



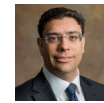
Prospects for a Shift Back to Value

Time to consider a changing environment.

December 2019

KEY INSIGHTS

- After a prolonged growth cycle, we feel the environment is becoming increasingly more favorable to value investing.
- Reversals of style regimes can be unpredictable but typically happen abruptly and can be sustained for a long time. We question how well positioned many investors are for such a change.
- The narrow leadership and bifurcated nature of markets have left many opportunities for investors with a value perspective.



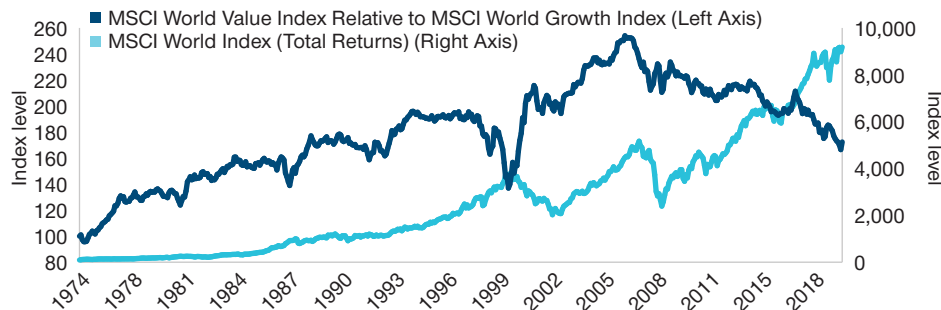
Sebastien Mallet
*Portfolio Manager,
Global Value Equity Strategy*

Value investing has been out of favor for some time, weighed down by a backdrop of low economic growth, low inflation, and record low interest rates. More recently, however, we have seen a sporadic rotation out of momentum-driven growth stocks into more cyclically

oriented value names. Is this just a short-term movement, or are we about to witness a more sustainable shift back in favor of value over growth stocks? This is important as history tells us that when regime changes happen, they can be swift and dramatic, with large stock price movements.

(Fig. 1) Value's Underperformance vs. Growth Seems Overdone

Factors are building that could see a reversal
As of September 30, 2019



Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance.

Sources: FactSet and MSCI (see Additional Disclosures).

“... we feel the environment is becoming increasingly favorable to value investing.”

The Case for Reevaluating Value

For much of the past decade, growth style investing has dominated. (Figure 1 demonstrates the extended period of outperformance for growth stocks.) To an extent, this has been justified by fundamentals—technological advances, structural changes in slower growing economies, and lower inflation that has helped power markedly better cash flow and earnings for growth sectors of the market. Investors’ preferences have been further reinforced by policy actions—not least the unprecedented suppression of interest rates and the deleveraging that has occurred.

Valuation spreads between high and low momentum stocks in general have also widened appreciably, with the recent rotation in the market only reducing that slightly. Along with the strong performance in momentum stocks in recent years, we have also seen other quality-related factors, such as return on equity and growth, perform well. A consequence of this has been an even sharper divergence with the performance of value. Figures 2a and 2b show not only the negative correlations, but also the fact that they have been

approaching historic extremes. This reinforces our impression that markets could be due to correct.

So, is the recent movement just a short-term reaction to factor relationships that had become too extreme, or are we on a cusp of a more sustainable regime shift back in favor of value over growth stocks?

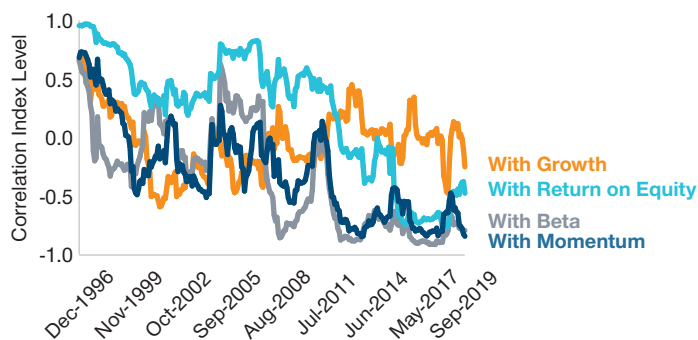
Using our analysis, we see that regime shifts have occurred in a range of different economic environments. We do not necessarily need a new economic upswing for value to reassert itself. Although many parts of the value universe are economically sensitive, such as banks and “high cyclical” industrials, there is also a healthy representation of more defensive areas, such as utilities and other traditional industries.

Historically, the backdrop for a value recovery is often one where relative valuations have become extreme, and broader performance patterns are upended. As seen in Figure 1, market turning points are often quite contemporaneous with regime changes, while Figure 3 shows the current relative valuation levels in relation to history.

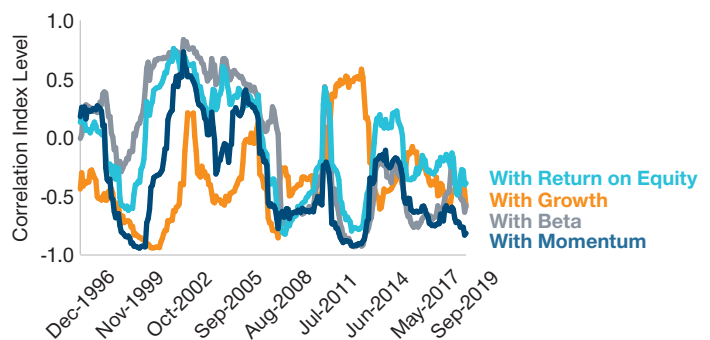
(Fig. 2) Diversification Benefits of Value

Negative correlations approaching historic extremes
As of September 30, 2019

2a: Value Correlations With Other Factors—EAFE



2b: Value Correlations With Other Factors—U.S.



Sources: T. Rowe Price, Kenneth French Data.

EAFE data: Data from Morgan Stanley Capital International for 1996 to 2006 and from Bloomberg for 2007 to present.

U.S. data: Includes all NYSE, AMEX, and NASDAQ firms with the necessary data.

Analysis is for research purposes only and does not represent actual portfolios or investments. Factors were defined by Kenneth French using portfolios formed on size, portfolios formed on book-to-market value, portfolios formed on operating profitability and portfolios formed on investment. See Additional Disclosures.

4.5x¹

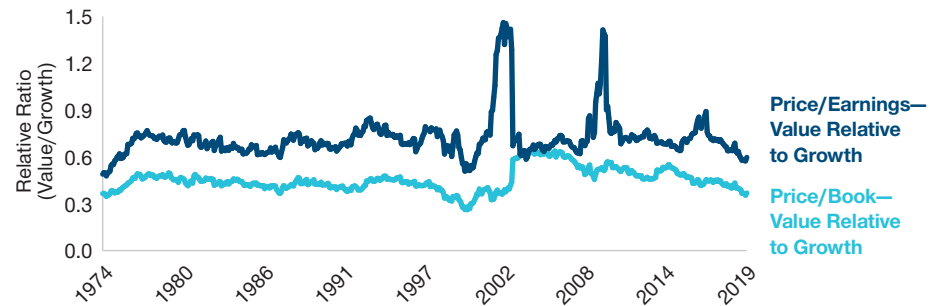
MSCI World Growth Index—price-to-book value ratio.

1.6x¹

MSCI World Value Index—price-to-book value ratio.

(Fig. 3) Value Maintains Its Valuation Discount

Relative valuations have become even more attractive
As of September 30, 2019



Relative valuation measures: We have divided the ratios for the MSCI World Value Index by the ratio for MSCI World Growth Index to demonstrate the differential.
Sources: FactSet and MSCI (see Additional Disclosures). Analysis by T. Rowe Price.

While it is difficult to accurately time a reversal in style regimes, extreme valuation gaps have typically been one of the key catalysts. We would also argue that the current low relative valuation starting point for many stocks within the value universe represents a margin of safety in today's environment.

However, any eventual shift in style regime does not necessarily signify a uniform downturn for growth stocks. Many with the best growth profiles

continue to generate some of the highest free cash flow margins. But, if the global economy continues to slow or move into recession, we expect that these companies will be in uncharted waters. There are no previous cycles where such dominant companies have had to adapt to a sluggish economy that could work to undermine their growth. This contrasts with the value sector, which features companies that have been operating for more than 100 years through a range of economic cycles. We

Factors That Could Propel a Regime Shift Back to Value

Return to Rationality



There is now around USD 15 trillion of negative yielding fixed income instruments currently in the market. Not only does this appear anomalous when compared with the yields offered by equities, it is also causing distortions in markets.

Sentiment Shifts



There are increasing signs that “the times they are a-changing”—capital has been ascendant over labor, populism is rising, and there are increasing demands for intervention. In particular, we have seen a call for greater fiscal support, while some are also advocating modern monetary theory. These would be supportive for value-oriented areas of the market.

Changing of the Guard



The idea that today's biggest companies—primarily U.S. technology companies—will continue to dominate the next decade should be met with caution. Seldom do the same companies, or even economies (such as Japan in the 1980s) manage to sustain such dominance.

¹Source: MSCI, as of September 30, 2019.

“Relative valuation levels present exciting opportunities for bottom-up stock pickers, particularly for those with a marked value perspective.”

therefore have a greater, perhaps more predictable, understanding as to how these firms are likely to perform when economies change course.

Disruption Is Real, But It Is Not a One-Way Street

Disruption is real, and the dynamics of this has created divergent outcomes across a range of industries to the expense of many incumbent competitors. At the same time, we believe that in many corners of the market the hopes for today’s winners—as reflected in their valuations and the consensus belief in them—could well disappoint. The risks to them—including their own disruption, further technological shifts, increasing costs of capital and regulation—are real. While the consistent propensity for investors to overestimate both the magnitude and persistence of earnings growth for these companies is also a potential barrier.

However, we are ever diligent about the risks that value-oriented companies face and how disruption is impacting companies more generally. There is an elevated level of uncertainty in many investors’ minds due to the structural

changes that have occurred. That is why it is important to remain disciplined in order to avoid value traps. But we would also point out that long-established brands are fighting back and adapting to the “new world.” They are developing their own capabilities, acquiring or partnering with innovators. Also, many traditional business models remain highly relevant and continue to provide durable earnings growth.

Higher Valuations and Greater Dispersion Favor Active Approach

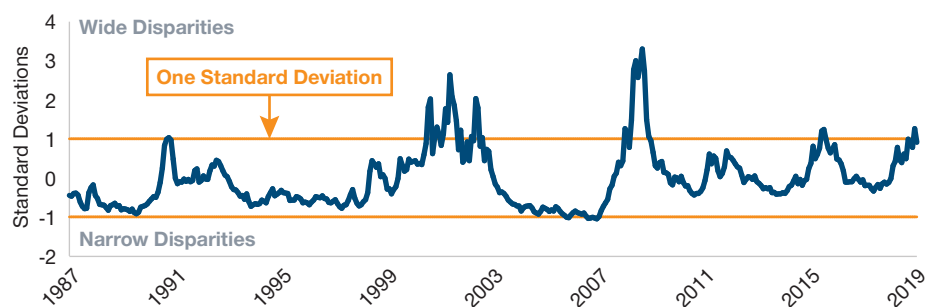
With the market reflecting some extreme levels (in terms of growth outperformance and value underperformance), it is presenting exciting opportunities for bottom-up stock pickers, particularly for those with a marked value perspective. Over the past 18 months, the market has seen increasing dispersion in performance and widening valuation spreads (Figure 4).

Near Term and Beyond

It remains to be seen whether the recent occasional bouts of factor rotation are a sign that we are on the cusp of a major shift in style regimes.

(Fig. 4) Valuation Spreads Near Historical Peaks

Increased dispersion offer opportunities for stock pickers
As of September 30, 2019



Developed markets spreads are represented by the MSCI World Index. Top quintile compared with the market average. We form value and growth portfolios in each country using four ratios: book-to-market (B/M); earnings-price (E/P); cash earnings to price (CE/P); and dividend yield (D/P). Firms in the country portfolios are value-weighted. To construct the developed market spreads, we weight each country in proportion to its global weight. Analysis is for research purposes only and does not represent actual portfolios or investments.

Source: Empirical Research Partners Analysis.

“...when regime changes happen, they can be swift and dramatic, with large stock price movements.

However, there can be no denying that the current growth cycle has been both extended and dramatic. There is also an increasing recognition that the investment landscape may be changing, not least a challenge to the prevailing deflationary mindset. Signs of improving macro conditions, ongoing monetary stimulus, extreme valuation differentials, and stretched positioning are combining as a compelling backdrop for a recovery in value.

With markets currently elevated, and after a prolonged growth cycle, we feel relative prices favor value-orientated

areas of the market. Specifically, stock-specific valuation multiples have widened—creating a much better backdrop for value stock pickers.

Historical evidence argues for style change, but we may still be too early to persuade the skeptics. The market's enthusiasm for some of the attributes of growth stocks may be hard to move, but they will likely start to weaken. As noted, when regime changes happen, they can be swift and dramatic. Equity investors will not want to find themselves isolated on the wrong side of any shift.

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING NEXT

The following are potential short-term triggers that could cause investors to dramatically reassess their positioning: (1) Resolution of trade and tariff concerns—clearly the U.S.-China relationship is in the headlines, but there are also concerns about escalation involving Europe. (2) Effective policy stimulus—with the space for further monetary easing being squeezed, the onus is shifting more toward a fiscal response. (3) A pickup in nominal activity—economic data have worsened materially, providing scope for a pickup, whereas any signs of incipient inflation could be profound.

Additional Disclosures

Financial data and analytics provider FactSet. Copyright 2018 FactSet. All Rights Reserved.

MSCI and its affiliates and third party sources and providers (collectively, “MSCI”) makes no express or implied warranties or representations and shall have no liability whatsoever with respect to any MSCI data contained herein. The MSCI data may not be further redistributed or used as a basis for other indices or any securities or financial products. This report is not approved, reviewed, or produced by MSCI. Historical MSCI data and analysis should not be taken as an indication or guarantee of any future performance analysis, forecast or prediction. None of the MSCI data is intended to constitute investment advice or a recommendation to make (or refrain from making) any kind of investment decision and may not be relied on as such.

The broad market returns and factor returns used in our analysis were drawn from French Data Library, a research site maintained by Kenneth R. French, a finance professor at Dartmouth University and a noted academic researcher. Broad market returns for the U.S. Data were based on daily returns for a capitalization-weighted universe consisting of the U.S. common stocks listed on the New York Stock Exchange, the American Stock Exchange, and the Nasdaq market for which reliable price and return data are available. For the EAFE data, Morgan Stanley Capital International data was used from 1996 until 2006. Thereafter, Bloomberg provided the source data.

Factor returns were based on portfolios created from the stocks in the broad market universe ranked by the following factors:

For Value portfolios these were formed on Book-to-Market Value using the <0; bottom 30%, middle 40%, top 30%; quintiles; deciles.

Firms with negative book equity are in only the BE < 0 portfolio.

For Growth portfolios these were formed on Operating Profitability - bottom 30%, middle 40%, top 30%; quintiles; deciles.

For Return on Equity this was based on all the constituents of the relative indices's.

For Beta this was based on portfolios formed on univariate market beta (β) at the end of each June for each index.

For momentum six value-weight portfolios formed on size and prior (2-12) returns to construct Momentum.

For more details on the return methodology, please see the French Data Library, on the Web at http://mba.tuck.dartmouth.edu/pages/faculty/ken.french/data_library.html.

T. Rowe Price focuses on delivering investment management excellence that investors can rely on—now and over the long term.

T.RowePrice[®]

Important Information

This material is being furnished for general informational purposes only. The material does not constitute or undertake to give advice of any nature, including fiduciary investment advice, and prospective investors are recommended to seek independent legal, financial and tax advice before making any investment decision. T. Rowe Price group of companies including T. Rowe Price Associates, Inc. and/or its affiliates receive revenue from T. Rowe Price investment products and services. **Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance.** The value of an investment and any income from it can go down as well as up. Investors may get back less than the amount invested.

The material does not constitute a distribution, an offer, an invitation, a personal or general recommendation or solicitation to sell or buy any securities in any jurisdiction or to conduct any particular investment activity. The material has not been reviewed by any regulatory authority in any jurisdiction.

Information and opinions presented have been obtained or derived from sources believed to be reliable and current; however, we cannot guarantee the sources' accuracy or completeness. There is no guarantee that any forecasts made will come to pass. The views contained herein are as of the date written and are subject to change without notice; these views may differ from those of other T. Rowe Price group companies and/or associates. Under no circumstances should the material, in whole or in part, be copied or redistributed without consent from T. Rowe Price.

The material is not intended for use by persons in jurisdictions which prohibit or restrict the distribution of the material and in certain countries the material is provided upon specific request. It is not intended for distribution to retail investors in any jurisdiction.

Australia—Issued in Australia by T. Rowe Price Australia Limited (ABN: 13 620 668 895 and AFSL: 503741), Level 50, Governor Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Suite 50B, Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia. For Wholesale Clients only.

Brunei—This material can only be delivered to certain specific institutional investors for informational purpose upon request only. The strategy and/or any products associated with the strategy has not been authorised for distribution in Brunei. No distribution of this material to any member of the public in Brunei is permitted.

Canada—Issued in Canada by T. Rowe Price (Canada), Inc. T. Rowe Price (Canada), Inc.'s investment management services are only available to Accredited Investors as defined under National Instrument 45-106. T. Rowe Price (Canada), Inc. enters into written delegation agreements with affiliates to provide investment management services.

China—This material is provided to specific qualified domestic institutional investor or sovereign wealth fund on a one-on-one basis. No invitation to offer, or offer for, or sale of, the shares will be made in the People's Republic of China ("PRC") (which, for such purpose, does not include the Hong Kong or Macau Special Administrative Regions or Taiwan) or by any means that would be deemed public under the laws of the PRC. The information relating to the strategy contained in this material has not been submitted to or approved by the China Securities Regulatory Commission or any other relevant governmental authority in the PRC. The strategy and/or any product associated with the strategy may only be offered or sold to investors in the PRC that are expressly authorized under the laws and regulations of the PRC to buy and sell securities denominated in a currency other than the Renminbi (or RMB), which is the official currency of the PRC. Potential investors who are resident in the PRC are responsible for obtaining the required approvals from all relevant government authorities in the PRC, including, but not limited to, the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, before purchasing the shares. This document further does not constitute any securities or investment advice to citizens of the PRC, or nationals with permanent residence in the PRC, or to any corporation, partnership, or other entity incorporated or established in the PRC.

DIFC—Issued in the Dubai International Financial Centre by T. Rowe Price International Ltd. This material is communicated on behalf of T. Rowe Price International Ltd. by its representative office which is regulated by the Dubai Financial Services Authority. For Professional Clients only.

EEA ex-UK—Unless indicated otherwise this material is issued and approved by T. Rowe Price (Luxembourg) Management S.à r.l. 35 Boulevard du Prince Henri L-1724 Luxembourg which is authorised and regulated by the Luxembourg Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier. For Professional Clients only.

Hong Kong—Issued in Hong Kong by T. Rowe Price Hong Kong Limited, 6/F, Chater House, 8 Connaught Road Central, Hong Kong. T. Rowe Price Hong Kong Limited is licensed and regulated by the Securities & Futures Commission. For Professional Investors only.

Indonesia—This material is intended to be used only by the designated recipient to whom T. Rowe Price delivered; it is for institutional use only. Under no circumstances should the material, in whole or in part, be copied, redistributed or shared, in any medium, without prior written consent from T. Rowe Price. No distribution of this material to members of the public in any jurisdiction is permitted.

Korea—This material is intended only to Qualified Professional Investors upon specific and unsolicited request and may not be reproduced in whole or in part nor can they be transmitted to any other person in the Republic of Korea.

Malaysia—This material can only be delivered to specific institutional investor upon specific and unsolicited request. The strategy and/or any products associated with the strategy has not been authorised for distribution in Malaysia. This material is solely for institutional use and for informational purposes only. This material does not provide investment advice or an offering to make, or an inducement or attempted inducement of any person to enter into or to offer to enter into, an agreement for or with a view to acquiring, disposing of, subscribing for or underwriting securities. Nothing in this material shall be considered a making available of, solicitation to buy, an offering for subscription or purchase or an invitation to subscribe for or purchase any securities, or any other product or service, to any person in any jurisdiction where such offer, solicitation, purchase or sale would be unlawful under the laws of Malaysia.

New Zealand—Issued in New Zealand by T. Rowe Price Australia Limited (ABN: 13 620 668 895 and AFSL: 503741), Level 50, Governor Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Suite 50B, Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia. No Interests are offered to the public. Accordingly, the Interests may not, directly or indirectly, be offered, sold or delivered in New Zealand, nor may any offering document or advertisement in relation to the Interests be distributed in New Zealand, other than in circumstances where there is no contravention of the Financial Markets Conduct Act 2013.

Philippines—THE STRATEGY AND/ OR ANY SECURITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE STRATEGY BEING OFFERED OR SOLD HEREIN HAVE NOT BEEN REGISTERED WITH THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION UNDER THE SECURITIES REGULATION CODE. ANY FUTURE OFFER OR SALE OF THE STRATEGY AND/ OR ANY SECURITIES IS SUBJECT TO REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE CODE, UNLESS SUCH OFFER OR SALE QUALIFIES AS AN EXEMPT TRANSACTION.

Singapore—Issued in Singapore by T. Rowe Price Singapore Private Ltd., No. 501 Orchard Rd, #10-02 Wheelock Place, Singapore 238880. T. Rowe Price Singapore Private Ltd. is licensed and regulated by the Monetary Authority of Singapore. For Institutional and Accredited Investors only.

South Africa—T. Rowe Price International Ltd ("TRPIL") is an authorised financial services provider under the Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services Act, 2002 (FSP Licence Number 31935), authorised to provide "intermediary services" to South African investors.

Switzerland—Issued in Switzerland by T. Rowe Price (Switzerland) GmbH, Talstrasse 65, 6th Floor, 8001 Zurich, Switzerland. For Qualified Investors only.

Taiwan—This does not provide investment advice or recommendations. Nothing in this material shall be considered a solicitation to buy, or an offer to sell, a security, or any other product or service, to any person in the Republic of China.

Thailand—This material has not been and will not be filed with or approved by the Securities Exchange Commission of Thailand or any other regulatory authority in Thailand. The material is provided solely to "institutional investors" as defined under relevant Thai laws and regulations. No distribution of this material to any member of the public in Thailand is permitted. Nothing in this material shall be considered a provision of service, or a solicitation to buy, or an offer to sell, a security, or any other product or service, to any person where such provision, offer, solicitation, purchase or sale would be unlawful under relevant Thai laws and regulations.

UK—This material is issued and approved by T. Rowe Price International Ltd, 60 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4N 4TZ which is authorised and regulated by the UK Financial Conduct Authority. For Professional Clients only.

USA—Issued in the USA by T. Rowe Price Associates, Inc., 100 East Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD, 21202, which is regulated by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. For Institutional Investors only.

© 2019 T. Rowe Price. All rights reserved. T. ROWE PRICE, INVEST WITH CONFIDENCE, and the bighorn sheep design are, collectively and/or apart, trademarks or registered trademarks of T. Rowe Price Group, Inc.