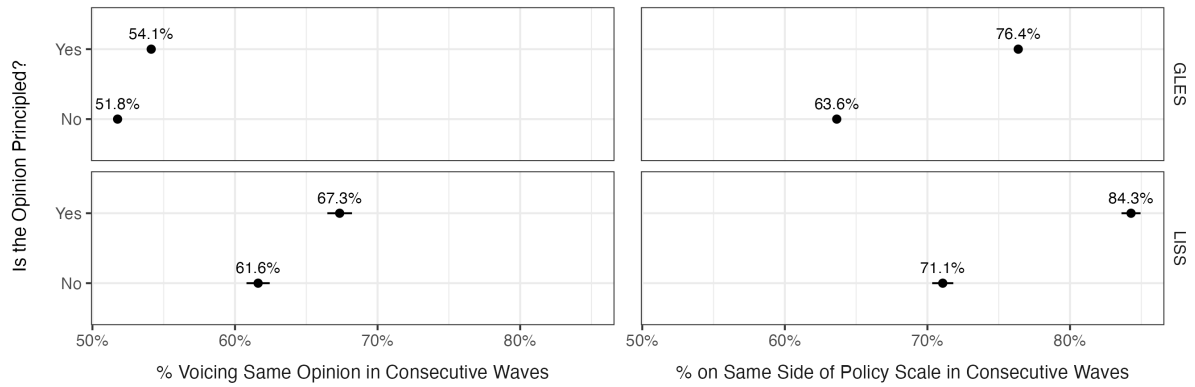
The relative stability of principled and unprincipled opinions, averaging across different policy issues, values, and periods. The left side of the figure depicts the percentages of panelists who voiced the same exact opinion in two consecutive waves, whereas the right side depicts the percentage who stood on the same side of a policy scale at two consecutive waves. Lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Data weighted to give each value-policy pair equal weight.

Figure E2: Comparing the Effects of Principledness and Party Agreement
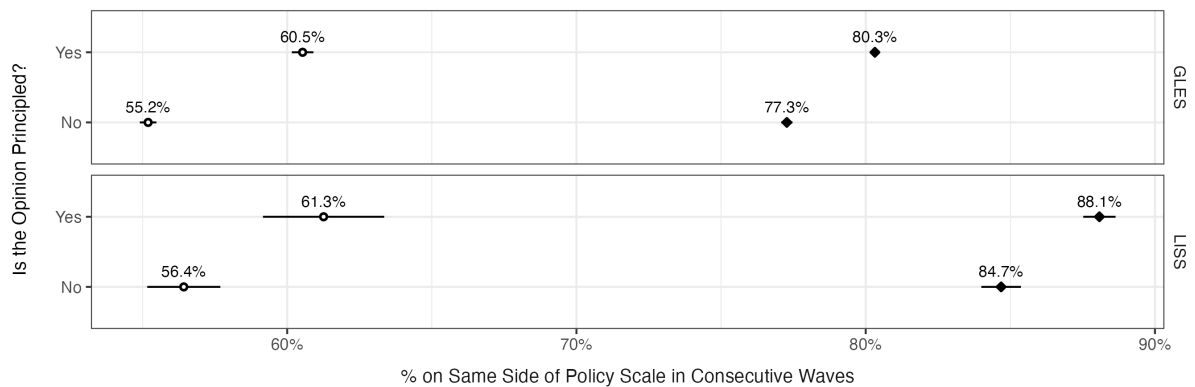
The effects of principledness and party agreement on opinion stability. White points represent cases where a panelist disagreed with their party on a policy issue, whereas black diamonds represent cases where a panelist agreed with their party on a policy issue. Lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Data weighted to give each value-policy pair equal weight.
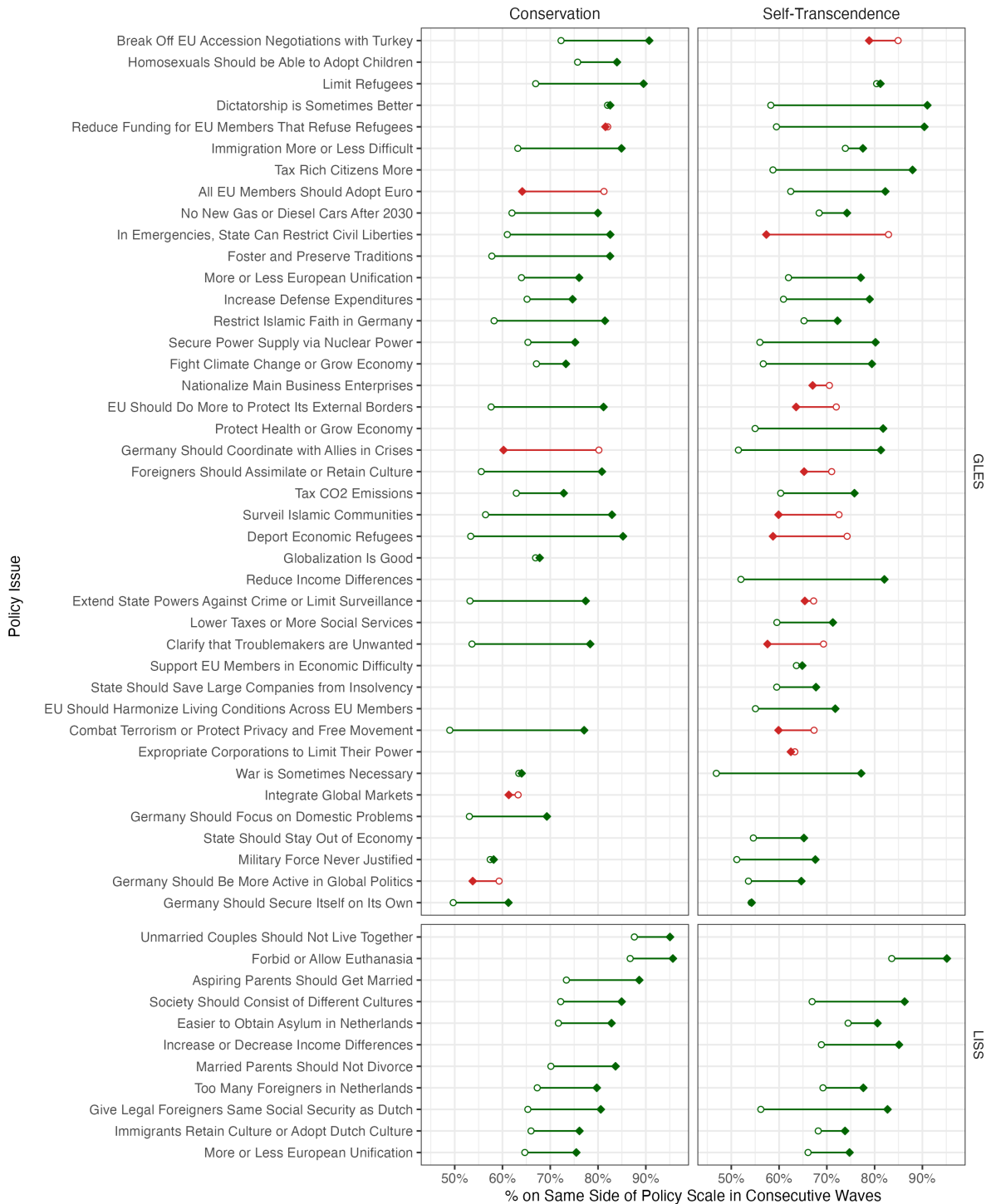
F   Effects by Value and Policy Issue

One may wonder whether the effects of principledness on opinion stability vary depending on what value or policy issue is in focus. To assess this possibility, I run a separate logistic regression for each pairing of value and policy issue:

$$OpinionStable_{i,t} = \beta_1 * Principled_{i,t} + Controls + \epsilon_{i,t}$$

In this model, $OpinionStable_{i,t}$ indicates whether a panelist's (i) opinion about the policy issue was stable over period t. $Principled_{i,t}$ indicates whether a panelist's policy opinion was consistent with the value at the beginning of period t. $Controls$ represents vectors of control variables. These include individual-level traits that might increase opinion stability: political interest, education, and age (e.g., Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). I also control for how extreme each panelist's opinion was at the beginning of period t (i.e., the absolute distance between the panelist's opinion and the scale midpoint) as some evidence suggests that extreme opinions may be less stable over time (Klein and Stavrova 2023). Finally, the model includes period fixed effects. Standard errors were clustered by panelist.

Figure F1 displays the results of these models. The left side of Figure F1 depicts the effects of consistency with conservation values, whereas the right side of Figure F1 depicts the effects of consistency with self-transcendence values. Hollow points represent unprincipled opinions, whereas filled diamonds represent principled opinions. Green lines indicate cases where principled opinions are more stable than unprincipled opinions. Red lines indicate cases where principled opinions are less stable than unprincipled opinions. As can be seen in Figure F1, looking across cases, principled opinions are generally more stable than unprincipled opinions. However, the size of this effect differs greatly across cases. Moreover, in some cases, principled opinions are *less* stable than unprincipled opinions.

Figure F1: Average Stability of Principled and Unprincipled Policy Opinions, by Value and Policy Issue

The relative stability of principled and unprincipled opinions by value and policy issue. Hollow points represent unprincipled opinions, whereas filled diamonds represent principled opinions. Green lines indicate cases where principled opinions are more stable than unprincipled opinions. Red lines indicate cases where principled opinions are less stable than unprincipled opinions. Lines represent 95% confidence intervals.

G   Stability of Party Positions

When analyzing the effects of party agreement, I operationalize each party's position as that taken by the majority of party members who hold a position on a policy issue (i.e., disregarding "don't knows" and midpoint responses). How often do these positions change?

To answer this question, I counted the number of times each party's position "noticeably" changed. Noticeable changes meet two criteria. One, the party exhibited a statistically significant change in its position from one wave to the next ($p < .05$, *two-tailed*). Two, the party's position was *qualitatively* different. For example, if the percentage of opinion-holding party members who supported a policy was less than 50% at t_1 but was statistically indistinguishable from 50% at t_2, this would be considered a qualitative change.

Tables G1 and G2 show that noticeable changes in parties' positions do happen, but are relatively rare. Insofar as noticeable changes do occur, this would depress the effects of party agreement on opinion stability.

Table G1: Sum of Changes in Party Positions (GLES)

Policy Item	First Date Asked	Last Date Asked	AfD	CDU	CDU/CSU	CSU	DIE LINKE	FDP	GRÜNE	SPD
060b	2017-02-17	2021-12-09	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
060e	2017-02-17	2021-12-09	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
060i	2017-02-17	2021-12-09	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
060k	2017-02-17	2019-11-06	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
060l	2020-04-21	2021-12-09	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1090	2016-10-14	2021-09-30	0	8	6	0	0	0	0	0
1130	2016-10-14	2021-12-09	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
1210	2016-10-14	2021-09-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1250	2016-10-14	2021-09-30	0	1	4	3	1	2	0	0
1290	2016-10-14	2021-09-30	3	4	7	4	0	1	0	0
1411	2016-10-14	2021-02-26	0	0	0	0	2	0	5	0
1483a	2017-02-17	2021-12-09	1	2	2	1	0	1	0	2
1483b	2017-02-17	2021-12-09	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
1483c	2017-02-17	2021-12-09	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
1483d	2017-02-17	2021-12-09	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1483e	2017-02-17	2021-12-09	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
1483f	2017-02-17	2021-12-09	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1483g	2017-02-17	2021-12-09	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
1483h	2017-02-17	2021-12-09	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880a	2016-10-14	2017-07-07	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880aa	2017-08-18	2017-09-28	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880ab	2017-08-18	2017-09-05	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880ac	2017-08-18	2018-03-16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880ad	2017-09-05	2017-09-19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880ae	2017-09-05	2017-09-28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880af	2017-09-19	2017-09-28	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
2880ag	2018-03-16	2021-12-09	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
2880ah	2018-03-16	2021-12-09	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880ai	2018-03-16	2021-12-09	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

2880ak	2019-05-29	2021-02-26	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
2880al	2019-05-29	2021-12-09	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880ao	2019-05-29	2021-02-26	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880ap	2019-05-29	2021-09-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880b	2016-10-14	2017-09-28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880ba	2020-04-21	2021-08-12	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2
2880bb	2020-04-21	2021-12-09	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
2880bc	2020-04-21	2021-12-09	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880bg	2020-10-04	2020-11-04	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880bh	2020-10-04	2020-11-04	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
2880bt	2018-11-07	2019-11-06	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880c	2016-10-14	2017-02-17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880d	2016-10-14	2021-09-30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880e	2016-10-14	2020-10-04	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880f	2016-10-14	2017-02-17	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
2880g	2016-10-14	2021-09-30	1	0	0	1	0	5	0	0
2880h	2016-10-14	2021-02-26	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
2880j	2017-02-17	2021-09-15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880k	2017-02-17	2018-11-07	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
2880l	2017-05-13	2021-02-26	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
2880m	2017-02-17	2020-10-04	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
2880t	2020-04-21	2021-07-08	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2880u	2017-09-28	2021-07-08	0	0	2	2	0	3	0	0
2880v	2017-05-13	2021-12-09	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
2880w	2017-07-07	2021-05-07	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
2880x	2017-07-07	2018-03-16	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
2880y	2017-07-07	2021-07-08	3	1	1	1	0	2	0	0
2880z	2017-08-18	2017-09-28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3103c	2017-08-18	2021-12-09	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
3103f	2017-08-18	2021-12-09	0	0	3	2	0	3	4	3

Table G2: Sum of Changes in Party Positions (LISS)

Policy Item	50Plus	BBB	CDA	ChristenUnie	D66	DENK	ForumvoorDemocratie	GroenLinks	JA21	PVV	PartijvoordeDieren	PvdA	SGP	SP	VVD	Volt
q102	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
q103	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
q104	0	0		0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
q105	0	1		0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
q116	1	0		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
q118	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
q119	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
q120	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
q125	0	2		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
q127	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
q130	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

H   Distributions of Values by Political Party

Figures H1 and H2 depict the distribution of GLES and LISS panelists' conservation and self-transcendence values, segmenting by partisanship. These figures show that political parties are not well-sorted by their basic values. Indeed, in the GLES, the intra-class correlation between partisanship and values is .04 for conservation values and .09 for self-transcendence values. In the LISS, the intra-class correlation between partisanship and values is .19 for conservation values and .10 for self-transcendence values.
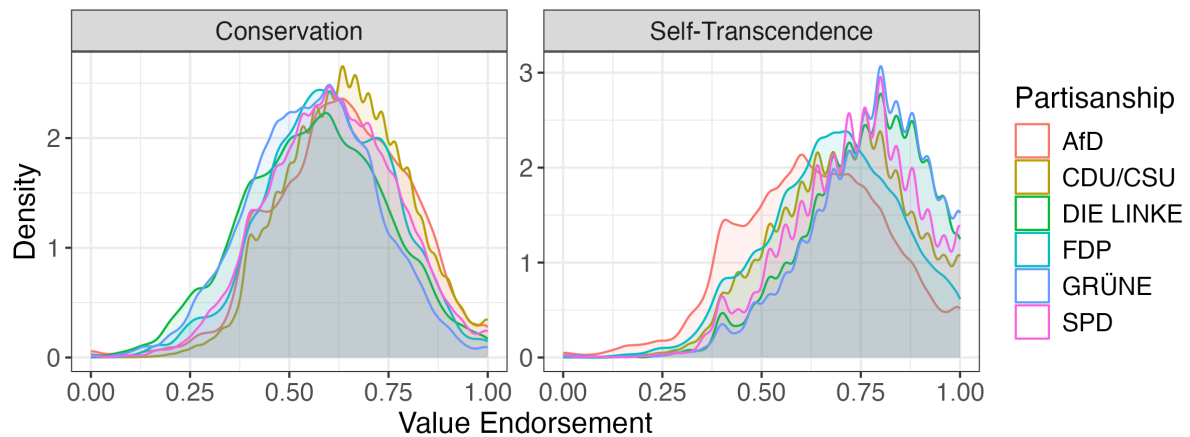
Figure H1: The distribution of GLES panelists' conservation and self-transcendence values, segmenting by partisanship.
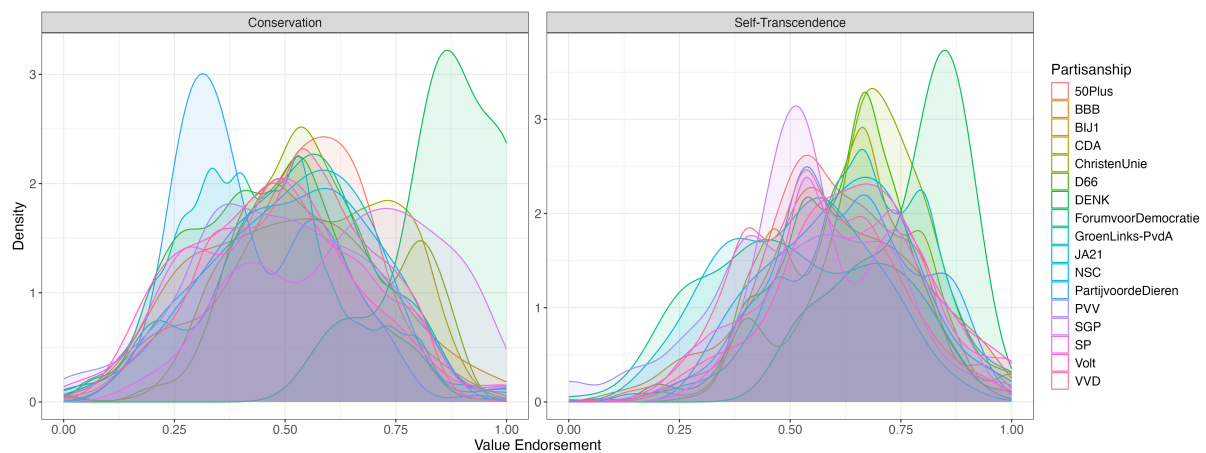
Figure H2: The distribution of LISS panelists' conservation and self-transcendence values, segmenting by partisanship.

I Effect of Values on Policy Opinions By Education and Political Interest

Table I1: Effects of Values on Policy Opinions By Education and Political Interest

	M: Education		M: Political Interest	
	GLES	LISS	GLES	LISS
Value	0.036***	−0.039	0.039***	−0.002
	(0.004)	(0.028)	(0.004)	(0.025)
Moderator	−0.131***	−0.197***	−0.067***	−0.160***
	(0.004)	(0.025)	(0.005)	(0.025)
Value * Moderator	0.164***	0.333***	0.149***	0.307***
	(0.007)	(0.046)	(0.007)	(0.046)
Num.Obs.	5 599 794	224 814	5 590 737	226 627
R2 Adj.	0.232	0.327	0.230	0.325
R2 Within Adj.	0.014	0.022	0.011	0.021
RMSE	0.28	0.24	0.28	0.24

Note: This model includes value-policy pair and period fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by panelist.

J   Adding Panelist Fixed Effects

In the main paper, I estimate the relationship between opinion stability and value-consistency by running logistic regressions of the following form:

$$OpinionStable_{i,p,t} = \beta_1 * Principled_{i,p,v,t} + Controls + \epsilon_{i,p,v,t}$$

As a reminder, in this model, $Controls$ represents a matrix of control variables. These include individual-level traits that might increase opinion stability (political interest, education, and age) as well as how extreme each panelist's opinion was at the beginning of period t (i.e., the distance between the panelist's opinion and the scale midpoint). Finally, the model includes value-policy pair and period fixed effects.

Because this model compares the opinions of different individuals, it is relatively easy to interpret. However, an important downside of this model is that it fails to control for all stable, unmeasured differences between individuals. These differences could account for the stability gap between principled and unprincipled opinions. To account for this possibility, I run a new model that includes panelist fixed effects:

$$OpinionStable_{i,p,t} = \beta_1 * Principled_{i,p,v,t} + \beta_2 * Extremity_{i,p,t} + \theta_i + \gamma_p + \lambda_t + \epsilon_{i,p,v,t}$$

where $Extremity$ codes how extreme each panelist's opinion was at the beginning of period t, θ is a vector of panelist fixed effects, γ is a vector of value-policy pair fixed effects, and λ is a vector of period fixed effects. As in the previous model, I cluster standard errors by panelist.

This revised model exclusively utilizes within-person differences in the principledness and stability of citizens' opinions, across issues and periods, to estimate the relationship between opinion stability and principledness. For instance, the model would take advantage of instances where, within the same period, a citizen has a principled opinion about one policy issue but not another. It would also leverage cases where the same person had an unprincipled opinion about an issue at one period, but a principled opinion about the same issue at another period.

As shown in Figure J1 below, this model produces results that are quite similar to those I report in the main paper. In other words, stable differences between individuals cannot explain the stability gap between principled and unprincipled opinions.

Similar concerns about unmeasured, between-subject differences could also be raised about my model that examines whether opinion stability better tracks principledness or party agreement. As such, I subject this model to the same treatment. The revised model is as follows:

$$OpinionStable_{i,p,t} = \beta_1 * Principled_{i,p,v,t} + \beta_2 * AgreeParty_{i,p,t} +$$
$$\beta_3 * Principled_{i,p,v,t} * AgreeParty_{i,p,t} + \beta_4 * Extremity_{i,p,t} + \theta_i + \gamma_p + \lambda_t + \epsilon_{i,p,v,t}$$

The results of this model are presented in Figure J2. Once again, the results of the revised model are similar to its counterpart in the main paper.

Figure J1: Average Stability of Principled and Unprincipled Policy Opinions
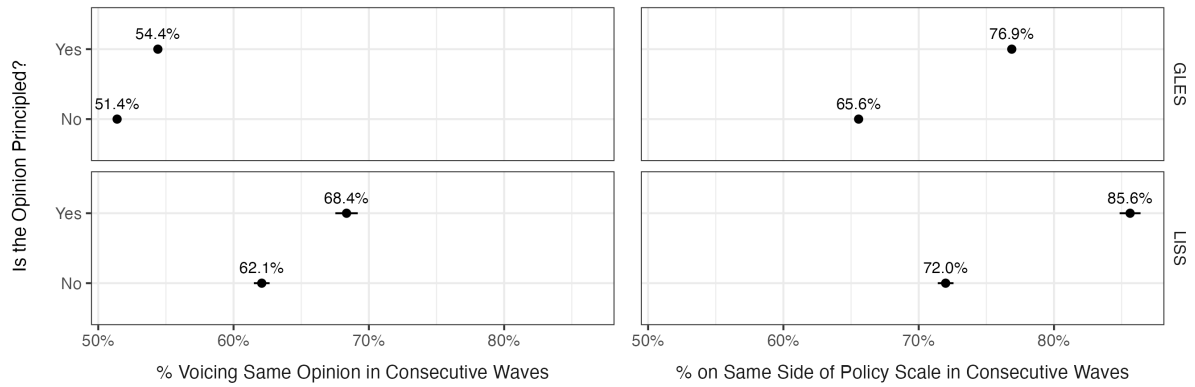
The relative stability of principled and unprincipled opinions, averaging across different policy issues, values, and periods. The left side of the figure depicts the percentage of panelists who voiced the same exact opinion in two consecutive waves, whereas the right side depicts the percentage who stood on the same side of a policy scale at two consecutive waves. Lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Data weighted to give each value-policy pair equal weight.

Figure J2: Comparing Principledness and Party Agreement
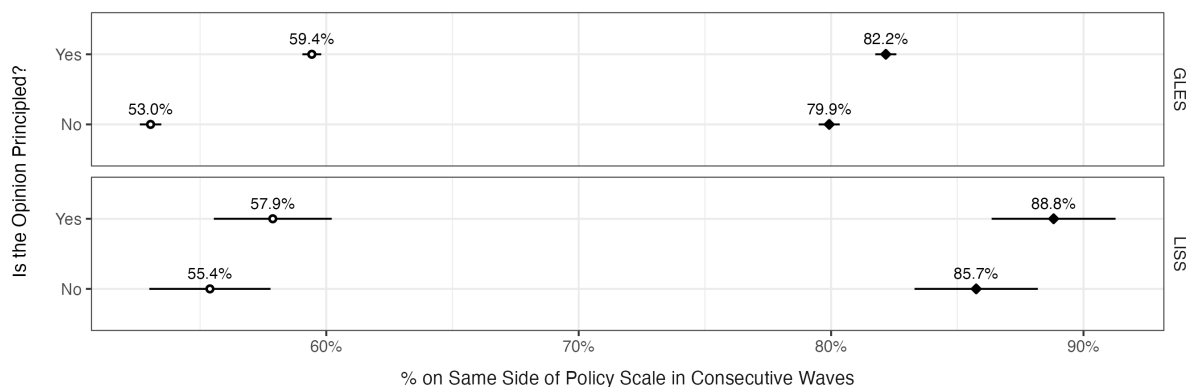
The association between principledness, party agreement, and opinion stability. White points represent cases where a panelist disagreed with their party on a policy issue, whereas black diamonds represent cases where a panelist agreed with their party on a policy issue. Lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Data weighted to give each value-policy pair equal weight.

K Tabular Models

Table K1: Associational 'Effect' of Principledness on Opinion Stability

| | DV: Same Opinion | | DV: Same Side | |
	GLES	LISS	GLES	LISS
Principled	0.022	0.017	0.030	0.028
	(0.001)	(0.005)	(0.001)	(0.004)
Education	0.014	0.027	0.024	0.018
	(0.003)	(0.015)	(0.003)	(0.013)
Political Interest	0.012	0.006	0.017	0.018
	(0.004)	(0.014)	(0.004)	(0.011)
Age	0.001	0.000	0.001	−0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Opinion Extremity	−0.011	−0.082	−0.212	−0.245
	(0.002)	(0.008)	(0.002)	(0.008)
Num.Obs.	2 568 843	99 896	2 568 843	99 896
R2	0.025	0.024	0.071	0.101
RMSE	0.49	0.47	0.44	0.39

This model includes value-policy pair and period fixed effects.
Standard errors are clustered by panelist.

Table K2: Associational 'Effects' of Principledness and Party Agreement on Opinion Stability

| | DV: Same Side | |
	GLES	LISS
Principled	−0.050	−0.092
	(0.002)	(0.012)
AgreeParty	0.104	0.156
	(0.002)	(0.008)
Principled * AgreeParty	0.078	0.113
	(0.003)	(0.012)
Education	0.039	0.031
	(0.003)	(0.012)
Political Interest	0.003	0.011
	(0.004)	(0.010)
Age	0.001	−0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Num.Obs.	2 558 560	99 896
R2	0.126	0.154
RMSE	0.43	0.38

This model includes value-policy pair and period fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by panelist.

Table K3: Associational 'Effects' of Principledness and Party Agreement (Within Sub-Populations)

	N: High Education		N: High Political Interest		N: High Value Importance	
	GLES	LISS	GLES	LISS	GLES	LISS
Principled	−0.038	−0.047	−0.017	−0.037	−0.020	−0.039
	(0.004)	(0.022)	(0.004)	(0.018)	(0.006)	(0.025)
AgreeParty	0.096	0.155	0.125	0.181	0.099	0.164
	(0.004)	(0.014)	(0.004)	(0.013)	(0.004)	(0.016)
Principled * AgreeParty	0.069	0.077	0.047	0.065	0.070	0.078
	(0.004)	(0.023)	(0.005)	(0.019)	(0.007)	(0.027)
Education			0.052	0.017	0.040	0.042
			(0.006)	(0.016)	(0.005)	(0.017)
Political Interest	−0.005	0.005			−0.022	0.024
	(0.006)	(0.021)			(0.006)	(0.015)
Age	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	−0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Num.Obs.	856 281	33 298	856 281	33 298	856 281	33 298
R2	0.136	0.168	0.152	0.181	0.142	0.170
RMSE	0.42	0.37	0.41	0.36	0.42	0.37

This model includes value-policy pair and period fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by panelist.

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