Regina Polak
Patrick Rohs   *Editors*

Values – Politics – Religion: The European Values Study

In-depth Analysis – Interdisciplinary Perspectives – Future Prospects

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Editors

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In-depth Analysis – Interdisciplinary Perspectives – Future Prospects

≦ Springer

Editors
Regina Polak
Department of Practical Theology
Faculty of Catholic Theology
University of Vienna
Vienna, Austria

Patrick Rohs
Department of Practical Theology
Faculty of Catholic Theology
University of Vienna
Vienna, Austria

Country Codes and Clusters

ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 Code	Country	Chapter 4 (Halman/ Sieben)	Chapter 5 (S. Pickel/ G. Pickel)	Chapter 7 (Quandt/ Lomazzi)	Chapter 8 (Bréchon)	Chapter 12 (Aschauer)
AL	Albania	ex-communist	Southeastern Europe	ex-communist		
AM	Armenia	ex-Soviet	Russian region	ex-Soviet		
AT	Austria	Western	Western Europe	Western	Western Europe	Prosperous states
AZ	Azerbaijan		Russian region	ex-Soviet		
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	ex-communist	Southeastern Europe	ex-communist		
BE	Belgium			Western		
BG	Bulgaria	ex-communist	Southeastern Europe	ex-communist	Eastern Europe	Baltic states and Southeastern Europe
BY	Belarus	ex-Soviet	Russian region	ex-Soviet		
CH	Switzerland	Western	Western Europe	Western		Prosperous states
CZ	Czechia	ex-communist	Central Eastern Europe	ex-communist	Eastern Europe	Visegrád and Slovenia
DE*	Germany	Western	Western Europe	Western	Western	Prosperous states
DK	Denmark	Northern	Northern Europe	Northern	Nordic countries	Prosperous states

(continued)

ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 Code	Country	Chapter 4 (Halman/ Sieben)	Chapter 5 (S. Pickel/ G. Pickel)	Chapter 7 (Quandt/ Lomazzi)	Chapter 8 (Bréchon)	Chapter 12 (Aschauer)
EE	Estonia	ex-Soviet	Baltic region	ex-Soviet	Eastern Europe	Baltic states and Southeastern Europe
ES	Spain	Southern	Western Europe	Southern	Southern Europe	States with signs of crisis
FI	Finland	Northern	Northern Europe	Northern	Nordic countries	Prosperous states
FR	France	Western	Western Europe	Western	Western Europe	Prosperous states
GB**	Great Britain	Western	Western Europe	Western	Western Europe	States with signs of crisis
GE	Georgia	ex-Soviet	Russian region	ex-Soviet		
GR	Greece			Southern		States with signs of crisis
HR	Croatia	ex-communist	Southeastern Europe	ex-communist		States with signs of crisis
HU	Hungary	ex-communist	Central Eastern Europe	ex-communist	Eastern Europe	Visegrád and Slovenia
IE	Republic of Ireland			Western		
IS	Iceland	Northern	Northern Europe	Northern	Nordic countries	Prosperous states
IT	Italy	Southern	Western Europe	Southern	Southern Europe	States with signs of crisis
LT	Lithuania	ex-Soviet	Baltic region	ex-Soviet	Eastern Europe	Baltic states and Southeastern Europe
LU	Luxembourg			Western		
LV	Latvia			ex-Soviet		
ME	Montenegro	ex-communist	Southeastern Europe	ex-communist		
MK	North Macedonia	ex-communist	Southeastern Europe	ex-communist		
MT	Malta			Southern		
NL	The Netherlands	Western	Western Europe	Western	Western Europe	Prosperous states

ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 Code	Country	Chapter 4 (Halman/ Sieben)	Chapter 5 (S. Pickel/ G. Pickel)	Chapter 7 (Quandt/ Lomazzi)	Chapter 8 (Bréchon)	Chapter 12 (Aschauer)
NO	Norway	Northern	Northern Europe	Northern	Nordic countries	Prosperous states
PL	Poland	ex-communist	Central Eastern Europe	ex-communist	Eastern Europe	Visegrád and Slovenia
PT	Portugal		Western Europe	Southern	Southern Europe	States with signs of crisis
RO	Romania	ex-communist	Southeastern Europe	ex-communist	Eastern Europe	Baltic states and Southeastern Europe
RS	Serbia	ex-communist	Southeastern Europe	ex-communist		
RU	Russia	ex-Soviet	Russian region	ex-Soviet		
SE	Sweden	Northern	Northern Europe	Northern	Nordic countries	Prosperous states
SI	Slovenia	ex-communist	Central Eastern Europe	ex-communist	Eastern Europe	Visegrád and Slovenia
SK	Slovakia	ex-communist	Central Eastern Europe	ex-communist	Eastern Europe	Visegrád and Slovenia
TR	Turkey					
UA	Ukraine			ex-Soviet		

*Also DE (W) for West Germany and DE (E) for East Germany for earlier EVS waves
**Also GB-NIR for Northern Ireland

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Introduction

Regina Polak and Patrick Rohs

Abstract The introduction presents the idea and aims of this volume. The triad 'Values – Politics – Religion' forms the thematic framework within which results of the European Values Study based on the data of 1990, 1999, 2008, and 2017 are presented. The findings are embedded in an interdisciplinary discussion on the results, concepts, and challenges of this long-term study with a focus on the impact of religion on political values and attitudes. Against the background of the 'crisis permanence' since at least 2020, the editors argue the timeliness and relevance of this volume, as it offers fundamental empirical insights and theories as a starting point to further develop the expected value transformation in the years to come. Afterwards, the authors introduce the European Values Study, clarify the contested guiding concepts 'Values – Politics – Religion', and present the idea, character, outline, and structure of the volume. Furthermore, the research process, aims, and target groups of the volume are described. A summary of the individual contributions offers an overview of their main contents. The volume is intended as an explorative pilot study that aims at stimulating the further development of interdisciplinary values research and contributing to an in-depth, qualified discourse on values – in particular on the relationship between political and religious values – in society, politics, and religious communities.

Keywords European Values Study · Interdisciplinary values research · Liberal democracy · Religion and values · European values

R. Polak (✉) · P. Rohs
Department of Practical Theology, Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
e-mail: regina.polak@univie.ac.at; patrick.rohs@univie.ac.at

1.1   About This Study

The European Values Study (EVS) is the focus of this volume. The triad 'Values – Politics – Religion' as indicated in the title of the volume forms the thematic framework within which its dataset was analysed. Based on the data of the past four surveys waves in 1990, 1999, 2008, and 2017,[1] the authors offer an overview of political and religious values and their interrelationships among the European population. In particular, the authors discuss those political attitudes that are relevant for the functioning of liberal democracies, including a comparison between Western and Eastern European countries, attitudes towards solidarity and immigrants and Muslims, and the political and religious value patterns among people in economically precarious situations. Trends and dynamics related to attitudes towards redistribution, ethnocentrism, and environmental awareness will also be identified. In particular, the impact of religious attitudes on these values areas will be explored.

All of these research topics were already at the centre of public and political debate before the global COVID-19 pandemic broke out during our project – and the researched values will continue to shape political discourses in the years to come. Thus, the empirical evaluations document the values landscape in Europe, which can be considered the starting point for those value developments which can be expected to continue in the course of the 'crisis permanence' (Ulrich 2022) present since 2020 at the latest – COVID-19, the war in Ukraine, the subsequent global economic crises, the refugee crisis, etc. Even if in the longer term a transformation of values is to be expected as a result of the growing acceptance of the 'normality of crises', we assume that the value dynamics and value cleavages documented by the EVS 2017 will also shape the values debates of the coming years. As values and attitudes usually change only slowly, that is, 'at the pace of intergenerational population replacement' (Inglehart et al. 2017: 1313), there will probably be no 'jumps' in values among most of the population, but the expected change in values will start from the values before the crises.

The results of the European values Study are embedded in an interdisciplinary discussion of both the findings and the relationship between values, religion, and politics from the perspective of selected disciplines of values research, which critically reflect on this controversial and ambiguous triad from their perspective and analyse it with a view to future prospects.

The following introductory considerations justify the timeliness and relevance of this volume, introduce the European Values Study, clarify the guiding concepts 'Values – Politics – Religion', and present the idea, character, structure, and outline of the volume. The research process, aims, and target groups of the study are described and a summary of the individual contributions is offered. The volume is intended as an explorative pilot study that aims at stimulating the further development of interdisciplinary values research and contributing to an in-depth, qualified discourse on values – in particular on the relationship between political and religious values – in society, politics, and religious communities.

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[1] The data of the EVS 2017 were collected between 2017 and 2021; the official naming is 'EVS 2017'.

1.2 Timeliness and Relevance

The recourse to 'values' plays a key role in the public discourse of European societies as well as in the context of the multiple catastrophes and crises with which Europe has been confronted in recent years. The permanence of cumulative and mutually reinforcing crises forces Europe to pose the question of which values will and should meet these challenges. Particularly on the political level, 'European values' have been appealed to for quite some time. The political scientists Foret and Calligaro (2018) identify a:

> trend that, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, has seen "values" dramatically re-emerge in the political life of the Western democracies. European multilevel governance, both in national, transnational and supranational arenas, makes no exception. In the EU, the enlargements, the geopolitical challenges and the economic crises have triggered debates on the common values susceptible to hold the Member States and citizens together, to justify public action and to ensure the sustainability of the European political, economic and social models. (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 1).

From a political science perspective, this can be seen as a thoroughly positive development, since the reference to values enables the European Union to 'constitute a new mode to relate to identity and memory', it provides 'a new type of narrative', and offers 'a fresh way to search for normative resources to assert EU policies and politics' (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 2) and to legitimise them. Also, Christof Mandry (Chap. 9, this volume) argues, that value semantics can be interpreted as the solution to the political problem of how the European Union can function as a democracy without being a state in its own right.

Indeed, values can be an enormous resource, insofar as they are 'collective' and 'mental representations' of what is worth appreciating in a society as good or bad and therefore are always 'at work – even if only rhetorically – in all human interactions except in extreme cases based only on calculation or power' (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 3). From this point of view, it does not seem surprising that the concept of 'values' has become the linguistic medium in many European societies by means of which they reassure themselves about questions of individual, social and political ethics.

Nevertheless, such an exclusively positive view of values and values discourses may also be met with scepticism. As many of the contributions to this volume argue, the concept of 'values' is not only highly ambiguous, vague, and messy, but also insufficient to solve political problems (see Polak, Chap. 2, this volume). Moreover, as a key concept in political discourses, it is comparatively young and controversial (see Weymans, Chap. 3 and Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume) and raises critical questions with regard to its capacity to solve ethical, legal, and (religious) pedagogical challenges (see Polak, Chap. 2, Konrath, Chap. 11, and Grümme, Chap. 13, this volume). Above all, however, an unreflective affirmative view of values is counteracted by the observation that the values of the European Union, as enunciated in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000/2016) and the Treaty of Lisbon (TEU 2007/2016), are not shared across the board by significant parts of the European population. Although the European Values Study – which originated

in the 1980s and thus long before the European canon of values – does not explore attitudes towards the EU's values explicitly, empirical findings have for decades demonstrated a gap between those values propagated by the European Union, academics, and intellectual elites and those values that can be discerned in significant parts of the European population and regions (Bréchon and Gonthier 2017; Luijkx et al. 2016). The universal and normative claim of European values is especially contradicted by the finding that intolerance, particularist solidarities, and other anti-democratic attitudes are part of the make-up of European citizens (see Part II, and Aschauer, Chap. 12, this volume). Moreover, pride in European values has been clouded for some time by the fact that liberal democracy, the rule of law, and human rights are also disputed within the European Union and affected by erosion processes – be it in the disputes over illiberal democracies in the Visegrád states (Leggewie and Karolewski 2021) or in the restrictive migration and asylum policies of the European Union, including human rights' violations at its borders (Goździak et al. 2020).

Given these ambivalent findings, the catastrophes that struck Europe during our project raise pressing questions. How will Europeans' political values discourses and values evolve when the population becomes aware that there most likely will be no return to the 'normality' that existed before pandemic and war? How will pre-pandemic value patterns play out when people are confronted with a situation in which 'calculation or power' (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 3) is given priority over values, as evidenced by the war of aggression initiated by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir V. Putin, against Ukraine on 24 February 2022? Will this lead to a revival of the struggle for European values among citizens? Or will it result in regression and thus to a renewed outbreak of already existing value conflicts that endanger cohesion and peace in Europe?

Therefore, the more precisely one knows the initial pre-pandemic situation, the more likely one will be able to set measures that protect, strengthen, and promote the political and social relevance of that canon of values that Europe has successfully struggled for since the end of World War II. Our study aims to contribute to the knowledge of this initial situation by providing social and political elites and stakeholders with detailed and representative insights into the political and policy-relevant values and attitudes of the populations. Moreover, by embedding the results of the EVS in an interdisciplinary discussion, we present contexts in depth that go beyond the concrete empirical results and allow them to be reflected upon from the perspective of disciplines of values research that argue hermeneutically. This multi-disciplinary approach is intended to promote the quality of public discourses on values and thus build bridges between the values of the population and the values as propagated by political and scientific elites.

This assessment is in no way intended to encourage the 'elite bashing' of populist political movements and parties. However, we do assume that the empirically given values landscape must be taken into account more seriously in order to ensure the preservation, recognition, and further development of European values in times of upheaval. In particular, more attention must be paid to those value patterns that contradict the values of the EU. From the perspective of empirical values research,

right-wing populist parties in Europe probably owe their success to the fact that they address and serve attitudes and values that are overlooked by social and political stakeholders and opinion leaders, who do not adequately respond to them, or who instrumentalise them for their interests instead of trying to deeper understand them. Yet understanding of anti-democratic attitudes in no way implies agreement or acceptance. Rather, willingness to engage in dialogue and conflict on an equal footing is required. It is, for example, understandable and sometimes true when an advocate of universal solidarity identifies racism in nationalist attitudes; but they may overlook cultural, social, or historical contexts and thus values that underlie a national self-image. Conversely, someone who rejects the normativity and universality of European values may lack essential knowledge about their ethical meaningfulness or may not realise that problems generated by economic or political crises cannot be solved by a struggle over values alone.

With the apocalyptic horsemen of multiple crises, and above all the war against Ukraine, the granting of more time, space, and resources to such deepening discussions of values is urgent. As the war shakes those values that were agreed in the course of the integration of the European Union after 1989 (see Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume) – not least in the confrontation with suffering, violence, and war – the dramatic consequences of the war may also threaten European values and their acceptance among the population. As the Bulgarian political scientist Ivan Krăstev (2022) stated:

> Russia's president is destroying not only Ukrainian cities and military and energy infrastructure but also moral and intellectual infrastructure. Politics is not only what governments do, but also includes the arguments they use to justify their actions. By justifying his incursion into Ukraine as a 'special operation' to 'denazify' the country, the Russian president is raping the moral foundations on which the European order was based.

Preventing this dramatic future moral scenario is therefore central to the political agenda. With our volume, we wish to contribute to this challenge by identifying the resources and crisis zones in the European values landscape. Although the future is open, the face of Europe will change and with it the values of its people. European values are thus facing an immense test. The times of a 'democracy without enemies' ('feindlose Demokratie', Beck 1995) are over. According to US President Joe Biden, the world faces a 'battle between democracy and autocracy, between liberty and repression, between a rules-based order and one governed by brute force' (Biden 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to fight for European values. We are afraid that the universal values of the European Union are at risk, for at the turning point in time that Europe faces at the very moment as we finish our volume, values change is primarily discussed in terms of security policy, military, and economic aspects.

However, the struggle for European values will only succeed if these values receive unambiguous support from the population. This volume proves that there is potential for both hope and risk in this struggle and provides data, theories, and argumentation to give impetus to the upcoming discourse on values, which can strengthen its effectiveness and sustainability. In our view, such discourses are necessary, because the possibilities and limitations of the concept of values, as well as the findings of interdisciplinary values research, have been given far too little

consideration politically and socially to date. Values, in theory and practice, are open to interpretation and ambivalence; they are therefore not always of ethical or even universal quality; and they can stimulate but also polarise. At the same time, they must play a key role in future debates because, as 'conceptions of the desirable' (Sedmak 2010: 19; Kluckhohn 1951: 395), they form the basis of ethical decisions and thus belong to the fundamental stock of liberal democracies, which cannot guarantee them themselves (see the 'Böckenförde-Dictum'[2]). Yuval Harari (2022) states:

> At the heart of the Ukraine crisis lies a fundamental question about the nature of history and the nature of humanity: is change possible? Can humans change the way they behave, or does history repeat itself endlessly, with humans forever condemned to re-enact past tragedies without changing anything except the décor?

Inextricably linked to this question of the possibility of human change is the question of values. Do these represent more than a function of society and politics? Do values just flexibly adapt to historical processes experienced as fated – or are humans capable of orienting themselves to values that are ethically responsible and universally valid? Are human beings capable of ethical reasoning because of their capacity for freedom, reason, and transcending given realities – or are they just the results of social and political circumstances?

And What About Religion? Since the two editors of the volume are practical theologians, a special interest in religion in the context of values research and values discourses is self-evident. However, this volume is not a theological study. Rather, it focusses on the empirical and interdisciplinary study of values, including theology as one contributing discipline. From a practical-theological point of view, only a solid and interdisciplinarily reflected empirical value research enables a theological situation analysis, which is – besides reference to the theological tradition providing criteria for evaluation of the results – the basis for practical consequences. To provide such a theological situation analysis would go beyond the scope of this volume and is reserved for further volumes. Nevertheless, the theological approach to values is presented in the chapter 'Values: A Contested Concept. Problem Outline and Interdisciplinary Approaches' (Polak, Chap. 2, this volume). Furthermore, selected practical-theological consequences are provided in the chapter 'Conclusions, Challenges, Consequences' (Polak, Chap. 14, this volume), although without detailed theological arguments. For practical theologians also the process of research is decisive because scientific practice is a form of human practice and thus not neutral in terms of underlying worldviews, convictions and ethics, that should consequently be made transparent and reflected. So, establishing an interdisciplinary dialogue between the authors of this volume and opening up an academic space of critically reflecting both the EVS and the respective disciplinary approaches is also an implicit expression of the practical-theological background of the editors.

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[2] 'The liberal, secularized state lives on conditions that it cannot guarantee itself.' (Böckenförde 1991: 112).

But there are also other reasons why the specific research interest in the influence of religiosity on political attitudes based on the European Values Study are timely and relevant. For one, religiosity is an essential source of values; religious communities influence the values of their members, including political values; and religious traditions harbour values that they contribute to social and political discourses (see Polak, Chap. 2, this volume). Admittedly, these functions of religion have ambivalent effects. Moreover, the concept of religion is as controversial as the concept of values. This ambivalence of religion became as publicly visible in the course of the pandemic with regard to positions on state measures as it did in the war against Ukraine, in which Russian Orthodox priests, arrested as a result of their criticism of Putin, were confronted with the Orthodox Patriarch Kirill, a religious leader who legitimised the neo-imperialist, anti-Western ideology of violence with religious arguments and interpreted it as a fight against evil, that is, as a moral duty (Sooy 2022).

Moreover, the political relevance of religion has become a social, political, and scientific topic in twenty-first century Europe (Boari and Vlas 2013) – as recently as the Islamist terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001. A fundamental and paradoxical change in the role and meaning of religion can also be observed in Europe since 1989. The sociologist of religion Grace Davie (2022) characterises this change on the basis of international empirical studies as follows: while Christianity retains its formative role in European culture, especially in terms of temporal and spatial order through holidays and architectural spatial design, and churches continue to play an important role in the lives of many people, they are losing their influence on the values, attitudes, and behaviour of the majority, especially among the younger generation. As a result, patterns of religious affiliation and commitment have also been noticeably changing for decades on the basis of free choice. Moreover, the influx of religious migrants and refugees into Europe is accelerating religious pluralisation and confronting the more secularised West in particular with new public and political challenges. Although there are clear differences between Western and Eastern Europe with regard to these developments, these dynamics can be observed throughout Europe.

Against this background, which can also be substantiated by the results of our study, Europe is confronted with a paradox: a process of progressive deconfessionalisation and de-churching (mostly referred to as secularisation) and the simultaneous growing importance of religion in public and political discourses as well as the politicisation of religion, which takes over functions in identity politics and nation-building processes (see Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). Religion is becoming more important as a topic of political debate, while the importance of religious communities and power is diminishing in the political sphere, that is, changes in political order are leading to a dwindling of possibilities for participation for religious communities in political decision-making (Rosenberger 2022). In the context of migration policy in particular, challenges and new conflict zones have been emerging for some time, which allow us to speak of a 'hijacking' of religion (Marzouki et al. 2016) for political and especially populist interests. While in Western Europe this development has led to a declining influence of the more liberal

church leaderships in migration issues (Rosenberger 2022), the cooperation between conservative church leaders with national governments has increased in Eastern Europe (Pickel and Sammet 2012). This reveals a thoroughly contradictory understanding of religion (Rosenberger 2022): while 'Christian values' and religion as 'Christian culture' are experiencing a discursive revaluation, religion is considered a private matter, which, when it comes to Islam, has no right to publicity. At the same time, in the context of democratic political debates on gender and sexual ethics as well as bioethical issues, religious communities prove to be highly active (for example, in Germany; see Pickel and Liedhegener 2016) but internally divided actors who support or block the change of values regarding these controversial issues.

Although our study is not a political science study, these dynamics form the background for this volume's interest in the impact of religion on political values. The central question is whether and how this relationship between religious and political values is reflected at the level of the values of Europeans and what an interdisciplinary perspective can contribute to understanding this relationship from diverse academic approaches. For religion will play a fiercely contested but irrepressible and vital role in the upcoming discourses on values. The more precisely these relationships can be described empirically and interpreted in an interdisciplinary way, the more political and religious actors and institutions will be able to identify and promote the contribution of religion to the debates on European values. Thus, our volume offers insights into the influence of religion on political attitudes that go beyond empirical findings and are comparatively rarely considered in research on the relationship between values, politics, and religion.

1.3   The European Values Study

This volume is fundamentally based on data from the EVS. The EVS is an empirical, large-scale, cross-national, longitudinal, and representative survey research programme on basic human values. Its research focuses on the values, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions of European citizens in the areas of family, work, religion, politics, and society (European Values Study 2022a).

The roots of the EVS go back to the 1970s. Initiated by two Catholic theologians – Jan Kerkhofs (Catholic University of Leuven/Belgium) and Ruud de Moor (Tilburg University/The Netherlands) – the European Values Systems Study Group (EVSSG) was established in 1978 as an informal group of social science academics to study moral and social values underlying European institutions. Questions addressed included the following: Do Europeans share common values? Are values changing in Europe – and if so, in what direction? What role do Christian values play in the context of a changing meaning of religion in life and the public sphere? Is a replacement by an alternative system of meaning taking place? What are the implications for the European unification process?

Between 1981 and 1983, the EVSSG conducted the first wave of the EVS and in an international comparison studied the values of Europeans in twelve European countries, which were called the 'Community of the Twelve' then, using a standardised questionnaire. Since then, four further waves took place at intervals of nine years: 1990, 1999, 2008, and 2017, in which an increasing number of countries participated. In the meantime, the European Values Study is an internationally renowned, professionally institutionalised research centre, which is managed by the Council of Programme Directors, who are responsible for the general outlines of the project, the approval of the final questionnaire, and the survey method, which must be used across all participating countries to ensure the comparability of the data. The Theory Group develop the questionnaire and the Methodology Group ensure the quality of the project. The EVS is steered by the Executive Committee, which is chaired by Ruud Luijkx (Tilburg University/The Netherlands). The Department of Practical Theology at the Catholic-Theological Faculty at the University of Vienna, to which the editors of this volume belong, became a member of the EVS in 1990. In 2017 it established a cross-faculty Research Network 'Interdisciplinary Values Research' (n.d.) including the Faculty of Catholic Theology, the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Philosophy and Education, the Faculty of Psychology, the Faculty of Law, and the Rectorate of the University of Vienna.

For 2017, data are available for a total of 37 European countries, from Portugal to Russia and from Iceland to Serbia (European Values Study n.d.). The data on the five waves provide information showing that value transformation processes have been taking place in the values landscape of various European countries, but to different degrees and at different speeds, and in some cases in different directions (European Values Study 2021). These developments are strongly influenced by various contextual factors (including political and socio-economic conditions in the respective countries as well as historical events and constellations), which the authors of this volume have repeatedly taken into account in their argumentation.

The major strength of the EVS is that it allows replication and comparison over time in many European countries. In the meantime, very extensive data are available, which offer a wide range of possibilities for analysis. In addition, the data sets and questionnaires are stored free of charge for scientific purposes in the data archive of GESIS. There one can also find the integrated data set (European Values Study 2021) across all previous survey waves and participating countries, which – unless otherwise stated – also forms the basis for the empirically oriented chapters of this book. There is also further information, for example, on the questionnaires used. In addition, the website of the European Values Study (European Values Study 2022) contains a bibliography with a wide range of literature that deals with the EVS data on various key topics that are updated regularly. More than 2800 publications have been published on the surveys (European Values Study 2022b).

At the same time, however, the EVS also has a few blind spots that should not be concealed. First, the theoretical concept of values was not developed to the highly differentiated theoretical level that can be observed in social science and other disciplines of values research today, as at the start of this project 'there was no grand claim for any unified theory of human values' (Arts and Halman 2011: 79). Instead,

the EVSSG assumed that there were European values patterns that constitute systems – an idea that was refuted by the results in 1981 and led to the question regarding which social scientific theories could be applied to interpret the findings of the EVS. Since then, modernisation theory and (new) institutionalism were the guiding paradigms to understand value patterns (Arts and Halman 2011). However, the lack of a precise understanding of concepts has shaped the EVS from its start. This applies in particular to the items related to politics and religion (see Sect. 1.4). Second, the more recent developments since the beginning of the EVS require a balancing act between the change of questions and the comparable interpretability (over time). Moreover, there are also aspects of so-called measurement equivalence, which have recently been discussed more closely and which relate, among other things, to the possible difficulties with regard to comparability as a result of the respective translations used, since the questionnaires are presented in the official language(s) of the participating countries respectively. A final point then relates to the different survey dates (that is, data from EVS 2017 were collected between 2017 and 2021), which may contain situational effects to a greater or lesser extent.

This volume explicitly refers to the past four survey waves in 1990, 1999, 2008, and 2017, as data are available for most European countries. In this respect, it is possible to examine changes and developments over a period of almost three decades. For the purpose of comprehensibility, in the empirical chapters that refer to the EVS data the questions and items used are labelled with a letter (Q for Questions and v for variables) and a number. These labels refer to the CAPI Master Questionnaire of the most recent EVS wave (European Values Study 2020) and are intended to ensure the traceability of the variables and items used.

The results of the EVS are not only of interest from a social science perspective, but also to a wider audience of social scientists, politicians, managers, journalists, and stakeholders in various social institutions such as schools, universities, religious communities, or civil society organisations. Therefore, the data is also a useful resource for educating young people about Europe and its values and promoting a better understanding of each other.

1.4 Description of the Volume

1.4.1 Concepts

The triad 'Values – Politics – Religion' forms the umbrella under which this volume presents its findings. Admittedly, all three terms are scientifically controversial and ambiguous concepts that can be understood in a highly heterogeneous way – empirically, hermeneutically, or normatively – in different disciplines of values research. Equally complex and plural, their mutual relationship can be theorised.

Since the EVS is at the centre of this volume, we started and based our project on the meanings these terms have had in this long-term study, which we present now in a first step.

(a) 'Values'

As a result of the genesis of the EVS, the concept of values in the EVS does not correspond to the contemporary status quo of the scientific discussion of this concept; nor does it have a consistent definition. Nevertheless, from a sociological perspective, the EVS data offer a rich and valuable repository of information about attitudes, ideas, convictions, beliefs, etc. that are related to values and express what people consider valuable. This enables sociologists, through interpretation by current theories of values, culture, and society, to make quite valid statements about how attitudes correlate with each other, which political and religious preferences and value patterns can be detected, and how these can be interpreted – for example, in the context of theories of liberal democracy, solidarity, or secularisation theories (see Part II in this volume).

(b) 'Politics'

The term 'politics' is also not clearly defined in the EVS. Rather, the questionnaire comprises a wealth of questions that can be assigned to different levels of politics, policy, and polity or that refer to political and policy-relevant attitudes, depending on the theoretical concept chosen for interpretation. Like work, family, leisure time, friends and acquaintances, politics is understood as an area of life. Furthermore, the survey asks about interest in politics; political self-assessment (left–right); participation in political activities (for example, signing petitions, joining boycotts, strikes, etc.); attitudes towards democracy; preferences for political systems; attitudes towards the state and the government; trust in political and social institutions (parliament, police, social security system, UN, etc.); active and passive participation in political activities (for example, political activism); active and passive institutional affiliations (for example, in voluntary organisations, including religious communities); proximity to the nation, to Europe and to the world; and attitudes towards immigrants, Muslims, and homosexuals, which allows statements to be made about Europeans' willingness to show solidarity and tolerance.

(c) 'Religion'

The EVS defines the term religion comparatively precisely, albeit traditionally. The focus is on the self-assessment of subjective religiosity, whereby the concept of religion is oriented towards the classic sociological dimensions of a denominational self-image, agreement with statements of faith, religious practice (for example, prayer, attendance at religious services), and active and passive membership in religious communities, and thus, for the sake of long-term comparison, is still primarily shaped by a Christian understanding of religion (see Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). Specific statements about the religiosity of members of other religious communities and alternative spirituality are therefore only possible to a limited extent and are also not possible due to the lack of representativeness of most national samplings. It is also not possible to make statements about religious communities as political actors and their influence on political attitudes. The volume also refrains from evaluating the impact of religiosity according to denominational self-image

and affiliation.[3] However, in view of the influence of Christian churches on political attitudes, as is particularly evident in the role of parts of the Orthodox Church in the Russian war against Ukraine, this should be a central topic for further analysis of the EVS data.

1.4.2   Empirical Research Questions

While conceptualising this volume, the sometimes messy and vague terminology of the EVS on values, politics, and religion led us to the decision to address this weakness through an interdisciplinary research process that takes advantage of the richness and strength of the EVS data material and at the same time reflects its problems and weaknesses. This explains the character and structure of this volume as well as the volume's research process, all of which are outlined below in a second step.

Previous results of the EVS (Polak and Schachinger 2011; Doebler 2015), current research in the sociology of religion and political science (see references in Pickel and Pickel, Chap. 5; Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6; Aschauer, Chap. 12, this volume), and public discourses have led us to focus on the questions of how the development of political attitudes is represented in the European values landscape and how religious attitudes affect them when analysing the data of the EVS 2017. Religion has been shown to have a significant impact on political attitudes (see references in Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). In this volume, we would like to explore this issue in more depth and in a more differentiated way based on the EVS. At the same time, the topic of religion – at least since 9/11 – has become a conflictive and contested issue in political discourses. In this context, the recourse to values – especially religious (that is, Christian and Islamic) values – plays a central role (Mattes 2016). As already mentioned, the decline in subjective religiosity, which has been documented for some time, contrasts with an increase in the political significance of the topic of religion. Moreover, religious communities also legitimise their social and political contributions by referring to values (Polak 2011). The change in political significance or the influence of political discourse on religiosity cannot be measured with the help of the EVS data. However, it is possible to make representative statements about the empirical basis of this close connection between values, politics, and religion at the level of individuals and the European population. In particular, the following questions were of interest to the Research Network 'Interdisciplinary Values Research' (n.d.) to which the two editors belong and with which the topics for this volume were identified:

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[3] The significant impact of denominational affiliation could already be proved in the EVS 2009: Even with regard to religious attitudes and practices, it is significant whether the respondent is Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox. Thus, if a respondent has an orthodox self-affiliation, it is 2.5 times more probable that he or she believes in God than if he or she is Catholic (Polak and Schachinger 2011, 199).

1. What is the state of those political attitudes in the European population that are relevant to democratic politics, and what impact do religious attitudes and values have in this context? Is it possible to observe a difference between Western and Eastern Europe?
2. How can the impact of religiosity on political attitudes be understood in more depth and precisely, that is, is it really religiosity as such that has an effect, or do other factors also have an impact?
3. How is solidarity shaped in the European population, both in terms of range and quality? And what impact does religiosity have on the solidarity of Europeans? This question has repeatedly become virulent in political discourses, especially since the refugee crisis in 2015, and the answer to it is highly relevant for the cohesion of the European Union in view of multiple and cumulative crises.
4. What political and religious value patterns can be observed among those classes that receive little attention in values studies and values discourses: people in precarious socio-economic circumstances?

To answer the research questions listed, only data from the questionnaire that relate to the areas of 'religion' and 'politics' in the narrower sense are used. This choice does not take into account those attitudes and values that relate to the so-called 'private' area of life (e.g. family, work, gender, economy, moralities), which are also provided by the EVS. Undoubtedly, these values on the micro-level of life have an impact on political attitudes (and vice versa) and are by no means 'private'. So, our choice carries the risk of giving the impression of separating 'private' and 'political' attitudes and thus contributes to the depoliticisation of daily life values and individual moralities – a dynamic that currently puts the political system under pressure and is a far too little discussed cause of the crisis of democracy. But research needs focusing. So, the research on the impact of religiosity on 'end-of-life' values (Halman and Sieben, Chap. 4, this volume) pays only one, but important tribute to the nexus of so-called 'private' and 'political' values, as this issue is highly politicised and religious communities and institutions play an ambivalent role in this sphere.

1.4.3 Interdisciplinary and Explorative Character

During the project conception, it became clear that the character of the EVS makes it necessary to approach the research triad from the perspective of other disciplines of values research too, in order to be able to discuss in depth the questions arising from their mutual relationships. For this reason, from the outset the volume was designed to be interdisciplinary. Thus, it is not an exclusively social science study that is presented here. Rather, the volume is intended as an exploratory contribution to the further development of increased interdisciplinary research on values, which is to be developed in the future. Since at the beginning of our project there was no comprehensive theory for interdisciplinary research on the relationship between

values, politics, and religion, we consider it a first necessary step to make visible the subject-specific approaches to the topic from the perspective of the respective disciplines. The interdisciplinary contributions therefore reflect on the issues from those perspectives. The following questions were of particular interest to us:

1. What are 'values'? What questions are raised while evaluating the data of the European Values Study? And what understanding of values can different scientific disciplines contribute to the discourse on values, particularly with regard to religion?
2. How does the concept of values enter the political discourse of the European Union from a historical perspective? And what role does religion play in this?
3. What long-term developments and transformations can be identified on the basis of EVS data with regard to the influence of religion on value attitudes?

Furthermore, we selected three exemplary perspectives on our topic that play or should play a central role in current discourses on values in the context of religion and politics:

1. How can the concept of values be used in the political context of the European Union in an ethically responsible way?
2. What role do values and religion play in a politically and everyday powerful area of people's lives, that is, in the field of economics? This question is intended to make the relationship visible in an exemplary practical field.
3. What is the relationship between values, politics, and religion from a legal perspective?

Finally, one of the practical-theological concerns of an interdisciplinary study is to formulate future perspectives and perspectives for action based on scientific research, which are relevant not only for the scientific community, but also for stakeholders in society, politics, and religious communities. In doing so, we ask the following questions:

1. What social and political challenges will arise in the future on the basis of value trends to be identified in the EVS? And what influence does religion have on them?
2. What can a (religious) pedagogical perspective contribute to better understand the impact of religiosity on political attitudes and thus to better shape them with the aim of promoting democratic values?
3. What conclusions, consequences, and challenges result from the project's findings for social, political, and religious actors and institutions, especially for the EU and religious communities, as well as for the European Values Study and interdisciplinary values research?

Since neither theoretical nor methodological concepts and thus scientific standards of interdisciplinary values research have been available so far, the authors have oriented themselves in a first step to the classical model of interdisciplinary values research as formulated by the EVS: values research situates itself in four levels and distinguishes between (a) an 'empirical-descriptive level' that documents 'what is

the case'; (b) an 'explicative-theoretical level' that interprets 'how this can be explained'; (c) a 'normative level' that reflects 'what should be the case'; and (d) a 'pragmatic level' that asks 'what consequences result from this' (cf. the relation model between (social) sciences and policymaking of Arts and Halman 2011: 96–97).

From this point of view, the sociological contributions correspond to levels (a) and (b), the contributions from the hermeneutic and normative sciences offer exemplary approaches to level (c), and in the part 'Future Prospects', elements of level (d) are outlined. Nevertheless, this four-level model did not seem sufficient to answer our questions, since we lacked essential perspectives of interdisciplinary values research, including an interdisciplinary discussion of the controversial concept of values, a historical, a socio-ethical, a legal, an economic, and an educational science perspective. We have therefore modified the four-level model and structured the volume along our research questions in order to make visible its interdisciplinary and exploratory character and to explicitly unfold the heterogeneity of approaches and put them up for discussion. Accordingly, the volume is divided into four parts, which are now concretised as follows.

1.4.4 Structure

The first part provides *'Basic Research'* (Chaps. 2, 3, and 4) and discusses the contested meaning of values from an interdisciplinary perspective, searches for the political use of the concept of values in the European Union from the perspective of cultural history, and researches the importance of religion in the religious and moral spheres of Europeans from a general empirical perspective. Accordingly, the contributions provide a conceptual clarification of the concept of values, including results from the debates among our team of authors and experts and approaches from different academic disciplines of values research (Regina Polak, Vienna/Austria); a cultural-historical examination of the use, content, and impact of the term 'European values' in EU institutions (Wim Weymans, Louvain-la-Neuve/Belgium); and a sociological overview on the transformation of the impact of religion on moral values and attitudes with the example of 'end-of-life' values in the last 30 years (Loek Halman & Inge Sieben, Tilburg/The Netherlands).

The second part (Chaps. 5, 6, 7, and 8) presents results from four *'In-Depth Analyses'* based on the EVS data. First, a comparison between political culture and democratic values across Europe is provided, including the analysis of the significance of religious values for political values under conditions of advanced secularisation (Susanne Pickel, Duisburg-Essen/Germany & Gert Pickel, Leipzig/Germany). Second, the impact of religiosity on political values is investigated with the example of the attitudes of Europeans towards immigrants and Muslims, as these are crucial for liberal democracy and a focal point of conflict on values, politics, and religion (Regina Polak, Vienna/Austria & Dirk Schuster, Krems/Austria). Third, as solidarity is one of the core European values, an empirical overview on attitudinal solidarity among the European population is offered (Markus Quandt, Cologne/Germany &

Vera Lomazzi, Bergamo/Italy). Fourth, a special focus is put on the political and religious values of the social class of the poor and marginalised – the 'invisibles' – who are rarely at the centre of values surveys (Pierre Bréchon, Grenoble/France).

In the third part (Chaps. 9, 10, and 11) exemplary *'Interdisciplinary Perspectives'* are provided. Three selected disciplines of values research reflect the relationship between values, politics, and religion: social ethics, economics, and law provide theories, arguments, and practical experiences by which the empirical results can be discussed in an interdisciplinary perspective. First, the concept of European values is explored from the perspective of social ethics, arguing that these values should be understood as normative political values for Europe as an 'imagined community' (Christof Mandry, Frankfurt am Main/Germany). Second, cognisant the origin of the concept of values in economy, the importance and relevance of (normative) values in companies and management is shown, in particular documented by the importance companies should attach to human rights as a universal catalogue of values (Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi, Vienna/Austria). Third, a legal approach shows that legal debates and conflicts could support a better understanding of the circumstances and contingencies of the creation of (religious) values and norms (Christoph Konrath, Vienna/Austria).

The fourth and last part (Chaps. 12, 13, and 14) aims to provide *'Future Prospects'* based on the discussions of the previous parts and developing them further from different angles, with a special focus on empirically observed future challenges and practical conclusions, consequences, and challenges. First, three main social and political challenges in Europe and the role values and religion play in them are identified from a sociological point of view (Wolfgang Aschauer, Salzburg/Austria). A religious-pedagogical perspective identifies the contributions religious pedagogy can provide to the current values discourses in Europe (Bernhard Grümme, Bochum/Germany). Finally, conclusions from the contributions and the research process are drawn, and consequences and challenges for different areas – including tasks for EU politics, religious actors, and communities, for the EVS and for inter-disciplinary values research – are formulated.

Thus, the volume does not offer a comprehensive synthesis, but aims to explicitly recognise the plurality and complexity of approaches to the subject matter in an explorative way, in order to better name and reflect on the tensions and contradictions of interdisciplinary values research and thus to be able to better deal with them in the future (see Polak, Chap. 14, this volume). This also corresponds to the self-conception of practical theology, which above all raises the diversity of perspectives on the object of research synthesis on an inductive basis, in order to enrich the scientific and public discourse. Moreover, the differences between disciplines are also recognised as the central place to identify future challenges for practice and scholarship (see Polak, Chap. 14, this volume). Therefore, this volume does not offer a universal theory on the triad of values, politics, and religion, but aims to provide readers with different disciplinary and methodological perspectives by means of which the complex topic can be reflected on the basis of our research questions.

1.4.5 Research Process

In keeping with the exploratory nature of our project, we deliberately refrained from providing the authors with a normative-analytical theoretical framework for the triad of 'Values – Politics – Religion' or with definitions of terms that go beyond the EVS and to which they must all submit. What we predefined when starting the project with our authors were the concepts of the EVS, the respective research questions concretising the meta-theme of the volume, and the task of transparently demonstrating and justifying the terminology and the theoretical and methodological approaches the authors chose to use. We also asked our authors to establish cross-references to other contributions, which were also considered critical.

In this way, we wanted to stimulate an interdisciplinary dialogue around the EVS and to ensure that the diversity of disciplinary approaches was as visible as possible. The research results were not to be restricted by an overall standardising theoretical and conceptual framework, but were to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the EVS as deeply as possible and to answer the research questions in the most plural way. Furthermore, we aimed at making optimal use of the expertise of our authors, so that the widest possible space for interdisciplinary discourse was opened up within the team of authors. We therefore defined interdisciplinarity not only as multiperspectivity on the research subject, but also as a communication process between the authors, which was to be reflected in a research process in which the editors defined themselves as leaders and moderators.

As authors of the volume, the following researchers participated in this process (in alphabetical order):

- Assoc.-Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Aschauer (Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology and Human Geography at the University of Salzburg/Austria)
- Prof. em. Dr. Pierre Bréchon (Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Sciences po Grenoble/France)
- Mag. Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi (Sustainability Consultant at PricewaterhouseCoopers Vienna/Austria)
- Prof. Dr. Bernhard Grümme (Chair for Religious Pedagogics and Catechetics at the Faculty for Catholic Theology, Ruhr-University Bochum/Germany)
- Assoc.-Prof. Dr. Loek Halman (Associate Professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology at the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Tilburg University/The Netherlands)
- Dr. Christoph Konrath (Constitutional expert and political scientist in the Austrian Parliamentary Administration, Vienna/Austria)
- Ass.-Prof. Dr. Vera Lomazzi (Assistant Professor in Sociology at the Department of Management at the University of Bergamo/Italy)
- Prof. Dr. Christof Mandry (Chair for Moral Theology and Social Ethics, Department of Catholic Theology at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main/Germany)
- Prof. Dr. Gert Pickel (Chair of Sociology of Religion and Church at the Department of Sociology of Religion at Leipzig University/Germany)

- Prof. Dr. Susanne Pickel (Chair of Comparative Politics at the Department of Political Science, University of Duisburg-Essen/Germany)
- Assoc.-Prof. Dr. Regina Polak (Head of the Department of Practical Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Vienna/Austria)
- Dr. Markus Quandt (Senior Researcher and Team Leader at GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Cologne/Germany)
- Mag. Patrick Rohs (University Assistant (pre-doc) at the Department of Practical Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Vienna/Austria)
- Dr. Dirk Schuster (University Assistant (post-doc) at the Center for Museum Collections Management at the University for Continuing Education Krems/Austria)
- Assoc.-Prof. Dr. Inge Sieben (Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology at the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Tilburg University/The Netherlands)
- Prof. Wim Weymans PhD (Chair in European Values at UCLouvain, Louvain-la-Neuve/Belgium)

At the beginning of the project, the authors each received their specific research questions and were invited to choose the exemplary data as well as the theoretical framework necessary for the evaluation for the in-depth analyses or the theoretical approach for the hermeneutic contributions themselves. The challenge was to relate the concepts of the EVS to theories that correspond to the scientific status quo. In the case of the concept of values, the need for a fundamental reflection on this concept and its strengths and weaknesses for political discourse quickly became apparent. In the case of the concept of politics, theoretical concepts of liberal democracy emerged as the guiding paradigm. The concept of religion revealed for the EVS the urgent need to focus not only on individual religiosities, but to take better account of the complex embedding of religiosity in social, political, cultural, and historical contexts and to further develop the leading paradigms of modernisation and secularisation theory in the future. Moreover, it was necessary for the sociological contributions to answer the research questions using exemplar data and topics. We also left it to the sociologists of the in-depth analyses to select the countries to be considered in each case. The authors selected the focus on certain countries based on the criteria defined by them. Therefore, in most of the empirical chapters, individual countries were also combined to form clusters of regions. Here, too, the editors refrained from a uniform specification. An overview of the individual country abbreviations (which follow the ISO-3166-1 alpha-2 code) and the assignment to the respective regional cluster can be found separately in the 'Front Matter' section of the book.

For joint discussions on the chosen theoretical and methodological approaches, all authors of the volume met in three half-day workshops – on 26 November 2020, 10 February 2021, and 7 May 2021. These meetings were held online because of the pandemic. In each case, the authors presented the current status of their contributions, received feedback from us and from each other, and then finalised their contributions in multiple feedback loops and in consultation with the editors.

The in-depth analyses were completed first, and the authors of the other sections were then encouraged to refer to them in order to strengthen the internal cohesion of the volume. This process fostered dialogue between empirical and non-empirical researchers and allowed for mutual critical queries and the identification of issues for interdisciplinary values research. The discussion results were then taken into account in further processes by the authors and in the development of future perspectives.

Furthermore, a half-day workshop with external experts from academia, EU policy, and religious communities took place on 1 June 2021. These experts received the in-depth analyses and selected hermeneutic texts and were asked for feedback, which they discussed with the authors. The experts were asked to identify particularly noteworthy findings and to interpret them from their respective scientific and professional perspectives, to reflect on the possibilities and limits of the concept of values in political and religious discourses, and to name concrete practical challenges that arise for politics, society, religious communities, and education in view of the scientific findings.

The participants in this expert workshop were (in alphabetical order):

- Dr. Jehoshua Ahrens (Central Europe Director of the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation; member of the Orthodox Rabbinical Conference, Germany)
- Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Heiner Bielefeldt (Chair in Human Rights and Human Rights Politics, Institute of Political Science, Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nuremberg/Germany)
- Prof. Dr. Sophie van Bijsterveld (Chair in Religion, Law and Society, Department of Empirical and Practical Religious Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen/The Netherlands)
- Dr. Vincent Depaigne (European Commission, Coordinator for Dialogue with Churches, Religious Associations and Communities, Philosophical and Non-Confessional Organisations, Brussels/Belgium)
- Prof. Jonathan Fox PhD (Yehuda Avner Professor of Religion and Politics, Department of Political Science, Bar Ilan University Ramat Gan/Israel)
- ao. Prof. Dr. Christian Friesl (Head of the Research Network 'Interdisciplinary Values Research', Vienna/Austria)
- Mag. Eduard Hulicius (Member of the Cabinet of Vera Jourová and Commissioner for Values and Transparency in the European Commission, Brussels/Belgium)
- Dr. Harald Jauk (Policy Advisor for Foreign and Social Affairs to Othmar Karas [Vice President and Member of the European Parliament], Vienna/Austria)
- Prof. András Máté-Tóth PhD (Professor for Study on Religions, University of Szeged/Hungary)
- Prof. Dr. Manfred Nowak (Professor of International Human Rights, University of Vienna/Austria; Secretary General of the Global Campus of Human Rights)
- Assoc.-Prof. Dr. Gergely Rosta (Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology, Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest/Hungary)
- Prof. Dr. Linda Woodhead (FD Maurice Professor and Head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at King's College London/England)

With the permission of the experts, we were allowed to take up their ideas, suggestions, critical comments, and questions in anonymised form as inspiration. In particular, the discussion with the experts made it necessary to present those problematic issues that are associated with the use of the concept of values in political and religious policy areas in the 'Basic Research' section, which discusses the understanding of 'values'. The concrete practical suggestions of the experts are reflected in the identification of conclusions, consequences, and challenges, and have been further elaborated independently by the editors.

This complex, multi-loop interdisciplinary research process means that the present study is characterised by a plurality of perspectives, high complexity, and also contradictions, and sometimes raises more questions than clear answers. This deliberate keeping open of perspectives may be irritating from the point of view of a classical social-scientific and also an ethical approach to the discourse on values in the context of religion and politics; however, it reflects not only the complexity of the negotiated topic, but above all the status quo of interdisciplinary research on values, which in the future will face the task of developing a qualified meta-theory as well as methodology, which this volume cannot and does not provide. Rather, the research process of our study has revealed that the various disciplines of values research are still working largely independently of each other at the present time and that there is a great need for mutual understanding and deeper cooperation. At the same time, this explorative study has opened up a space for a qualified scientific discourse on values, as the editors would also like to see happen for public and political debates, religious communities, and the education system, in which plurality, contradictions, and tensions are just as evident – only rarely reflected. This volume aims to tame the associated discursive arbitrariness of public and political values discourses based on scientific findings and to cultivate them in the direction of qualified plurality. It became clear that no discipline of values research can sufficiently explain this complex phenomenon without interdisciplinary dialogue. Empirical studies such as the EVS can present value landscapes descriptively and interpret them in sociological terms, but must be subject to questioning with regard to their hermeneutical and ethical foundations and consequences; the hermeneutical disciplines, in turn, must be prepared to be critically questioned as to what is the empirical basis on which they make claims about values and value developments in the population in the context of politics and religion.

1.4.6 Goals and Target Groups

This brings the goals and target groups of the volume into view. In addition to the scientific goals – analysing the international dataset of the EVS with a focus on political values and their relationship to religion from empirical as well as theoretical perspectives along the described questions and from an interdisciplinary perspective – this volume aims primarily to make a scientific contribution to the current

public and political discourses on values and to provide empirical and hermeneutical foundations for this purpose, and to formulate normative as well as practical future prospects for society, politics, and religious institutions. In this way, the values of the European Union – especially liberal democracy, solidarity, and tolerance – are to be promoted and the value conflicts between Western and Eastern Europe are to be understood in greater depth and made easier to deal with. The volume is therefore not only of academic relevance, but also aims to make a practically oriented contribution to values debates and to improve their standard and impact. Through the exploration of the possibilities and boundaries of the concept of values in political and religious discourses, the presentation of empirical foundations and the interdisciplinary discussion of the triad 'Values – Politics – Religion', the quality of values discourses as well as the values education of the population shall be improved and stimulated. Thus, the volume hopefully represents a first and inspiring step and a mine of ideas for further projects for interdisciplinary values research.

The target groups of the volume are therefore not only peer academics of different fields of values research (for example, social sciences, political and cultural studies, economic studies, philosophy, ethics, pedagogy, theology, law), but also stakeholders in society, politics, education, and religious communities on the national and EU level. Besides, the volume is also suitable for graduate students as an introduction to interdisciplinary values research.

1.5 Summaries

Finally, we will now present the most important findings and results of the individual contributions to our study along the lines already described.

Part I: Basic Research In her contribution, *Regina Polak* (Vienna/Austria) deals with the polysemy of the concept of values. She justifies the relevance of the EVS for interdisciplinary values research, but also identifies the critical questions to be asked of empirical values research: the question of the normativity of values, that is, whether there are ethical and unethical values; the question of universal values and their relationship to particular values; the question of the ambiguous understanding of 'European values' and the values of the European Union; the question of the political functions of values and the deeper understanding of values conflicts. Despite the conceptual chaos that becomes apparent in the course of this problem outline, the author considers the concept of values as a good possibility for pluralistic societies to assure themselves of their ethical orientations in the political discourse, if criteria such as its historical connection or the necessity of ethical reflection are guaranteed. Similarly ambivalent is the relationship between religion and values, which the author discusses further, especially when, for example, religion becomes an identity marker in the context of political discourse or, conversely,

values become a kind of 'new religion'. After exploring the complexity of the issues discussed, the article further offers an overview of the genesis of the concept of values as well as the understanding of values in selected scientific disciplines of values research, and identifies their respective contributions to a responsible use of the concept of values, with particular attention paid to the social scientific, ethical, and theological contributions. Nevertheless, even a scientific approach does not allow for a consensus on what values are.

Wim Weymans (Louvain-la-Neuve/Belgium) examines how the use, content, and impact of the notion 'European values' in European institutions has changed over time and describes in which contexts and with which arguments the term has been used throughout the development of the European Union. He distinguishes between a conservative Christian definition of the term originating in the Cold War era and a more inclusive secular understanding. While values were not preva-lent in the early days after the Second World War, the invocation of European values has increased since the 1990s. The latter, more secular definition of values arose after the end of the Cold War, when European institutions and politicians increasingly started to use 'European values' to legitimise the European project after rival notions such as that of a 'European identity' or a 'social Europe' proved less useful. The author also shows how some of today's tensions surrounding the concept of European values can be explained by these historical developments as a tension between the new, more abstract version of European values and their conservative origins. Furthermore, he critically examines the Catholic and Protestant influence on European values. Finally, he provides a possible way out of the predicament.

In their contribution, *Loek Halman* and *Inge Sieben* (Tilburg/The Netherlands) investigate value transformations in the religious and moral landscape of Europe within the past 30 years to examine the impact of religion on values. In particular, they focus on moral values and explore the linkage between so-called 'end-of-life' morality (such as the acceptance of abortion, euthanasia, and suicide) and religious indicators at a contextual level, that is, in countries in defined regions, and at the individual level. Therefore, they distinguish between the effect of religious practices and religious beliefs on people's moral views. They show that institutional religious engagement is a stronger predictor of rejecting abortion, euthanasia, and suicide than religious beliefs, although the relation is not that strong. At the country level, higher levels of secularisation go hand in hand with greater permissiveness towards those 'end-of-life' issues. While Europe has become more permissive regarding 'end-of-life' morality in the last three decades and traditional moral values are still connected to religious practice and religious beliefs, the influence of religion on moral values seems to weaken.

Part II: In-Depth Analyses *Susanne Pickel* (Duisburg-Essen/Germany) and *Gert Pickel* (Leipzig/Germany) examine how political culture and democratic values compare across Europe and what the significance of religious values is for political values under conditions of advancing secularisation. They further question whether the democratic political culture remains stable in Western and Eastern Europe's

democracies and whether religion and religiosity act as obstacles to anti-democratic developments or combine with often traditionalist-oriented positions of right-wing populists and anti-democrats. Although the European Values Study confirms that a high level of legitimacy is still attached to democracy, there are massive differences in support for the current democratic system, with a strong openness to alternative anti-democratic systems in Eastern Europe which helps right-wing populists to gain influence and power. Massive differences in satisfaction with democracy can be observed, and these show the fragility of the legitimacy of democracy. Prejudice and collective defence provide a bridge between right-wing populists and religion. But religious ideas work in two directions. While religious commitment and a social religion prove to be a bridge to civil engagement and civil society, a strongly individualised, traditionalist religiosity tends to create a separation from other social groups and people as well as from democracy and its values.

In their chapter on religious and political attitudes, *Regina Polak* (Vienna/Austria) and *Dirk Schuster* (Krems/Austria) investigate the effect of religiosity on political attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims in Europe, as the acceptance of cultural and religious plurality and tolerance are crucial for liberal democracy and a focal point of conflicts about values, politics, and religion. The authors critically discuss selected theories about secularisation, individualisation, and pluralisation of religion to outline the development of religion in Europe and its role in the political arena, by presenting a theoretical model of the phenomenon of the religionisation of politics and the politicisation of religion. They also analyse the effect of religiosity in relation to sociodemographic factors and distinguish different socioreligious types, and provide theoretical interpretations of the results, concluding with the importance of taking other variables such as age, size of town, country-specific constellations, political discourses on migration, and the cultural and historical contexts into account. Furthermore, a plea is made for a multi-perspective pluralisation approach to religion which focuses on the interplay between the individual and politics. Based on their results, the authors assume that conflicts over religious values might be ignited based on the differences between those who are highly religious and those who are not very religious, between generations, between the rural periphery and the urban centres, and finally between groups of different income levels. In all those conflicts, religiosity could be politically instrumentalised.

Markus Quandt (Cologne/Germany) and *Vera Lomazzi* (Bergamo/Italy) discuss solidarity as one of the core European values described in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000/2016) and the Treaty of Lisbon (TEU 2007/2016), and ask who, why, how much, and under what conditions solidarity is offered. In contrast to earlier research, they focus on the attitudinal perspective on solidarity, not behavioural or policy-preference perspectives. They discuss possible antecedents to solidarity levels as well as questions such as the prevalence of solidarity attitudes among European populations, the degree to which the declared norm is shared among these populations, and whether solidarity attitudes have changed with consecutive crises in Europe. Distinguishing solidarity by close and universal scopes, they find that both are associated with the identification of citizens with communities at different levels and that European societies display a good

degree of homogeneity and stability, with levels of close solidarity higher than levels of universal solidarity in most European countries. The religious composition has stronger associations with universal solidarity, while high religious diversity within a country has a very distinct negative effect on both forms of attitudinal solidarity, indicating that religiosity might play the role of an identity marker.

Pierre Bréchon (Grenoble/France) sheds light on the values of the 'invisibles', the social class of the poor and often marginalised, and analyses if there are differences in the value patterns of this group compared with others, especially in religious and political values. The precarious tend to be more individualistic and less individualised. They also seem to be less politicised and more dissatisfied with those in power, mobilising less strongly in public action such as voting or social and political protest. In particular, the precarious are less attached to democratic values and show greater levels of xenophobia and nationalism, which means they share many features of populism. Concerning religion, a slightly greater importance is attached to religious attitudes by the disadvantaged categories of the population, though differences are generally quite small. This can be explained by their more traditional and conventional value systems, with weaker propensity for change and slightly stronger conformism.

Part III: Interdisciplinary Perspectives Discussing the questions that arise when an ethical concept of values is transferred from the individual to a political community from the perspective of social ethics, *Christof Mandry* (Frankfurt am Main/Germany) states that European values should be understood as political values that form the absolute political and ethical foundation for responsible and liberal politics in Europe as an 'imagined community'. Based on the argument that in the context of European integration the question of European values is about the identification of the citizens with the 'project' of European unification, he demonstrates that value semantics can be interpreted as the solution to the political problem of how the European Union can function as a democracy without being a state in its own right. By describing the historical-political process, which in the twentieth century led to the establishment of value semantics as the central expression of European identity, he argues that European values took over a bridge-building function between different historical experiences and cultural imprints of European communities. From an ethical view, this function must be reflected within the tension of the universality of European values, including the generality and abstractness of their normative expectations, and their particular implementations in specific history and institutions.

Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi (Vienna/Austria) deals with the importance of values in economic contexts, particularly in companies, and discusses the handling of values in management and communication. With a normative approach, she points out the relevance of normative values for business which influence corporate governance and interaction with business stakeholders. She shows how the concept of values originated in the economic sphere and also included the idea of ideal values, as they establish and regulate social relationships. Furthermore, she

shows why an ethical approach to corporate values, based on the normative stake-holder view, is necessary for values to fulfil their orienting function. She also deals with the debate on the responsibility of companies to uphold and protect human rights. Therefore, she examines why human rights as a universal catalogue of values are relevant for companies, and how they affect corporations and challenge their handling of values on different levels. Religion, however, does not play a significant role in these debates, occurring when it does primarily on the individual level.

Christoph Konrath (Vienna/Austria) states that despite the fact that human rights and the rule of law are integral to value debates in Europe, the latter are rarely connected with discourses about the law and legal practice. He argues that neither the role of value concepts in legal discourses nor the impact of personal attitudes and values conceptions in legal practice are reflected. Simultaneously, a growing judicialisation of politics and the promotion of constitutional courts as safeguards of rational debate, equality, and human rights can be observed. In this context, the author discusses the social functions of law and the self-conception of legal institutions and people within them. Guided by an interdisciplinary 'law in context' approach, he reflects on the conception of the institutional basis of the rule of law by legal scholars in relation to value debates, and demonstrates how and why value debates have gained influence over recent decades, which is connected with a technical understanding of rights, laws, and the rule of law. The author observes that politicians and political debates increasingly aim at enshrining values in constitutions and laws – a tendency that the author argues with a narrative on the preconditions of the modern state and its being used to promote certain value sets. Using practical examples, he illustrates how these developments result in values conflicts that are brought before courts and describes how people, who aim to defend their rights and religious, cultural, and moral views, mobilise the law with a focus on conflicts about migration and religion in the public sphere. Based on his analysis, he argues for a better connection between legal and values debates while respecting the tension between them. In turn, the tension between laws and values can be perceived as a source for strengthening the role of the rule of law, human rights, and legal discourse as safeguards of human dignity, social diversity, freedom, and justice.

Part IV: Future Prospects   *Wolfgang Aschauer* (Salzburg/Austria) examines current social and political challenges in Europe and the role that values play in them by focusing on three aspects. First, concerning distributional conflicts and the ongoing need to create a higher social balance between classes, he asks if European citizens are still in favour of a higher appreciation of the welfare state. Second, concerning identity conflicts between opting on the one hand for societal closure and approval of a multicultural society on the other, he examines if European citizens generally adapt to the reality of cultural diversity. Third, concerning environmental awareness, he investigates if the increasingly intense climate debate is leading to a focus on protecting the environment. Therefore, he provides an empiri-

cally based distinction between major value cleavages in Europe and clarifies potential differences in causal relations, separately analysing the dynamics in major European regions to assess long-term developments regarding perceptions of central social challenges and to detect the drivers for achieving a broader scope of solidarity. While concerns about climate change are more likely to cross the threshold of heightened attention in flourishing economic times, the willingness to spend a part of income on the environment has decreased significantly in almost all Western countries. The gaps between political liberalism in Western Europe and neo-conservatism in Eastern Europe probably further inhibit the defining of a common strategy of sustainability within the EU. The existing cleavage between conservative values and liberal world views (partly) influenced by religion still has a lot of power to explain current perceptions of an ethnic threat versus approval of multicultural society or environmental concern.

Bernhard Grümme (Bochum/Germany) contributes to the volume with a religious education perspective. He discusses what contribution religious pedagogy can make to the current discourse on values in a late-modern society and also discusses the question of the imparting of values. He examines the possibilities and limits thereof as well as the normative and hermeneutic implications. He clarifies the concept of values led by a pedagogical interest and develops a profile of values education which is defined with examples from the research on the European Values Study and the religious pedagogical model of compassion education. Although religious education is not identical to values education, it can make a critical and productive contribution to the current discourse on values because of its specificity regarding the idea of God and its integrative, politically dimensioned concept of education. Therefore, religious values education emphasises the importance of internally guided understanding, experience-based reflection, and critical self-reflection.

Finally, *Regina Polak* (Vienna/Austria) draws exemplary conclusions and identifies consequences and challenges based on the results of the volume and its research process. She highlights four thematical areas that call for practical consequences in society, politics, education, and research. In light of the background of the diagnosis of the crisis of liberal democracy, she argues for strengthening subsidiarity in political values communication and underlines the need for debating the tensions between universal and particular values, with a focus on the value cleavages between Western and Eastern Europe, but also on significant groups in Europe who do not feel represented in the dominant political discourses. Regarding the role of religion in values discourses, she discusses how religion can be both a problem or a component for solving the crisis of liberal democracy and lists challenges for both political and religious actors and communities. Moreover, she highlights the importance of values education, for younger and older people, and argues that society, politics, and religious communities should attach greater relevance to religious education, as it is of public and political concern. Finally, she summarises future challenges for both the European Values Study and trans- and interdisciplinary values research that have emerged during the research process of this volume.

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Thus, first and foremost, our thanks go to our authors, who generously contributed their professional expertise to this time-consuming endeavour. Further thanks go to the external experts who willingly and critically reviewed our findings and enriched the research process with their feedback, questions, and ideas. Giving time and expertise free of charge is not something that can be taken for granted. We would also like to thank our colleagues from the Research Network 'Interdisciplinary Values Research' (n.d.) at the University of Vienna, who accompanied the project during its development and during the research process. Furthermore, such a project cannot be implemented without the cooperation of study assistants, copyeditors, and a perfect secretary's office. In particular, we would like to thank Jean-Louis Forrer for protocol writing, Gráinne Treanor for mid-project copyediting, Nicole Kadlec for translation work, and Monika Mannsbarth for organisational and administrative support. Last but not least, we would also like to thank for the cooperation with SPRINGER which made it possible that this volume can now be published.

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Regina Polak and Patrick Rohs, Editors

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Dr Regina Polak (*1967) is Associate Professor and head of the Department of Practical Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna (Austria). She is a member of the research network 'Interdisciplinary Values Research' and the research centre 'Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society', both at the University of Vienna. Her research focuses on socio-religious transformation processes in Europe, values research, religion and migration, and interreligious dialogue in a migration society. She is also Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions.

Patrick Rohs (*1989) is a university assistant (pre-doc) at the Department of Practical Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna (Austria). He studied Catholic theology and psychology in Vienna and Trier (Germany) and coordinates the research network 'Interdisciplinary Values Research' at the University of Vienna. His dissertation deals with 'Values education and social cohesion'.

Part I
Basic Research

Chapter 2
Values: A Contested Concept. Problem Outline and Interdisciplinary Approaches

Regina Polak

Abstract The concept of values builds the 'umbrella' of this interdisciplinary volume. But what 'are' values? Our volume documents, that values are a contested concept. In this chapter, I want to discuss the polysemic and ambiguous meanings and functions of this term and identify its strengths and weaknesses for public and political discourse. In this way, a more qualified and differentiated reference to values shall be promoted, particularly in the debates about European values. The discussion of values will be achieved using three approaches. First, the concept of values used in the European Values Study (EVS) will be presented. As the EVS does not claim a clear definition of values, a thematic problem outline will, second, reflect the questions, problems, and difficulties occurring in an unreflected usage of this contested term, with a special focus on the relationship between values and religion. Third, an overview of diverse academic definitions and theories of values demonstrates that there is no unique and conclusive definition of this concept. However, this article aims at providing arguments for why exactly the polysemy and ambiguity of the concept of values can be perceived as a strength, if we are aware of the problems and relate them to the results of values research. Thus, we purposely abstain from a final definition of values and hope to inspire further qualified interdisciplinary research, which is a desideratum that has become visible in our project.

Keywords Values · Norms · European values · Universal values · Ethics

R. Polak (✉)
Department of Practical Theology, Faculty of Catholic Theology,
University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
e-mail: regina.polak@univie.ac.at

2.1   Introduction: Objectives and Structure

As 'values' is the generic term of the European Values Study (EVS), the concept of values forms the 'umbrella' under which this volume presents basic research on the relationship between values, politics, and religion from the perspective of various disciplines of values research. But the concept of values is ambiguous and polysemous and can take on different functions or serve different interests.

This chapter aims to raise awareness of the problems surrounding this complex term and wishes to contribute to its differentiated understanding and a more sensitive usage – especially in public and political discourses – by providing academic reflections, findings, and materials using an interdisciplinary approach. Because of the ambiguity fundamentally inherent in the concept of values, we refrain from rash systematisations and syntheses. An overall definition of the concept of values would also contradict the heterogeneous definitions presented in this volume, as the various values research disciplines contributing to it are based on diverse concepts of values.

The aims of this contribution are realised in three steps:

In a first step, we present the concept of values of the EVS and discuss the usage difficulties that have been revealed during our study. From this discussion, we derive the character and concerns as well as the possibilities and limits of our project. The second step offers a thematical problem outline. We present the tensions and questions around the concept of values discussed by our team of authors and experts when reflecting our empirical results,[1] including a reflection on the understanding of 'European values' and the relationship between values and religion. In the third step, we address the question of how academic values research from the perspective of different disciplines can contribute to a deeper understanding of values and present selected definitions and theories. Finally, we conclude by drawing some exemplary consequences from the discussion.

2.2   The Concept of Values in the Context of Our Volume

This volume focuses on empirical studies based on the data of the EVS 1990–2017, with a special focus on the impact of religious attitudes and values on political attitudes and values. The empirical findings are embedded in contributions that reflect specific aspects of the relationship between 'values', 'politics,' and 'religion' from the perspective of hermeneutic and normative academic disciplines.

To make the differences between the disciplines recognisable, the authors of the volume were not given a normative concept of values by which to orientate themselves when preparing their contributions. In this way, we wanted to do justice to the range and heterogeneity of the respective approaches. As we assume that any

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[1] The research process and the experts are presented in Chap. 1: Introduction, Sect. 1.4.5.

substantial interdisciplinary research requires the making visible of differences and conflicts between the individual disciplines before any systematising, we wanted to ensure that the specific contribution of each discipline to values research became as clearly visible as possible. Recognising and confronting differences and a deeper understanding of the different approaches can then open spaces to let those questions, discussions, and desiderata – that future values research must face – emerge.

Thus, the present volume has an explorative, inductive, and interdisciplinary character. The results reveal how deep mutual ignorance, reservations, and rifts between empirical and hermeneutic-normative disciplines still are. The questions arising during the process of the study document the urgent need for further and qualified interdisciplinary collaboration. Particularly in discussions on the relationship between 'politics' and 'religion', the ambiguity of the concept of values creates more confusion than orientation and raises countless questions while demanding clarification, because *all* three terms – 'values', 'politics', and 'religion' – are contested concepts.

For example, the term 'religion' can refer to individual religious self-understanding ('religiosity'), to religious communities or institutions, or to the psychological, social, or political functions of those communities or institutions (Figl 2003: 62–81). 'Politics', in turn, can have a normative, a descriptive, or a functional meaning. It can, for example, be defined normatively as 'the totality of the activities to prepare and produce decisions that are binding for society as a whole and/or that are oriented towards the common good and that benefit society as a whole' (Meyer 2003: 41). But the term can also just describe different dimensions of political acting such as the distribution of resources, opportunities for participation, and power, and can then be broken down to 'polity' (political structures), 'politics' (political processes), and 'policy' (political content) (Rohe 1994).

The EVS has a very traditional understanding of 'politics' and 'religion'. While the concept of politics refers to political attitudes based on theories of liberal democracies, the concept of religion focuses on religious self-understanding and religious practices. The latter has its origins in a traditional Christian understanding of religiosity. Even if these understandings explain critical queries – that is, whether they adequately reflect the contemporary transformations of the religious and political field in Europe (see Polak, Chap. 14, this volume) – they are comparatively clearly defined for our research purposes.

In contrast, the concept of values raises innumerable questions. Massive criticism has been expressed because of the indeterminacy and ambiguity of this concept, particularly by those authors who contributed to our volume from a hermeneutic-normative approach.

In light of these difficulties, this volume is based on the premise that the EVS provides essential empirical findings that should also be recognised by non-empirical values research disciplines to root their hermeneutical and ethical reflections also in empirical findings. In turn, we are convinced that the critical perspective – of cultural studies, social ethics, philosophy of law, economics, religious education, philosophy, and theology – on the social science findings opens a dialogue that could improve empirical research.

This volume documents the initial steps in such a dialogue. Thus, the heterogeneous concepts of values of the individual disciplines sometimes collide and reveal the need to raise more academic and political awareness of both the problematic nature of the concept of values *and* its rich potential to stimulate academic, social, and political discourses on values. In the chapter 'Conclusions, Consequences, Challenges' (Polak, Chap. 14, this volume), we will identify exemplary areas of further discussion. We wish to initiate debates, not to conclude them. Defining values once and for all would not only contradict our practical-theological self-image, according to which the strength of academic values research lies in the independence of the heterogenous approaches and findings, but it would also contradict one of the results of this volume: that above all it is the ambiguity of the concept of values that can motivate and stimulate societies to implement, reflect, reinterpret, reargue, and relegitimise their values – a duty that must be fulfilled by democratic societies time and again to keep values alive and justifiable. We agree with Wim Weymans (Chap. 3, this volume), who thinks that the very 'messiness' of the contested term can contribute to those necessary value debates that Europe needs in an era of multiple crises.

However, from an ethical approach and from the perspective of European values, the tension between the results from the EVS and the normative understanding of European values can be perceived as a weakness. This was previously criticised when we published the results of the EVS 2010 (Moser 2013). But when the European Values Systems Study Group (EVSSG) began this project, it 'made no grand claims for any unified theory of human values' (Arts and Halman 2011: 79). Rather, the then called EVSSG had 'one grand theoretical idea, that is that European value patterns constitute systems' (Arts and Halman 2011: 79) – an idea that was refuted by the results of the first survey in 1981 and resulted in the development of social scientific theories on values long before the European Union proclaimed its normative values. Additionally, this tension can also be seen as a strength that is inherent in the complexity of interdisciplinary values research, because interdisciplinary values research deliberately situates itself on several levels and distinguishes between (a) an 'empirical-descriptive level' that documents 'what is the case'; (b) an 'explicative-theoretical' level that interprets 'how this can be explained'; (c) a 'normative level' that reflects 'what should be the case'; and (d) a 'pragmatic' level that asks 'what consequences result from this' (cf. the relation model between (social) sciences and policymaking of Arts and Halman 2011: 96–97).

In our volume, the contributions from the social sciences correspond to levels (a) and (b), the contributions from the hermeneutic and normative sciences offer exemplary approaches to level (c), and the contributions in the section 'Future Perspectives' (Chaps. 12, 13, and 14, Part IV of this volume) outline elements of level (d). Because of its explorative character, this volume cannot provide a comprehensive synthesis. This is an outstanding desideratum. But the tensions within our volume reflect all the problems that explicitly and implicitly characterise the controversial discourses on values that have shaped public and political discourse in the European Union for several decades. During our research process, we were able – with our teams of authors and experts – to outline those thematic fields in which

further debate both in and between academia, society, and politics is needed. This volume hopefully provides a stimulating academic resource for such debates.

2.3   Thematical Problem Outline

We now list some of the thematic fields in which further discussion is necessary.

2.3.1   The Relevance of Empirical Values Research

For 40 years, the EVS has been offering comprehensive mapping and theories on the values landscape of the European population. For nearly the entire duration of this long-term EVS project, it has been criticised for its lack of a clear definition of the concept of values. Although the EVS makes no normative claim, this criticism may be justified. For example, respondents can only take a position on attitudes and issues given to them as 'values' without recourse to a guiding understanding of values. The acceptance or rejection of abstract ethical norms such as 'justice' or 'freedom' only come into view indirectly or not at all. For example, the results do not tell us what the respondents understand by freedom or solidarity, how they argue their attitudes, or whether normative values provide ethical orientation for decisions. Thus, with a few exceptions (for example, solidarity or democracy), the EVS provides little insight into explicit agreement with the normative values of the European Union. In turn, the narrow concept of religion does not allow us to provide any theories regarding the field of the so-called *new spiritualities*, which have become established as an autonomous field of religion in Europe during the socio-religious transformation of recent decades.

   Moreover, the question may arise as to what kind of 'reality' the results describe. Are the researched values those that people really orient themselves to in their lives, or do the results only represent the behavioural response to values arising from given theories? In turn, what concept of values guides the theories on which the selected attitudes are based? In addition, little research has been done into whether actions are associated with the respective attitudes in everyday life. Moreover, in some social science interpretations, a guiding normative concept of values can be implicitly recognised alongside a descriptive one – for example, when a liberal understanding of democracy becomes recognisable as an implicit guiding concept (Pickel and Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume), or when the EVS presupposes that political attitudes should be guided by values, which is not considered consensual, either empirically or theoretically (see the criticism of Grümme, Chap. 13, this volume). In some other international social science projects, such as the International Panel on Social Progress (IPSP 2018), such normative goals are even explicitly stated – for example, when values research is explicitly placed in the service of promoting social justice worldwide. Should social scientists be guided by values in their

research, and how do they justify this? Is this made sufficiently transparent? And is it even possible to conduct social research free from (personal) values?

Despite this diffuse understanding of values and the justified questions, the EVS offers relevant results that the hermeneutic-normative sciences should also perceive and take seriously for several reasons. On the one hand, the vagueness of the understanding of values offers plural respondents starting points for expressing their attitudes. This openness might also explain the success of the concept of values, and not only in values research. It offers an umbrella under which ethical discourse can be conducted in a time of ethical pluralism without using the socially disavowed concept of morality, which many people associate with repressive moralising. On the other hand, the character of a replication study, which surveys the same attitudes over decades, reveals long-term dynamics and tendencies and thus value transformations. This does justice to the fact that values belong to those dimensions of culture that usually change only very slowly in core areas such as religion and politics. Finally, the attitudes to given values researched by the EVS are not based on arbitrary selection but on recognised social science theories, such as the theories of modernisation, individualisation, pluralisation, or secularisation. These have interpreted social value transformations for decades and have thus shaped the everyday discourses of the European population. In this way, the EVS provides insights into aspects of the reality of values in Europe and documents what the respondents think about those value-laden topics that are negotiated in scientific, political, media, and other public discourses. Even if this raises the question of the mutual influences and power relations between everyday discourses and expert discourses, these findings should also form an essential starting point for hermeneutic-normative values research – precisely *because* of their power. As Arts and Halman state (2011: 97–98): 'Philosophers and theologians therefore cannot confine themselves to evaluating and influencing the principles and values of politicians and policymakers but they also have to know what is in the minds of the people.'

Admittedly, following Theodor W. Adorno's criticism of empirical social research and especially attitude research (Adorno 1972), the empirical results of the EVS are not 'facts' in the sense of immediate and objectively measurable data. But precisely because of their scientific form of power, they constitute an effective dimension of value reality and massively influence value debates. However, because from an ethical perspective the results can be misguided, they require a (self-)critical interpretation and assessment by critical social theories and normative sciences. Otherwise, empirical values research runs the risk of merely duplicating or (unintentionally) legitimising unethical world views or of being instrumentalised or even misused. Without (self-)criticism, empirical values research would contribute to a scientifically based manipulation of the masses (Adorno 1972).[2] As modern societies – and in particular politicians – are more likely to trust 'data' than

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[2] This can be seen, for example, in the misuse of opinion polls for political purposes, when political representatives use them to influence the voting behaviour of the population.

hermeneutically complex theories or reflections of the humanities, this interdisciplinary research seems more urgent than ever.

Therefore, because empirical values research is a powerful actor in social and political discourses, its relevance should also be recognised and critically reflected upon by the hermeneutic-normative sciences. Embedded in interdisciplinary dialogues, the EVS can – like any other science – be one important instrument of self-enlightenment (Heinrich 1987).

The empirical findings of the EVS thus have an ambivalent potential. They can take on a critical function for society and move the hermeneutically normative sciences with their tendency towards the ideal to ground their theoretical-abstract approaches in reality that can be found. But without the collaboration with hermeneutic-normative sciences, they can be misused for interests other than the scientific, as methodologically they have no genuinely ethical theories at their disposal for the evaluation of their data. The ethical orientation of the individual researcher is not sufficient for ethical reflection. In turn, hermeneutic-normative scientists can sharpen their critical potential by arguing with empiricism.

This interdisciplinary cooperation becomes particularly explosive when the respondents reveal values that lack ethical judgement, or when politicians derive the actions they should take directly from the mere empirical results, especially when they orientate themselves based on majority views: for example, when the legitimacy of an anti-migration policy is derived from predominantly negative attitudes towards migrants. Without a normative critique of the results, social sciences cannot determine or justify whether such a policy is ethically justifiable, and why that is so.

2.3.2   The Normative Question: Ethical and Unethical Values?

Social sciences do, of course, have detailed definitions and theoretical accounts of the concept of values and refer to hermeneutic-ethical theories in theory building (for details, see section "Sociological approaches" in this chapter). Research, however, concentrates primarily on the normative or structural function of values in social contexts and the associated content and empirical manifestations. The results do not claim to be normative. Therefore, social science research on values provides information on which values societies orient themselves towards and further offers theories on how this can be understood in the context of social developments. But from a hermeneutic – especially a philosophical, ethical, and theological – perspective, such an understanding of values admittedly entails problems.

The results can be misunderstood as 'facts' without considering that the descriptive representations are interpreted reality shaped by theoretical presuppositions and decisions, and sometimes implicitly normative ones. For example, attitudes towards religious values can be reduced to the dimension of content and ritual, while the political ideas of religious people are not considered constitutive of a religious self-understanding. From the perspective of religious studies and theology, such a reduced approach would be highly insufficient. For Judaism, Christianity, and

Islam, for example, justice and freedom are genuinely religious values – that is, they are founded in faith, they are of normative character and consequently (should) shape the political behaviour of the believers.

Furthermore, the respondents can also represent values that contradict normative values such as those of the European Union: they can reject gender justice or tolerance towards minorities and plurality; they can advocate for the preferential treatment of men (for example, in the labour market), or for the exclusion of immigrants from participation in public goods; or they can vote for culturally homogeneous societies. Can such results then still be called values? Or would one have to develop a separate category to describe such attitudes? Are there values that from a normative point of view are not worthy of being called values? And what are normative as opposed to non-normative values?

With these questions, the ethical, philosophical, and theological critique of empirical values becomes necessary. Human values in the sense of an empirical description can differ significantly from normative human values, which refer to a normatively understood humanity and are formulated from the perspective of human rights or ethics, which always aim at universal validity and commitment. If, for example, the EVS shows a high level of rejection of immigrants and Muslims in some regions of Europe (see Pickel and Pickel, Chap. 5; Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6; Aschauer, Chap. 12, this volume), it can be concluded that many respondents do not share central values of the European Union. Conversely, can the values that possibly underlie them, such as nationality or cultural homogeneity, still be called values if they have an obvious anti-humanist tendency? Or could this rejection also be based on other values not asked about in the EVS, such as the appreciation of one's own history, culture, and homeland, which do not have to be *eo ipso* anti-humanist?

The question of normativity also becomes precarious in the case of value conflicts that can result from the various political value cleavages between Eastern and Western Europe documented in this volume (see Pickel and Pickel, Chap. 5; Aschauer, Chap. 12, this volume). As value conflicts are part of the normality of a pluralistic Europe, normative criteria are needed, based on which value conflicts can be discussed and resolved to enable action. Are such criteria then not normative values in their own right? Do they themselves require normative ideas to judge them? The ambiguity and vagueness of the concept of values tests the limits of the concept and challenges its suitability and applicability for ethical, legal, and political decisions. Therefore, neither an exclusive recourse to values nor a pure semantics of values is of help for value conflicts. A differentiated clarification of what values are is needed, along with valid and binding norms.

A cultural studies perspective also exacerbates the problem of unclarified value concepts. The genesis and use of the concept of values, as used by the European Union (see Chap. 3, this volume), documents how the mere recourse to the concept of values is unsuitable for either the analysis or the solution of ethical, political, or legal conflicts. The understanding of European values is inseparably linked to historical constellations and political interests and goals. Thus, a cultural-historical approach intensifies the normative question.

So, too, does a historical perspective, which also obliges a normative-critical examination of the concept of values. Even if the totalitarian regimes of National Socialism and communism did not explicitly use the concept of values, they did refer to values such as loyalty, honour, comradeship, community, or homeland, in whose name unspeakable crimes against humanity were committed, above all the Shoah. This historically unique crime was accompanied by relativisation, abolition, and perversion of the human ability to distinguish between good and evil, law and unlaw (Arendt 2018/1963) and turned discrimination, exclusion, and murder into values.

Bearing this in mind, values research must be called upon to pay more attention to the darker sides of values and to approach the concept of values from a critical distance. According to Zygmunt Bauman (1994), social sciences in particular must acknowledge appropriate consequences from the fact that mass murders of millions took place, legitimised by the invocation of values – a process of self-reflection that has not yet taken place.

In this volume, some basic information on philosophical, ethical and juridical understanding of values will be presented (see section "Philosophical and ethical approaches" in this chapter; also Mandry, Chap. 9; Konrath, Chap. 11; Grümme, Chap. 13, this volume). However, juxtaposing different perspectives on the topic of values raises another essential question. How do empirical and normative values relate to each other? Some academic answers will be given in section "Philosophical and ethical approaches". But to be able to take the next step of intertwining the results, the respective guiding substantive and methodological pre-understandings of the individual disciplines would have to be made transparent and discussed. Only then can the heterogeneous approaches be intertwined in a theory-guided discourse. During our research process, we became painfully aware that there is a lack of places and projects for such a substantially interdisciplinary discourse in a highly differentiated and specialised scientific landscape with its subject-specific logics. An ethical assessment of our empirical results is therefore reserved for further study.

2.3.3 The Question of Universal Values

Closely connected to the question of normative values is the question of universal values, that is, values that are universally valid and binding for 'everyone'. The EVS clearly documents that the European values landscape regarding religious and political attitudes is highly pluralised, fragmented, and polarised. In particular, the findings on attitudes to democracy, solidarity, diversity, or the influence of individual religiosity on political attitudes suggest that respondents' acceptance of universal values such as human rights, which should apply to all, is guided more by sociodemographic, regional, and historical factors than by universal ethical principles, and is thus precarious. Claims on the acceptance of universal values by the respondents, which an ethical approach aims at just as much as the values of the European Union or human rights do, can therefore only be assumed, not proved based on the EVS.

Thus, our volume has made clear the necessity of taking a closer look at the universal dimension of values in the future. From an ethical point of view, universality in this context means the general validity of ethical concepts, norms, principles, virtues, and values that can be justified by theoretical and practical reason, independent of the consent of the individual and their biographical, social, cultural, or other characteristics, and connected with a normative claim to apply to everyone (see Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume). Such universality underlies, for example, human rights (see Coudenhove-Kalergi, Chap. 10, this volume) or Christian ethics, which are both based on normative values such as the dignity of each human being or the equality of all human beings. In their self-image, the so-called European values also see themselves as universally valid values – a claim that is, of course, not only critically questioned from a historical and post-colonial perspective (see section "Overview"; also, Mishra 2017) but is also rejected by some religious representatives (see, for example, the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam from 1990). Additionally, empirical findings suggest that the approval of universal values can also be expressed in culturally formatted, particular forms and that a plurality of values does not automatically indicate the rejection of a universal ethical orientation (see IPSP 2018: 41–57). If, however, the values of the European Union are normatively used as a basis for evaluating the empirical findings of the EVS, a discussion on the justification of the universality of these values seems indispensable. For example, whether and why the European normative value of democracy must necessarily be understood universally in its liberal form, or whether other varieties of democratic understanding could also correspond to this universal requirement, could be discussed. For even in the case of a fundamental recognition of universal values, the question arises as to how these values can be realised concretely in both spatial and temporal terms – that is, how they can find expression in individual or regional political decisions (see Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume).

However, if one shares Zygmunt Bauman's assessment that humanity is currently facing challenges of 'planetary proportions' (Bauman 2015: 70–73), there is no alternative to the recognition of universal values such as equality or freedom, solidarity, and justice for all people. In light of the climate catastrophe that is already occurring, global migration or the economic domination of a few privileged sections of humanity over the mass of the deprived – as well as the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in the Ukraine – are a call for universal values.

The EVS leads to the assumption that a significant part of Europe is not yet ready for such a universal orientation. Also, Zygmunt Bauman sees 'frighteningly low chances' (Bauman 2015: 70) of developing universal compassion or even 'global solidarity'. Nevertheless, he states that the attempt to struggle for a universal orientation is 'a must' (Bauman 2015: 71), because it is a matter of life and death and the 'naked survival of the human species' (Bauman 2015: 73) is at stake. According to Bauman, Europe's unique history puts it in a 'better position than any other part of humanity to meet these challenges' (Bauman 2015: 71), for the European Union is a result of the 'lesson of tragedy', especially in reflecting on its colonial history and its 'long and entangled relations with the rest of the human planet' (Bauman 2015: 70). In the course of its history, Europe has recognised the need to move from a

'Hobbesian planet' – where all struggle against all for power and hegemony – to the Kantian 'common union of the human race' (Bauman 2015: 68), which includes the duty to develop a universalist perspective of norms and rights. Precisely because Europe has failed in history, it is aware of 'the price of detours and delays' (Bauman 2015: 68) caused by a path through violence, war, and mass murder. Therefore, Europe was taught the need for universal orientation by blood and suffering. The universal claim of European values cannot be understood without remembering this history. In times of war in Europe, this important heritage must not be forgotten.

2.3.4 European Values

Genesis

There is no doubt that the theoretical formulation of the European values can be traced back to the theories of philosophers and intellectuals, as they were developed in particular in the wake of the Enlightenment. However, they only became politically effective and enforceable in concrete historical contexts – first, after the civilisational abyss of the twentieth century, when European politicians, initially in Western Europe, were prepared to give them political recognition (see Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume), and second, when because of the catastrophes of war large parts of the Western European population were ready to accept them. A further dynamisation of the acceptance of universal values was brought about by the downfall of the Soviet regime and the associated search for integrating elements such as these very values (see Mandry 2011). The recognition of the universality of European values is thus inextricably linked to the historical experiences of totalitarian violence, war, and mass murder. They have been wrested from this experience.

This close connection between European values and history can be proven, for example, by the 'Charter of the European Identity', which was adopted in 1995 by the Europa-Union Germany at the suggestion of the then-President Václav Havel (Charta 1995). In an address to the European Parliament in Strasbourg in 1994, Havel had called for such a charter, which was to make European integration appear to the inhabitants of Europe not only as a 'bureaucratic monstrosity' but as a contribution to a 'new and unmistakably clear self-reflection' of 'what one could call European identity'. Such a charter, according to Havel, should consist in a 'new and really clear articulation of European responsibility, in increased interest in making real sense of European integration and all its wider contexts in the world today, and in recovering its ethos' (Charta 1995).

Thus, in its first paragraphs, the Charter describes Europe as a community of destiny and values that has developed within the framework of a historical process of civilisation that 'was set in motion by our ancestors and by us' and has led to a 'stage of development where all are interdependent' (Charta 1995). In concrete terms, the Charter calls on every European to 'cooperative responsibly in building a European community of peace'. The values associated with this peace-building

project are 'based on a common law in which the freedom of the individual and the responsibility towards the community have found their expression' and exist as 'fundamental European values in the commitment to tolerance, humanity and fraternity'. The European values therefore have less of a philosophical and more of a historical character: 'Preserving peace, preserving our environment and organising a life of dignity for all require a common policy. Uniting Europe means responding to the historical challenge of the present and the sorrowful experiences of the past.'

In describing the European community of values, the Charter emphasises the historical location of the concept of values and therefore the need to raise awareness of, preserve, critically examine, and further develop the historical heritage of those values. This historical memory includes recognition that these values have their roots in antiquity, Judaism and Christianity and were further developed in the Renaissance, in humanism, and in the Enlightenment. Moreover, the Charter recalls that Europe has repeatedly questioned and violated its values through unrestrained nationalism, imperialism, and totalitarianism. From this perspective, European values are 'historically formed and deeply rooted preferences and criteria of judgement' (Bauman 2015: 75).

Today, these historical roots seem to have been forgotten. In public and political debates they are often reduced to abstract norms that are to be enforced from above in their Western interpretation. It is therefore not without reason that they are met with resistance, in particular from Eastern European states that joined the EU after the implosion of the Soviet empire. The European Union failed to connect the history of this region with the European values, as this history was inadequately recognised publicly. These states are sceptical of values that from their perspective seem to be normatively imposed from 'Brussels'. Additionally, some of these abstract values have their own history in the post-communist region – for example, the concept of solidarity, which was misused by the communist ideology of the Soviet regime for self-interest and oppressive practices.

This historical amnesia of the genesis of the European values also affects the EVS. Critics do not recognise that the values of the European Union were far from being on the horizon when the first EVS was conducted in 1980. In contrast, this new idea of researching the value patterns of the European population can be seen as one important element in developing a set of normative values on a political level.

According to our empirical results, the gap between the values of many Europeans and the European values stated in the treaties of the European Union seems to widen. In the wake of the post-2008 global financial and economic crisis, the 2015 refugee crisis and, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, 'families of countries' can be observed that are highly divergent in their attitudes towards economic redistribution and solidarity, intercultural coexistence, and environmental awareness. In some regions of Europe, the political goals of the EU and the values on which they are based are clearly rejected. Economic and cultural divisions across Europe point to massive value conflicts between individual countries and the values of the EU (Aschauer, Chap. 12, this volume). If and how the experience of the Russian war against the Ukraine will influence these value patterns – increase the gaps or strengthen the commitment to European values – cannot yet be predicted.

Content

These tensions and divisions may also have their roots in the concept of 'European values', which is itself a vague concept, as Wim Weymans (Chap. 3, this volume) argues in his cultural analysis of the values of the European Union.

This ambiguity starts with the deconstruction of the concept of 'Europe'. Europe cannot be precisely defined from an academic perspective; nor can it be identified geographically, historically, culturally, or in terms of philosophical history (for example, Bauman 2015; Mishra 2017; Schmale 2015; Schmale et al. 2012). The self-understanding of Europe turns out to be a result of self-representations that have changed throughout history. As Europe is not therefore identical to the European Union, European values cannot be reduced exclusively to the European Union's code of values. Rather, the term 'European values' can also include all those norms and principles, maxims and virtues, commandments and laws that have been developed by philosophers, theologians, and intellectuals in the course of the history of a region that has represented itself as 'Europe'. Finally, speaking of European values can also refer to those values that are shared by the people in the region that today calls itself the European Union. These values of Europeans 'are extremely complicated to establish' (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 5). The EVS and the Eurobarometer[3] have been trying to map these values through quantitative data based on questionnaires. While the EVS, as discussed, systematically analyses the respondents' answers to questions referring to several domains of life without identifying values beforehand, the Eurobarometer tests whether a pre-established list of values such as peace, democracy, human rights, etc. is common among the respondents. But even such a purely empirical understanding of European values can turn out be problematic, because these values are not just a monopoly of people living in this region. A comparison between the values of people living in European countries and people living in Islamic countries documents quite a lot overlapping in attitudes (Tausch et al. 2014).

Given this confusing and diffuse mishmash, the normatively defined canons of values, formulated by the European Union, can at first sight seem unambiguous. These values are essentially laid down in the Treaty of Lisbon (TEU 2007/2016) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000/2016).

Article 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon lists the following values on which the European Union is founded: 'respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to all Member States in a society characterised by pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men.'

The central importance of these values for the EU's self-understanding is also made clear in Article 3, when it is described as the EU's objective to 'promote peace, its values, and the well-being of its peoples' (Art. 1 TEU). Once again, the

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[3] Eurobarometer: Public Opinion in the European Union. Eurobarometer (europa.eu).

preamble emphasises the historical origins of these values. On the one hand, it cites 'the cultural, religious and humanist heritage' as the source from which 'the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy and equality and the rule of law have developed as universal values'. On the other hand, 'the historical importance of overcoming the division of the European continent' is recalled, combined with the 'necessity of laying firm foundations for the shape of future Europe'. The commitment to values – now called 'principles' – plays a key role in this: 'freedom, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law'.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which was integrated in the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009 and thus became legally binding, also invokes these values. In its very first sentence it reads as such: 'The peoples of Europe are resolved to share a peaceful future, based on common values, by uniting in an ever-closer union'. Referring to history, the charter then lists the following values: 'Conscious of its spiritual, religious and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible and universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity. It is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the human person at the centre of its action by establishing citizenship of the Union and an area of freedom, security and justice.'

A critical look at the values formulated in these documents reveals that the concept of values is not clearly defined. Rather, it represents an abstract umbrella term covering various categories such as ethical norms, legal principles, virtues, or procedural-political norms without distinguishing between these categories. Quite a few of the values listed are highly ambiguous and could be assigned to heterogeneous ethical categories. For example, is tolerance a virtue, an ethical norm, or a legal claim? Furthermore, there is no clear-cut distinction 'between values as ultimate end and as means, between the normative contents and the procedures designed to actualize them' (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 4). The values of the EU, therefore, also require constant interpretation and communicative negotiation in concrete contexts and public processes. They reveal that the meaning and goals of values are subject to a process of never-ending transformation, which challenges the EU governance, when used for policies and polity-building, and as narrative tools (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 4).

If one recognises these lists as the results of political processes of agreement, however, this code of values can be appreciated in its relative indeterminacy. The openness of these values to interpretation is a strength – if they relate to public and political processes of interpretation. Given the historical and empirical diversity, the values of the European Union can then be interpreted contextually as simultaneously unifying and integrating Europe through a constant dialogue on values. Therefore, the values of the European Union formulate less a philosophically or ethically secured catalogue than a political ideal that is intended to open a common space of discourse. They are *deliberately* kept vague.

In view of the European history, this common agreement on such a catalogue of norms can be seen as immense progress. They are milestones in 'a long-standing quest for normative foundations of the European polity' (Foret and Calligaro 2018:

2). However, such progress is by no means self-evident, cannot be decreed from above, and must be striven for and won again and again. Therefore, the generality and abstractness of the terms are deliberately intended to allow local, regional, or national interpretations that can be linked to cultural, religious, and historical conditions. The European values are therefore not definitions but descriptions that need to be interpreted in theory and practice. According to Foret and Calligaro (2018: 4), European values can be seen as *representations*. As values are 'cultural representations and points of reference about what is good or bad', European values are 'these values enshrined in the treaties and asserted by European institutions in their discourses' (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 4).

The current revival of European values as answers to external and internal challenges of the EU – such as international migration, the weakening role of Europe in global politics, the financial and economic crisis from 2008 onwards, etc. – can thus be seen as both a chance and a risk. New national movements, with their rhetoric and narratives highlighting the uniqueness of the European identity and referring to European values, reveal the dark side of value politics. Simultaneously, the 'reference to European values appears as a fresh way to search for normative resources to assert EU policies and politics' (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 2), as they can have an enormous mobilising power. Furthermore, the universality of these values is a resource in a global era. According to Zygmunt Bauman, Europe is challenged to 'invent humanity' just like it invented nations to pacify religious wars in Europe more than 200 years ago (Bauman 2015). However, contemporary migration and asylum policy at Europe's borders shakes trust in the credibility of the EU and the success of this adventure.

Values and Their Political Functions

The ambivalent political functions of values come into view in the previous paragraph. In their impressive volume on European values, Foret and Calligaro present a profound interdisciplinary analysis of how, by referring to values, the EU constitutes a new mode to create identity and memory and provides a new type of narrative by referring to them (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 2). According to these authors, relating to values after the failure of both the nation-building narrative and the functionalist market-oriented narrative can be a new way to legitimise EU politics and policies (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 2). From their perspective of political science, values are ideas that can shape the cognitive and symbolic map of individuals or groups and thus collective action (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 2 referring to Smith 2016: 49; see also Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume).

But such an idealistic concept of values also has dark sides and turns out to be precarious, because the recourse to values does not only promote social or political cohesion, but also has disuniting, even polarising, effects. For example, since the refugee crisis in 2015, the appeal to internal EU solidarity in distributing refugees justly in all European states has triggered massive resistance on the part of the Visegrád states. Suddenly, the limits of solidarity were up for debate. New concepts

such as 'flexible' solidarity were invented by the European commission in 2016, demanding only the services the member states are able to provide for refugees (such as money, provision of jobs, help on site in Syria, expert help in all possible places) instead of insisting on a binding quota regulation for the admission of refugees. The European value of solidarity was put in the service of national and party-political interests. Furthermore, the conflicts over how to interpret solidarity were also based on values: while the Visegrád states defended their rejection of admitting refugees by claiming to protect Christian identity and values from an Islamic invasion, other states, international organisations, and civil society references to the values that human rights are based upon (Goździak et al. 2020). Value-based politics without a discussion on political ethics and moral reflection can thus have problematic consequences when used for political interests only.

Connecting values with political interests, however, is one of the important factors for the success of the European Union. Although its political relevance is relatively young (see Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume), the recourse to values became an effective instrument in the 1980s, when the EU could no longer fulfil its promise of constantly growing prosperity, which had united the member states until then. Moreover, after 1989, new orientation parameters were needed for the integration of Western and Eastern Europe (Mandry 2011). By then at the latest, the character of European values had been transformed; from ethical representations that had been derived from historical experiences meant to be interpreted regionally and aiming at gradual unification through communication, they mutated into explicit instruments of political legitimation and the exercise of power.

This explicit political use of values raises numerous questions. How can such a political enforcement of values be argued and legitimised when their historical origin loses relevance? If the European values have owed their effectiveness to concrete groups, must the respective histories and groups of origin be forgotten for the sake of the universal claim to validity of the European values? Are the historical origins of values a genuine part of their understanding? And if they are not, how might these values be alternatively grounded?

Despite the ambiguity of the political functions of values, the latter are inherent in the concept, as the struggle for values is never an individual task only, but always a constitutively and necessarily political process, like political conflicts over the distribution of power and resources or the assertion of interests (Heschl 2016). In relation to this political character of struggling for the assertion of values, political sociologist Franz Heschl (2016) empirically documented a strange paradox in EU communication, describing a remarkable depoliticisation of value conflicts at the level of the European Commission between 2000 and 2009. During this period, the process of European unification was presented in the rhetoric of the European Commission as a uniquely progressive and successful project with no alternative, in which politics mutated into a 'low-cost administration by experts' (Heschl 2016: 431). All citizens could benefit from the blessings of the unification process through the promotion of strategic-rational action, effectiveness, efficiency, and synergies. In this 'one EU for all' rhetoric, the citizens became consumers of the EU's achievements and amenities. Differences in interests, values, and power resources became

invisible and the associated political conflicts were rhetorically neutralised and thus obscured by formal strategic principles (Heschl 2016: 430). Heschl argues that this commission rhetoric made politics lose its character of conflict and turned it into a factual, technocratic search for solutions. The consequence of this fading out of political and value conflicts further led to citizens getting the impression that they could no longer bring their interests and values into political decisions and participate in decisions as moral subjects (Heschl 2016: 439). According to Heschl, world views and values no longer played a role in this rhetoric. From the perspective of hermeneutic values research, however, one would have to correct him: ethical values were replaced by instrumental and organisational values (effectiveness, efficiency, and synergies) based on a technocratic world view. From an ethical perspective, there is no action that is not value-based and thus world view neutral. Rather, the replacement of substantial ethical norms through formal strategic principles as a matter of priority is problematic.

According to Heschl, this technocratic rhetoric has not fundamentally changed. It has only been supplemented by the emergence of a 'crisis rhetoric' since 2010 in which the EU presents itself as a protective shield against external shocks.

Value Conflicts

Given this paradoxical situation – on the one hand, the EU referring to values to enforce political interests and, on the other hand, the concealing of the political character of value discourses – it is not surprising that the struggle over values has regained a prominent position in recent years. Parts of the European population have started to fight for the recognition of what they claim as their own value orientation. Nationalist and right-wing populist parties in the Visegrád states in particular refer increasingly to values to assert their political interests. They resolve this paradox by opposing the top-down prescription of values with their own values. Therefore, the current value conflicts within the EU can also be recognised as a struggle to regain the political character of value conflicts. Consequently, the debate about European values has become radicalised in many European countries since 2015. Within and between European states, values conflicts polarise the populations. Whether in France (*Le Monde Diplomatique*: Robert 2017), Spain (*El Pais*: Marín 2017), the United Kingdom (*The Guardian*: Garton Ash 2018), or Germany (*FAZ*: Frasch 2018), heated debates about the definition and validity of European values can be observed particularly since 2015. In the context of debates on migration policies and the challenges of living together in cultural and religious diversity, the protection and defence of 'democratic, humanistic and constitutional values and principles' such as 'tolerance, equality, and freedom' are called for against movements, parties, and governments that question these values (Verwiebe 2019: 1). Real as well as alleged conflicts and incompatibilities between European or Judeo-Christian values on the one hand and migrant or especially Islamic values on the other hand are at the centre of these value conflicts that in the meantime threaten the community of values of the EU (Leggewie and Karolewski 2021). However, severe

value conflicts are also recognisable in numerous other areas: in the conflicts with Hungary and Poland over the understanding of democracy; in the disputes over the legal recognition of migrants and ethnic minorities, same-sex partnerships, or LGBTQIA+ persons; in the debates over the public role of religion and over the freedom to religion or belief. Finally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, value conflicts have been exploding and leading to aggression, even with violence on the streets of some European cities such as Vienna or Rotterdam, when individual freedom versus the common good was brought into a prominent position in the conflicts over state protection measures or vaccination obligations. All these value conflicts may point to a larger challenge for the EU: to remember the historic origin of European values as well as the urgent need for an internal political self-assurance and debate about European values and their interpretation.

Brexit can also be interpreted as an expression of massive and non-negotiated value conflicts. The rejection of the EU's political and economic ideas of unity and the opposition of significant parts of the British population to the 'Brussels Values' are at the root of this event. According to Smith and Woodhead (2018: 34), Brexit was foreseeable: in addition to the two-thirds of respondents who rejected the EU's bureaucracy and lamented its democratic deficit, as many as 45% felt that the 'EU undermines British values'. This conflict of values is also reflected in the clear difference between supporters and opponents of the EU. While the former place greater value on regionality, historical and cultural memory, protected borders, and local democracy instead of bureaucracy, the latter advocate values such as a global human family, open borders, and tolerance underpinned by the law and human rights.

As in many other countries in Europe, the line of conflict in the United Kingdom runs between the universality and particularity of values. At present, this politically unresolved tension divides the populations in many countries into two parts: while one part is universally cosmopolitan, mostly well educated, and wealthy, and can therefore afford these values (the so-called 'anywheres'), the other part (the so-called 'somewheres') experiences itself as economically disconnected and politically unrepresented (Goodhart 2017). By returning to nationalist and traditional cultural values, that is, particular values offered to them by the right-wing parties, the latter believe they can regain the rights and recognition they feel they have lost. These developments again let us assume that value conflicts must also be considered in the context of economic developments. As Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (2003) demonstrated, questions of identity politics, which also include value politics, must be intertwined with political discourses about the distribution of political and economic power and resources. Focusing on values alone might therefore serve to conceal unequal and unjust distribution. At the same time, the tension between universal and particular values also raises the questions of whether and how these can be connected and how the focus of many people on particular value orientations can be broadened to a universal horizon.

The intra-European heterogeneity of the understanding of values as a source of conflict is also recognisable in education policy. All 27 EU member states are committed to democracy and tolerance and attach great importance to the teaching of

these values in their national education policies (CULT: Veugelers et al. 2017). However, a study in 12 member states commissioned by the European Parliament shows that only a few member states take the different components of education for democracy and tolerance into account systematically and in all schools. In the states' curricula, concrete instruments and supporting measures for the teaching of common values are often not enforced with vigour. Nor do education policy measures take adequate account of this topic. Although the education policymakers of the EU committed themselves to the 'promotion of civic education and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination' in the 'Paris Declaration' of 2015 and developed corresponding strategies to achieve this goal, the teaching of European values plays an insufficient role. According to the CULT-Study (2017), the social, cultural, and political situation of the respective EU member states is decisive in determining whether and how common values are promoted (CULT 2017: 11). For example, instead of cultivating democratic attitudes through appropriate accompanying measures in the practice of living together at school, learning is only 'about' democracy. For example, tolerance is taught in the abstract, not in the sense of active inclusion of all social and cultural groups in a school (CULT 2017: 35). The study also demonstrates that the international dimension of European values is superficial, knowledge-oriented, and combined with the often uncritical teaching of one's nation (CULT 2017: 35). In this way, the inner-European value conflicts endure in schools because the European values are welcomed and demanded as abstract entities and ideals, but heterogeneously implemented or even ignored in practice.

In their abstract idealistic form, however, values are excellently suited for a function that has been increasingly resorted to both individually and politically in recent times: they function as identity markers. As identity is a 'more complex multi-layered system of representations characterizing an individual or a social group', values as one type of the representations can, combined with others, establish an identity (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 4). In consequence, values are used to describe cultural, social, and political affiliations rather than ethical orientations, because the recourse to values enables identification and the creation of a sense of belonging. Social, ethnic, religious, and other groups and minorities therefore resort to values in their struggle for recognition and equal rights, as do nationalist and right-wing populist groups and politicians. Values can therefore mutate into a moral weapon in identity-political conflicts if identities, belonging, and cohesion are not interpreted historically but are rather interpreted in an essentialistic manner. Such essentialised self-definitions as 'people of colour' and 'culture' or references to 'homeland' and 'nation' can then cover up internal heterogeneity and different interests within identity groups. Moreover, the appeal to values makes it possible to (seemingly) unify very different social classes and milieus as well as economic and political interests, which often results in excluding the respective 'others'. Values as identity markers create community and, at the same time, draw new dividing lines that can mutate into division (Kohlenberger 2021). The universal value of human dignity and universal values such as the common good recede into the background.

The Conceptual Chaos: Problem or Opportunity?

The problem areas outlined so far reveal a conceptual deficit in the understanding of values. Therefore, the concept of values is used unsystematically and chaotically in everyday and public usage. People refer to European values and can use them to describe human rights, the European way of life, or guiding culture. Appeals to values can refer to religious traditions as well as to the Enlightenment or to a secular world view. Freedom, equality, or justice are called values just as much as health, success, and happiness or effectivity and success. The inflationary use of the concept of values raises moral problems.

So, in contemporary moral debates, values are not infrequently claimed as absolute norms in daily life. In this case, they are not supposed to be negotiable, as the concept of values would suggest based on its genesis. Rather, many people expect them to designate 'those supreme goods that are not subject to subjective needs' and should be 'beyond dispute' (Aichholzer et al. 2019: 16). They are supposed to be 'objective', that is, generally valid and accepted. But how this objectivity is to be argued is usually left open in such debates. At the same time, the subjective right to individual values is insisted upon. Thus, social debates on values usually remain vague in terms of content, ambiguous interpretations, abstract appeals without justification, and unresolved contradictions. Instead of differentiated ethical reflection and the formation of judgements based on rational arguments, values therefore serve a (pseudo)ethical self-assurance of individuals and groups. These contradictions result in public complaint about a general loss of values, a growing relativism of values, and even a decay of values. The need for ethical orientation in societies characterised by plural concepts of values and multiple crises becomes visible.

In some European states, the values crisis is primarily attributed to the younger generation. Consequently, new curricula of ethical education and value formation are invented, for example, in Germany, Austria, or Great Britain. Also, social multipliers in politics, in the media, in civil society, and in economic enterprises (see Coudenhove-Kalergi, Chap. 10, this volume) formulate canons of values for themselves and demand an increased orientation towards 'guiding cultures' and 'guiding values' or 'codes of conduct'. But are these diagnoses and solutions based on an analysis appropriate to the situation? And is the focus on the crisis of values the appropriate answer to the ethical and moral needs of European societies?

Value change has been the subject of research for decades and is not historically new. Values have always changed continuously in the process of civilisation. From the perspective of interdisciplinary values research, however, the recent value change is not so much a loss of values as a result of individualisation and pluralisation of values and, consequentially, orientation crises (Aichholzer et al. 2019). Rather, given the plurality of values, modern societies are confronted with the problem of hierarchising and prioritising values in the face of ethical decisions. Values crises are thus not so much a sign of a loss of values but of a lack of ethical and legal criteria and theories that help in making responsible decisions in conflict situations.

The diagnosis of a lack of values must also be questioned. On the contrary, in light of the polarised contemporary public debates around 'political correctness' and 'cancel culture', even an excess of moralising discourse could be criticised. In

relation to the numerous young activists in civil society organisations who are active in the field of climate protection and the fight against discrimination and racism (cf. 'Fridays for Future', 'Black lives matter'), a general diagnosis of a loss of values also falls short. What is lacking is a meta-values discourse that refers to ethical and legal arguments. Thus, the recourse to values seems to have replaced ethical reflection. Confessions and appeals take the place of arguments and reasoned discourse. With Linda Woodhead (2021), one can observe that values almost take on the character of a religion (see section "Values as the new religion?").

The replacement of ethical argumentation through values can also lead to what Zygmunt Bauman calls the *adiaphorization* of morality, which can, for example, be observed in the debates on European migration policy: public and political processes of ethical judgement become arbitrary, ornamental accessories, or they disappear altogether, and a narrow technocratic attempt at solutions takes their place (Bauman 2016). In migration policy, for example, the normative rights of refugees are no longer the starting point for debates but rather the security and protection of the native population and the economic benefits of migrants. Even if the latter are legitimate values, there is a lack of debate that weighs the rights and duties of refugees and natives against each other based on normative, ethical criteria (Nida-Rümelin 2017; Heimbach-Steins 2015).

These developments show that discourses on values no longer refer only to 'a phenomenon of individual lifestyles', 'but must be located in an overarching context of social change in the twenty-first century in view of growing global and European challenges, such as those posed by wars, international migration and climate change' (Verwiebe 2019: 2). They are an eminently political issue, not only from an EU top-down policy perspective, but also from a bottom-up perspective. However, given these value transformations, the question must be asked whether and to what extent the reference and orientation to values can and should solve political problems. Without reference to values, this will not succeed; but without taking ethical, legal, and other arguments into account, value appeals can also distract from other causes of social crises.

For example, a study by the *Bertelsmann-Stiftung* (de Vries and Hoffmann 2016) proves that globalisation fears have a far more decisive influence on political affinities than value attitudes, which are far more stable than fears. Fears can be used and fuelled comparatively quickly and easily by corresponding political interests. Political discourse then uses values to legitimise the respective 'politics with fear' (Wodak 2016). Values then are not the source of political attitudes but are instrumentalised and unfold their influence on political attitudes. These findings suggest that values would only be the secondary cause of, for example, anti-democratic or xenophobic attitudes. Addressing the fear of globalisation, which increases poverty and inequality and is therefore perceived as a threat by many, would be paramount. On the other hand, the international social science project 'Rethinking Society in the 21st Century' (IPSP 2018), which is dedicated to empirically researching factors that should support institutions and policies in promoting social justice, documents the central role that values and cultures play. Although locally heterogeneous, inclusive identities that are anchored in cultural values and at the same time universally oriented and open to being changed by the cultures and values of others have proved

to be an excellent breeding ground for social and societal progress and greater justice.

Summary

The conceptual chaos in contemporary debates on values can therefore be assessed in an equally contradictory way based on these findings. There are numerous good reasons to view the indeterminacy and the politics associated with the recourse to values with scepticism and to deal with this concept in a more cautious, reserved, and, above all, differentiated manner. However, one can also see the inflation of values in public and political discourses positively. Apparently, the recourse to values is a success, and the reasons for this can and must be taken seriously. Thus, the intensified value debates also reflect a massive social need for ethical self-assurance and orientation. Due to its polysemy and vagueness, the concept of values seems particularly suited to satisfy this need, for it makes it possible to correspond to the subjective character of ethical reflections as well as to the prerequisites of ethical judgements in pluralistic societies. This desire for ethical orientation becomes problematic when subjective or political values make objective claims without any reflection. Moreover, the success of the value debates testifies to the recovery of the political dimension of value conflicts. In this sense, value conflicts can be seen as an interruption of the rationalist myth of progress promoted by the EU, reducing the citizen to a consumer of political services. Participation in value discourses enables citizens to regain their status as moral subjects. Space is created for normatively oriented negotiations of values, and formal governance processes can be critically questioned regarding the authority of decisions. The question of ethical legitimacy and personal responsibility in political decisions can be raised again. In this way, the concept of values can become a pivotal point where citizens of the most diverse value orientations meet to argue the issues. This is where a current development meets a concern that also motivated the founding figures of empirical values research – Talcott Parsons, Clyde Kluckhohn, and Gordon Allport – to give the concept of values a prominent position in the further innovative development of the social, human, and cultural sciences in the post-war period: in understanding the connections between person, culture, and society, values play a key role in the empirical knowledge of how society makes sense (Polak 2011: 24). However, values and value discourses can only unfold this potential if both are subjected to critique, to which scientific values research and educational processes contribute essential expertise.

2.3.5   *Values and Religion*

Since this volume is devoted to the impact of religious attitudes on political attitudes, we present a few considerations on the relationship between values and religion before we discuss these interdisciplinary contributions.

Relationship Between Religion and Values

For thousands of years, religious communities and the religious traditions upon which they are based have been constitutively linked to ideas of ethically responsible action. Over the centuries, the monotheistic traditions in particular – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – have also developed elaborate moral and ethical principles and norms. The connection between faith and reason, that is, the rational reflection of religious doctrines and beliefs and vice versa, is central to their self-understanding. Long before the European Enlightenment in the modern era, they were aware of the need for reason-guided ethical reflection and ethical education of the innate, quasi 'natural' morality of human beings. To this end, they developed corresponding theories and forms of practice. Their principles and criteria are based on the ethos of the faith revealed in the Tenakh, the Bible, and the Qur'an (Freise and Khorchide 2014). These teachings and theories did not speak of values, but the reflections were nevertheless based on categories such as rules and regulations, norms and principles, commandments and laws, virtues and attitudes. The concept of values was not only unknown for a long time but was and still is viewed sceptically in these traditions, especially from the theological side.

One of the main reasons for this reservation about the concept of values is the religious presupposition that moral and ethical ideas do not owe themselves exclusively to autonomous human reason, as is the case with the concept of values. Rather, they are also and decisively of heteronomous origin, that is, they owe their origin to a divine authority. Especially in pre-modern times, 'values have not been developed, postulated, or formulated by us humans, but have come to us from outside, heteronomously, through the Torah, the Bible. They have also been passed on as such from generation to generation' (Bollag 2014: 39). Accordingly, from the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic points of view, what are called 'values' today, such as the equality of all people before God or the obligation to justice, are therefore essentially owed to divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures and are not arbitrarily negotiable as such.

However, these revealed normative principles always require interpretation by human reason, which is also understood as autonomous in these traditions. Thus, in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, methods, teachings, and theories have also developed (written down, for example, in the Talmud, in the Hadiths, or in the churches' magisterium or theology), which must be considered when interpreting the revealed norms. In Christianity and Islam in particular, philosophy is of fundamental importance. Thus, these religious traditions also recognise the plurality of moral norms and ethical conceptions – a plurality that is inherent in the ethics of these religions. The rules of interpretation, in turn, are intended to protect against the arbitrariness and equal validity inherent in plurality on the one hand and against fundamentalist interpretations of the sacred texts on the other. Likewise, ethical learning and ethical education play a central role in these religions.

Nevertheless, the reception of the concept of values by religious traditions will remain cautious and connected with certain tensions, since it usually rejects heteronomous or even divine specifications as origin and authority. The question of the

origin and the legitimation of values – heteronomous and/or autonomous – has thus been one of the decisive reasons for the hesitant use of the concept of values on the part of religions for a long time. The loss of an absolute horizon to which all refer together – that is, the reference to a transcendent, divine reality – is also viewed critically. Since such a reference is missing in the concept of values, there is no instance before which one must justify oneself. Without such an absolute reference point, from a religious point of view there is a danger of value relativism, which means a situation in which all ethical ideas become indifferent and arbitrary. Moreover, ethical norms would then be completely socialised, that is, they would only be subject to human interests or power-relations and become arbitrarily negotiable and interchangeable. From a religious perspective, the recognition of a heteronomous divine origin of ethical norms and principles protects against these dangers. The plurality of ethical norms and values is thus by no means excluded but always obliged to return to divine revelation and its interpretations in tradition.

In contemporary secular societies, such a view is regarded with scepticism and even rejected. On the one hand, particularly in Europe, the practice of many Christian churches has shaken confidence in their ethical authority, as they have too often enforced their 'absolute moral truths' by utilising moral and political repression and violence. The scandals of sexual abuse of minors – including their cover-up by church leaders –, financial scandals, and others, the lack of gender justice, and the rejection of the recognition of same-sex relationships have exacerbated this mistrust in recent years (see Halman and Sieben, Chap. 4, this volume). On the other hand, countless historical catastrophes such as the plague (Gronemeyer 1996) or the wars and mass murders of the twentieth century have shaken belief in God (Polak and Schachinger 2011). Consequently, a growing number of secular people regard the conception of ethics today as a task to be guaranteed exclusively by their human reason, not by reference to any kind of divine revelation. The concept of values emphasises this subjective-autonomous dimension. However, in the futile search for absolute, objective values and their enforcement, the loss of a transcendence that is binding for all is clearly recognisable. Today, it seems that human rights have taken over this transcendent function, linked to a sacralisation of the human person (Joas 2013).

Religious communities that want to contribute to social debates and claim valid ethical convictions (for example, on sexual or bioethical issues) must therefore justify themselves in a secular context. They find themselves under pressure to legitimise their ethical convictions in a secular language, as a recourse to a divine authority has become alien to many people. This newly challenging situation becomes evident, for example, in the conflicts about the right to practise religion in public throughout Europe or in the debates on assisted suicide in Germany and Austria.

Given these ethical conflicts, it is not surprising that religious communities and churches have increasingly taken up the concept of values to translate their norms and principles into the language of contemporary ethical debates. To argue and legitimise their convictions, many religious communities are now also referring to values by emphasising that religions are a central source of values and especially of

value formation. However, this usage of the concept of values is still highly controversial (see Grümme, Chap. 13, this volume; Müller et al. 2020).

Religion as an Identity Marker

Despite the decreasing relevance of religion as a source of values (see Halman and Sieben, Chap. 4, this volume), the close connection between religion and values has recently become apparent in the function of religion as a cultural and political identity marker. As the Pew Research Institute on Religion documents, a Christian self-understanding increasingly assumes the function of cultural identity in Western Europe (Pew Research Center 2018). It serves to distinguish the Christian from migrant and Muslim cultures through belonging to the Christian culture and even to exclude the latter. In numerous studies of religious science or the sociology or psychology of religion, religiosity is also primarily researched under the label of its identity-forming functions (for example, Werkner and Hidalgo 2016; Arens et al. 2017). Also, this volume demonstrates the complex link between religious and political attitudes (see Pickel and Pickel, Chap. 5; Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume).

From a historical perspective, this linkage is not new. Religious values in the sense of ethical ideas have always been used to legitimise the exercise of political power, right up to the justification of the persecution of the Jews or the confessional wars of modern times. Religious values also served as motivation for religious groups and movements committed to social reforms in the name of freedom, equality, and justice; think of the social movements of the churches in the nineteenth century or the current commitment of Christian churches to migrants and refugees. Religious convictions also played a decisive role in creating the European Union. While the intensity and the specific character of this impact is discussed (see Weymans, Chap. 3, this volume; Mandry 2011; Sutherland 2010; Altermatt et al. 2008; Chenaux 2007), Catholic and Protestant values in particular played a crucial role at the beginning of the formation of the European Union. This impact of values was so significant that in Britain politicians were afraid Europe would become a Catholic project (Sutherland 2010). The enormous influence of religiosity has also been researched by the social sciences, as can be seen in the Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map (WVS Database 2020), which demonstrates the impact of denominational heritage on the massive contemporary cultural change and the persistence of distinctive cultural traditions.

However, the focus on identity in this well-known relationship between religiosity and both cultural and political values is new and deeply connected with the transforming role of religion in society and politics – that is, the growing politicisation of religion in society and politics (see Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). This development of referring to religious identities to argue political interests becomes most obvious in migration and Islam policies in European states. One can even speak of 'hijacking religion' for political aims, while Christian churches simultaneously lose their influence on these policies. Furthermore, Christian (or

Judeo-Christian) and Islamic values are claimed by individual politicians and political parties throughout Europe to be incompatible. Religion has become a means of social and political distinction (Polak and Seewann 2019). For example, Alexander Gauland (AfD, Germany), Horst Seehofer (CDU, Germany), and Heinz-Christian Strache (ex-politician of FPÖ and former vice chancellor of Austria) proclaimed: 'Islam does not fit our values' (*Tagesanzeiger*: Eigenmann 2017).

These claims cannot be proven, either from a historical or a theological perspective. The centuries of anti-Jewish theologies, including discrimination and persecution, give the lie to the harmonising talk of Judeo-Christian values and testify to historical amnesia (Aichholzer et al. 2019: 27). Nor, theologically, is a clear-cut distinction between Christian and Muslim values valid. Despite certain differences between the monotheistic traditions, Jews, Christians, and Muslims agree on fundamental ethical positions such as human dignity or justice (see, for example, Hans Küng's studies on these religions). Moreover, an empirical approach proves that populations cannot be divided into Christians and Muslims when it comes to values, as believers of both can be observed in diverse socioreligious types (Polak and Seewann 2019). The influence of religious attitudes on values only becomes effective in combination with other characteristics, such as sociodemographic ones. Religiosity is therefore only one element of a multi-layered system of identity, dependent on the social and political context.

Values as the New Religion?

Another link between values and religion has recently been claimed by the British sociologist of religion Linda Woodhead (Woodhead 2021). Based on decades of empirical research, Woodhead demonstrates how, during the decline of Christianity in Britain, new spiritualities, values, and non-religious commitments have replaced traditional Christian values. She claims that a kind of new religion has emerged: the religion of values. She observes this transformation process at the level of personal, organisational, and political and economic values, which are replacing religiously based values in certain population groups in Britain. Whether in political statements or in school values education, the recourse to values takes on a kind of religious function and serves as the ultimate justification for ethical behaviour. In this context, values take on a life of their own and are no longer associated with traditional religion by an increasing number of people; they have an autonomous status. On the level of personal values, this is reflected in the replacement of an altruistic ethic of love with values such as autonomy, self-determination, and self-realisation. On the political and economic level, global and national value orientations, as well as traditional bourgeois values and a corporate culture that values disruption, competition, and winning, are in conflict with each other. According to Linda Woodhead, these tensions, intensified by the online world, are leading to new 'culture wars revisited'. In the social and political debates surrounding Brexit, these tensions became clearly visible, not least in the effects of religious identities: members of the Church of England, for example, were significantly more likely than the rest of the

population to believe that the European Union undermines British values (Smith and Woodhead 2018: 34).

From the perspective of the sociology of religion, this thesis of values as a new religion seems plausible. Values take over functions once provided by churches and religious communities, above all functions of identity formation, community building, and recourse to absolutely binding ethical norms. They create group affiliation, promote belonging and togetherness, and enable orientation. Nevertheless, the (pseudo-)religious character of values leads to similar social problems and conflicts that are known from the history of religion: values not only unify, but they also divide society. If they are decreed without arguments or legitimation or do not refer to their historical origin, they are at risk of turning into ideology. They can be instrumentalised to serve to enforce personal and political, often non-transparent interests. They can lead to practices that often contradict what is verbally asserted or demanded. Think, for example, of the verbal appeals to cooperation, while in practice competition on the career ladder in companies, political parties, or universities is structurally rewarded and leads to success. Values would thus be a religion in a pre-enlightened sense of absolute, unquestioned convictions in which one believes but does not argue why one believes. Like religion, the religion of values would then require criticism of this kind of religion.

Also, theologically, such an understanding of values as religion results in numerous problems. Without legitimising and arguing their claim to authority; without reference and contextualisation in historical and contemporary social, political, and cultural contexts; and without a transparent exposition of their basic ideological assumptions about the meaning and essence of being human and of life, the abstract character of value codices has an ideological character. In light of the ideological uses by churches of their moral codes, values, from a theological point of view, like religion, are an extremely ambivalent reality. They require rational legitimation, critical and self-critical reflection, and scientific research.

2.4 Values: Interdisciplinary Approaches and Academic Contributions

Given the problem outlined, one might ask: if values are just a contested concept, would it not be better to dispense with the concept? If this concept obviously creates more confusion than orientation and is at risk of degenerating into meaningless phraseology, why should it continue to be used? This brings us to the question of what values 'actually' are. So, after unfolding the questions and problems, strengths and weaknesses of referring to values, we will present what academic research can contribute to a qualified values discourse.

From our point of view, besides the status of values in the treaties of the European Union and their success in public debates, ethical arguments oblige us to struggle for a scientifically sound understanding of values. For it is by means of the concept

of values that modern societies negotiate the central questions of 'good' and 'evil', be it in terms of individual behaviour, the meaning of life, or the social, cultural, political, economic, and legal conditions for a good, just, and peaceful coexistence in society.

This brings us to the question of what values 'actually' are. Thus, the following section presents various understandings of values as defined and discussed in selected academic disciplines. However, also academic values research does not provide exhaustive, consensual, or conclusive definitions of values. We are confronted with a plurality of definitions and a struggle to justify universally valid values and norms, even in ethical approaches. Moreover, if we could receive the academic debates about values not only in German and English literature, as we do in this contribution, but also in other European languages, the plurality of approaches would become inextricable, as the understanding of values is deeply embedded in diverse social, cultural, and historical contexts and has therefore taken heterogeneous paths of development depending on language and region. The selected approaches and models we present here are thus intended to open a space for discourse in which the social science findings of the EVS can be critically reflected upon in future research.

2.4.1   The Genesis of the Concept of Values

To understand the centrality of values in modern societies, it is necessary to reflect on the genesis of this concept (see also Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume).

Economic Origins

In both the German and English languages, the etymological origin of the concept of values can be found in economics. For example, the Germanic word 'werþa' appears in the eighth century AD and denotes 'preciousness' or 'price'. It keeps this semantics in the Old High German word 'werd' and the Middle High German word 'wert'. From the twelfth century onwards, 'wert' was also applied as an attribute to persons, denoting a 'valued', 'revered', 'noble' person. This marks the beginning of an idealistic use of the concept of value, which is later also applied to objects that are described as 'highly valued', 'desirable', or 'valuable'. These different meanings necessitated an ethical specification that distinguishes between non-moral and moral values: values can then be understood either as goods or as ideals (Müller et al. 2020: 162–163). Also, the German Duden online (2021) documents the economic origin of the concept of value. It defines 'value' as the quality inherent in a thing that makes it desirable to a certain extent and allows it to be sold or marketed. Furthermore, value as an exchange value is the social labour objectified in a commodity and whose measure is the socially necessary labour time. The term value also refers to things and objects of great value that belong to personal or common

property and the positive significance attributed to someone or something. Finally, value is the result of a measurement or examination expressed in numbers or signs. The *Duden online* does not note any ethical meaning. Slightly different, but also revealing its economic origin, the Cambridge Dictionary online (2021) defines the term value as worth, importance, usefulness, and purchasing power. But in its plural meaning an ethical dimension shines through: 'values' are the 'beliefs that people have, especially about what is right and wrong, and what is most important in life, that control their behaviour'; 'values' also are 'standards or principles'. To gain a specifically ethical meaning, the term acquires attributes such as 'moral (values)' or 'religious (values)' to be attributed. 'Values' then are 'the principles that help you to decide what is right and wrong, and how to act in various situations'.

In German philosophy, Immanuel Kant reflected on the distinction between economic values and ideal and moral values by distinguishing between 'values' and 'dignity', 'more precisely, he distinguishes between price and dignity and attests the latter an absolute value' (Körtner 2020: 132). But as an 'absolute value' is not only a supreme value in comparison to other values but is of a completely different quality, it consequently abolishes the concept of value. For Kant, everything has an absolute value that has a purpose in itself, that is, it exists for its own sake and is to be respected as such. Kant writes: 'In the realm of ends, everything has either a price or a dignity. What has a price can be replaced by something else, as an equivalent; what, on the other hand, is above all price, and therefore does not pay an equivalent, has a dignity' (Kant 1983: 68). As every human being is a rational being capable of morality and destined for self-determination, a person cannot have a value but only an inalienable dignity. This means, that no human being can be exchanged or offset against other(s) and must not be degraded to an object and instrumentalised to serve the purposes of others (Körtner 2020). So, Kant distances himself from the economic use of the concept of value in relation to the human being.

The consequences of considering the human person as a value were also reflected on by the English-speaking Thomas Hobbes – without any idealistic or normative approach, but rather empirically: 'The validity or value of a man, like that of all other things, is his price. This is determined by how much one would pay for the use of his power and is therefore not absolute, but dependent on the need and estimation of another' (Hobbes 1998: 67). Consequently, the value of a person depends on his or her assessment, appreciation, and recognition by others. As in the market, human value then results from the dynamics between supply and demand. For Hobbes, this value is expressed in the material side of money and the immaterial – as it were, the symbolic side of social recognition.

The economic connotation of the term and the practical consequences make it understandable as to why the concept of value was viewed with scepticism in philosophy and ethics, especially in German-speaking countries, until the nineteenth century. For even in the national economy of the nineteenth century, the concept of values describes what things are worth on the market. It denotes their price and is subject to subjective preferences. In this sense, values are the 'subjective side of willingness to pay' (Aichholzer et al. 2019: 16), which follows the laws of supply and demand. In European philosophy, Christian ethics, and non-European moral

systems, categories such as 'commandments and prohibitions, norms and taboos, maxims and imperatives, virtues and vices, rules and regulations, rights, and duties' (Aichholzer et al. 2019: 15) were therefore preferred to discuss ethical issues.

Despite the legitimate criticism of the economic origin of the term values, its etymology also demonstrates that the semantics of terms can be transformed, and they can acquire new or additional meanings. Critical references to etymology can therefore point to the potential abbreviations and limitations of a term but are not sufficient to reject a term in general. Such a general rejection would be tantamount to artificially fixing language and ignoring its continuous development. From an ethical perspective, the semantic transformation of concepts must also be considered because people can negotiate their ethical questions only in terms available to a society (Müller et al. 2020: 164).

The Nineteenth Century

Such a shift of semantics took place in the nineteenth century when the concept of values was introduced into philosophy and ethics by German thinkers. Honecker (1990) and Bambauer (2019) identify several essential reasons for its introduction. On the one hand, the great philosophical systems of German Idealism as developed by G. W. F. Hegel and F. W. J. Schelling were increasingly questioned. During the rapid progress of the natural sciences, all idealistic and metaphysical, non-empirical theories were dismissed as conceptually unclear and unscientific. The search for the essence of nature, which up to then had been understood as spiritual and reasonable, was replaced by a functional analysis of natural laws. Science was claimed to be decidedly value free, and nature was no longer to be interpreted idealistically, but as a 'complex interplay between inherently non-binding principles' that can be clearly recorded and described (Bambauer 2019: 27). This development not only led to a causal-reconstructive approach to reality and devalued nature through a reductionist world view; it also led to a gap between realities and values, since the latter do not objectively exist but can supposedly only be subjectively ascribed (Bambauer 2019).

On the other hand, the nineteenth century experienced a massive intellectual disruption, commencing with insight into the historical and therefore transformable character of (not only) philosophical ideas, which also affected ethical systems. The idea of timelessly valid, universally binding norms and principles was fundamentally shaken. This intellectual revolution took concrete shape in the moral-critical and genealogical analyses of Friedrich Nietzsche. He argued that moral ideas and concepts must always be understood in their historical context, particularly relative to contemporary social and cultural interests. Moral ideas are an expression of human interests, and in particular of what Nietzsche called the 'will to power': moral values serve and legitimise personal interests such as the increase of power. Nietzsche's ideas not only radically relativised the traditional notions of 'good' and 'evil' but also shattered trust and belief in an absolute point of reference from which moral norms are derived and to which they must be justified. The Christian theological world view and its teleological orientation broke down: God was proclaimed

to be dead; a new morality was needed (Honecker 1990). As all norms, virtues, rules, or laws are merely subjective and reflect individual perspectives, humans find themselves in a Godless situation, henceforth eternally forced to engage in what Nietzsche called the permanent 'revaluation of all values' (Honecker 1990: 215). This new situation, which Nietzsche called 'nihilism', has been confronting philosophy and ethics with new challenges since the nineteenth century, as it fundamentally calls into question the possibility of a supra-temporal, universal ethics valid for all human beings (see Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume).

Against this historical background, the concept of values enters philosophy and ethics. The resulting 'axiology', that is, the doctrine of values (Wils 2006: 404), responds to a new understanding of reality that is henceforth dominated by natural science, technology, and nihilism and rejects metaphysical thinking. Ethics is no longer concerned with facts but with values and now tries to decide on the moral correctness of 'valuations'. According to Honecker (1990: 215), this change in moral consciousness and the crisis of values can be seen in the value ethics of Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817–1881), Wilhelm Windelband (1848–1915), Heinrich Rickert (1863–1936), Max Weber (1874–1928), and Nicolai Hartmann (1882–1950). Ontology as the foundation of ethics is replaced by anthropology, which no longer seeks theoretical speculation but the validity of values and supports the setting of preferences for actions. Ethical considerations thus become evaluative, prescriptive, and normative. The good no longer exists as such; it can only be justified as valid with arguments. While Lotze, for example, justifies the validity of values from the perspective of critical empiricism, proclaiming that the ability to feel values enables ethical judgements, Max Weber rejects such 'psychologism'. He formulates a 'material ethics of values' based on Plato's doctrine of ideas: values exist a priori like ideas. As such, they form a hierarchy of values and are recognised through a view of their essence (Honecker 1990: 215). Despite the differences in arguments, the new value ethics faces a new challenge: after the abolition of ontology, the relationship between the essence and the ethical action of human beings is broken and the need to overcome the separation between subjectivity and objectivity occurs. While Neo-Kantian philosophers insisted on the objective a priori validity of values, phenomenological thinkers were convinced of the existence of a 'world of values', which can be entered either through accepting values ('Wertnehmung', Max Scheler) or perceiving values in their being as such (Wils 2006: 405).

Because of their a priori nature, these new value ethics were initially hardly recognised in philosophy and ethics. However, they demonstrate that the concept of values is reacting to a fundamental crisis in the justification of ethical norms. Modern value ethics is a crisis phenomenon.

Twentieth and Twenty-First Century

As a result of this crisis, a plethora of normative ethics has been developed in the twentieth and twenty-first century to justify the validity of values and norms: existentialist, materialist, eudaemonist, communitarian, and contract-theoretical

approaches, new transcendental philosophical approaches and normative ethics based on virtues (Pieper 2017: 226–252) – the list is endless and cannot be elaborated on here. In all these ethics concepts, values play a minor role or none at all. But since the 1980s, when value discourses started in the European Union, new philosophical studies on values have been published in German (Werner Flach, Hans Joas, Christian Krijnen) and the English language (Harry Frankfurt, Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, Bernard Williams) area (Krijnen 2011: 549). All these newer value conceptions face the challenge of explaining the understanding and validity of values in a non-metaphysical way (see section "The nineteenth century" in this article). The crisis of the nineteenth century still shapes the discussions – in particular, when values are claimed to be normative or even universally binding, that is, objectively valid and not dependent on subjective needs and interests. How can values be recognised and justified? Do they exist as such, like ideas? How can values be recognised by people and why should they be obeyed? Or are values the mere result of lengthy, often violent processes of agreement? Can normative and objective values exist apart from concrete historical contexts? Who decides on the objectivity and validity of values? These are some of the questions not only philosophers, but also modern societies are still facing (Aichholzer et al. 2019: 16–17; Honecker 1990: 216). They form the ethical signature of our time, which is marked by the loss of absolute and definitive moral certainties and a transcendent or even divine horizon. Accompanied by the loss of significance of religion, value debates are also increasingly orientated towards immanence and dynamised by the primacy of a scientific and scientistic approach to the world.

These developments also led to a growing socialisation of human beings, which Hannah Arendt critically warned against in the context of her studies on totalitarianism in 1961. For her, the transformation of goods and virtues into values is a highly dangerous process. With recourse to Thomas Hobbes, she argues that this process also affects human beings, as their socialisation results in a radical relativism that can no longer determine absolutes. She warns that in the end of this process only power will judge what is decisive in the 'exchange and struggle of values with one another' (Arendt 2003: 319). Goods, ideals, and finally human beings become a value – and can, consequently, also be judged as worthless, superfluous, and allowed to be destroyed. For Arendt, the millions of dead and murdered people in the two totalitarianisms of the twentieth century are therefore also the consequence of a society that transforms everything into values.

The contemporary struggle for normative and universal values seems to prove this challenging analysis. But simultaneously it also seems to mark the fact that people are aware of the danger of relativism and the necessity of ethical judgement. Human beings are obviously capable of striving for universal values and norms; normativity and universality belong to the human ethical 'matrix'. The awareness of the subjectivity, historicity, relativity, and contextuality of values and the renunciation of their violent enforcement can therefore also be recognised as the recognition of freedom, autonomy, and the need for caution and modesty in ethical judgements. Contemporary value discourses, therefore, take place in societies that are aware of the transformative, plural, and constructive character of values. Values do not

simply exist objectively, but must be created and discussed in an active, communicative, and participatory way.

The recognition of the ambivalent character of values need not result in the rejection of universal norms and values. This can be seen not least in the globally increasing recognition of human rights after the Second World War. Despite all the failures and resistance against their comprehensive implementation, the dedication and commitment to human rights by the European Union, by international organisations such as the United Nations (UN) or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and by countless civil society organisations, bear witness to this striving for a universal ethos that applies to all human beings. In order not to let the threatening scenarios outlined by Arendt come true, the struggle for the global recognition of human rights and international legal order will therefore be of central importance in the future (Merks 2012). The increasing cultural and religious pluralisation that is transforming all societies worldwide because of migration and globalisation presents many societies with new ethical challenges in which values play a significant role. But the emergence of populist parties, fundamentalist groups, and identity politics movements, which promise unambiguity by resorting to traditionalist, tribalist, or 'woke' values can be seen as a sign that many people are overwhelmed by pluralisation and suffer from ethical disorientation regarding values. Values research must therefore develop ethical concepts in which universality and particularity are not opposites. Such concepts rather strive constantly for what is necessarily common and binding and simultaneously negotiate the right to uniqueness and particularity communicatively and without violence. Respect for freedom and diversity and concern for a common basic ethos belong inseparably together (Merks 2012: 222, 230).

This short historical overview demonstrates that the contemporary discourses on values are still a crisis phenomenon, prolonging the eruptions of the nineteenth century. They need academic support to avoid the risks of the concept of values being used to solve moral and ethical challenges as presented above and to assure their quality.

2.4.2 Academic Approaches

The success story of values since the Second World War is primarily owed to the reception of this concept by the social sciences. Following Talcott Parsons, Clyde Kluckhohn, and Gordon Allport, social science values research established itself as an innovative research branch in the 1960s. A concept from ethics and moral philosophy then became the key concept with the help of which the relationships between person, culture, and society were to be researched, and the humanities and cultural and social studies were to be further developed and integrated (see Sect. 2.5). Over time, the relevance that the concept of values acquired simultaneously on the European political level also aroused the interest of other academic disciplines. Today, values researchers can be found in communication studies, literary studies,

law, education, history, theology and, finally, philosophy and ethics. The breadth of values research is vast. This results from the overlapping of values research with other academic disciplines in which values play an important role. Values research can also be found, for example, in European studies, in nursing research, or in research on values education in schools. This sometimes leads to a mixture of levels at which values are negotiated. In recourse to values, the attitudes and behaviour of individuals and their ethical justifications can be researched just as much as the institutional framework conditions in which values are conveyed in condensed form (Körtner 2020). The political level, on which questions of values are related to law, can be found in the scientific focus just as much as the meta-level of the philosophical and ethical justification of values.

For these reasons, neither a common terminology nor a consensus on the definition of values can be found within the individual academic disciplines. This is exacerbated by a lack of interdisciplinary cooperation (see Sects. 2.2 and 2.3). The following sections can therefore present only an exemplary insight into selected sciences. The diverse and contradictory approaches might increase confusion; however, from our perspective, they provide multiple contributions that can help to sharpen terminology and use the concept of values in a context-sensitive and responsible manner.

Overview

The German *Dictionary of philosophical concepts* (Kirchner et al. 2006) defines the term value as the relationship that is established between an object and a standard defined by a valuing human being. This definition is justified by the fact that all human activity relates to added value and valuation:

> The distributive, deciding and goal-realizing activity of valuing expresses the relational dimension between a human being and an object (entity, process, person). Because the human being strives for a (the) good in his willing and doing, standards of valuing are formed, such as the usefulness (for instance, of a tool) or the suitability for satisfying a need. These standards are further validated in the social community, passed on through transmission and teaching, and become values themselves through abstraction. (Kirchner et al. 2006: 727–728).

Therefore, values can denote both material or ideal goods, that is, non-moral values and ideal and moral values. Values have their origin in human relations and therefore have relational, relative, and immanent character.

Such a human relations-focused and immanent-grounded understanding of values can be found in many other academic disciplines.

Communication studies, for example, understand values as those 'culture-based qualities, ethical imperatives, moral postulates, socio-cultural orientations or civilisational standards' that a society based on institutions cannot do without for the sake of its existence and that it must transform to maintain the validity of the social contract (Bauer 2019: 99). In this approach, the character of society is understood as representable neither in events nor in facts and data but only in the interpretation

of events and their relevance. Society is the 'pattern of exchange and discourse of its relations as well as, conversely, the marking of the patterns of relations of its discourses in their forms of interaction that are set in perpetuity' (Bauer 2019: 99). Society is 'what its communication is, or rather: how it interprets itself – the patterns of its interactions and the dynamics of its relations – in the context of its communication' (Bauer 2019: 99). So, when communication studies ask about values, the communication of values and their semantic charges are the focus of attention. Values therefore only exist in cultural interpretations of events, actions, and relationships, and because communication is constantly changing, values also have an ever-changing nature.

Research in *literary studies* also approaches the concept of values in this descriptive way, that is, it reflects on the values that can be found in human literature but neither defines the term precisely nor asks basic hermeneutic questions. It explores so-called 'values phenomena' and approaches them in a rather 'intuitive way' (Prinz 2019: 118). Values are counted 'as a matter of fact among the essential components of both fictional worlds and text-related plots' (Prinz 2019: 118), because there is no agreement on these 'values phenomena' either in everyday language usage contexts or in academic language usage. Furthermore, it is only analytical literary studies that are dedicated to the concept and matter of value phenomena in literary studies. These analytical studies focus less on the texts themselves and more on the 'extra-textual conditions of the production, reception and distribution of texts' (Prinz 2019: 119). Values thus come into play in the act of evaluating texts as well as in the analysis of the contextual conditions of the creation of texts.

Political science offers diverse understandings of values. For some scientists, values come into view as 'subjective goals of life' and as a 'motivational basis for attitudes and behaviour' (Verwiebe et al. 2019: 288). In this meaning, they influence political actors, structures, institutions, and processes or, conversely, are influenced by them. Moreover, the interplay between institutional (intended) mediation and individual socialisation is of interest, that is, how values are formed in political contexts and what functions values and discourses on values assume in political processes and discourses in which the distribution of power, resources, and participation is fought over. In contrast, other scientists claim that values can never be reduced to individual ones but are always 'collective representations' (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 3). They are 'mental representations' of what is worth appreciating in a society as good or bad and therefore always 'at work – even if only rhetorically – in all human interactions except in extreme cases based only on calculation or power' (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 3). Therefore, a value is always produced by social convention and asserted by an institution. For Foret and Calligaro (2018: 4), 'values appear as discursively constructed ideational and axiological signifiers for collective action'. They are therefore central for any definition of politics, 'understood as the "activity to modify or maintain institutions that either mobilizes values explicitly or seeks to silence them"' (Foret and Calligaro quoting Smith 2016: 8). Values can strengthen or reform institutions and 'structure the actor's normative purposes and (…) are used to build alliances or create cleavages, which are central dynamics of governance' (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 4).

Cultural studies, in turn, also makes clear that values cannot be understood without their context, particularly without their cultural context: 'while a value indicates what is important for people, culture explains why' (Pereira et al. 2015: 30). Values are understood as firm convictions about what is considered good, desirable, and worth striving for in life. At the same time, knowledge of these values does not allow any statements about which concrete ways of life are associated with them, that is, how they are lived. A cultural studies approach focuses on these ways of life when, for example, Hall (1959) distinguishes ten different 'areas of culture' in which discussions about values are conducted in semiotically different ways and are also organised heterogeneously. Accordingly, values shape culture, especially the social customs and habits of culture. However, these can differ significantly from the norms that apply or should apply in a society. This brings the tension between norms and values into view. Norms, especially ideals and universal norms, are, in the understanding of cultural studies, 'conceptually autonomous, are usually related to the idea of goodness and set a pattern of what is good' (Pereira et al. 2015: 34). While cultural habits are participatory activities with authoritative features (the inherent value of customs) that determine certain patterns of behaviour and exert a normative pressure for members of a community to follow them, norms stand by themselves and have 'complicated relationships to the other kind of norms and the value notions of good and evil' (Pereira et al. 2015: 34–35). Thus, norms also differ from moral rules related to moral action. In this view, values form the link between lived culture and norms that should apply to all. Their power makes it possible to understand why, for example, universally valid norms are lived in different ways in different areas of life or why they are not recognised.

More recent, intercultural approaches in cultural studies reveal further problems that can become a source of value conflicts if the close connection between culture and values is not considered. For example, people may share the same values but express them with heterogeneous practices – such as when respect is expressed in a greeting with a nod, a hand on the heart, or a handshake (Hoffman 2015: 147). The acceptance and observance of universal normative values such as human rights, in turn, can fail because these are not viewed from the perspective of individualism. Thus, the Western primacy of the dignity and rights of the individual person is not recognised everywhere in the world, for instance, by philosophers who give group rights priority over individual rights, such as some African philosophers do (Hoffman 2015).

Similarly, *social psychology* also clarifies the inseparable connection between values, culture, and action. It demonstrates that values, moral-philosophical considerations, convictions, or ethical norms alone are insufficient to steer concrete action (Welzer 2021). Not even the cognitive insight into the rationality of values is decisive for the behaviour of most people. Much more influential are all the practical routines and habits of everyday activities and the inherited 'mental infrastructures' (Welzer 2021: 110) by means of which reality is perceived and interpreted. Very little that people do is due to conscious decisions. Human action is primarily pre-set by the material and cultural conditions that form the world in which one exists (Welzer 2021: 81). Therefore, in a society where it is normal to exclude Jews or

discriminate against foreigners, one can agree to the value of tolerance without acting accordingly, because habitus imprints run beyond the threshold of consciousness (Welzer 2021: 82). For this reason, appeals to values and norms often remain unsuccessful. Thus, a social psychological approach explains why values such as sustainability are supported in theory but, despite the well-known fact of the climate catastrophe, play no role in the concrete consumption or travel behaviour of many people. Moreover, moral convictions and values can even be used psychologically to bring unethical behaviour into agreement and congruence with correct values (Welzer 2021: 81).

The difference between values and norms is also emphasised in *legal studies*. Thus, values are 'not identical with norms, but are their basis', and norms are at the same time 'values that have coagulated into binding force' (Staake 2018: 683). That means that law is also based on a legal ethos and contains coagulated values. Depending on the point of view, jurisprudence values are either defined or described as undefinable but intuitively recognisable. Staake (2018: 682), for example, defines values as 'the result of our personal development shaped by upbringing and other environmental influences as well as our experiences'. Such subjective values can also give rise to group values, which – even if they are only relatively valid – strive to be binding for all. Staake regards the resulting relativity of values as an indispensable precondition for a discourse on values which in no way excludes the universality of values. But to define universal values, corresponding debates are required, since not all value concepts carry the same weight. Group values, for example, can deviate from objective value concepts and addressees. This brings up the question of the justification of norms in terms of coagulated values because norm acceptance depends decisively on the justifiability of the contents of the norm. Arguing the rational reasons of universally binding norms and linking them to values is necessary, as 'the impetus and the basis of every norm-setting are the value concepts of the participants' (Staake 2018: 683). If norms are to be accepted long term, consistent value decisions and the transparency of value bases are of eminent importance. In this context, norms often tie in with the concept of law in society. However, values are usually read into legal provisions. There is no direct link between minimum ethical requirements and legal concepts. From this perspective, the law appears as a socio-cultural reality and does not require an ultimate metaphysical justification. This by no means excludes recourse to (fundamental) values in legal systems, as for example in the German Federal Constitutional Law or the treaties of the EU, but it does call for democratically conducted discourses on values in society, in which their central values such as equality, freedom, etc. must be negotiated again and again (Aichholzer et al. 2019: 21–27). For even in legal systems that are based on legal positivism and deliberately exclude values, values play a key role in the always necessary interpretation of the law and, furthermore, its acceptance. This strong relationship between legal norms and values can be seen, for instance, in the current conflicts in Europe between religious and secular groups on the question of recognising same-sex partnerships or marriages.

The debate on values in *education, pedagogics and educational science* is similarly tense (Grümme, Chap. 13, this volume). Values education has always been one

of the central tasks of school education and upbringing. In the countries of the EU, it is also a task to which state education policies have committed themselves (CULT 2017; see section "Value conflicts"). In a narrower sense, values education in schools is understood as the 'totality of the pedagogically initiated discussion and reflection of values as well as the subjective acquisition of values within the institution of school' (Schubarth 2019: 80, see also Schubarth 2010: 10). Such values education goes beyond a mere imparting of values and 'encompasses both the school-based socialisation of values and the necessity of providing corresponding pedagogical learning opportunities' (Schubarth 2019: 80). Values education, therefore, aims at the acquisition of values and the development of moral judgement (value competence) in order to be able to deal with the diversity of values in a pluralistic society. This values education is realised in concrete fields of social learning, violence prevention, peace education, anti-racist education, political education, or the promotion of social, moral, or democratic competencies, etc. (Schubarth 2019: 79). In this discipline, values thus come into view both as part of individual identities and learning goals and as values and norms that can be found in society and are considered relevant. To enable pupils to form appropriate competencies, knowledge, and judgement skills, critical values education must also deal with the social contexts of values and their hermeneutics and ethical justification on the theoretical meta-level.

In *economics*, interest in the ethical dimension of values has increased only in the last 15 years (see Coudenhove-Kalergi, Chap. 10, this volume). This interest is largely rooted in the growing need for ethical orientation and thus in the controlling function of values. Values research in economic studies focuses on companies and primarily concentrates on pragmatic questions such as value management, corporate ethics, legal projects, and their mutual relationships. These functions are discussed in business ethics and in the model of corporate social responsibility and sustainability. In this volume, Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi discusses approaches that also explicitly address fundamental ethical questions or are oriented towards existing normative values such as human rights, which is quite a new development in this area of research.

Historical approaches tend to show a certain scepticism towards the concept of values; particularly they cast doubt on the idea of authentic and common European values. On the one hand, there are 'traditions' such as the Judeo-Christian, the Greco-Roman, the Medieval and the Enlightenment traditions, which form a core European identity and an 'idea of Europe' within which 'long-term continuities and communalities' can be observed 'that could draw the boundaries of a European ethos and serve as a foundation for the contemporary European Union' (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 6; Padgen 2002). But deeper analyses reveal that this identity, including its values, is constitutively shaped by pluralism and disagreements on its interpretation and political implementation (Joas and Wiegandt 2008; Schultz-Forberg and Stråth 2010). The continuous consensus on values per se is accompanied by a discontinuity in their semantics throughout European history. On the other hand, European values have also had a 'dark side and nurture imperialism, racism and totalitarianism' (Foret and Calligaro 2018: 6 referring to Davies 1996 and Judt 2006). Postcolonial and global historical studies also question the universality and

uniqueness of European values and criticise the Eurocentrism of this concept (Chakrabaty 2000; Vanhaute 2013).

A historiographic perspective on values can also lead to a sharp criticism of their contemporary usage by the European Union. Historians therefore do not define values but focus on the political instrumentalisation of this concept (Csáky and Feichtinger 2007). Historians criticise the fact that the recourse to European values in the course of European integration falls back on the nation-state pattern of the nineteenth century and is thereby guided by the – not sufficiently reflected and not admitted – idea that political unity can be established according to this pattern (Csáky 2007). From this perspective, contemporary value discourses do not express an allegedly existing community of values, but rather the will to enclose and domesticate the plurality of values in Europe. The demand for common values could therefore threaten the inner diversity of Europe as well as the various national and regional memories, and generate resistance. Moreover, the claim of common European values could also erase the memory that a European self-understanding including values already existed before the integration of Europe. And the recourse to genuine European values can give the impression that there is a monopoly on values that are characteristic only for Europe. Such a concept of 'self-authentication' (Csáky 2007: 25) erects new mental borders and both results in the exclusion of 'others', such as values, groups, or cultures, and demands ethnocultural homogenisation and assimilation. Finally, an exclusively positive reference to European values threatens to let people forget Europe's historical experiences of the civilisational abyss in the twentieth century as constitutive for the identity for the European Union. Without this memory, European values turn into abstract, supra-temporal norms and concepts which can even block the progress of integration.

This first overview demonstrates the heterogeneity of values research in academia. There is neither a common understanding nor a consensual definition of values, and different phenomena are researched from diverse perspectives.

Sociological Approaches

Sociology is much more precise in pursuing the question of values. 'What are values, how do they develop, and what are they needed for?' are its enduring themes (Thome 2019: 47). Sociologist Helmut Thome (2019) offers an excellent overview of the theoretical debates in classical values research. According to his research, as early as 1969 Lautmann (1969) counted 180 different definitions of values, which he took from 400 relevant specialist publications. He distinguishes between object- and concept-focused definitions, whereby these represent explications rather than firmly delimited terms. The concept of values then denotes (a) either 'objects' that are considered valuable (so-called 'social values') or (b) 'concepts' of what is desirable (Thome 2019: 48). Thomas and Znaniecki (1958: 21), for example, define 'social values' as 'any datum having an empirical content accessible to the members of some social group and meaning concerning which it is or may be an object of activity. Thus, a foodstuff, an instrument, a coin, a piece of poetry, a university, a

myth, a scientific theory, are social values'. In contrast, Kluckhohn (drawing on John Dewey) defines values as 'a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristics of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action' (Kluckhohn 1951: 395). Essential for this notion of values are 'affective' ('desirable'), 'cognitive' ('conception'), and 'conative' ('selection') elements. In this sense, objects can also become such conceptual values when they are endowed with symbolic meaning, leading to an emotional and normative attachment to them, such as flags for patriots and nationalists (Thome 2019: 49).

The understanding of what is desirable raises the question of evaluation, that is, the distinction between what is merely desired and aspired to ('desired') and what is also regarded as desirably required and justified ('desirable'). According to Thome, Frankfurt and similarly Joas therefore speak of values as 'second-order desires': values are always subject to a process of 'reflective self-assessment' and are hierarchically ordered according to the degree of their desirability. This process therefore always already implies assessments in the sense of 'right' or 'good', 'better', 'less good', and 'bad' (Thome 2019: 50). Moral, cognitive, or aesthetic standards are therefore necessarily inherent in values to evaluate 'first-order desires'. Such evaluative standards are available to actors in any identifiable culture and are transmitted, internalised, and interpreted situationally through lifelong socialisation processes, social practices, and interaction rituals (Thome 2019: 50 drawing on Durkheim and Collins). Therefore, values are relatively constant but not static. They can change over time, as can be seen, for example, in the changing attitudes towards homosexuality (see Halman and Sieben, Chap. 4, this volume). At the same time, because of their relative constancy, values always have a normative element. They originate essentially from the human will, but always also contain an 'ought', which in the case of a violation of values can show itself, for example, in feelings of shame and guilt. Values are thus also closely related to personal and collective identities and, with their normative character, can also be regarded as characteristic of an individual or a culture.

From a sociological perspective, values also assume numerous functions for society. These were already the focus of attention for the founders of values research, Parsons, Kluckhohn, and Allport. They wanted to describe and theoretically interpret society's meaning and moral resources with their values research. In doing so, they focused on the structural function of values insofar as they control attitudes and behavioural dispositions and guarantee the performance and stability of societies. From a sociological perspective, this happens because values provide human action with selection criteria for modes, means, goals and control perception (Thome 2019: 51). Values provide orientation, motivation, and legitimation for human activity and secure benefits and social status for individuals (Chong 2000: 214). On the other hand, they regulate social interaction and coexistence, providing a basis for commonality and trusting communication as shared values, and thus ensure the cohesion of a society (Aichholzer et al. 2019: 31). Sociology also distinguishes between instrumental values or means values and terminal or end values, whereby the former serve to realise the latter (Rokeach 1973). For Milton Rokeach, for

example, moral values such as honesty are instrumental values and means to achieve terminal values that refer to the end-state of existence, such as freedom or happiness. Of course, the relationship between such means-end chains is controversial, as they are mutable. Instrumental values, for example, can transform into terminal ones – as Georg Simmel has shown, for instance, regarding the value of money (Thome 2019: 54); and values, in turn, can be understood empirically or transcendentally and are subject to constant interpretation. Therefore, from a sociological perspective, there can be no ultimately valid values (Thome 2019: 56). Values underlie a constant process of transformation. Intentional actions or even manipulation of values by interest groups, media, or political discourses, etc., play an important role in the change of values. These can massively change the values of a culture or society, especially since the recognition of values is closely dependent on specific reference groups: 'People develop attitudes and values that are favoured within their reference group' (Chong 2000: 229).

The nature of values therefore leads to the conclusion: if they are to be able to fulfil their socially stabilising functions, they must be factually, temporally, and socially generalised (Thome 2003: 7–16, 52). Factual generalisation means that their semantic content is abstracted, and the content of the value is also described via contrast formations without being related to individual actions or specific objects. This presupposes the embedding of values in comprehensive contexts of meaning and action and makes interpretations necessary in the concrete (for instance, between equality and inequality). Temporal generalisation refers to the unquestionable validity of values, that is, their normativity. Referring to Luhmann, Thome (2019: 52) speaks of 'counterfactually stabilised expectations' that apply without justification even in the case of value violations and without which societies lose their stability. Moreover, values can have a different degree of social generalisation, they can be privatised, particularised, culturally specific, or universalistic; that means, they can have different scope in terms of the degree of factual agreement as well as normative validity. Universalistic values (such as those underlying human rights) in particular make the normative claim that the other values mentioned above do not run counter to them. They therefore do not have to be recognised by all people at all.

The quantity, quality, and intensity of current values conflicts in Europe, as documented in this study, make it clear that these generalisation processes are hotly contested in society and that it is by no means automatically certain which values are or should be generalised in factual, temporal, and social terms. This becomes clear around value concepts in the environment of sexuality or religion, or in the context of migration and refugee policy. For example, are values that regulate sexual behaviour private? How far should they be oriented towards ethical or legal norms? What does freedom of religion mean concerning the public activities of religious people? Do national values take precedence over human rights in dealing with refugees? Finally, on which value concepts and norms should such questions be decided if values and their validity – as a sociological approach shows – are subject to social negotiation processes and struggles?

Thome (2019: 56–58) also emphasises that values should be distinguished from needs, attitudes, and norms, whereby these phenomena are at the same time in an intensively discussed relationship with values. Needs, for example, either describe human desire or longing insofar as it is not yet subject to evaluation or refer to requirements necessary for the preservation of social or biological existence. As such, they can, of course, underlie values, that is, values would then be 'cognitive representations of human needs' (Kluckhohn 1951: 428) and can both arise from and create needs. Attitudes, on the other hand, describe the factual view towards specific objects and are therefore assigned to persons. They have no normative claim even if many people share them. Attitudes, therefore, describe the 'individual consciousness' that determines a real or possible action of persons (Thomas and Znaniecki 1958: 22) but lack the normative dimension. Norms, in turn, are conceived in sociology as rules that are formally explicit or informal and have the potential for sanctions. They prescribe or prohibit actions or attitudes for specific situations and contexts and thereby enable coordinated social or institutional action. Unlike values, which are intrinsic in origin and do not prescribe action, they have a prescriptive character. From a sociological point of view, norms are therefore not coagulated, derived values, but exist, for example, as a legal order to ensure the functioning of society even when there are conflicts of values. Pluralistic societies need such externally available norms that are valid regardless of divergent values – and people who are willing to follow these norms (Thome 2019: 53–55). From a sociological perspective, a policy trying to achieve normativity by means of values will therefore fail.

Empirical values research is primarily oriented towards a concept-related understanding of values. The two most well-known and effective research traditions are socio-psychological values research (for instance, Shalom H. Schwartz) and social-scientific attitudes research, which also includes the EVS or Ronald Inglehart's World Values Survey. While Schwartz (1994), for example, starts from universal human needs and from this concludes the universally based existence of universal value dimensions (self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, universalism), from which he derives goals for individual and collective action, attitude studies approach values from a primarily functional perspective. Strictly speaking, they investigate values as attitudes towards second-order social values that can be found in society and are accepted as an expression of values. They explore opinions on what a society considers valuable. For example, in the context of modernisation theory, Ronald Inglehart postulates a continuum of prioritised individual needs, more specifically materialistic and post-materialistic values (Inglehart 1989), which he theoretically expands in later studies to include the dimensions of 'survival' versus 'self-fulfilment' and 'traditional' versus 'secular-rational' value orientation (Inglehart and Baker 2000). This theoretical model was also taken up by the EVS and further developed and adapted (Aichholzer et al. 2019: 32).

This outline of the sociological approach reveals its strengths and weaknesses. Sociology clarifies the social origin and complexity of the emergence, formatting, and formation of values and their function. It offers insights and overviews of social

value constellations. It also addresses the question of the social origins and functions of norms. For the sake of objectivity, however, it does not address the ethical question of normative values, that is, which values or norms should apply to all, independent of socially changeable and power-infused empirical circumstances and how one arrives at such judgements.

Philosophical and Ethical Approaches

It is therefore not without reason that numerous philosophers and ethicists, in particular thinkers from the continental philosophical tradition, criticise the deficient understanding of values in social science. They stand in the long tradition of philosophical and ethical scepticism about the appropriateness of the concept of values for genuinely ethical questions that aim at the general validity of values and norms (see section "Genesis"; see also Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume). This criticism can be summed up by Martin Heidegger when he states that 'precisely by labelling something as *value*, what is thus valued is deprived of its dignity' and 'by assessing something as value, what is valued is only admitted as an object for human estimation' (Heidegger 2000: 41). All valuing is subject to subjectification and thus does not do justice to either philosophical or ethical concerns, reflecting the meaning and essence of the reality that transcends merely immanent objectivity and formulating ethical norms, principles, maxims, commandments, and laws that go beyond the subjective character and are generally binding and objectively valid. If values are only a historically changeable phenomenon subject to social dynamics, they can rise or fall in price. This makes them susceptible to abuse and instrumentalisation (Körtner 2020: 130). Human dignity, for instance, would then become subject to human availability and social negotiation processes.

Philosophical and ethical approaches therefore contribute to values research with their concepts of reason, transcendence, and normativity as innate human abilities. Because of these abilities, human beings can transcend the empirical reality and enquire beyond it with their mind and intellect. They are able to ask about the meaning of existence and of life. They are capable of the idea of universal ethical norms or an absolute reality that is humanly unavailable.

Philosophers and ethicists also criticise the synonymous use of the term 'values' for rather heterogeneous phenomena in the realm of ethics. In particular, 'from an ethical perspective, the equation of normative and evaluative patterns for action and decision making cannot satisfy, because norms set free the connotation of an ought, whereas values are associated with the will' (Dabrock 2015: 62). While a norm defines a moral status that should be striven for, values can be plural and have a particular character. Sayer (2011: 23–24) also criticises the sociological focus on the desires and needs of the subject as well as the social function and formation of values which ignores the 'reason-laden or reasonable character of values'. According to him, social sciences reveal a certain 'aversion to normativity' (Sayer 2011: 24) and avoid the question of why people recognise values. Furthermore, there is no debate as to whether, besides social and psychological reasons, there are also

rational reasons for sharing values. In reality evaluation, judgement, and reasoning overlap, and values can thus be seen as 'sedimented valuations' that 'have become attitudes or dispositions, which we came to regard as justified' (Sayer 2011: 25). As they are not beyond reason, the question of the reasonable justification of values arises. From this perspective, value change is shaped by social transformation, but also by reasonably reflected on experience and reasonable argumentation. To share this understanding, however, it must be accepted that human beings are not a result of social conditions alone and that the human capacities for reason-guided normativity and transcendence are constitutive dimensions of human existence. In an exclusively immanent world view, there is no room for such considerations. Values can then be perceived solely as the result of human habits, interests, and power struggles.

But because in contemporary philosophy and ethics, metaphysical approaches that assume objectively existing values and norms are highly controversial or even rejected, the claim for absolutely and universally valid values and norms must be justified non-metaphysically. Therefore, recent philosophical approaches try to receive the concept of values positively, but at the same time develop theories and arguments on how to use it in an ethically responsible way. The question of how values and ethical norms are related plays a central role but – as expected – is answered in a highly heterogeneous way. Bambauer (2019: 34–36) presents some of the latest theories:

In continuing Max Scheler's ontological value realism, younger representatives of value realism speak of 'value intuitionism'. They assume that values can be perceived through a 'genuine value sensorium' (Horn 2014: 101), that is, people have a specific faculty that is oriented towards recognising values that are self-evident. But this approach does not answer why people should bind themselves to these values and how one can protect oneself from self-deception, deception, and ethical errors. Analytic philosophy does not justify the validity of values but reconstructs them through a structural analysis of value statements. According to the so-called theory of 'supervenience', the attributes of values supervene with natural attributes or events; that means that specific values are necessarily connected with certain actions and can be transferred to actions if they are similar. Theories of needs take a similarly reconstructive approach when they base human action on everyday needs and understand needs as the source of the emergence of values. Universal values are derived from basic anthropological needs, which are not necessarily objectively but rather trans-subjectively valid. Desire theories, according to which values are the expression of subjective desires, also argue in this way but do not justify the legitimacy of these desires. Similarly, Christoph Horn's 'theory of oikeiosis' (Horn 2014) derives values from the practical self-understanding of the acting human being but expands its approach: rational and self-determined actions are presented as axiomatically good and therefore affirmed. This axiomatically 'good' action refers to inescapable conditions of meaning that an actor must consider if he wants to think and act consistently.

All these value theories start from the acting subject, from whom they derive and legitimise not only the existence but also the justification of values as an orientation

for human action. In this sense, norms would then be 'higher-order' and condensed values with the claim to validity and, in this respect, principles of action that have their origin in intuitive insights, needs, desires or presumptive contexts of meaning and which stand in a relationship of fluid transition to values. Do these theories then really differ from sociological ones? Many questions remain unanswered. Do values always imply norms – and should they? Are norms always based on values – and should they be?

Theories of the justification of norms following Immanuel Kant are therefore rather reserved about such approaches. According to Kant, norms can never be derived directly from subjective-conative impulses or desires of individual actors or groups. Instead, the ethical value of actions and things must be determined and derived regarding laws that are to be formulated by practical reason. One such moral law is, above all, the famous Categorical Imperative (Kant 1983), which is why this approach can also be called the 'imperative theory of values'. It states that one should act only according to that maxim whereby one can at the same time will that one's action should become a universal law. According to this, normative values are to be derived from this imperative and empirically found values must be critically examined against it. Admittedly, psychoanalytical, postmodern, or most recently neurobiological findings on the character of human reason, which is far from pure or neutral but rather marked by psychological, historical, social, or biological factors, can also give rise to criticism of this model.

Recently, the theories of values presented by Hans Joas (1997) and Charles Taylor (1989, 1999) have been widely received (see Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume). Joas also starts with the subject and asks about the genesis of values. He sees them as the result of human self-transcendence and self-binding. It is not so much rational reasons that bind people to values as it is drastic life experiences in which people transcend themselves and bind themselves to values because of the overwhelming experience of something valuable. Values are, therefore, something passive – one is seized by them. They are emotionally charged standards by which concrete actions are judged. In this way, values also open a space for intersubjective understanding about values and broad spaces of freedom. Values are thereby made narratively plausible and thus clearly differ from moral norms, which have a prohibitive character and are justified rationally and argumentatively. Because of their experiential character, values must therefore be rationally reflected, controlled, and justified. That means they must be brought into a meta-ethical discourse with the universal claim to validity of moral norms and the always plural possibilities of interpreting experiences. Joas thus clearly distinguishes between values and norms but simultaneously presents a communication-theoretical connection between them, insofar as value commitments are the basis and condition for the possibility of ethical discourse. Accordingly, values require reason-guided, argumentative reflection and evaluation.

Similarly related to the identity function of values, Charles Taylor speaks of values as 'second-degree desires', with the help of which people evaluate their desires and from which they develop a 'moral landscape' during their life course, which has a narrative and temporal structure. Human action takes place within this landscape

and always has a linguistic-narrative character. At the same time, this value path always takes place in a space shaped by traditional and collective value concepts. This space also contains 'constitutive goods', that is, ideas that place values in a superordinate world view and thus guarantee their meaning and value, for instance God, the idea of the Platonic good, the validity of law, etc. For their articulation and formation, individual values, therefore, require a space in which, by means of socially mediated and culturally shaped language, those historically and culturally sedimented value concepts are transgenerationally passed on and conveyed. These span horizons of meaning in which the value of ethical actions can be discussed in the first place. Even in pluralist societies, the plurality of recognised values is not limitless. According to Taylor, 'constitutive goods' in the sense of generally binding norms do not become the source from which individual values are derived. But they do form the framework within which a society seeks ethical orientation. They have the character of pre-findable norms. This theory raises the question as to which constitutive goods a society orients itself to in its value formation processes when the bonds with goods that were based on religious, transcendental, or metaphysical universal norms are lost.

This fragmentary insight into current value theories shows that even philosophy and ethics do not provide a universal and definitive answer to what values and norms are and which values and norms can make universal claims. There are considerations to name universal ethical norms and relate them to values, but even such models cannot avoid the recognition of the subjective character, the historical changeability, and the plurality of values. In his virtue-based ethical model, Stephan Ernst (2020), for example, speaks of fundamental moral values such as respect for human dignity, solidarity, and tolerance, as well as the preservation of sustainability, but must presuppose that this requires the willingness to adopt a moral and reasonable standpoint as such and to understand values not only as serving self-interests but as having universal validity too. The central question would thus be why moral and normative values should be desirable at all and not just a burdensome duty (Ernst 2020: 32–33). Ernst argues that the rejection of these fundamental basic values and their presumptions would damage overall reality. Not recognising these values would express the admission that someone is not interested in the common good and would thus 'withdraw from coherence with overall reality, reason and human community' (Ernst 2020: 34). But what if this is what people do – give priority to their self-interests and group interests?

Despite the questions that philosophical or ethical approaches also leave open, their research reminds us of essential issues that every generation that wants to act ethically must always reflect upon. Ethics and philosophy, therefore, contribute indispensably to the following topics:

(a) The relation between values and norms (see Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume)

As demonstrated, the relation between values and norms can be seen in a twofold way: either values are then understood as experience-based foundations for norms and norms in consequence are sedimented values, or values and norms are perceived as opposing realities that owe themselves to different sources and regulate each

other reciprocally. Therefore, the normative claim of ethics can best be met by understanding the concept of a norm as a regulative of human interpretation, ordering and shaping human behaviour in a double sense: 'as a genitivus subjectivus and as a genitivus objectivus' (Schockenhoff 2014: 486).

In the first case, norms are produced by human practical reason and are thus the result of historical, cultural achievement and human interpretation of existence in a historical world. They are a regulative *of* human interpretation, action, and design. In this sense, norms would be condensed values. As genitivus objectivus, norms, in turn, are regulations *for* human thought, action, and design that can be found in life and developed anew. In this sense, they describe the basic conditions and prerequisites of what is good for the personal and social existence of human beings. In a certain sense, they therefore are 'more objective' rules, laws, commandments, etc. of living together on this earth. These norms are also subject to historical change because what is described as good has been wrested from historical experience but is guided by the primacy of human practical reason, according to which 'what is good and therefore what is to be done is what corresponds to and serves the personal well-being of the human being, which promotes him as a human being, develops his humanity, and allows him to be more and better a human being' (Schockenhoff 2014: 486). Good deeds would therefore have an end in themselves for grounds of reason.

(b) The justification of values and norms

Without going into the numerous models of justification of norms that ethics has developed in the meantime, ethics reminds us that norms and their claims to validity must not only be described but must be justified in relation to the facts and the situation. Even if there are various methods for this, or whether there can or should (not) be ultimate justifications of norms, norms neither simply exist objectively, transcending time and history, nor can they be derived exclusively from empirical circumstances. Rather, because of the human capacity for rational and transcendent thinking, people can enter a reflective, critical distance from what is historically and empirically present and, based on reasonable rules and methods of thinking, transcend reality towards something new and different from what is empirically experienced and known. What is true for norms is consequently true for values.

(c) The relation between particular and universal values (see Mandry, Chap. 9, this volume)

Given the reality of culturally and religiously plural societies, intercultural ethics in particular points out that social cybernetic models that start from an unspecified appeal to peaceful, multi-cultural coexistence and living together are not sufficient. Instead, rational models of coexistence are necessary that combine the recognition of the plurality of values with the need for binding norms. Moreover, the coexistence of culturally and religiously diverse groups is a task of social order. In this context, Merks (2012) speaks of the bipolarity between particularity and universality and emphasises the need not to see these as opposites. Rather, he promotes the necessity of developing a way of thinking that brings the constant striving for the

necessary common and the right to individuality and particularity into reasonable tension (Merks 2012: 222). So, how can particular values, for example, be valued without abandoning the struggle for universal, normative values? And of what kind must universal norms and values be not to induce violence to legitimate particularities? Ethics that wants to formulate universal values in the sense of universally valid norms must, therefore, on the one hand, adhere to the fact that a society cannot exist in the long run without certain commonalities in moral and value issues; on the other hand, it must also consider that such commonality cannot be developed without respect for individual freedom and cultural diversity. Therefore, concern for a common basic ethos is just as much a part of any qualified discussion of values as respect for freedom and diversity. For Merks (2012: 234–235), human rights represent a suitable normative system because they address both the indispensable right of individuals and the universality of this same right for all people. They form a universal ethical basis for modern, subject-centred societies. The goal would be the integration of cultural differences into a jointly shared 'culture of cultures' that rests on four pillars: (a) the will to live together, (b) the care for the material and social prerequisites of social participation, (c) the recognition of the central importance of the person, and (d) the recognition of a common legal order that is neither confessional nor religiously oriented or even bound, but can be expected to provide justice for all (at least in the sense of protecting all from injustice). This model also makes clear that an ethically responsible polarity between particular and universal values with (a) and (b) also includes pre-moral conditions: no commonality can be established by appealing to universal values and norms or a legal order alone.

(d) The relation between values, norms, and meaning

As values provide orientation for human action, they always also create meaning or, conversely, refer to a meaning from which they derive their validity. Values are therefore always embedded in ideas of the meaning of human existence and the world. Unlike analytical or descriptive-explicative approaches, non-reductionist philosophical approaches therefore always insist on a transparent disclosure and justification of the ideas regarding the meaning of life and reality that underlie value and normative claims. Values and norms are thus always also concretions of concepts of the meaning of life and reality, and, conversely, endowed by them. So, values and norms neither merely exist nor are they only set or claimed by people. Rather, they reveal the ability of people to give meaning to life and reality that goes beyond mere material existence. In turn, such 'structures of meaning' are always value related. Nor do they merely exist, but they are granted the claim to validity and are therefore subject to evaluation processes. Meaning, values, and norms can thus be neither naturalised biologically, psychologically, culturally, etc., nor adequately grasped by essentialist theories of a pre-given meaning of life and reality. They must always be critically examined for their validity by means of practical reason.

For this reason, different 'levels of value' (Krijnen 2011: 551) can be determined, that is, a distinction can be made between more or less unconditionally valid values. Individually subjective values only apply to a concrete subject; general

subjective values apply to a numerical totality of subjects who strive for them based on their natural concerns in life. In contrast, objective values – such as legal norms – apply to all subjects of a system of order or culture, regardless of the factual recognition of subjects. Another distinction concerns intrinsic values and conditional values: while the subject autonomously submits to the former and they are in themselves unconditionally valid for the subject, the latter serve to preserve life and only become unconditionally valid values in combination with intrinsic values (Krijnen 2011: 449–551).

Values as a 'Formal Indicator' ('Formalanzeige')?

What remains to be said at the end of this plethora of different approaches to the concept of values? From our point of view, the socially necessary struggle for ethical orientation cannot be realised either without the concept of values or with sole reference to values. The term refers to topics and questions indispensable for people to live together. In this sense, the term 'values' could be seen as a 'formal indicator'. According to Martin Heidegger (as discussed by Kisiel 2006), formal indicative terms, like all basic philosophical terms, are terms that do not directly state what they refer to in concrete terms, but only give an indication that the human being who tries to understand this term is faced with a 'peculiar task': to transform themselves into the 'Dasein' (the reality, the existence) the term indicates but cannot sufficiently decipher. Therefore, the formal indicator is not universal in the sense of a generic generality under which the concrete is subsumed, but in the sense that, according to a situation, it indicates a concrete way of being ('Dasein') without being able to reveal it completely. Formal indicative terms can never express directly what they refer to but can only give hints of what is to be done. They do not define. Rather, they can make a claim for a transformation. But as they can never cause transformation; they just indicate. And as the transformation into existence ('Dasein') can only be realised by a concrete person, formal indicators can never fully represent their content, but must be done and experienced. Thus, they are formal. So, a formal indicator confronts the existential task of engaging with the facts, questions, doubts, tasks, reflections, and actions associated with this concept.

If values are such a formal indicator, they can neither be fully defined nor answer ethical questions completely, but are intrinsically connected with reflection, communication, and action – with human existence, as such. Values thus do not call for implementation or application but remind us to face ethical challenges both theoretically and practically and call for transformation. The term therefore only reveals its meaning in concrete situations and contexts. Its generality lies in its reference to a concrete situation from which it cannot be separated. Values can therefore never be defined definitively and once and for all. Hopefully, we have taken the reader into this task so far with our various approaches to this concept and have been able to contribute to an inconclusive discourse.

Theological Approaches and 'Christian Values'

(a) Theological approaches

Like philosophy and ethics, Christian theology has a critical relation to the concept of values. As a scientific reflection of historical and contemporary Christian faith in its various denominations, it is committed to the rules and regulations, norms and principles, commandments and laws, virtues and attitudes the biblical and historical tradition has developed (see section "Relationship between religion and values"). Furthermore, Christian faith is not only an ethical system but a comprehensive way of life embedded in an overall religious interpretation of reality. Therefore, Christian theologians highlight that referring to values is only legitimate in the context of 'religious rootedness, faithful commitment and binding community forms' and must be 'shaped by faith and the determination for God's salvation' (Bittner 1994: 2154).

Nevertheless, as early as the 1980s, the practice-oriented disciplines of theology in particular began to react to the emerging political discourse on values and received the concept of values in a theologically appreciative way. Some German-speaking moral theologians and social ethicists such as Dietmar Mieth (1987), Christof Mandry (2009), Eberhard Schockenhoff (2014), Clemens Sedmak (with a seven-volume series on foundational values of Europe: Sedmak 2010–2017), and more recently Stephan Ernst (Ernst and Engel 2014; Ernst 2020) and Sigrid Müller, Stephanie Höllinger, and Bettina Baldt (2020), have contributed affirmatively to the discourse on (European) values and value ethics and presented corresponding concepts.

Müller et al. (2020), for instance, define values as a constitutive element of virtue ethics. The latter is considered the moral part of value ethics, that is, it serves the ethical examination of values. From this point of view, values are fundamental standards for the orientation of human action and therefore indispensable for the acceptance of norms as concrete prescriptions for action. Without reference to the values that norms are based upon, the latter become empty rules, are no longer understandable, and lose acceptance; 'without values, norms remain empty of content and arbitrary' (Müller et al. 2020: 173–174). Vice versa, without norms, the concretisation of values remains ambiguous. Values must therefore undergo a critical differentiation into non-moral values on the one hand and fundamental and end values (Müller et al. 2020: 174–179) on the other. Non-moral values are fundamental goods that represent the material prerequisites for action (for example, health, property, and physical freedom), while fundamental moral values denote the normative 'minimum conditions of individual conduct of life and human coexistence' (such as justice, solidarity, respect for human dignity, sustainability). End values, in turn, can be pursued directly or indirectly and must again be divided into non-moral and moral values. Wealth, for example, would be an immediate non-moral end value that must be subjected to scrutiny by moral end values such as responsibility, proportionality, etc. On the other hand, happiness in life would be a non-immediate non-moral end value that must be tested by moral end values such as moral coherence or good conscience. The concept of values can thus be regarded as a basic and essential resource of moral action, but it does not replace ethical discussions.

For Sedmak (2010: 16), values are 'highly emotional ideas about what is desirable' and at the same time 'relatively general and permanent evaluation criteria'. As such, they form the frame of reference and the source of norms and ethical preferences. From an ethical point of view, they must not be the reason but rather the fundament for decisions and actions. They provide essential criteria for evaluations and are 'conceptions of the desirable'. For Sedmak (2010: 19), three dimensions of values emerge: a cognitive dimension, which is connected to convictions; an affective dimension, which shapes value bonds emotionally; and a volitive dimension, which allows these cognitive and affective bonds to values to be understood as the result of decisions of the will. Values thus are closely related to identity and attitudes to life and are indispensable sources of moral motivation, though they require ethical examination.

Dietmar Mieth (1987), in turn, outlines a normative understanding of the extent to which values can be referred to in an ethically responsible manner. In his view, the concept of value must not be separated from the concept of the meaning of existence. Otherwise, the reference to values can turn into ideology. Values are thus commitments 'of a recognised and acknowledged meaning of the human existence' (Mieth 1987: 211). Whoever appeals to values must therefore clearly define and justify the term and at the same time provide transparent information about the meaning of human existence with which these values are connected. Moreover, an ethically responsible concept of values must be tied back to the personal dignity of the human being and the respective concrete historical situation. Last, but not least, its use must be accompanied by a transparent communication process about its content and justification. For Mieth, too, the concept of values does not replace ethical examination.

Practical theology also receives the concept of values in a similarly positive way, as it is obliged to deal with contemporary developments in societies in a critical and appreciative manner in order to find corresponding points of contact with theology. Since, moreover, the Christian churches have also taken up the discourse on values in their daily practice so that they can connect to social developments in a communicative way and develop their ethical norms in the horizon of modern society and thus also to be able to legitimise themselves, the scientific examination of interdisciplinary research on values is also one of the core tasks of practical theology. Finally, this theological discipline assumes that concepts that are highly accepted in a society are always also 'witnessing notions', that is, they reveal problems of society in a condensed way and at the same time indicate possible solutions. Values thus represent both the need for moral orientation and the answer to this need in pluralist societies. Therefore, values transformation needs not to be seen primarily as a loss of ethical orientation but as an opportunity for further moral development.

(b) 'Christian values'

From a theological perspective, values research is also highly relevant because of the contemporary public and political reference to 'Christian values' or 'Judeo-Christian values' in European value discourses. However, as Pickel and Pickel (Chap. 5), Polak and Schuster (Chap. 6), and Aschauer (Chap. 12) demonstrate in

this volume, many people with a Christian self-image share values and attitudes that are incompatible with the Christian faith from a theological point of view – such as xenophobia or rejection of diversity. Christian religiosity continues to have a diminishing but still significant influence on political and politically relevant attitudes, even in the context of secular societies. Moreover, Christian churches play a historically relevant role in the genesis of the values of the European Union.

Even if the impact of Christian faith on the values of the European Union is hotly debated scientifically, values research cannot ignore religion, and Christianity in particular. But the results can be quite contradictory. While Weymans (Chap. 3, this volume), for example, estimates the influence of the Protestant tradition on the genesis of European values to be higher than that of the Catholic tradition and hardly attributes any importance to the influence of religion today, Mandry (2011) or Bauman (2015) emphasise the Catholic influence of the founding fathers of the European Union, which is reflected, for example, in personalism, the subsidiarity of structures and institutions, or the transnational orientation (Bauman 2015: 108) of the European Union. Others, such as Altermatt et al. (2008) even discuss the question of whether Europe is a Christian project. Religious communities, especially the churches, are also institutionally involved at the European level and have developed corresponding organisations and structures for this purpose – for instance, CEC, the Conference of the European Churches, COMECE, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union, or CROCEU, the Committee of Representatives of the Orthodox Churches to the European Union. These institutions and platforms correspond to political representatives at the European Parliament and the European Commission, whose mandate includes dialogue with religions. Religion, therefore, also plays a significant role in the governance of the EU in connection with values (Foret and Calligaro 2018).

Today, historically genuine religious values have remained in public discourses of the European Union mostly in abstract, universalised, quasi-secular, stripped-off versions. Additionally, the values of the Enlightenment, such as religious freedom, could often be asserted only in conflict and struggle with the churches and religious communities. These struggles continue when it comes to the acceptance of human rights and their values regarding issues of gender justice and sexual orientation. But recent research also demonstrates that the political values of the Enlightenment are fundamentally owed to a biblical Judeo-Christian ethos and were by no means developed independently of it. Admittedly, it was primarily the Christian churches that fought this political ethos of the Bible for a long time and recognised values such as democracy, religious freedom, or human rights only in the twentieth century. But Nelson (2011), for instance, proves that the dominant narrative, according to which modern political thought in the West owes its existence to secularisation, is false. Instead, the political ideas and values associated with it were developed by Christians who devoted themselves to the Hebrew sources of the Old Testament. In this sense, Europe had already become not more but less secular in early modernity, insofar as a genuinely biblical political ethos (especially with its orientation towards justice and law) became politically relevant. Today, Christian values in the EU stand alongside secular and multicultural values and compete for recognition (Sutherland

2010). There are numerous reasons to explore the connection between values, religion, and theology.

So, what are 'Christian values'? As the EU conflicts with Poland and Hungary, which repeatedly claim the need to protect Christian values from an Islamic invasion, prove, this is also a contested concept. In public and political reality, Christian values are often associated with nationalism, a traditional image of women and the family, the rejection of same-sex relationships, and diverse gender identities, or brought into opposition with modern value relativism. For Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, Astrid Mattes (2016) demonstrated that the recourse to Christian values – decoupled from the Christian churches and in the guise of an enlightened Christian-formatted universalism – was pushed above all by the Christian Democratic parties to differentiate European culture from Islam.

But such an interpretation fails to understand Christian values from a theological perspective. First, a traditionalist approach which claims an opposition between Christian and secular values ignores the idea that the latter – such as democracy, religious freedom, or solidarity – must also be examined and recognised for their theological connectivity and dignity and, if ethically responsible, can be accepted. Second, claiming an oppositional position between Christian and Islamic values is also theologically wrong. Despite all their differences, they share numerous ethical ideas and values in history and the present (Borgolte 2006; Renz 2014). Third, and above all, Christian values do not exist isolated from the Christian faith and detached from a Christian context of life. Therefore, the recognition of the equal dignity of all human beings, the appreciation of ethnic and religious plurality, and the commitment to justice for each individual and all people is inseparably connected with Christian values. Christian values do not form an autonomous moral system from which one can derive norms arbitrarily; they are not a quarry that can be used for political interests.

Even, if this normative-theological claim was not realised, as the political reception of Catholic social teaching in modern times led to a political (ab)use of Christian values independent from churches (Chapel 2018), a theologically responsible reference to Christian values is legitimate only if they are embedded in the community of life, the law, the memory, and the interpretation of the churches. Furthermore, they must be subject to criticism by the doctrines, rules, norms, principles, commandments etc. that the biblical and historical tradition provides (Polak 2020). Therefore, from a theological point of view, nationalism or xenophobia can never be justified theologically.

Nor are Christian values a monopoly of Christian churches in terms of content, since charity, justice, and solidarity can also be advocated for without a Christian background and faith. Even if certain values – for instance, the virtue of humility – were primarily propagated by Christianity, Christian values can also be justified by means of ethically autonomous rationality (Ernst 2020: 36). What would be specifically Christian about such values is the motivation through faith in God, the willingness to justify oneself before God, and the commitment to the community of faith. According to Auer (1995), there is even also the possibility of an autonomous morality that understands the Christian faith as a stimulating, critical, and

integrating basis for ethical judgements. This means that Christian faith can encourage human beings to be alert, creative, and ready to engage in ethical questions. It can criticise and denounce inhumane irrationality and ideologies. And it can integrate all human expressions that can be justified as humanly beneficial and scientifically justifiable, including values. Christian values are thus plural conceptions of a good, desirable life for each individual and all, based on the Christian faith and in need of theological-ethical critique (Polak 2020).

The political recourse to Christian or Judeo-Christian values is therefore highly ambivalent. On the one hand, it reminds Europe of the essential intellectual-historical origins of modern, secular values in Judaism and Christianity, which are sometimes ignored by contemporary secular elites. This recourse also claims that Christians, Jews, and religious people want to, can, and shall contribute to value discourses. But referring to Christian values also has a dark side if their historical abuse is ignored. Churches fought the recognition of modern European values for a long time and still do. The European anti-Semitism, based on a long anti-Judaic Christian tradition (Henrix 2004), gives lie to the hyphen in the term 'Judeo-Christian values'. Finally, the political interests associated with the appeal to Christian values very often aim at exclusion and marginalisation of non-Christian migrants and Muslims (Mattes 2016). So, an uncritical reception of the formula 'Christian values' seems highly problematic, as long as the historical and contemporary burdens are not adequately recognised in political rhetoric. From a theological point of view, this is regrettable, for in terms of content, in a theologically reflected sense Christian values stand for an ethical-universal orientation for the good of each human being, humanity, and the whole creation.

In conclusion, theology contributes essential historical, hermeneutic, and criteriological insights to values research. In particular, it enables a deeper understanding and a differentiated ethical critique of religiously motivated values. Because of its rational understanding of the transcendent reality, it can also pose questions about secular values that often ignore the human ability to transcend. Therefore, theology can also contribute to the question of the possibilities and limits of ethical judgement and knowledge.

2.5   Conclusion

Both the problem outline on the use of the concept of values and the overview of the different conceptualisations and approaches in academic values research clearly demonstrate an unwieldy variety of understandings and a struggle over values. It became clear that discourses on values play a key role in people's coexistence on different levels: on the individual level; on the level of social institutions such as the education system, the economy, and religious communities; and on the level of political actors, processes, and institutions. The recourse to values and societal conflicts around values and their understanding is an inescapable personal and political reality in pluralist societies searching for ethical orientation.

In view of the abundance of multiple global challenges, the struggle for values will and must therefore be a central component of social and political debates. In modern societies, which do not accept the recourse to either ultimately predefined or transcendent values and in which people claim participation also in value issues, the struggle for values will therefore be a necessary and permanent condition. As we have shown, this is associated with numerous questions, tensions, and problems. Simultaneously, the success of the concept of values and academic values research demonstrates that this contested concept, despite all its difficulties, has immense potential concerning the ethical self-assurance of societies and their (political) institutions.

In this struggle for values, academic values research can contribute significantly to a more qualified discourse on values. Admittedly, this requires strengthening interdisciplinary cooperation, since the various disciplines of values research have highly heterogeneous approaches and terminologies. Sayer (2011: 36) therefore proposes a 'post-disciplinary perspective' that 'goes beyond dichotomic thinking within the disciplines'. This perspective overcomes the dualisms between 'is-ought, reason-emotion, science-ideology, science-ethics, positive-normative, objectivity-subjectivity, mind-body' (Sayer 2011: 36). In this regard, increased cooperation between normative, hermeneutic, and empirical sciences as well as a stronger international perspective should be added. As values research in different languages can lead to new insights, the latter cooperation seems very promising. For example, Anglophone philosophical values research, with its more pragmatic, language-analytical approach, opens up different perspectives than does a transcendental philosophical German-language approach to ethics, which asks about the conditions for the possibility of ethical judgement formation. In the future, such post-disciplinary collaborations promise to provide a comprehensive, complex picture of values, their understanding, and their use, and show multi-perspective and at the same time scientifically based ways of developing ethical judgements. Essential to the reception and effectiveness of such interdisciplinary research is, of course, continuous dialogue with social and political actors and the communicative embedding of research in public discourse on values. Even then, discourse on values will remain plural, conflictual, and inconclusive. But the struggle over the central ethical question of 'good' and 'evil' will remain decisive in societies that attempt to live together in diversity, justice, and peace.

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Dr Regina Polak (*1967) is Associate Professor and head of the Department of Practical Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna (Austria). She is a member of the research network 'Interdisciplinary Values Research' and the research centre 'Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society', both at the University of Vienna. Her research focuses on socio-religious transformation processes in Europe, values research, religion and migration, and interreligious dialogue in a migration society. She is also Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions.

Chapter 3
A Critical History of the Use of 'European Values'

Wim Weymans

Abstract This chapter examines how the use, content, and impact of the notion of 'European values' in European institutions has changed over time. It especially focuses on when and why (and in what context) the term has been used and distinguishes between a conservative Christian and a more inclusive secular definition of the term. After a brief word about the method, a conservative Cold War use of the term by Christian politicians in the post-war years is examined. The chapter then explores how, after the end of the Cold War, the term was also used in a second, more inclusive and secular sense as it became mainstream when European institutions and politicians increasingly started using it to legitimise the European project (also because rival notions such as that of a 'European identity' or 'social Europe' proved less useful). Moving closer to the present, the chapter then shows how some of today's tensions surrounding the concept of European values can be explained by their history. The chapter ends by proposing a possible way out of today's predicament, pleading for more room for political debate around European values.

Keywords European values · European identity · European integration · Liberal values · Conservatism · Social Europe

In today's European political discourse, 'European values' are often invoked by both defenders of the European project and its detractors. The European Union (EU) refers to European values to defend and legitimise its policies, while its critics likewise invoke these values (albeit often interpreted differently) to criticise these very same policies. In what follows I will critically examine who has used the term in European institutions, and when and for what purpose they have used it. I will also see how the use, content, and impact of the notion of 'European values' has

W. Weymans (✉)
EURO and INCAL (Institut des Civilisations, Arts et Lettres), UCLouvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium
e-mail: wim.weymans@uclouvain.be

changed over time. In so doing, I hope to shed some light, not just on their sometimes-forgotten origins and brief history, but also on their current predicaments.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, I will provide a brief word about the method. Second, I will look at the Cold War origins of the use of European values by a particular group of conservative politicians and the Council of Europe in the post-war years. And third, I will examine how, from the 1970s onwards, the European Community tried to legitimise its project by invoking a European identity and the ideal of a social Europe. Only after these notions proved less useful did the notion of 'European values' gradually begin to replace them. As European institutions and politicians increasingly used the term European values when legitimising the European project, these values became mainstream, albeit with a different meaning – more abstract, less partisan, and less religious – as I will explain in a fourth section. Fifth, and moving closer to the present, I will show how the history of European values that I traced can explain some of the tensions surrounding these values today. I will conclude this chapter by suggesting possible ways out of today's predicament.

3.1   A Critical Approach

If scholars empirically examine 'European values', for example in the European Values Study (EVS), they study the degree to which certain values, attitudes, and norms are present at a European level (as opposed to a regional or national level only), which allows them to analyse complex evolutions, variations, and correlations. 'European' then mainly refers to the scope of analysis and does not imply a normative political agenda.[1] However, when politicians and institutions invoke values, there are invariably normative issues at play, as these values are meant to legitimise political projects (and delegitimise others), which means that values are 'valued' differently, depending on who invokes them. Although politicians, when legitimising their policies, arguably always – implicitly or explicitly – invoke certain values such as security, safety, or equality, they rarely explicitly refer to 'values' as such. (While British politicians, for example, increasingly speak about 'British values', Irish politicians rarely refer to 'Irish values'.) Yet in what follows I will concentrate on this explicit (and not so obvious) use of a term such as 'European values'. Why and when did European institutions, at some point in their history, start to *explicitly* invoke that term?

When focusing on this explicit political use of 'European values', I will critically examine not just what they mean (i.e. what does 'European' refer to in European values and what is it opposed to?), but also see how, when, and why – and in what contexts – the term is used. I will also look at rival concepts that they replaced,

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[1] Which is not to say, of course, that it is necessarily 'neutral'. For one, by focussing mainly on nation states, as opposed to regions, such studies may be seen as implicitly reinforcing the nation state as a reality (Schrag-Sternberg 2013: 83–84).

while assessing the price one must pay for using one concept rather than another. I thus presuppose that there are different definitions of what 'European values' mean – definitions that sometimes clash and are at times incompatible.

Such a critical approach requires both philosophy and history. Philosophy is required because a conceptual analysis will help in differentiating between different definitions of the concept of European values in political and ideological discourse. And history is needed because a historical awareness of the context and impact of values, as well as the different functions they serve, in turn helps us to stay mindful of the various constellations in which discourses operate. After all, terms such as values or human rights did not always have the same scope, salience, or impact they have today.

By adopting such a conceptual, historical, and critical approach, I follow Nietzsche when he wrote that 'we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values should itself* (...) *be examined* – and so we need to know about the conditions and circumstances under which the values grew up, developed and changed' (Nietzsche 2007: 7). With Nietzsche and Foucault, one can call this a 'genealogical approach' (Foucault 1977). Rather than seeing values as naturally 'good' and their history as one of inevitable progress, such a critical perspective instead questions the use of values as well as the actual origins their defenders often look away from (Moyn 2010: 1–10). This critical approach can be contrasted with a more traditional teleological history of values that instead emphasises continuity (rather than shifts), historical necessity (instead of contingency), and a focus on the values themselves (and not on the wider context and impact they (fail to) have). Such a traditional approach mostly assumes that values are always a good thing (thus concealing their potential ideological side effects or costs) and that their history represents progress.[2]

Although a critical approach implies that the scope of my analysis is already quite wide – focusing on the use of 'European values' in an 80-year period and also exploring the wider context – it nevertheless still has some important limitations. One limitation is that by 'European values' I mean values that European institutions use to define themselves. But, of course, 'European values' not only refer to the values that are invoked and promoted by *European institutions*, but also, in a much wider sense, to what *European citizens* value (Foret & Calligaro 2018: 5). Seen from the perspective of European citizens – as examined by the European Values Study or the Eurobarometer – European values can refer to the following four perspectives, each of which requires research that falls outside the scope of this chapter.

European values in this broader sense can first refer to values that Europeans share (the lowest common denominator) or to values that a majority of Europeans value more than others. Second, it can mean values that distinguish European citizens from those in other continents (when compared to the World Values Survey, for example). Third, the term can stand for values that Europeans believe their

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[2] For an example of such a teleological approach applied to European values, see Labayle 2012. He uses teleological language, when he, for example, writes that the 'progressive establishment' (*consécration*) of European values (44) is no coincidence and logical (42) and the result of a 'slow maturation' (42).

institutions should be embodying (which may be different from what Europeans personally believe to be important). One could further compare the values that Europeans believe in – or that they want their institutions to represent – with the values that these institutions say they represent, and highlight discrepancies between both (Frischhut 2019: 127). Another, more historical, approach would be to see to what extent the changing use of 'European values' by politicians follows the change in values of the citizens they are meant to represent (Foret 2014). These latter perspectives presuppose that European institutions invoke values as much as European citizens do. However, as we shall see in what follows, this has not always been the case.

3.2   The Conservative and Christian Cold War Origins of European Values

Although defenders of the European project today often portray it as the embodiment of (European) values such as dignity, human rights, and democracy, and suggest that this project finds its roots in the defence of these values, a quick look at the actual origins of the EU allows us to see that these values were not prevalent in the early days, contrary to what some EU officials would have us believe. In fact, 'the 1951 Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (...) made no mention of "democracy" or "human rights," and neither would the 1957 Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community' (Duranti 2017: 209). Until the 1990s, values were hardly invoked at all by European institutions, which instead kept their technocratic focus on the single market the Community was meant to create. If values were mentioned at all back then, they were mostly peace (think, for example, of Schuman's famous declaration of 9 May 1950 (Schuman 1950; see also Dujardin 2016: 217)) or reconciliation rather than those invoked nowadays such as democracy or human rights, which were conspicuously absent in those early days.

All this is not to say that 'European values' such as democracy, the rule of law, and human rights were completely absent in Europe's post-war years. They *were* explicitly invoked, not by the European Community (the EU's predecessor), but by its less consequential sister institution, the Council of Europe (1949), and the European Convention on Human Rights it helped to create (in 1950) and defend through the European Court of Human Rights since 1959 in Strasbourg (Duranti 2017: 1–2). It was here that the language of European values and human rights was used, albeit in a very specific way, serving a particular conservative ideological agenda, attacking the left in general and communism in particular. As historians such as Samuel Moyn and Marco Duranti have recently shown, when the Cold War began in the post-war years, the European Convention on Human Rights was mainly concerned with 'ideological signalling about the values on which Western European identity depended', and it 'emerged thanks to Britain's commitment to the "spiritual

union" of Western Europeans against communism' (Moyn 2015: 94). This discourse
was indeed used by conservative British politicians such as Winston Churchill and,
later, Margaret Thatcher, amongst others.

This conservative vision of values – which survives in certain conservative cir-
cles today – is characterised by the following features. First, it sees European values
as being embedded in a common civilisational or 'spiritual' foundation that is
Europe's Christian heritage. This echoes conservatism's founding father, Edmund
Burke, who had earlier emphasised the primacy of civilisation and religion – for
example, when he wrote in 1790 that 'our civilisation' has, 'in this European world
of ours, depended for ages upon (...) the spirit of religion', adding that 'this mixed
system of opinion and sentiment' – the 'superadded ideas, furnished from the ward-
robe of a moral imagination' – what we would today call values – 'has given its
character to modern Europe' (Burke 1999: 170–173). In the post-war years Churchill
linked such existing conservative ideas with human rights in a Cold War context. In
his view:

> The European human rights system was directed at safeguarding those freedoms (...)
> derived from Western Europe's premodern Christian and humanist heritage within the con-
> fines of what [he] termed 'democratic European civilisation'. By this, he meant a bounded
> cultural space restricted to those nations who embraced a common set of ethical values
> derived from the shared history of their peoples. (Duranti 2017: 210)

In so doing, 'conservatives enshrined human rights as European values in the ser-
vice of a nostalgic Christian vision of the European legal order, not a liberal cosmo-
politan one' (Duranti 2017: 3).

Such an invocation of a Christian heritage may not have sounded all that strange
in the post-war years, given that the European continent was by no means as secu-
larised back then as it is today. As Duranti explains:

> Churchill (…) did not demand that Europeans subscribe to a particular religious creed in
> order to be faithful to what he called 'spiritual values' of 'democratic European civilisa-
> tion'. One need not have been a Christian at that time to agree that the cultural inheritance
> of Western Christendom could provide a foundation for uniting the manifold communities
> in which Europeans formed their ethical obligations. (Duranti 2017: 403)

As late as 1988, Thatcher repeated this argument – of human rights being rooted in
Christianity – when she asserted that 'we still base our belief in personal liberty and
other human rights' on 'that idea of Christendom (…) – Christendom for long syn-
onymous with Europe – with its recognition of the unique and spiritual nature of the
individual' (Thatcher 2016: 216).

Another key feature of this discourse is that European values were regarded as
Europe's legacy to the world, in part through a process of colonisation and imperial-
ism, with Churchill as its obvious defender. And while post-war Europe appeared as
a peaceful endeavour that broke with a long tradition of European wars, it is worth
noting that when the first European institutions emerged after the war, European
nations still often brutally dominated large parts of the world through their colonies.
So, while the brutalities on the continent had ceased, overseas they still continued in
various forms, and were often committed in the name of (and legitimised by

invoking) civilisational values (Fanon 2004). As late as 1988, Thatcher unapologetically talked about Europe (and its values) in this colonial sense when she declared that 'the story of how Europeans explored and colonised – and yes, without apology – civilised much of the world is an extraordinary tale of talent, skill and courage' (Thatcher 2016: 217). It was in that same sense that 'European values', associated with talk about Europe's humanism, spirit, and civilisation, were denounced by anticolonial thinkers such as Frantz Fanon. Fanon stated in 1961 that 'it is in the name of the Spirit, meaning the spirit of Europe, that Europe justified its crimes and legitimized the slavery in which it held four fifths of humanity' (Fanon 2004: 237), and Sartre agreed when he declared that 'our beloved values are losing their feathers; if you take a closer look there is not one that isn't tainted with blood' (Sartre 2004: lix).

European values were seen as European in that they *originated* in Europe but at the same time they were used by Europeans who saw it as their vocation to export these values to the world. By 'European' one did not mean that they were limited to Europe – other continents were welcome to adopt them too – but rather that Europe was referred to as their *exclusive origin* (rather than their *exclusive destination*). A successful example of the export of European values was the United States (US). Once more, Thatcher: 'European values have helped to make the United States of America into the valiant defender of freedom which she has become' (Thatcher 2016: 217). European values in this Cold War narrative were therefore often seen as synonymous with American, Western, or transatlantic values. Europe had the merit of being at the origin of these values (which were therefore called European). But, thanks to the successful propagation of these values, Europe gladly accepted that its own values had now become American or Western values too. In that sense this use of values was part of a larger 'religion of universal progress' (Mishra 2017: 37) – 'the belief that Anglo-American institutions of the nation state and liberal democracy will be gradually generalized around the world' (Mishra 2017: 37).

As to the content, in this conservative narrative European values were mainly linked with centrist values such as liberty or the rule of law rather than with left-of-centre values such as, say, solidarity or equality between men and women. Indeed, 'for conservative Europeanists, to be a "good European" required committing oneself to respecting "human rights and fundamental freedoms", understood as civil liberties rather than social rights' (Duranti 2017: 9). The invocation of European values and human rights was more than just about words, as they were meant to have a real impact through the European Court of Human Rights that would favour conservatives at the expense of advocates of a powerful post-war welfare state. The supporters of the European Convention on Human Rights were, after all, mainly 'interested in using Europeanization as a way to combat domestic socialism, in an era when the popular and ideological appeal of social democratic ideals and communist ones were rising to new heights' (Moyn 2015: 159). For many among them 'the objective of post-war European unification on the basis of human rights principles was to roll back the dramatically enhanced positive role of the nation-state in economic and social policy' (Duranti 2017: 212). The creation of a European supreme court 'was widely regarded as a mechanism for realizing what socialists

described as a conservative agenda too unpopular to be enacted through democratic means' (Duranti 2017: 7). When used in a specific and limited sense, human rights could serve the conservative agenda as conservatives 'ensured that the right to property and the right of parents over the religious content of their children's education would be codified in treaty law, while the rights to employment, health care, and social security would not' (Duranti 2017: 5). Even more controversially, 'human rights were also advanced by conservatives and reactionaries to avoid post-war repression of collaborators and, in France, *Vichistes*' (Pasture 2018b: 492).

The first decades of the post-war European project were therefore characterised by some kind of division of labour. As Duranti explains:

> The history of the European project featured dual post-war moments. One was the technocratic state-driven process of economic integration (…) [;] the other moment was a more holistic transnational process of envisioning the material aspect of European unification as indivisible from its ethical foundations. (Duranti 2017: 359)

While those engaged in the conservative ideological project around the Council of Europe explicitly used values to differentiate that project from Eastern European (and even Western European) communist ideologies, in the technocratic European Community the values it currently invokes, such as democracy and human rights, were notably absent in these post-war years.

Yet even when conservative or Christian values were not explicitly invoked in the technocratic project of a European Community, it is often suggested that this community too was nevertheless influenced by Christian, and especially Catholic (rather than Protestant), values, ideas, and actors. After all, the argument goes, 'the founders of the European Community – Alcide De Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman – were all Christian Democrats' (Müller 2013: 141). Moreover, it is further suggested that Christian democratic parties were inspired by Jacques Maritain's personalist defence of values such as democracy and human rights. Although they did not explicitly invoke 'European values', it is undeniable that post-war Christian politicians were involved in a European transnational peace project that sought to limit state power and defend democracy and rights. Yet it is important to contextualise this involvement, see it for what it was, and not confuse it with later evolutions.

From a historical perspective, this involvement was quite new. Until the Second World War, Christianity broadly subscribed to an anti-modernist world view and had been suspicious of modern democracy and rights. It 'had mostly stood for values inimical to those we now associate with human rights', as 'Christians and Christian thought were deeply entangled in the collapse of liberal democracy on the European continent between the wars' (Moyn 2015: 6–7). This began to change in the mid 1930s, when Pope Pius XI realised 'that totalitarian states of the left and even of the right threatened the moral community for which Jesus had long ago called' (Moyn 2015: 15), and his successor Pope Pius XII started invoking the language of human rights founded on human dignity during the war (Moyn 2015: 1–3). Around the same time, the Catholic intellectual Jacques Maritain redefined rights and democracy as a Christian legacy, albeit in a neothomist and conservative sense (Moyn 2011: 91–97; 2015: 16, 82–83).

One could argue that, after experiencing first hand the evils a totalitarian state could inflict, Christian politicians too became keen on limiting state power both at a national level (think of Germany's new federal structure) and internationally (hence their advocacy for a European Community that was in part meant to limit the power of nation states). As Müller explains, for Christian democratic politicians, 'national sovereignty (…) was something to be feared. These leaders advocated subsidiarity and a Europe united in its "Christian-humanist" heritage (the particulars of which were not to be discussed all that much, as long as they added up to anti-Communism)' (Müller 2013: 141). Christians were indeed not just suspicious of a state dominated by the totalitarian right, but also of a state that furthered the interests of the left. As already explained, the rise of a socialist (welfare) state made Christian democrats suspicious of a strong nation state, which was another reason why they supported transnational projects that limited the nation state at home and abroad.

It is undeniable that 'Christianity's ascendancy both spiritually and politically after World War II' contributed to 'the move from a conservative maintenance of middle-class rule that was willing to give up democracy if necessary to one that embraced it at all cost' (Moyn 2015: 171–172). Yet if Christian politicians discovered the value of democracy in those post-war years – they were called Christian *democrats* after all – theirs was still a specific conservative idea of democracy that was also deeply suspicious of popular sovereignty and saw true democracy (and the European project) as a way to *limit* the unbridled expression of the people's will. For them, European integration was 'a credible response to the dangers of popular sovereignty, of which Christian Democratic leaders, even as leaders of people's parties, would remain particularly wary' (Müller 2013: 142). Indeed, 'European integration, it needs to be emphasized, was part and parcel of [a] comprehensive attempt to constrain popular will: it added supranational constraints to national ones' (Müller 2017: 95).

Yet one should certainly not overstate the role Catholicism (or Maritain's personalist ideas) played in the origins of the European Community. It is true that the Vatican, especially under the leadership of Pope Pius XII (1939–1958), was said to favour the European construction as a third force acting as a counterweight to Washington or Moscow (Chenaux 2007: 8–9). But the Vatican had little to no influence on the European Community (Dujardin 2016: 219). And when Catholic politicians cooperated at all in these post-war years, they were mainly motivated by their shared anti-communist stance rather than by ideals of European federalism, let alone values (other than perhaps peace) (Chenaux 2007: 87–88). So, just as the Council of Europe used 'European values' mainly as a tool against communism, so Catholic politicians from various European countries likewise cooperated in order to stop communism (and not to build a united Europe).

Moreover, many of Europe's so-called founding fathers were not particularly Catholic (think of Paul-Henri Spaak or Jean Monnet), although admittedly they made occasional references to distinctly Christian values such as respect for the human person or a Christian civilisation (Dujardin 2016: 214–215), which was probably an illustration of the predominance of Christianity in the post-war years

(making the absence of such references in the European Community treaties even more striking). And despite some post-war Christian democratic predominance, other non-Christian democratic political forces right of centre that had politically survived the war also remained powerful – think of de Gaulle who, after resisting Germany during the war, went on to oppose a supranational Europe after the war ended.

Lastly, Maritain's personalist ideas in reality hardly found their way into post-war Christian democratic party programmes (Chenaux 2007: 90). This came as no surprise, as even Maritain himself was 'unconvinced of the extent to which mere party politics could usher in the new kind of Christian civilization, based on human dignity' (Moyn 2015: 16). Moreover, Maritain's Catholic defence of values was not the only one on offer. During the war, other legitimations of human rights and democracy were developed, for example by the French Union Leader and intellectual Paul Vignaux (who was a Catholic but neither a Christian democrat nor a Gaullist and who was an important source of influence for the later European Commission president Jacques Delors). Unlike Maritain, who mainly drew on Thomas and Aristotle, Vignaux was inspired by the Protestant theologian Niebuhr and by the nominalism of Duns Scotus (Weymans 2018).

The conservative Christian Cold War defence of values that was meant to stop communism and differentiate Western Europe from the communist East was also popular in Central and Eastern Europe, where it resonated with Church leaders (think of Karol Wojtyła in Poland, the later Pope John Paul II) and intellectuals such as Milan Kundera. Ironically, conservatives in the West had been so successful in attacking communism that many in the West no longer saw Eastern Europe as part of European civilisation. As Kundera lamented, 'in the eyes of its beloved Europe, Central Europe is just a part of the Soviet empire and nothing more' (Kundera 1984: 37). This prompted Church leaders and intellectuals to stress that the East belonged to Europe rather than to Russia. The newly elected Polish pope, John Paul II, declared in 1982 that the 'soul of Europe remains united because, beyond its common origin, it has similar Christian and human values' (John Paul II 2017a: 35). He later referred to 'the Slavic peoples' as 'the other "lung" of our common European homeland' (John Paul II 2017b: 42). In a more secular vein Kundera reminded the West that people from Central Europe too were part of European civilisation: 'for a Hungarian, a Czech, a Pole (...) the word "Europe" does not represent a phenomenon of geography but a spiritual notion synonymous with the word "West"' (Kundera 1984: 33). He emphasised that Central Europe belonged culturally to Western Europe rather than to Russia and stressed that 'nothing could be more foreign to Central Europe and its passion for variety than Russia: uniform, standardizing, centralizing' (Kundera 1984: 33). Of course, Cold War warriors such as Thatcher agreed, which is why she emphasised in 1988 that 'we must never forget that east of the Iron Curtain, people who once enjoyed a full share of European culture, freedom and identity have been cut off from their roots. We shall always look on Warsaw, Prague and Budapest as great European cities' (Thatcher 2016: 217).

Although European values are today meant to appeal to *everyone*, from left to right, initially these values were thus especially invoked by a *particular*

tradition – conservative, anti-communist, Christian, and (mainly) Western European – meant to exclude others (especially communists) and protect one's own interests. This partisan appropriation of European values by conservative forces probably explains in part why these values were rarely explicitly used by the European Community to define itself, at least as long as the Cold War lasted. It also explains why, until the end of the Cold War, the European Community had to look for different, less partisan, concepts to legitimise its project, especially when that need for legitimacy increased from the 1970s onwards.

3.3 From a European Identity to a 'Social Europe' (1970s to Late 1990s)

It is fair to say that until the 1970s neither the European Community nor the Council of Europe and its human rights instruments amounted to much. As Moyn points out: 'by the mid-1970s the European Court of Human Rights had decided only seventeen cases', and it was only in the middle of the 1980s that the number 'approved for court consideration skyrocketed' (Moyn 2010: 80). Until then, the technocratic European Community in turn did not (yet) impact people's daily lives and therefore still by and large enjoyed the passive and indifferent 'support' of the wider public (which would later be called a 'permissive consensus'), and so it was not yet in need of much legitimation, let alone a discourse about values. Two shifts would slowly change that.

First, there was the enlargement of the European Community. It was no coincidence that one of the first official reflections about what Europe meant and stood for emerged in 1973 in the context of the first enlargement that welcomed Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Ireland. Back then, the foreign ministers drafted a now famous declaration in which they mused about Europe's identity and its relationship with the wider world (Council 1973). In order to position themselves in the world, they arguably first needed to know what they stood for. Likewise, an enlargement of the club presupposes that one has an idea of what the club represents. In 1973 the foreign ministers saw much potential in the concept of a 'European identity', although they did mention in passing their 'cherished values' or 'common values and principles' (Council 1973: 119). As we now know, this would later change.

The second shift was the increasing necessity to establish a connection with the wider public and the need to legitimise the European project in order to convince voters of its merits. This need slowly emerged as that public was gradually discovered and given a voice at a European level. As early as 1974, the first Eurobarometer was launched (Schrag-Sternberg 2013: 83) (just a few years before the first European Values Study took place in 1981), and in 1979 the first elections for the European Parliament were organised. In order to enable participation in these elections, European political parties were created, such as the Christian Democratic European People's Party in 1976. As part of its ideology, that party created the myth of the

aforementioned Christian democratic 'founding fathers', whose work on the European project needed to be continued (Chenaux 2007: 95). Newly elected members of the European Parliament had work to do because 'starting in the 1970s observations had emerged that the European integration actually prompted a "democratic deficit" – an expression that appeared in 1979' (Vauchez 2016: 13). Moreover, after a long period of highly successful economic expansion, hitherto successful Western nation states were hit in the mid 1970s by a deep economic crisis, which meant that citizens and politicians increasingly looked to Europe for help and a way out of the crisis.

Inspired by the necessity to define Europe vis-à-vis the world and its citizens, from the mid 1980s the newly installed European Commission – headed by its ambitious new president Jacques Delors – launched various initiatives to make Europe more visible by introducing symbols and to develop a sort of 'nation building' at a European level (Sierp 2019: 142–145; Shore 2000; van Middelaar 2013). Apart from reviving the original ideal of a 'single market' and the ideal of a European identity that had been emerging since the 1970s, the Delors Commission added a new term of its own, that of a 'social Europe', and this term became widely used from the mid 1980s onwards. The idea was that the economic benefits of the single market were meant to be redistributed amongst all Europeans (Dinan 2014: 215–216). At first, and probably in part as a result of these policies, things looked promising for the newly relaunched European project headed by Delors. Indeed, popular support for the European Community was arguably never higher than between the mid 1980s and 1992, in large part because of the 1992 target for launching the single market (Schrag-Sternberg 2013: 83–84; Dinan 2014: 207).

Until the 1990s, both the enlargement and ideas to increase public support were seen as compatible with ideals of constructing a strong, substantive European identity and the dream of a social Europe. But in the 1990s this slowly changed. When it came to enlargement after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, the European club was about to widen substantially eastward. The bigger the club became, the harder it would become to find a substantial common denominator. But also the relationship between the European Union (as it was now called) and the wider public changed. Permissive consensus and a brief period of 'euro-enthusiasm' was followed by a more (euro)sceptical attitude among the public and a so-called 'constraining dissensus' that lives on today, whereby the European peoples no longer automatically shared the more ambitious European projects and the references to a European identity that accompanied them.

The concept of a substantive cultural European identity that was still seen as useful until then now appeared less appropriate. In the context of enlargement, this made sense, as it was arguably harder to talk about a shared substantive identity when it involved imagining a club of more than 20 member states (from the 1990s onwards) instead of just nine (as in 1973). But also, when it comes to the relationship with the wider public, invoking a European identity proves tricky. The painstaking process of deciding what figures or objects to put on European banknotes was one concrete example that 'demonstrated how hard it is to define a European identity' and also illustrates 'the fear that national identifications would prove more

powerful than a European identity' (van Middelaar 2013: 242) – which is why these banknotes were eventually stripped of any references to concrete people or objects. So even *inside* European institutions, bureaucrats had always liked abstractions and been wary of concrete identities. Apart from their fondness for abstract banknotes, there was also their predilection for abstract symbols such as a flag or anthem (Weymans 2020: 34–36) or for European educational or research schemes such as Erasmus or Marie Curie schemes that require people to leave their home countries (Weymans 2009: 272–273). Just as French revolutionaries before, eurocrats tend to *identify* the European project with these abstractions and oppose these to particular identities (as if they do not mutually presuppose each other) (Weymans 2020: 34–36). But it was especially outside 'Brussels' that the idea of a concrete European identity, history or civilisation was frowned upon. This comes as no surprise, given the vast diversity of Europe's peoples. In Mak's words:

> There is no European people. There is no single, all-embracing community of culture and tradition (…) [T]here are at least four of them: the Northern-Protestant, the Latin-Catholic, the Greek-Orthodox and Muslim-Ottoman. There is not a single language, but dozens of them (…) And, above all: in Europe there is very little in the way of a shared historical experience. (Mak 2008: 828)

Indeed, Europe has always faced the 'problem of finding memory frames that could appeal to all European societies' (Littoz-Monnet 2012: 1197), and the enlargement only made that challenge more daunting. In short, as time went on, 'the efforts to develop state-like symbolism and imagery (like the flag, a memory and cultural policy, a citizenship) (...) met strong limits, related both to the indifference of individuals and to the resistance of member states' (Foret 2020: 24).

One can speculate as to why 'the people's own nation' remained 'overwhelmingly the strongest point of identity' and why, 'by contrast, emotional association with a European identity was extremely weak' (Kershaw 2018: 482) despite repeated efforts to create such an identity. Was it because of the fact that Europe – unlike nation states (or the US), which constructed their identities more or less from scratch – had to deal with strong pre-existing national identities (van Middelaar 2013: 228)? Or was it because a 'European identity' – in the singular – was seen as referring to a *single* identity that can be seen as hard to reconcile with Europe's motto 'united in diversity'? Just as EU institutions try to avoid speaking about 'the European people' in the singular (van Middelaar 2013: 289), the use of a single European identity may likewise be seen as too risky.

All this may explain why in the early 1990s 'the Twelve dispensed with the identity prose', thus undermining 'the rhetoric about a shared past or a common civilisation' (van Middelaar 2013: 249). It is true that attempts to construct a more substantial European identity did in part continue beyond the 1990s. Think of the constitutional treaty in 2004 that contained plans to make the EU more like a state, including its own symbols and laws (van Middelaar 2013). Yet the rejection of this same constitutional treaty in 2005 by French and Dutch voters, which was at least in part attributed to these renewed efforts at European nation building, probably

represents the provisional endpoint of serious attempts to build a cultural or sub-stantive European identity, at least within the European institutions.

Given that for various reasons the idea of a cultural or substantial European iden-tity was no longer seen as a suitable prospect for keeping Europe together, politi-cians had to turn to alternatives, such as the aforementioned ideal held by Delors of a social Europe. In 1988 Delors indeed talked about the creation of a 'European social area' (Delors 1988a: 139) and called for 'a concrete and productive social dialogue at the European level' (Delors 1988b: 5) as one example that clearly shows 'the social dimension of the European construction' (Delors 1988b: 9). In the wake of his social agenda of the 1980s, the idea(l) of a 'social Europe' or – from the 1990s onwards that of a 'European social model' – lived on and existed alongside the ideal of a cultural 'European identity', especially in the first decade after the turn of the century, when such notions were still widely invoked.

But the notion of a 'European social model' proved likewise problematic, if only because a welfare state at a European level is lacking (Bourdieu 2010: 136; Rosanvallon 2006: 229–231; Mazower 2012: 410) and because in reality there are multiple social models in Europe, not just one (Garton Ash 2009: 79). In addition, the newly arrived 'Central and Eastern Europeans (…) after long years under com-munism, were dead opposed to excessive market regulation' (Mak 2008: 821). Moreover, in the 1990s European countries reformed their welfare states, often in the name of policies that resulted from their membership of the European Union, which arguably became gradually more neoliberal, especially as a result of the constraints imposed by the creation of monetary union in the 1990s. The refer-ences that were made to Europe's social model in the post-Cold War years thus increasingly rang hollow in a world where this social model came under pressure as a result of the rise of (transatlantic) post-Cold War neoliberal policies associ-ated with globalisation and 'third way' or 'new labour' welfare state reforms rep-resented by social democratic politicians such as Tony Blair (UK prime minister from 1997 to 2007) or Gerhard Schröder (German chancellor from 1998 to 2005), both preceded in the US by Bill Clinton (US president from 1993 to 2001). In Europe even these newly elected social democratic leaders appeared to further promote liberal policies (Denord & Schwartz 2009: 120), albeit not to the same extent as in the US. In a similar spirit Europe's 'Lisbon Strategy', launched in 2000, was aimed at creating jobs by turning Europe into a competitive knowl-edge-based economy that, for example, required European universities to com-pete with each other (Weymans 2009).

References to a social Europe were thus now no longer perceived as a credible promise (as they still did in the second part of the 1980s), but as a hollow slogan that social democratic leaders appeared to use to embellish the de facto predominance of neoliberal policies. As a result of these and other factors (such as the fallout of the financial crisis of 2008), notions such as a 'social Europe' and a 'European social model' were used less and less after 2010, and a new term was thus called for. This is where 'European values' came in.

3.4 The Rise of European Values (From the Late 1990s to the Present)

As the Cold War ended, the language of 'European values' was extracted from its particular conservative Cold War origins and recycled in a less particular and ideological sense in order to represent the European Union as a whole rather than just one of its more conservative ideological currents. In practice, European values could indeed only be useful as a political tool as long as they became secularised and were 'extracted' from their prior more 'embodied' or concrete civilisational and religious content. Unlike a European identity (or a 'European social model') used in the singular, European values were always (and conveniently) seen as *many*, as a list of values, where everyone could choose the value they liked the most.

Before they emerged as a term that was widely used in the European discourse after the turn of the century, European values appeared in the European treaties, starting with the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, when the European Community renamed itself the European Union. Values and principles gradually became the new minimalistic way to legitimise that new European Union and to provide it with a new juridical sense of commonality. This helps explain why, 'although references to democracy and human rights were absent from the founding treaties of the European Communities, they have been ubiquitous in the treaty law of the European Union since its inception at Maastricht in 1992' and why 'these principles are said today to be at the heart of what it means to be a European' (Duranti 2017: 359–360). Values were, for example, invoked in 1993 when defining the criteria new member states had to meet before they could join the European club. In the so-called Copenhagen criteria, values such as 'democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities' (European Council 1993: 13) now appeared to have replaced the ideal of 'European identity' that was still prevalent 20 years earlier when talking about the first enlargement (also in Copenhagen).

Interestingly, European values thus made their entrance in European documents in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall and at the time of an ensuing ideological optimism that was exemplified by Fukuyama's end of history thesis (which used Europe as an illustration). As long as the Cold War lasted, European values were used (by the Council of Europe and by conservatives) to differentiate between Christian Europe and its communist enemy. Once that Cold War ended, a secularised version of these values was now used to unify Europe and to define its identity, place, and mission in the world. All this happened at a point when 'rival' notions such as a 'European identity' or a 'social Europe' were still actively used. Just as the ideal of a European identity began to appear in official documents 10 years before it was deployed on a larger scale, so European values first appeared in the treaties before their use widened and they gradually replaced rival notions.

Apart from appearing in legal documents, European values were also invoked by philosophers. Already in the 1990s philosophers such as Habermas were pleading for a 'constitutional patriotism' and later even went on to invoke a 'distinctive set of "European values"' as a 'definition of the moral foundations of Europe which puts

social justice at the centre of a certain set of values, and defines Europe as the Not-America' (Garton Ash 2009: 79).[3] Although that last claim arguably 'does not hold up to closer empirical investigation' (Garton Ash 2009: 79), it was still seen as useful, provided it was diluted. Politician-intellectuals from Central Europe, such as Václav Havel, echoed traditional appeals to values in the East when he declared that 'Europe's rich and spiritual history (...) has created a body of incontestable values', adding the following rhetorical question: 'is it not these values (...) which do matter first and foremost and is it not, on the contrary, these values which give direction to everything else?' (Havel 2009).

Vaguely inspired by such philosophical ideas, 'dominant official discourses on European identity have stressed abstract values, principles, and institutional features of the EU's political system' (Schrag-Sternberg 2013: 148), thereby in effect replacing and diluting identity or a social Europe with more abstract values. As a result, from the late 1990s onwards the term 'European values', which had until then mostly been used by a small group of legal scholars, Europhiles, or intellectuals, was now increasingly used in public debate. Moreover, this reflected a broader trend in European societies where politicians started invoking values more widely (Foret & Calligaro 2018: 1), also at a nation state level (Charlemagne 2006). But while values in national discourses were, as before, still mainly used by conservatives who continued to use it to define and *exclude* (this time not just communists but also Muslims),[4] at a European level minimalist values were now meant to *include* all Europeans, both left and right. In short, 'the multiplication of references to "European values" has, since the 2000s, appeared as a new narrative claiming common normative roots but in a non-committal and flexible voice' (Foret 2020: 24).

Values were increasingly mentioned in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, which 'clearly stated what those values were' and 'included a provision to sanction member states that deviated from the EU's core values' (Dinan 2014: 298). They also appeared in the preamble of the 2000 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Schrag-Sternberg 2013: 149), which would later be incorporated into the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007. In the European convention that led to the constitutional treaty (which was eventually rejected by voters) values were also included. In those debates in 2003 'reaching agreement on the values and objectives of the EU was relatively easy, apart from an impassioned discussion about whether and how to recognize the EU's religious heritage (…). [I]n the end, the preamble merely included a reference to Europe's religious "inheritance"' (Dinan 2014: 273). Although the constitutional treaty was rejected in 2005, it lived on in a less ambitious version in the Treaty of Lisbon of 2007, which also incorporated the Charter of Fundamental Rights. In that treaty, which preserved the discarded constitutional treaty, excluding the references to European symbols, European values were finally enshrined in the famous Article 2 that starts as follows: 'The Union is

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[3] On the ambiguities and evolutions in Habermas's position, see Lacroix 2009: 142–146.

[4] Interestingly, in the Dutch case, conservatives reclaimed progressive values (such as tolerance) to define themselves and attack Muslims, as Merijn Oudenampsen (2018) has recently shown.

founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. (...)'. Unlike the post-war years, when European values were still closely linked with Christianity, 'Christianity' in the Lisbon Treaty is not named and is 'thereby neutralised to become a religious tradition and permitted to serve purely as a source of inspiration for democratic political values' (van Middelaar 2013: 249).

To be effective, European values indeed had to be secularised and stripped of their conservative and religious connotations, which they still had in the Cold War years.[5] After all, in an increasingly secularised Europe, 'a self-definition of Europe as actively embodying the values of western Christendom is (...) now untenable' (Garton Ash 2009: 76). When conservative Christians invoked European values in the post-war years, Western Europe was still a Christian region. But as Garton Ash points out, although it may be true that:

> From the 1460s to the 1960s, this notion of western Christendom – Catholic or Protestant, but not Orthodox – was at the centre of a certain narrative and self-definition of the European project (...) it clearly will not do today. There is a serious question in what sense Europe is still a Christian continent (…) Europe is now probably the most secular continent on earth. (Garton Ash 2009: 75)

Stronger still, one could even say that we currently witness a 'shocking secularization of the European continent a quarter century after the transwar era' (Moyn 2015: 173; Moyn 2011: 105–106), when Christianity was still very influential in European society and politics. Of course, some nuance is in order. For even when 'North-Western Europe is believed to be almost completely secularized, and many central European countries follow this example', and 'church-going has declined, particularly in Western Europe where many churches now stay empty', it is also true that 'most people find a religious service at special occasions important'. Nor does this mean 'that people do not feel religious anymore or no longer believe in God' (Halman, Sieben, & van Zundert 2012: 71–72). Still, it is fair to say that compared to the post-war years, in the last decades the societal influence of Christianity has diminished dramatically in Europe.

It was this potentially *minimalistic* and *abstract* feature of European values and human rights – what remained once one stripped them of their conservative ideological civilisational legacy – that made these values so appealing. Europeans cannot agree on a substantive European identity (let alone a common history or a common social model), but *at the very least* they can all try to share an allegiance to some *minimal secular abstract principles*. Or, as Ian Kershaw puts it, 'perhaps the illusive search for a European identity is in any case unnecessary as long as citizens of Europe's nation states are committed to upholding in individual countries the common key European principles of peace, freedom, pluralist democracy and the rule of law' (Kershaw 2018: 546). The abstract language of values was not just a

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[5] A similar evolution can be seen in the use of the language of human rights, which was likewise increasingly used from the late 1970s onwards, provided it first lost the previous conservative and religious origins of human rights (Moyn 2010).

minimalist alternative for more demanding programmes, but it also connected well with the aforementioned traditional attachment in European institutions to ideas and actions that helped in abstracting from particular nation states and identities. Yet, as we shall see, erasing the religious conservative roots of these values may be easier said than done.

Since the end of the 1990s, values have thus been increasingly used in the public debate about Europe. When the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012, it described itself as 'a community of values' (Barroso 2012). In his project for a European renaissance, Macron emphasised that 'a market is useful, but it should not detract from the need for borders that protect and values that unite'. He also referred to 'the European civilisation that unites, frees and protects us', which is why Europe is not just 'a soulless market' but 'a project' (Macron 2019). Values in a minimal and secular sense now appear to have become the leading legitimation of the European project and of initiatives to further that project. If Europe now talks about, for example, programmes to promote remembrance of its past, then it is with the aim of – in the words of the European Commission – 'bringing Europe closer to its citizens by promoting Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past' (Littoz-Monnet 2012: 1191). Also, any residual reference to the 'European Model of Society', for example by Barroso, then European Commission president, were framed in terms of values, as for him the financial crisis of 2008 was also first and foremost 'a crisis of values' (Barroso 2009: 4).

In short, the idea of a substantial common history, civilisation, culture, or identity has been replaced by rather vague common democratic 'values' (which proved hard to enforce). The European club is now 'not a Catholic, not a Christian, not even a post-Christian club, but a club of European parliamentary democracies' (van Middelaar 2013: 249). Although the ideal of a common cultural identity or of a social Europe was replaced by that of shared abstract values, the aim still remained to create some commonality of sorts, which is why 'the official declaration and codification of rights and of common "European" values underlying the EU's political life and system' can still be seen as an instrument to create a sense of a shared European community ('a deliberate demos-building tool') (Schrag-Sternberg 2013: 149). Once one looks at 'European values' mainly as a more suitable minimalist substitute for a 'European identity' or 'a social Europe' as tools to create common ground, they then appear in a different light: less as a timeless bedrock of European civilisation and more as a 'second best option', a 'consolation prize' after the prior failure of the more ambitious idea of a substantive European identity or of a social Europe.

It is ironic that countries from Central and Eastern Europe finally joined the European Union precisely at a time when that union had already minimised or ditched the language of identity, civilisation, and culture to which many in these countries had been so attached as a way to define their identity and to differentiate themselves from Russian occupation. Already in 1984 Kundera lamented that 'Europe itself is in the process of losing its own cultural identity' (Kundera 1984: 37) and that 'Europe no longer perceives its unity as a cultural unity' (Kundera 1984: 36). Kundera instead yearned for an 'era in which culture still represented the

realization of supreme values' (Kundera 1984: 37) and observed that 'culture no longer existed as a realm in which supreme values were enacted' (Kundera 1984: 36). While a few decades later Europe did start invoking values as part of its identity, these were probably not the cultural or civilisational values that Kundera had longed for, but their more abstract substitute.

As the discourse of values became more universal and inclusive – and the left now also started adopting it – it also became more abstract and less associated with a conservative Christian ideology. And while Europe still has a long way to go in terms of dealing with its colonial past (Müller 2013: 238; Pasture 2015: 197–198; Pasture 2018a), that colonial past finally started to haunt Europe's present, which means it has now become harder to unapologetically praise European values, and the imperialism and colonisation they once legitimised, unless those using these values first distance themselves from their conservative colonial past and are shown to have a more universal self-critical future. So, like their conservative predecessors, values are still meant to be promoted around the world, but this time without the concrete civilisational or cultural content associated with their post-war colonial predecessors. In that sense, values are not just a tool to speak to European citizens, or to new member states (in the context of the enlargement), but to the entire world. Barroso, for example, declared that the Europe he believes in is 'a Europe that puts its values at the heart of the relations with the rest of the world' (Barroso 2009: 5). Yet, as this increasing abstractness and universality of values solved many of the problems of the past, it also created new ones, as the past haunts the present.

3.5 The Return of the Past: A Clash Between European Values and Their Origins

In more recent years, we can witness tensions between the new, more abstract version of European values and their conservative origins. A first tension has to do with borders. Although the new abstract definition of European values in terms of human rights and the rule of law was supposed to be more inclusive and universal than its more substantive conservative predecessor, in both cases values served the same goal, namely to define, limit, and exclude. This was clear in the Copenhagen criteria of 1993 and reiterated in the Laeken Declaration of 2001, where European leaders stated that 'the European Union's one boundary is democracy and human rights. The Union is open to countries which uphold basic values such as free elections, respect for minorities and respect for the rule of law' (European Council 2001: 20).

As Duranti explains:

> The European unity movements envisioned the creation of the European human rights system as a means of facilitating the inclusion of certain states into European organizations and the exclusion of others. (...) The language of human rights and democracy served the same function with regard to the southward enlargement of the European Communities, the admission of former communist states into the European Union, and opposition to Turkish accession. (Duranti 2017: 359)

Indeed, once the EU started talking about values it became clear that values could also become conservative ammunition, for example against the accession of Turkey to the EU. During the campaign in France against the failed constitution in 2005, 'Chirac (...) distanced himself from Turkish accession' and 'stated that Turkish traditions were "incompatible with Europe's values"' (Schrag-Sternberg 2013: 165). All this highlights that values, just as Christian human rights, 'have been not so much about the inclusion of the other as about policing the borders and boundaries on which threatening enemies loom' (Moyn 2015: 24).

The migration crisis that has haunted Europe since 2015 showed that European values often did not apply to the treatment of refugees who appeared at Europe's increasingly fortified external borders. Although Macron declared in 2019 that he believes in 'a Europe that protects both its values and its borders' (Macron 2019), in reality borders often trump liberal values. The debate in 2019 surrounding the new von der Leyen Commission about the protection or promotion of the European way of life showed that values can easily be interpreted in a more substantial sense that is partly akin to its original conservative meaning in the post-war years.

A second tension is even more fundamental. As European values became more abstract and more universal and were also embraced by the left, they were now opposed by conservative forces inside Europe, and by governments in Central and Eastern Europe in particular. This rift between the West and the 'new member states' in Central and Eastern Europe is very complex, and one needs to be careful not to essentialise 'the West' or 'Central and Eastern Europe' (as if 'Western Europe' didn't have any issues with populists) (Charlemagne 2019; Garton Ash 2019: 171). But at the same time, it is hard to deny that 'these countries had some specific features common to post-communist societies' (Garton Ash 2019: 172) and that some populist politicians in those countries invoke European values in a specific way that is reminiscent of their 'original' conservative meaning.

Over the past years, Polish and Hungarian leaders especially have increasingly portrayed themselves as the true defenders of European values and European civilisation – in a conservative Christian sense – arguing that 'Brussels' had forgotten and betrayed these values by diluting them when it embraced liberal values instead. As the rule of law or the rights of women or sexual minorities (for example) came under pressure in countries such as Hungary or Poland (Rupnik 2018), many in the West saw this as a decline of the East that had become increasingly illiberal. In the East, conservative politicians retorted that they were just defending European values in their original and true conservative and Christian sense. In Poland, for example, 'there are nationalists and conservatives, mainly of Catholic denomination, for whom Europe only makes sense when it is Catholic, or at least Christian, and for whom liberal values and the legacy of the Enlightenment mean danger and destruction for Europe and for Poland' (Góra & Mach 2010: 240). And in Hungary Viktor Orbán states that a (Christian) 'national-cultural identity' and its values come first. For him, European values are to be derived from this national identity or values. As he explains: 'We are not Europeans because we have "common European values"[;] this is a misunderstanding. We are Europeans because we have [a] national, cultural heritage and values and we can harmonise those values in a common alliance'

(Orbán 2016). And later he declared that 'we believe Poles and Hungarians have a common path, common fight and common goal: to build and defend our homeland in the form that we want… Christian and with national values' (Foster 2018). Elsewhere, 'Orbán defends his hardline positions as not merely consistent with the EU's fundamental values, but as their true embodiment' (Mos 2020: 10). One could even say that 'Orbán (...) styles himself as a pro-European statesman who is ready to steer the Union back to its moral roots' (Mos 2020: 14). However it is important to add that 'populist movements and the conservative right (...) champion Europe's "Christian identity" in order to counter Islam. Such groups view this identity as a matter of culture rather than faith; few populists attend mass, and (...) the large majority of today's right are religiously indifferent' (Roy 2019: 4). For them, 'Christianity is bound up with Europe's identity, just as long as it does not interfere with their daily life, lecture them on loving their neighbour or preach to them about ethics and values.' (Roy 2019: 125).

The refugee crisis in particular 'has made it clear that eastern Europe views the very cosmopolitan values on which the European Union is based as a threat, while for many in the West it is precisely those cosmopolitan values that are the core of the new European identity' (Krastev 2017: 47). In particular, the actions by Angela Merkel, who was accused of 'the admission of migrants without limit in the name of "European values"' (Rupnik 2018: 33), were perceived by some Eastern European leaders as a betrayal of what they see as Europe's Christian values and roots. Ever since, leaders such as Orbán have been 'attacking Brussels for enabling what he called an "invasion" of refugees that threatened to "cast aside" the bloc's Christian culture' (Foster 2018). Yet it is worth underlining that the Catholic Church itself 'does not, at least in principle, reject immigration; on the contrary, we know how much Pope Francis insists on welcoming immigrants' (Roy 2019: 105–106).

Through their recent defence of 'European values', populist Eastern European leaders in Hungary and Poland appear to remind their Western European counterparts of the original meaning of European values as a Christian conservative language. The original conservative roots of European values, which were forgotten when these values were recycled by the European Union in a secular, more inclusive sense after the end of the Cold War, have now returned with a vengeance – a kind of 'return of the repressed'.

This proves a particular challenge for the Christian democratic family, and especially its European People's Party, which has recently been divided over the issue of European values, when it was asked, both internally and externally, to take a stance against Orbán's illiberal policies. While this quarrel (which eventually led to Orbán resigning from the party in March 2021) is often explained in strategic terms (focusing on the workings behind how the European People's Party dealt with Orbán), it also lays bare a fundamental conflict between the two meanings of European values: the original conservative Christian version (which the European People's Party in the past defended and which Orbán now invokes) and its post-Cold War secularised version that Western European countries in particular now use to condemn Orbán. Of course, many actions by Orbán – e.g. actively undermining the rule of law – were never part of the original conservative definition of European values and can indeed

be said to breach and undermine those values. Moreover, Christian democrats had historically defended the very rights and the rule of law that Orbán violates, just as they saw Europe as a way to *limit* the popular will (unlike Orbán's populism, which instead attacks Europe by invoking an *unbridled* popular national will). And yet, despite these fundamental differences, Orbán's appeal to Christianity and European civilisation does in part still appear to have resonated with the original (particular) meaning of European values that some parts of the European People's Party – essentially a conservative party – still adhere to, and not just in the East. After all, conservative groups lobby in Brussels on behalf of the religious right in general, and not just from Eastern Europe, by arguing 'that contemporary policymaking ought to reflect the fact that European values have historically been Christian values' (Mos 2018: 331). The case of Orbán and the European People's Party thus highlights in part the tension between two definitions of European values: their original conservative, Cold War sense and their secular, 'liberal', post-Cold War successors, a tension that may be linked to the identity crisis surrounding Christian Democracy. All this probably also reveals how 'Christian Democracy, though institutionally going strong, has been shaken everywhere (...) and its ideology is no longer the same—for some observers, no longer identifiably Christian—in our day' (Moyn 2015: 172).

The specific anti-communist context – so important for understanding the origins of European values in the Cold War years – also explains why these values are used in their original sense in countries that had actually suffered from communist rule and Soviet imperialism. For Rupnik, 'we can observe in these countries the return in a new (or wayward) form of a discourse about defending national culture and European civilization – today against Islamism coming from the South, as yesterday it has been against Sovietism coming from the East' (Rupnik 2018: 33). The fact that, as we have seen, many in Central and Eastern Europe during the Soviet occupation (think of Kundera) owed a sense of identity to 'thick', substantial concepts such as 'European civilisation', 'European culture', 'European identity', or 'European values' (in the initial conservative meaning of the word), meant that they were attached to these Cold War concepts, unlike the European Union, which in its post-Cold War years replaced such substantive (or 'thick') concepts by more abstract legal (or 'thin') concepts such as 'European values' (as detached from any substantive ideas of civilisation, identity, culture, or religion).

European values are often seen as 'liberal' values, in both meanings of the word 'liberal': not just its political definition – as furthering values such as freedom and democracy – but also 'liberal' in the economic sense, as defending 'neoliberal' policies and interests, a defence that ironically often arises in the name of noble liberal (political) values such as freedom. On the left, thinkers such as Bourdieu remarked that in the end Europe essentially prioritises economic values such as liberty and 'a whole set of unquestioned ends – maximum growth, competitiveness, productivity' (Bourdieu 2010: 125). For him, this is a betrayal of the true (political) value of liberty because, by 'drawing shamelessly on the lexicon of liberty, liberalism and deregulation', neoliberal policies 'obtain the submission of citizens and governments to the economic and social forces thus "liberated"' (Bourdieu 2010: 200).

In this context, Eastern Europeans invoke a critique of colonialism to remind Western Europeans of the 'sins' they committed in colonising not just the developing world but Eastern Europe as well. To take the case of East Germany, Garton Ash notes that 'accompanying the economic largesse from west to east in Germany had been elements of what might be called colonialism in one country, with second-rate West Germans lording it over Easterners' (Garton Ash 2019: 178). And just as European colonisation explains resentment in former colonies, likewise new member states in Central and Eastern Europe resent having to comply with the demands of the 'old' member states during the asymmetrical process of accession (which was also legitimised in the name of values). As Krastev explains, 'the new generation of leaders experiences the constant pressure to adopt European norms and institutions as a humiliation and build their legitimacy around the idea of a national identity in opposition to Brussels' (Krastev 2017: 58). Müller adds that 'critics of developments in Hungary and Poland (...) should face up to the fact that "liberalism" has often been experienced not just as cutthroat market competition but as powerful (Western European) interests getting their way' (Müller 2017: 59). In Garton Ash's diagnosis:

> All current European populisms feed off an anger at the way in which liberalism was reduced after 1989 to one rather extreme version of a purely economic liberalism (...) [,] but the impact of this one-dimensional liberalism was particularly acute in post-communist Europe, with its raw advent of capitalism, sense of historic injustice and societies unused to high levels of visible inequality. (Garton Ash 2019: 175)

Seen from a global perspective, this clash between abstract liberal values and their conservative critics resembles a wider conflict between a liberal belief in progress and a populist backlash fuelled by resentment and anger (Mishra 2017).

Unlike their Western counterparts, Central and Eastern European countries – which were part of an empire but never had an empire of their own and thus lacked postcolonial guilt – could see themselves as victims of imperialism or colonisation, first by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and now by Western Europe, legitimised in the name of noble values. Interestingly, anti-communists in Central and Eastern Europe now unwittingly use Marx's critique of values against Western liberals. They denounce Western liberals who use seemingly universal and abstract values to legitimise and conceal that they in fact further their own particularly 'liberal' or 'cosmopolitan' way of life (or even worse, their own Western economic interests). As Kopeček explains: 'in a manner that is ironically similar to earlier Marxist criticisms, many populists (...) oppose a mystified neutrality that supposedly masks the will and interests of a domestic liberal minority elite or the Brussels diktat' (Kopeček 2019: 75).

The traditional Marxist accusation of hypocrisy – whereby seemingly universal values are said to mask and (thus) further particular interests – did not just come from certain populists in Central and Eastern Europe. Using moral language in politics has always been tricky. At least the post-war conservative Christians who used values were more or less clear about the particular agenda they served. But once terms such as values or rights are used in a properly universalist or moral sense, with

the pretence that they are detached from particular interests, those who use them become vulnerable to accusations of 'hypocrisy' or 'ideology'. One could indeed argue that abstract values are meant to distract from the de facto predominance of a neoliberal agenda that fails to distribute wealth or protect the less well off. Was it a coincidence that 'solidarity' and 'social justice' were not listed as official values in Article 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon? Perhaps European values, despite their 'secularisation', in fact still served conservative interests similar to those present during the Cold War. True, many on the left now also defended liberal European values against conservative illiberal populists, but they could at the same time be accused of hypocrisy by defending European neoliberal policies that protect markets rather than people (e.g. during the Eurozone crisis). Not for the first time, Europe divides political families, on the left as on the right.

In that context it is interesting to look at which policies and values are *really* enforced, as one could argue that it is these values that in the end matter most. It is striking that 'the well-developed system of enforcement, which conventionally undergirds policymaking in the EU, does not extend to the fundamental values' (Mos 2020: 7). Critics who see values as a mere ideological embellishment (or concealment) of neoliberal policies could argue that this is perhaps no coincidence. Indeed, if governments in Poland or Hungary violate the rule of law, hardly any effective sanctions are taken, yet if the Greek government dared to challenge austerity policies in 2015, Europe did have both the means and the resolve to act decisively and punish those who dared to step out of line (van Middelaar 2019: 233–234).

Moreover, in the case of the use of values in politics, the European Union is accused of 'double standards': preaching in the name of values (typically abroad) while violating these same values (typically at home). One example is 'the EU's defense of human dignity worldwide, and the criticisms of its neoliberal and austerity policies that violate the human dignity of low-income workers or the unemployed' (Foret 2020: 29). And obviously the way Europe chooses to deal with the migration crisis (e.g. through its coastguard agency Frontex that is accused of illegal pushbacks that violate human rights) presents a huge challenge for an institution that claims to defend human dignity. The more institutions identify themselves with moral values, the easier it becomes to accuse these institutions of hypocrisy. These critical observations about ideology, hypocrisy, or double standards could be further complemented by a sociological or anthropological investigation into the values that policymakers in these institutions hold and the extent to which this influences their decisions (Foret 2014).[6]

The original conservative definition of values that was used to defend European ideals in the post-war years has now arguably come back to haunt those in Europe

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[6] Moreover, to the extent that the 'people's values' are often invoked to criticise 'Brussels' by politicians such as Orbán, who suggest that European values – as defined by citizens – differ from those deemed important by 'Brussels', further research could show if such a gap indeed exists and if citizens' visions of values – either for themselves or for the institutions they represent – correspond to what politicians such as Orbán claim they are. And if not, they could inspire sociologists and others to increase a critical awareness of a proper use of values research.

who believed that they could simply forget these origins. These origins also returned home in yet another sense. Initially, European values were seen as *European* mainly because they had *originated* in Europe rather than that they were applicable only to Europe. In today's increasingly illiberal world, the self-confident, outward-looking perspective that had characterised both the conservative Cold War language of European values and its optimistic liberal successor at the end of the Cold War (think of Fukuyama) has changed. Officially, Brussels still promotes values world-wide, but it does so with less self-confidence than in the aftermath of 1989 when, for a brief time, many in the West truly believed that the entire world would subscribe to its values.

If European values are now seen as *European* values, it is not so much in reference to their *past* (their origins) as to their *present* (regarding their preservation and future). As 'liberal' enlightenment values that were once seen as conquering the world are now in retreat around the globe, in an era of authoritarian leaders such as Xi, Putin, Trump, Bolsonaro or Erdoğan, these values at times appear to find a safe harbour only in the Europe from which they came. European values that used to be seen by many as values that originated in Europe and would go on to conquer the world are now seen as European values, not because of the Europe from which they came but because of the Europe in which they still have a future. In other words, 'where European leaders once spoke of "Western" values, increasingly they speak of European ones. (...) Limiting "universal" values to the European sphere shows a dearth of ambition but a practical admission of the EU's place in an increasingly illiberal world order dominated by America and China' (Charlemagne 2020: 24). Since the increased use of European values may thus correspond to a diminished importance for Western or transatlantic values, it may signal an overall decline of liberal values. Just as illiberal forces are governed by the fear of losing their traditional way of life (associated by some with conservative Christian values), European liberal elites are likewise fearful of losing their values in an increasingly illiberal world (especially since the Trump election). Conversely, populists who now claim to be the true defenders of European values in their conservative illiberal sense no longer want to conquer the world, but rather to just preserve what is left (Krastev 2017: 27, 33–39).

3.6   Contesting Values

The critical historical approach that was adopted in this chapter has revealed that the use of European values originated in conservative Cold War Christian circles. By secularising these values after the end of the Cold War, European policymakers tried to transcend and forget these particular origins. The fact that populist forces invoke values that come close to their original sense (albeit this time to attack rather than to unify Europe) shows that it may perhaps be wise to acknowledge the conservative origins of these values and the many political meanings that such a contested term can have.

Given this tension between European liberal secular values and their more sub-stantial conservative origins, what, then, would be an appropriate way to talk about 'European values' today? To many, the abstractness of those values implies an increased risk of confusion, as these values could now mean different things to different actors. As Duranti puts it: 'EU officials (...) increasingly resort to describing Europe as a "community of values," but they seldom provide a vivid portrait' (Duranti 2017: 409). Also, Mos suggests that the fact that 'the EU does not offer any definitions of its core principles' (Mos 2018: 326) is a problem that is cunningly exploited by the religious conservative right. In short, for many, European values are problematic because they are too vague and lack a clear definition (even though it is arguably this vagueness that explains their popularity).

Yet I believe that this vagueness need not in itself be a problem. After all, in nation states too, principles, norms and values are subject to debate and open to contestation. In democracies all politicians invoke the 'common good', 'the nation', or values such as liberty, equality, solidarity, and security, yet the majority and opposition each define them very differently. Indeed, when used in the domain of politics, perhaps values need to be considered not as objects that can be measured and defined, but instead as abstract formal principles that we can all invoke precisely because no one can ever fully grasp and define them (just as in democracies no one can ever pretend to know what 'the people' truly want). About political values, ideals, principles, and goals, one can say that 'by their nature, these goals cannot fully be attained (there is no perfect peace or freedom, on earth at least), but a shared striving towards them can itself bind together a political community' (Garton Ash 2009: 127). Following a thinker such as Claude Lefort, one could say that it is precisely this indeterminacy that enables democracies to be 'united in diversity' and that allows them to criticise dangerous attempts to appropriate values and endanger the rule of law (Weymans 2012).

The problem in today's Europe may not be that values are too vague and too much subject to debate but rather that they are still too much shielded from a proper *political* debate at a European level. If one sees values as principles that resist any final determination, it becomes easy to see why both European technocrats and their populist opponents misinterpret them, as both limit the options for debate by appropriating values that ultimately resist such appropriation. For Müller, 'for neither technocrats nor populists is there any need for democratic debate. In a sense, both are curiously apolitical. (...) [E]ach holds that there is only one correct policy solution and only one authentic popular will respectively' (Müller 2017: 97). Too often, *both* European institutions and their populist detractors claim to be the only true defenders of these values, making a democratic political debate even harder. If one instead sees values as indeterminate and thus subject to lively political debate, one can criticise both groups. Self-righteous and at times moralising liberals or eurofederalists can be criticised when they are limiting debate, pretending to be the only ones who know what these values stand for. Populists (from Orbán to Wilders) can likewise be criticised when they, in turn, claim to be the only true embodiment of these values, thus depriving others of the right to invoke them, and thereby

betraying them by making an independent judiciary, press, civil society, and free debate impossible.

All this presupposes that at a European level a proper stage and culture for political debate be created (van Middelaar 2019: 266–267), and this is currently lacking. When it comes to democratic values, Europe in many respects still has a long way to go in order to start practising what it preaches (a fact that Brexiteers handily exploited). One can debate what the most suitable forum could be – the European Parliament or the European Council (van Middelaar 2019: 250–254) – but in order to function properly, a democracy arguably does need a stage where the peoples of Europe can represent and debate their values, norms, and principles (Mak 2008: 829, 834; Weymans 2020). Initiatives to stimulate political debate at a European level may also be an antidote to a *moralising* use of these values whereby believers of the European project in particular tend to cast aside opponents as not respecting European values (van Middelaar 2019). A *political* use of these values may instead see these values as ideals that one invokes and strives for, but which no one can ever hope to fully grasp, which thus guarantees a healthy political debate.

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Wim Weymans PhD is the holder of the Chair in European Values at UCLouvain in Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium), where he has taught in the European studies programme since 2018. He studied political thought and intellectual history (MPhil) at Cambridge University and modern history (MA) and philosophy (PhD) at KU Leuven. He is chiefly interested in theories of democracy and political representation, focusing mainly on Lefort, Certeau, Gauchet, and Rosanvallon. He taught human rights history and theory at Columbia University and philosophy of law at the University of Antwerp (UAntwerp) and he was a visiting scholar at the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies (CES) at Harvard, chercheur invité at Sciences Po (Paris), a Fulbright scholar at UC Berkeley, and a visiting scholar at NYU's Remarque Institute. He has published in journals such as *Constellations*, *Thesis Eleven*, *History & Theory*, *Modern Intellectual History*, and the *European Journal of Political Theory*.

Chapter 4
Transformations in the Religious and Moral Landscape in Europe?

Loek Halman and Inge Sieben

Abstract In this chapter, we investigate the claim of secularisation theory that the impact of religion on end-of-life moral issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and suicide in various regions in Europe has declined. We distinguish between five regions in Europe based on important historical and contemporary religious and secular characteristics: Northern, Western, Southern, and Eastern European countries and ex-Soviet countries. We further elaborate on the idea that religious beliefs and religious practices are separate aspects of religion. The analyses yield evidence for the relationship between both religious beliefs and end-of-life morality on the one hand and religious practices and end-of-life morality on the other. As expected, religious beliefs appear less strongly associated with this kind of morality than does religious attendance. Those who frequently attend religious services are clearly stricter than individuals who attend religious services less frequently or never. However, it must be acknowledged that the impact of religion on morality is not as strong as might have been anticipated; nor do the analyses provide strong evidence of declining levels in the impact of religion on morality. Moreover, we observe very heterogeneous patterns of change in both secularisation and end-of-life morality between regions and, within regions, between countries.

Keywords Religion · Morality · End-of-life · Secularisation · European regions

4.1   Introduction

European unification is a unique experiment of economic and political collaboration and cooperation in Europe. It started in the aftermath of the Second World War with the intention of strengthening security cooperation between the European countries,

L. Halman · I. Sieben (✉)
Department of Sociology, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands
e-mail: loek.halman@tilburguniversity.edu; i.j.p.sieben@tilburguniversity.edu

and for a long time it has been a mainly technocratic enterprise. At the same time, Europe was considered to always have been a cultural identity with common spiritual and moral values (see Weymans, Chap. 3, this volume). 'Distinct European cultures share the same root and together they form the European civilization' (Camia 2010: 112), in which Christianity and Enlightenment are seen as 'the two core pillars that have framed visions of why and how to unify Europe' (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2015: 66).

These common moral values seem to be of key importance for the European project. As a mainly elite project focused on economic and political collaboration, European unification could be seriously hampered if it were not accepted and supported by the sharing of common values by the people. Empirical research, for example that based on data from the European Values Study (EVS), has indeed shown that there are coherent patterns in values in various life domains as well as coherent patterns in the importance of values in the various countries (Dorenbos et al. 1987), but also that Europe is far from homogeneous as far as values in important life domains are concerned. In addition, trend analyses show no evidence for a convergence of cultural values (van Houwelingen 2019), although Akaliyski (2019: 388) found that 'the longer a country has been part of the EU, the more closely its values approximate those of the EU founding countries, which in turn are the most homogenous'. In general, the observed value differences and patterns of value change in European countries seem to confirm the main modernisation hypothesis of Ronald Inglehart (1997, 2018) that links structural modernisation with secularisation, individualisation, and cultural modernisation (Marsh 2014), although path dependency, reflecting the importance of a country's historical, political, and social heritage and religious traditions, also needs to be taken into account to understand the particular trajectories of countries in value change (Inglehart and Baker 2000).

In this chapter, we focus on one of value domains that attracts special attention because of the strong links with both politics and religion: end-of-life morality. First of all, morality on abortion, euthanasia, and suicide enters the political domain because laws and regulations indicate what actions are legal, and for whom and under which circumstances they are legal. This politicalisation of end-of-life morality is even more pronounced in countries where there is conflict between religious and secular political parties (Green-Pedersen 2007). After all, it concerns issues that involve 'judgments of desirable policies based on beliefs about right and wrong, which can trace their origins back to religious precepts' (Studlar et al. 2013: 354). Privatisation and pluralisation have made such ethical issues increasingly personal concerns leading to a decreasing influence of religiosity. In general, end-of-life morality is linked to conservative values in other domains of life, such as family, gender roles, and homosexuality, as is shown in one of the key dimensions of Inglehart's (1997, 2018) cultural map of the world. This map also shows the strong linkage between religion and morality. In religious societies, the acceptance of abortion, euthanasia, and suicide is low, while in more secular contexts, people appear more lenient regarding such end-of-life issues. When exploring the basic values map in Europe, Hagenaars et al. (2003) also demonstrated the consistent links between religion and such end-of-life issues, not only at context level, but also

at individual level and in various distinct age groups (Arts and Halman 2011). It is this linkage between end-of-life morality and religion that we want to explore further in this chapter. We will look at both the context level (countries in different regions in Europe based on important historical and contemporary religious and secular characteristics) and the individual level and address the question as to whether it is religious practices or religious beliefs that affect people's moral views regarding these life and death issues. Before we elaborate on the underlying theoretical mechanisms, we first describe briefly the link between religion and morality in general.

4.2   The Link Between Religion and Morality

That religion and morality are linked may not come as a big surprise, since for most people they are obviously connected. The Pew 2017 survey in Europe reveals not only that many Europeans say that 'churches have positive impacts on society', but also that 'in several countries surveyed, roughly half or more of respondents say they agree churches and other religious organizations "protect and strengthen morality in society"'(Pew Research Center 2018: 145). Although it may be more or less common knowledge that religion and morality are connected, how exactly the association works is less clear. Does religion make individuals moral or does morality need religious justification? The Pew Research Center (2020) informs us that the notion that one must believe in God in order to be moral is widespread in most parts of the world, including the United States. In Europe, this idea is less popular, begging the question as to why this is the case. Of course, many parts of Europe are far more secular than other regions of the world, and if religion and morality were closely linked, this religious decline would be accompanied by a moral decline in Europe, as conservative politicians and traditional Christian believers sometimes proclaim (Rubin 2015). The evidence for such a moral decline, however, is not strong, as it seems that secularisation does not imply an increase in self-interested values or anti-social behaviour (Storm 2016). Indeed, as Bork has stated, we 'all know persons without religious beliefs who nevertheless display all the virtues we associate with religious teaching' (Bork quoted by Beit-Hallahmi 2010: 119).

Therefore, it seems rather unlikely that secular people and convinced atheists are morally ignorant or indifferent. The evidence seems to point in the opposite direction, for if one thing is clear in many parts of secular Europe, it is that people are better off in terms of (for example) solidarity, social capital, levels of trust, and tolerance (Norenzayan 2014). Religious individuals, but also atheists and agnostics, appear to have moral knowledge, although the latter will deny that it is ordained by God or a supernatural force. Of course, for some belief in God may help bolster motivation but it is quite well possible that alternative social and psychological mechanisms are available that would serve just as well as religion (Joyce 2007). This seems to indicate that the strong connection between religion and moral views

that was once so obvious has diminished or vanished. So, what is the nature of the relationship between religion and morality in contemporary Europe?

This question was empirically addressed by, for example, Ingrid Storm (2016) in her article in *Politics and Religion* in which she investigated the associations between changes with regard to religiosity and changes in two moral dimensions, one referring to issues of personal autonomy and the other related to issues of self-interest. It appears that the religious decline in European countries was accompanied by an increase of personal autonomy issues, but not so much with an increase in self-interest morality. Over time, self-interest morality, which is defined and measured as being opposite to social norms, hardly changed in Europe and appears to remain at a very low level. Indeed, there appears to be great consensus among religious and non-religious individuals about moral issues that involve harm and injustice. This lack of variation, both at societal and individual level, makes it difficult, if not impossible, to investigate the associations between religion and this kind of morality. We therefore confine our study in this chapter to the second dimension of morality. This dimension can be labelled as personal autonomy morality, or private morality. Here we follow Halman and van Ingen (2015), who investigated whether or not the religious decline in Europe was accompanied by shifts in moral values. They focused on personal issues and individual rights such as divorce, homosexuality, abortion, and euthanasia, and their analyses revealed that 'in Western Europe declining levels of church attendance have indeed led to increasing permissiveness towards abortion, divorce and euthanasia', but that with regard to homosexuality 'there is little evidence for such a conclusion' (Halman and van Ingen 2015: 624). This may not come as a big surprise, because issues like abortion and euthanasia are of a different order than homosexuality. Although all such issues concern personal matters, the first two deal with end-of-life issues, while homosexuality is a matter of sexual orientation. Moreover, the first issues are driven by choice more than the latter. To consider these very diverse issues as being part of one dimension of morality, as do, for example, Storm (2016) and Draulans and Halman (2003), does not do much justice to the likely different attributes that may impact these aspects of morality. We therefore confine our analyses to end-of-life issues only: individuals' justification of abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. These controversial issues are prominent in European morality politics (Engeli et al. 2012), disputed among pro-life and pro-choice adherents, and linked to religion (Halman and van Ingen 2015). To understand the role of religion in these matters, we address the question as to whether it is religious practices or religious beliefs that affect people's moral views regarding these issues.

Distinguishing between beliefs and practices in connection with morality is an issue that is less often investigated. Storm (2016), for example, combined religious practices and beliefs, leaving undecided the matter of which religious aspect impacts morality. Following McKay and Whitehouse (2015), we therefore ask ourselves what it is in religion that affects morality: religious practices such as attendance of religious services, or religious beliefs. The few studies that make the distinction between religious beliefs and attendance conclude that it is not so much people's belief that is key as it is attendance at religious services. For example, Galen (2012)

argued that it is religious belonging and not so much an individual's personal religious beliefs that is important when it comes to morality. According to Bloom (2012), this is because it is a matter of binding more than believing. In the next section, we will elaborate on these relationships theoretically. We conclude here by saying that we investigate the claim that religious involvement is a more important attribute of people's moral views than their religious beliefs. As such, we add to the understanding of the relationship between religion and morality.

4.3   Religion as a Source of End-of-Life Morality

From the above we can conclude that many people link morality to religion because religion would provide a moral compass. All religious institutions have moral messages, and 'many, perhaps most, of our moral standards come from religious guidance' (Uslaner 1999: 217). Some claim that religions:

> (...) make explicit moral claims that their followers accept. Through holy texts and the proclamations of authority figures, religions make moral claims about abortion, homosexuality, duties to the poor, charity, masturbation, just war, and so on. People believe these claims because, implicitly or explicitly, they trust the sources. They accept them on faith. (Bloom 2012: 184)[1]

For many people, religion is thus one of, if not the only, legitimate moral authority, and the normative framework it provides makes its adherents likely to be less permissive in their moral outlooks. It is consistently found that pious, devout, and religious individuals are more rigorous and less flexible in their moral outlooks (Jagodzinski and Dobbelaere 1995; Scheepers et al. 2002; Stark 2001; Finke and Adamczyk 2008; Adamczyk and Pitt 2009). Rodney Stark (2001) concluded that religious beliefs are powerful attributes of conformity to the moral order, while Letki (2006) and Parboteeah et al. (2008) found religious participation to be a significant factor in determining people's moral views.

Religion thus still appears to be a strong foundation upon which individuals base their moral positions. Most religions provide moral standards with regard to end-of-life issues. Religious individuals are likely to be more receptive to these standards and comply with the rules, whereas secular individuals 'may either completely reject these moral norms, or, at least, treat them more flexible' (Jagodzinski and Dobbelaere 1995: 220). Hence, it can be expected that religious individuals are less likely to accept euthanasia, abortion, and suicide than are secular individuals. The recent study by Storm (2016) convincingly substantiated this claim. In particular,

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[1] We acknowledge that not all religious followers accept these claims. Moreover, religious institutions may react to values of their followers as well. In this respect, differences between denominational traditions (more hierarchical versus more emphasis on individual autonomy) play an important role. However, we do not focus on religious denominations in this chapter because of the many local variations. We invite scholars to address this issue and the consequences for the relationship between religion and end-of-life morality in future research.

the non-religious 'think behaviors such as abortion and divorce can be justified in some, if not all situations' (Storm 2016: 121).

It seems, however, that religious attendance rather than an individual's religious beliefs is the more important factor in explaining moral views. But why would that be the case? To answer this question, we employ a sociological perspective, focusing on the role of religious institutions, authorities and communities. Durkheim was right when he claimed that the degree of integration in a religious community is the determining factor for people's behaviours (Graham and Haidt 2010; Galen 2012; Bloom 2012). In his seminal work on suicide, Durkheim (1951) attributed the lower suicide rates among Catholics (compared to Protestants) to the degree of integration into their religious communities. The key to understanding how religions provide meaning is 'the creation of moral communities bound together by shared group-level moral concerns' (Graham and Haidt 2010: 145). Uslaner (1999: 217) argued similarly that 'shared ties are the basis of a communal language of morals'. People who do not – or do not frequently – attend religious services are not very receptive to the moral messages of religion as they are not (fully) part of their religious community. In particular, those who have become dissociated from religious institutions like the church are not very likely to adhere to the moral message of these institutions. Not being tied to and integrated into institutional religious life makes it easier to disagree with its message and easier to depart from the norms set by religious institutions on moral judgements. In contrast, individuals who are closely tied to these institutions and take part in religious life will be more likely to echo the moral views voiced by those institutions. Religious institutions appear as compelling forces constantly reminding their members to act in a certain way (Shariff 2015). As Baumeister et al. (2010: 76) noted, 'religious communities represent moralistic audiences that can increase self-awareness and self-monitoring, thereby ensuring that people do not deviate from religiously prescribed norms, or that they promptly return on the right track when they do'. Hence, religious institutions may constrain people's choices and require their adherents to comply with their message. It is in this way that they form moral communities.

These moral communities also work beyond the individual level. When more individuals in a given context attend religious services, there is a larger pool of devout people in a society, which increases potential social interaction of all individuals, both religious and non-religious, with religious people in a variety of social structures, such as work, neighbourhoods, and voluntary organisations (Moore and Vanneman 2003). For those who regularly attend religious services, interaction with like-minded others will reinforce the moral messages of religious institutions, whereas for non-attenders such forms of interaction could enhance their willingness to conform to these moral values, as they would like to conform to leading social norms. In addition, in societies where many people attend religious services, religious institutions play an important role in the public debate about moral issues, since they spread their messages through major institutional vehicles like the media, education, and politics (Moore and Vanneman 2003). For all these reasons, we can assume that there will be a strong relation between attending religious services and the acceptance of end-of-life issues.

It should be noted that although attendance and religious beliefs will be associated, being religious does not necessarily imply that people also attend religious services. Not all religious individuals will attend religious services regularly, and therefore they will not be very receptive to following the strict moral guidelines and prescriptions of the institutions. Furthermore, it is very likely that the religious individuals who attended religious services in the past but no longer do so have often made this choice because they do not agree with the moral rules and guidelines of the religious institutions. Thus, considering yourself a religious person does not necessarily imply that you also attend religious services and that you want to adhere to the rules and prescriptions of the religious institution. Where individuals define themselves as religious and do attend religious services, it is likely that they will act accordingly; for them religious beliefs may be part of their cognitive structure and hence a determining factor for their moral views.

However, it is less obvious that religious beliefs as a stand-alone – that is, not in combination with attendance – will be a determining factor in predicting moral values. Why would religious individuals, especially those religious individuals who do not attend religious services, be morally stricter with regard to abortion, euthanasia, and suicide? There are no compelling arguments to assume that personal devotion would lead to a rejection of euthanasia without referring to the moral message of the religious institution. Of course, arguments for religious beliefs as a determinant of moral views could be found in the Divine Command Theory. The classic idea of this theory is the 'humble submission to God's will' and that 'God's revealed will is the proper measure or standard of human conduct (...) [and] rebellion or disobedience is the essence of sin' (Wainwright 2005: 75). If being religious means belief in a supernatural agent or God who commands, then God's rules and commandments have to be obeyed. However, it also means that behaviour should be in line with the religious duties, rules, and prescriptions of the system (Baumeister et al. 2010). Thus, fear of God and threats of punishment appear to influence people's judgements about moral transgressions (Atkinson and Bouerrat 2011; Pyysiäinen 2017).

Adherents of the Divine Command Theory regard religion as the traditional source of moral authority. According to them, moral values originate from God's will. Only God ordains what is good and bad, right and wrong, or allowed and forbidden. 'Divine command theories (...) assert that moral values are real and binding because God wills them so and consequently that it is God's will that make an action morally right or wrong' (Widdows 2004: 198). Even though it seems a plausible argument for many believers and pious people, it would imply that people who do not believe in God have no moral source and hence no moral values (Widdows 2004). This is, of course, very unlikely and can easily be disproved. As mentioned before, it is not only religious individuals who have moral knowledge; atheists and agnostics do as well, although the latter will deny that it is ordained by God or a supernatural force. It is quite possible that alternative social and psychological mechanisms are available that would serve just as well as religion (Joyce 2007). Humans seem perfectly capable of distinguishing right from wrong without knowing what God commands (Adams quoted by Widdows 2004). Haidt's (2012) Moral

Foundations Theory argues that humans intuitively know what is right and wrong, which according to de Waal could not be the case without the prior development of some kind of empathy and social cognition in our ancestors (Pyysiäinen 2017; de Waal 2006). In addition, there is empirical evidence that religious beliefs as a stand-alone does not make people more prosocially motivated; rather it is religious groups that 'exert strong pressure on group members to conform to the requirements and moral ideals of the community' (Shariff et al. 2014: 439). For example, Campbell and Putnam (2010) found no evidence of an impact of religious faith on volunteering and charitable behaviour when religious attendance was taken into account, which led Bloom (2012) to draw the conclusion that belonging to a religious community is the determining factor, not religious beliefs. Religious belief content appears not to be the causal mechanism of prosociality, according to Galen (2012), who summarised numerous studies on the relationship between religion and prosocial behaviour. Integration in a group of like-minded individuals appears to make the difference, not 'cognitive conviction regarding metaphysical entities' (Galen 2012: 893; Graham and Haidt 2010). As de Waal (2006: 174) noted:

> Moral norms and values are not argued from independently derived maxims (...) but born from internalized interactions with others. A human being growing up in isolation would never arrive at moral reasoning (...) [;] social interaction must be at the root of moral reasoning.

To conclude, it is not so much because of their religious beliefs, but because religious individuals are integrated in a religious community or group with rather conservative and strict rules that people think and act is a certain way, making them reluctant to approve of artificial life-ending activities. It is the binding factor of moral communities that appears to be the crucial aspect of religion rather than individuals' religious beliefs. We therefore assume that associations between religious beliefs and end-of-life morality are weaker than associations between attendance at religious services and the acceptance of the artificial ending of life.

4.4   Declining Impact and Shifting Moral Sources?

Since religion, and more precisely the moral communities of religious institutions, provide a normative framework for opinions on moral issues, modernisation may have far-reaching consequences for the moral order within societies. The rather evident relationship between religion and morality has been seriously challenged by modernisation, secularisation, and individualisation.

The core idea of what is called the secularisation paradigm is that modernity is very problematic for religion (Bruce 2002). A range of societal developments such as rationalisation, increasing existential security, and secular completion have caused religion to lose its central position in society and reduced religion to one of the many meaning systems in society that people can select from. For Casanova (1994), the core of secularisation is the differentiation and emancipation of the

secular spheres from religious institutions and norms. Indeed, modernisation 'undermines the power, popularity, and prestige of religious beliefs, behavior, and institutions' (Bruce 2011: 24). This appears clearly in the declining numbers of individuals in Europe who attend religious services, but also in people losing their religious beliefs. As such, Davie's (1990) famous qualification of Europe in terms of believing without belonging is not supported empirically. Voas (2009) therefore concluded that Davie's idea of believing without belonging was interesting, but that we had better forget it because, in addition to attendance at religious services being on the decline, all religious indicators show serious decline over time in large parts of Europe (see S. Pickel and G. Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume).

The loss of influence of religion not only appears in declining levels of religious attendance and beliefs, but is also visible regarding moral views on the approval of end-of-life issues. As we saw above, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide cannot be justified according to most religions, and religious individuals will therefore be stricter than non-religious individuals. The declining numbers of religious individuals is therefore likely to be accompanied by an increase in permissiveness towards these end-of-life issues. Particularly with respect to such sensitive topics as abortion, euthanasia, and suicide, a decreasing number of individuals are likely to accept the moral standards of the religious institutions. Instead, they want to decide for themselves. The decreasing importance of the religious institutions delineates a more general process of decline of authority and a growing anti-institutional mood due to the individualisation of society. People in an individualised society are considered to be free, independent from traditional constraints, and autonomous in their decisions. The 'role of subjectivity has greatly increased in contemporary society' (Cortois and Laermans 2018: 61). The individualisation paradigm states that individuals are increasingly writing their own script; it is up to the individual what to choose. Society demands that people make choices of their own. As such, people are condemned to individualisation; it is not something individuals arrive at by a free decision (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). As Giddens (1991) once proclaimed, people have no choice but to choose, and these choices are less and less determined by prescription from religious institutions. This implies that an anti-authority mood has developed (Inglehart 1997) and individualisation has encouraged an unrestrained endeavour to pursue private needs and aspirations, resulting in the assigning of top priority to personal need fulfilment (see Bréchon, Chap. 8, this volume). Self-development and personal happiness have become the ultimate criteria for individuals' actions and attitudes. Individualisation thus entails a process in which opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and values are becoming matters of personal choice. Personal autonomy is highly valued, and this is reflected in people's attitudes, ideas, and behaviours, which are increasingly dependent upon personal considerations and convictions. In other words, individualisation can be regarded as a process by which the individual gradually becomes liberated from structural constraints (Beck 1992). The liberation and emancipation from traditional collective bonds imply a reduction in the power of traditions. The traditional options become less self-evident, which eventuates in what Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002: 1) have described as 'losing

the traditional'. As a result, a decline in traditional options can be expected and thus also an increase in non-traditional views about end-of-life issues.

Regarding the impact of religion on moral views concerning such life-ending issues, a decline is to be expected. Structural differentiation and specialisation led to societal spheres being disconnected from each other, making them autonomous domains. The various subsystems of modern societies developed their own values, and therefore individuals in modern societies do not necessarily have coherent value patterns. Hence, there is a decreasing tendency for various opinions, views, ideas, etc., to be clustered into recognisable coherent patterns. Because of this development, we can expect a gradual decline in the associations between religious attendance and beliefs on the one hand and moral views on the other.

4.5   What the Data Reveal

In order to investigate the secularisation of European society and the assumption that it coincides with increasing levels of permissiveness in end-of-life morality, we rely on the survey data from the EVS. We selected data from the last four data collections (waves 1990, 1999, 2008, and 2017) and included all countries surveyed in the latest 2017 wave. Please note that not all countries were involved in all four waves (for example, some former Soviet Union states in the Caucasus were not included in the EVS in the 1990s). Table 4.1 displays an overview of the countries included and numbers of cases in each country and wave.

In order to investigate the associations between religion and moral views, we focus on two dimensions of religiosity. One refers to the institutional religious practice, testing the idea, based mainly on the arguments from Sociological Integration Theory, that religious engagement explains the connections between religion and morality. The indicator used in tapping this religious involvement is religious attendance. Respondents in the EVS were questioned about the frequency of their attendance at religious services apart from weddings, funerals, and christenings. The answer categories range from more than once a week, once a week, once a month, only on specific holy days, once a year, less often to never, and practically never. Country means are calculated and high scores thus indicate higher levels of secularity in a country. For the analyses at the individual level, we distinguish between individuals who attend religious services regularly (once a month or more) and individuals who rarely or never attend religious services.

The second religious dimension refers to a more general idea of religious beliefs: whether individuals consider themselves religious. Such a subjective notion does not necessarily imply an institutional connection, but can be an emotional feeling of an individual without being tied to an institution or a religion. Such emotions may be rooted in people's personality, but are of course also dependent upon what the community believes, the level of social control, and the religious practices of the community (Halman and de Moor 1994). This subjective religiosity is measured by the question: 'Independently whether you go to church, would you say you are a

Table 4.1 Overview of countries in the analyses, country codes (ISO 3166-1 alpha-2), region, and numbers of cases in each wave

Country	Code	Region	1990	1999	2008	2017
Albania	AL	4	0	0	1534	1435
Armenia	AM	5	0	0	1477	1500
Austria	AT	2	1460	1522	1510	1644
Bosnia-Herzegovina	BA	4	0	0	1512	1724
Bulgaria	BG	4	1034	1000	1500	1558
Belarus	BY	5	0	1000	1500	1548
Switzerland	CH	2	0	0	1271	3174
Czechia	CZ	4	2109	1908	1793	1811
Germany	DE	2	3435	2036	2038	2170
Denmark	DK	1	1030	1023	1507	3362
Estonia	EE	5	1008	1005	1518	1304
Spain	ES	3	2637	1200	1497	1209
Finland	FI	1	588	1038	1134	1199
France	FR	2	1002	1615	1501	1870
Great Britain	GB	2	1484	994	1549	1788
Georgia	GE	5	0	0	1498	2194
Croatia	HR	4	0	1003	1498	1487
Hungary	HU	4	999	1000	1513	1514
Iceland	IS	1	702	968	808	1624
Italy	IT	3	2018	2000	1519	2277
Lithuania	LT	5	1000	1018	1499	1448
Montenegro	ME	4	0	0	1516	1003
North Macedonia	MK	4	0	0	1493	1117
The Netherlands	NL	2	1017	1002	1552	2404
Norway	NO	1	1239	0	1090	1122
Poland	PL	4	982	1095	1479	1352
Romania	RO	4	1103	1146	1489	1613
Serbia	RS	4	0	0	1512	1499
Russia	RU	5	0	2500	1490	1825
Sweden	SE	1	1047	1014	1174	1194
Slovenia	SI	4	1035	1006	1366	1075
Slovakia	SK	4	1136	1327	1509	1432

Source: European Values Study Longitudinal Data File 1981–2008 (EVS 1981–2008) and European Values Study 2017: Integrated Dataset (EVS 2017)

religious person, not a religious person, or a convinced atheist?'. We dichotomised this item with 1 = a religious person and 2 = not religious or convinced atheist. The percentages of citizens in a country declaring themselves not religious or a convinced atheist are calculated, and again high percentages indicate higher levels of secularity in a country.

In this chapter, we focus on end-of-life morality, which refers to the acceptance of abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. In the EVS, these three issues were part of a

longer list of moral issues that were presented to respondents. People were asked whether these actions could be justified or not. The response categories ranged from 1 = never justified to 10 = always justified. All are personal matters involving individual choice to voluntarily end life. Because of the consistency in acceptance or rejection of these voluntary end-of-life issues, they are referred to as 'the consistent life ethic' (Trahan 2017: 29). The consistency appears clearly from the associations between people's opinions on these issues: factor analyses revealed a one-factor solution and the internal consistency of the scale appeared very high. We use the mean scores on these three end-of-life issues to indicate end-of-life morality. Again, country means are calculated, and a high score means that there is a high level of permissiveness for end-of-life issues in a country.

The secularisation trends and assumed increases in permissiveness concerning end-of-life issues will be displayed for different regions in Europe, as we may expect variations in the link between religion and morality. We distinguish five regions based on important historical and contemporary religious and secular characteristics: Northern Europe, Western Europe, Southern Europe, and two Eastern European regions.

First, the Northern region (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) is characterised by a mainly Protestant religious heritage and, compared to other parts of Europe, is quite secular nowadays. Countries in the Western region (Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Switzerland) are also very secular, but have a rather mixed religious denominational make-up because of historical events. The Southern part of Europe (Italy, Spain) is less secular and hence more religious, and overall Catholic. The Eastern European countries are distinctive from the rest of Europe, because they are characterised by ex-communist rule. As is known, communist doctrine in general was secular. This special heritage is thought to still have an impact on individuals' religiosity in this part of Europe today (Pollack et al. 2012). Since the communist doctrine may have been stronger in ex-Soviet states than in the so-called satellite states which were under the influence of the Soviet Union, we further distinguish ex-Soviet states (Armenia, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Russia) from ex-communist states (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia).

At the individual level, the relationships between religious practice and religious beliefs on the one hand and end-of-life morality on the other are explored, comparing the mean scores on end-of-life morality for individuals who regularly attend religious services with the mean scores of those who do not attend religious services. This comparison is also made for individuals who say they consider themselves religious persons and those who do not. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 display the mean scores for these groups in the five regions.

For both religious indicators, it is clear that there is an association between religiosity and end-of-life morality. Figure 4.1 shows that in all five regions individuals who attend religious services are less permissive in accepting these end-of-life
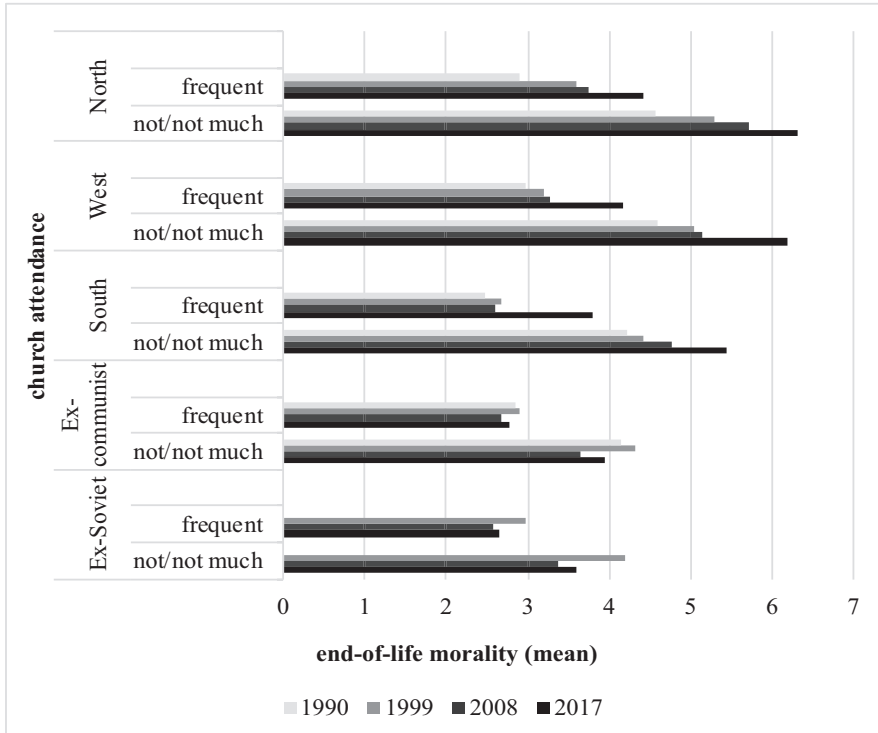
Fig. 4.1 Attending religious services and end-of-life morality in five European regions (EVS 1990–2017)

activities compared to individuals who rarely or never attend religious services. The differences between religious attenders and non-attenders appear to be larger in the Western part of Europe (the Northern, Western, and Southern regions) than in the Eastern part. What the regions all over Western Europe have in common is that the acceptance of abortion, euthanasia, and suicide steadily increases over time, not only for those who do not frequently attend a religious ceremony, but also for frequent attenders. The story in Eastern Europe appears to be different, since steady increases cannot be observed in that part of Europe. However, the trends over time among individuals who attend religious services and those who rarely or never do are remarkably similar too.

The same developments can be reported with regard to the associations between religious beliefs and end-of-life moral permissiveness. Figure 4.2 shows that again in the Western part of Europe steady increases in permissiveness can be found both for individuals who consider themselves religious and for those who do not. The trends in Eastern Europe again are less clear, but rather similar among religious and non-religious individuals. In this part of Europe, the level of permissiveness is not as strong as in Western European societies either.
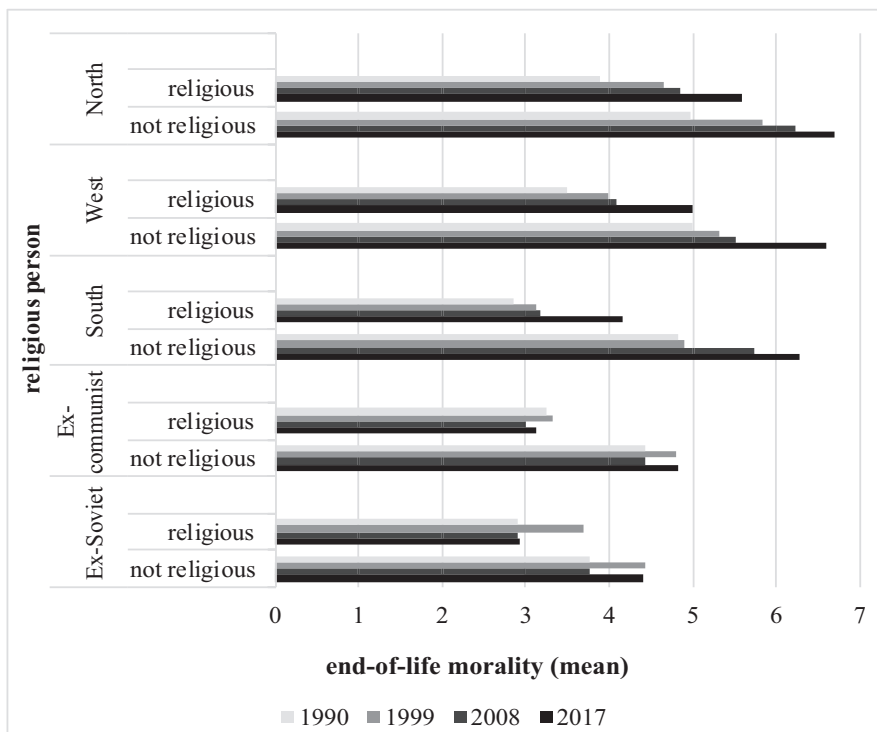
Fig. 4.2 Religiousness and end-of-life morality in five regions (EVS 1990–2017)

All over Europe, the differences between individuals who attend religious services and those who rarely or never do appear larger than between religious and non-religious Europeans, and such differences have remained more or less the same since the wave of surveys in 1990. As such, the idea from integration theories that institutional engagement is a stronger predictor of morality than religious beliefs seems to be confirmed, although 'strong' needs to be qualified. The association parameters (correlation coefficients and eta's) between the two religious indicators on the one hand and end-of-life morality on the other, which are displayed in Table 4.2 yield rather modest associations. Thus, religion and moral views with regard to abortion, euthanasia, and suicide are related, but not as strongly as many may have thought.

Table 4.2 also shows that the associations between religion and end-of-life morality do not decrease over time as is expected from secularisation theory. In all regions, the associations remain more or less the same across the four EVS waves. We did not check for composition effects, which will likely affect the slight differences over the years and the regions. In general, it seems that not much is changing in the relationship between individuals' religious attendance and beliefs on the one hand and their moral views about end-of-life issues on the other.

Table 4.2 Association parameters between end-of-life morality and church attendance (Pearson correlation coefficient *r*) and religiousness (η) in five regions (EVS 1990–2017)

Region	Religious indicator	1990	1999	2008	2017
North	Attending religious services	0.26	0.29	0.32	0.27
	Religious person	0.24	0.25	0.31	0.27
West	Attending religious services	0.37	0.36	0.36	0.36
	Religious person	0.33	0.27	0.30	0.33
South	Attending religious services	0.46	0.46	0.49	0.38
	Religious person	0.39	0.33	0.48	0.39
Ex-communist	Attending religious services	0.27	0.34	0.25	0.32
	Religious person	0.26	0.29	0.28	0.31
Ex-Soviet	Attending religious services		0.23	0.20	0.27
	Religious person		0.17	0.21	0.31

4.6 Path Dependency

The regional analyses described above clearly demonstrate that religion and morality are still linked in modern societies, even though the relationships are rather modest. However, societal changes are usually found to be nation specific, and Inglehart and Baker (2000) among others have convincingly shown the path-dependent trajectory of modernisation. Regional analyses mask such unique trajectories and do not do justice to the far from uniform developments that may take place in the distinctive societies within the regions. In order to address these nation-specific trajectories, we plotted for each region the country means on both religious indicators and end-of-life morality.

4.6.1 The Nordic Countries

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 show that the trends in the Nordic countries are far from linear, either regarding the levels of secularisation or with regard to increasing levels of end-of-life morality. In fact, the trajectories are difficult to interpret, and this holds for both religious attendance and beliefs. Both figures do reveal some differences between the Nordic countries. Not only do the trajectories appear to be country specific, but the countries also appear to be far from similar in their levels of secularity and permissiveness. Sweden ranks highest in secularity in 2017 and its population is as permissive towards end-of-life morality as the population of Denmark, which is less secular compared to Sweden. The Swedes became more permissive towards end-of-life morality between 1990 and 1999, but there was no clear trend in secularisation in Sweden in the same period. From 1999 to 2008, there was a decrease in attendance at religious services and feelings of religiousness in Sweden, making Sweden the most secular country in Northern Europe. The Finnish trajectory of initial declining degrees of secularisation and permissiveness towards end-of
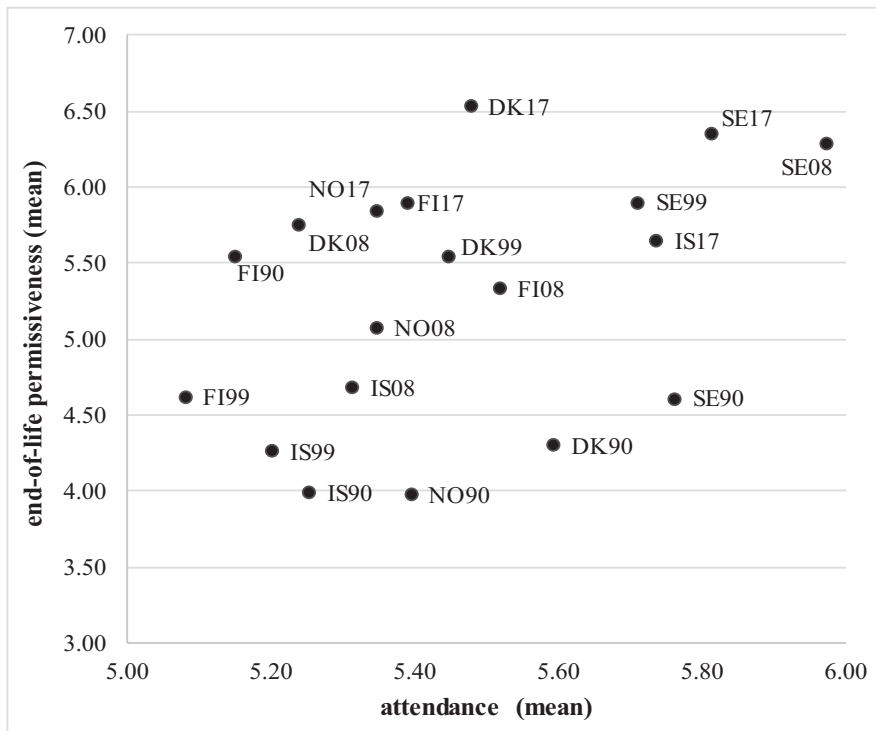
Fig. 4.3 Attending religious services and end-of-life morality in Northern Europe (r = .422; p = .072)

life morality between 1990 and 1999 is followed by an increase in religious attendance, beliefs, and end-of-life permissiveness up to 2008. During the last decade, we observe an increase in permissiveness towards end-of-life morality, but at the same time we see declining levels of secularisation, making the picture rather confusing. In Norway the level of secularisation remained more or less the same over the years, but permissiveness towards end-of-life morality steadily increased between 1990 and 2017. The Danish trend connects a more or less steadily increasing level of permissiveness with an only recently (2008–2017) increasing level of secularisation.

4.6.2 Western Europe

Although not linear and far from similar in all countries, the trajectories in the Western European countries more or less confirm modernisation trends of increasing levels of secularity and increasing levels of permissiveness towards end-of-life
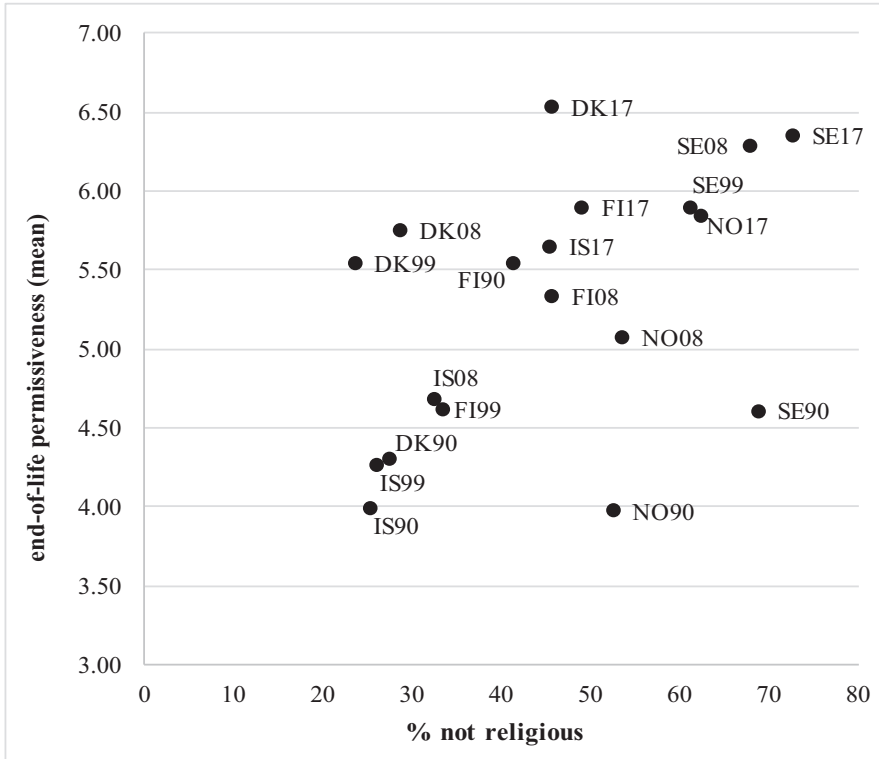
Fig. 4.4 Religiousness and end-of-life morality in Northern Europe ($r = .437$; $p = .041$)

morality (see Figs. 4.5 and 4.6). However, the timing of these trends is different in the countries, although the largest shift towards more permissiveness took place in the last decade in all countries. In France, there is more or less a steady increase in both secularisation and permissiveness since 1990; in the Netherlands, the largest increase in secularisation and permissiveness took place in the last decade, whereas in Great Britain the secularisation that took place between 1990 and 1999 was not accompanied by increasing levels of permissiveness towards end-of-life morality. The Austrian trajectory appears unique. From 1990 to 1999, Austrians became more permissive towards abortion, euthanasia, and suicide, but not more secular. Between 1999 and 2009, Austrians did become more secular, but during that decade the level of permissiveness towards end-of-life morality hardly changed. From 2008 to 2017, the level of religious attendance remained the same, but Austrians again showed more permissiveness towards abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. The figures also show that the Dutch are not the most secular (in Western Europe the Britons and French are more secular), but they appear to be the most permissive of all Europeans towards end-of-life morality.
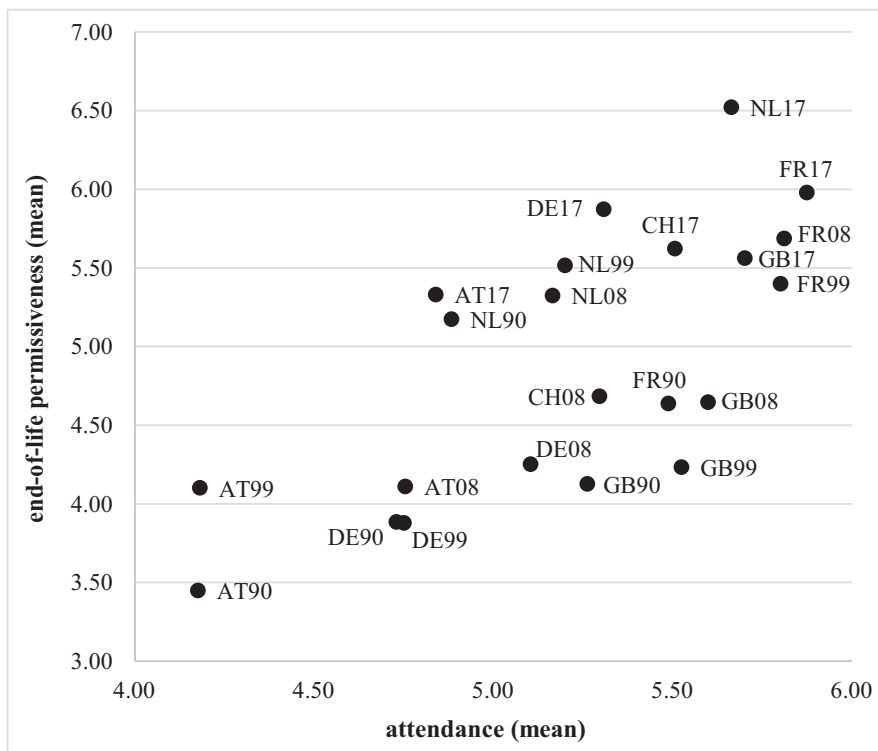
Fig. 4.5 Attending religious services and end-of-life morality in Western Europe ($r = .638$; $p < .001$)

4.6.3 Southern Europe

A strong association between religious attendance and end-of-life morality appears to exist in the two Southern European countries ($r = .810$; $p = .015$), but it is clear that there are differences in the trajectories between Spain and Italy. Figures 4.7 and 4.8 show that people in Spain are more secular and more permissive towards end-of-life morality than Italians. After a more or less steady secularisation of Spanish society from 1990 to 2008, secularisation did not continue in terms of declining religious attendance, but feelings of religiousness declined further. Spain's population gradually became more permissive towards end-of-life issues. In Italy, there were hardly any changes in either secularisation or end-of-life morality in the period from 1990 to 2008, but a shift took place in the last decade. Italians have become more secular and more permissive towards end-of-life morality since 2008.
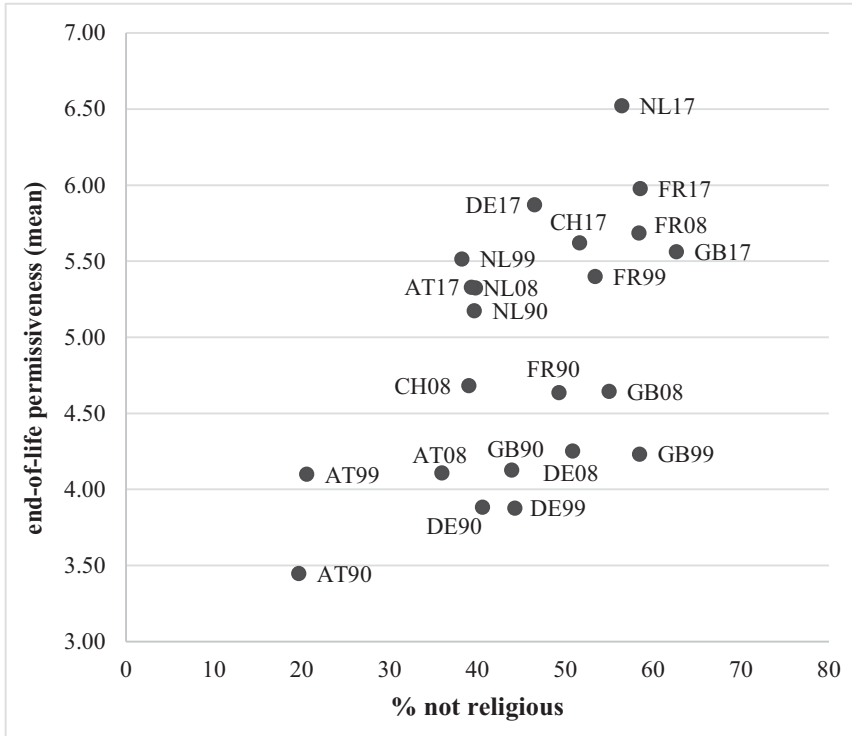
Fig. 4.6 Religiousness and end-of-life morality in Western Europe ($r = .549$; $p = .008$)

4.6.4   *Eastern Europe (Ex-Communist Countries)*

Figures 4.9 and 4.10 show that the trends over time appear rather modest and very diverse in the Eastern European ex-communist countries. More or less steadily increasing levels of permissiveness towards end-of-life morality can be found in Slovenia, Slovakia, and Czechia, but secularisation has not increased substantially in these countries. The latter society was already highly secular in 1990 and that remained the case, but the Czech people became steadily more permissive towards abortion, euthanasia, and suicide over the years. A reversed picture applies to Bulgaria, whose population became less secular during the past 30 years: both the level of those attending religious services and the level of feelings of religiousness declined. Although Polish people became more secular and more permissive towards end-of-life morality, they remain among the most religious people in the Eastern part of Europe. People in Bosnia-Herzegovina and North Macedonia are rather religious too, particularly regarding levels of subjective religiousness. The trends in the other Eastern European countries do not demonstrate large shifts, either in the levels of religious attendance and beliefs or in permissiveness towards
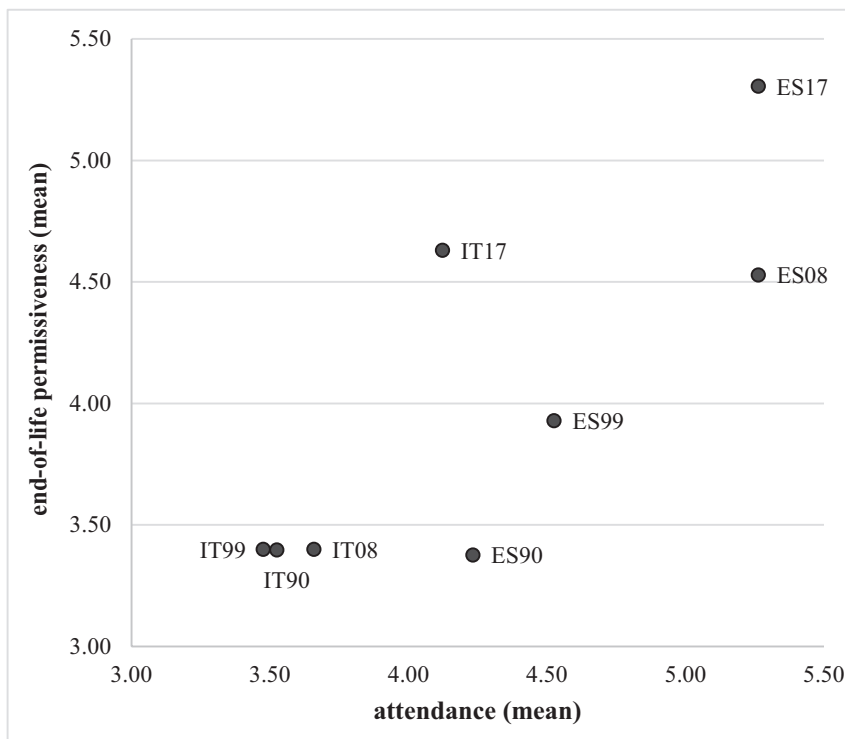
Fig. 4.7 Attending religious services and end-of-life morality in Southern Europe ($r = .810$; $p = .015$)

end-of-life morality. In fact, the populations of these countries show low levels of acceptance of abortion, euthanasia, and suicide.

4.6.5   Ex-Soviet Union

Figures 4.11 and 4.12 show that the trajectories of the two Caucasian countries (Armenia and Georgia) clearly deviate from the other ex-Soviet countries. The populations of these countries show lower levels of secularisation and permissiveness towards end-of-life morality than the populations of other ex-Soviet countries. In addition, there are no clear trends over time in these two countries. Trends in the other ex-Soviet countries are rather mixed. Estonian people seem to have become somewhat more secular and more permissive towards end-of-life morality, especially in the last decade, whereas the population of Belarus showed declining levels of permissiveness. Russia and Latvia are more secular than the other ex-Soviet countries, but more or less similar when it comes to end-of life morality.
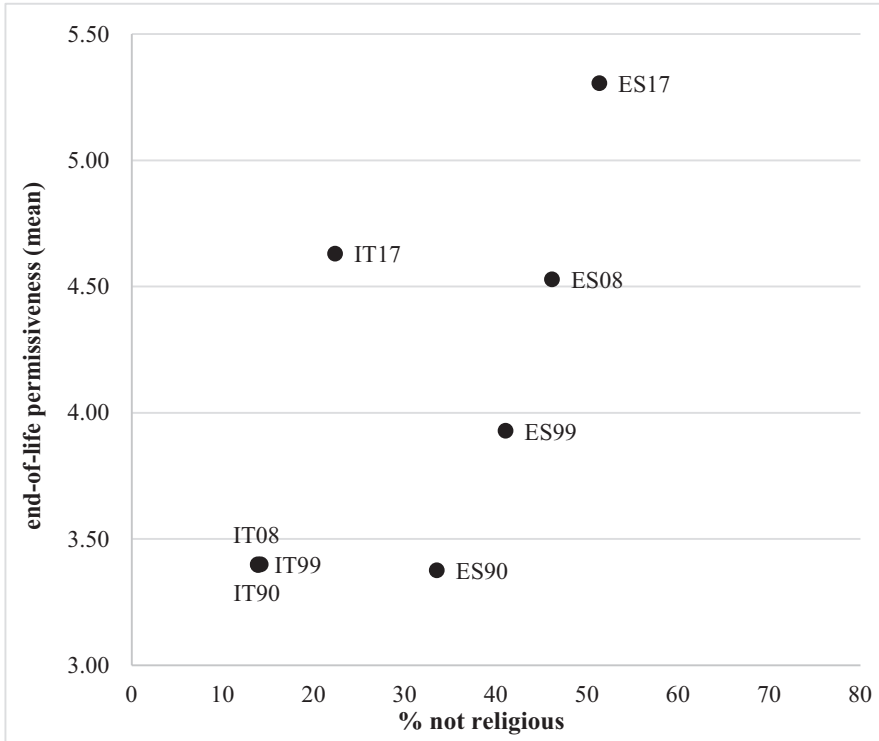
Fig. 4.8 Religiousness and end-of-life morality in Southern Europe ($r = .714$; $p = .047$)

A conclusion that can be drawn from Figs. 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12 is that the associations at the country level between secularisation and end-of-life morality (measured by correlation coefficients) are clearly positive in all five regions in Europe, indicating that higher levels of secularisation go hand in hand with more permissiveness towards abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. This is in line with the ideas of modernisation theories. In addition, the assumption of the integration perspective that religious practice as an indicator of this secularisation is more salient for a population's end-of-life morality than religious beliefs is confirmed for three out of five regions: in Western Europe, Southern Europe, and ex-Soviet countries, the macro-level correlation coefficients between levels of religious attendance and end-of-life morality are higher than the correlation coefficients between levels of subjective religiousness and end-of-life morality. In the Northern region, the two correlation coefficients are about equal and rather modest, while in the ex-communist countries the correlation between the levels of religiousness and end-of-life morality ($r = .638$; $p < .001$) is higher than the correlation between the levels of religious attendance and end-of-life morality ($r = .496$; $p = .001$).
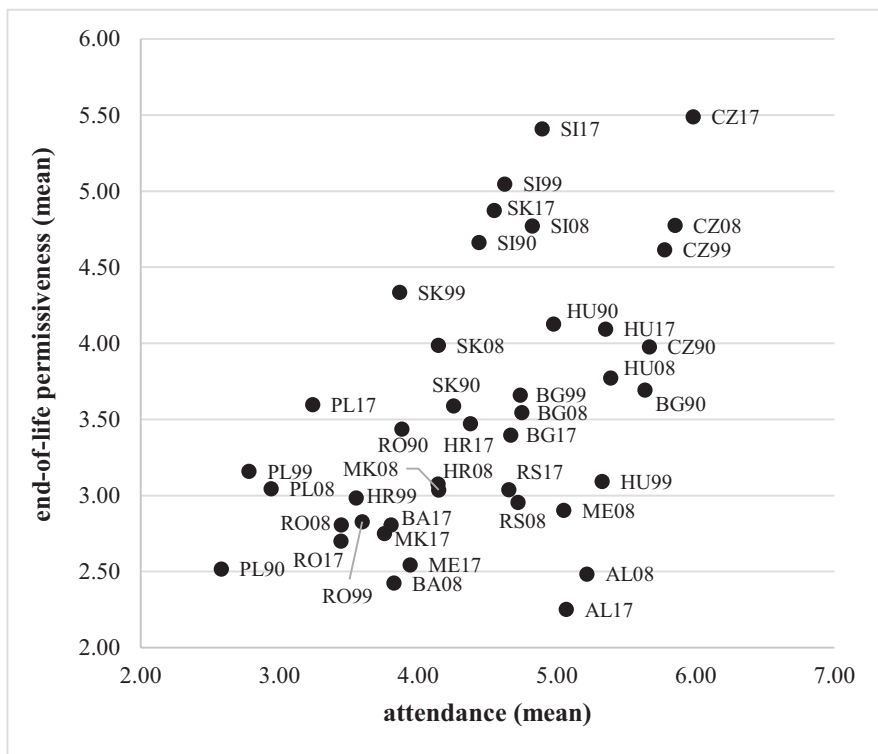
Fig. 4.9 Attending religious services and end-of-life morality in Eastern Europe/ex-communist countries ($r = .496$; $p = .001$)

4.7   Conclusion and Discussion

For many Europeans, religion provides moral rules and regulations concerning end-of-life issues. These religious guidelines are often reflected in politics to justify moral policies, that is, policies on basic human issues such as the end-of-life actions we studied in this chapter (abortion, euthanasia, and suicide). Such moral policies are more prominent on the political (and judicial) agenda in societies with a stronger religiously based party system (Studlar et al. 2013). However, modernisation processes such as differentiation, specialisation, and individualisation resulted in a secularisation of society with a consequently declining impact of religion on moral issues as well as a more secular political party system. Wilson (1982) summarised the secularisation process concisely when he stated that the social significance of religion declined. Although debated especially by American sociologists of religion, secularisation appears to be a general trend in Europe, but it is not very likely that it will be a process that will take place all over Europe in the same way and to the same extent. The secularisation process remains a complex phenomenon and may be country or region specific, as will its implications.
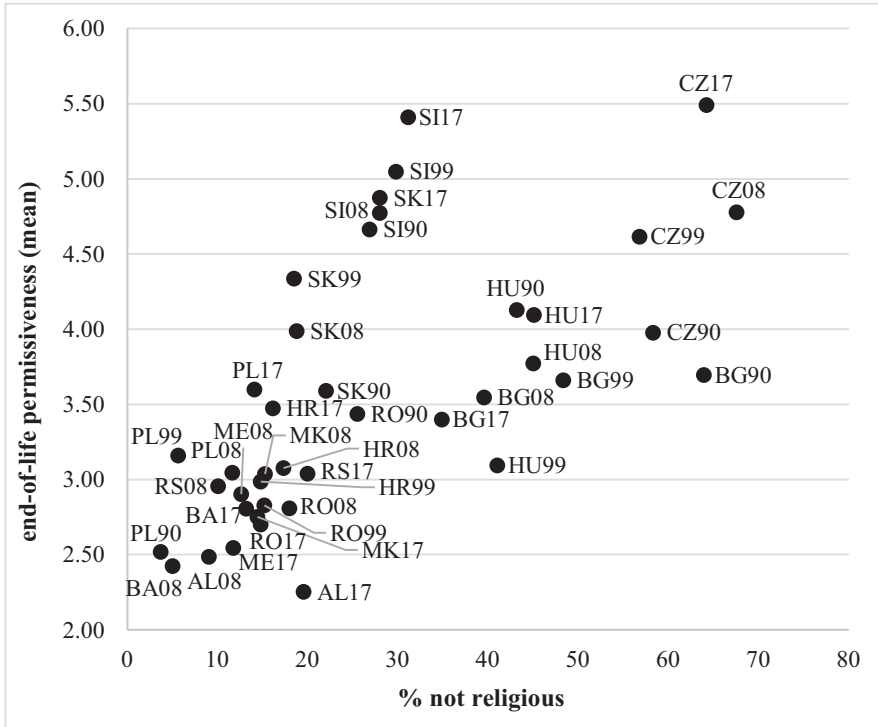
Fig. 4.10 Religiousness and end-of-life morality in Eastern Europe/ex-communist countries ($r = .638$; $p < .001$)

In this chapter, we elaborated on such issues and argued that secularisation will have resulted in a declining impact of religion on moral issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and suicide in the various regions in Europe. We distinguished between five regions in Europe based on important historical and contemporary religious and secular characteristics: Northern, Western, and Southern European countries, Eastern European ex-communist countries and ex-Soviet countries. We further elaborated on the idea that religious beliefs and religious practices are separate aspects of religion. Subjectively identifying as religious does not imply that people are also integrated in their religion (which manifests itself in attending religious services on a regular basis). We hypothesised that integration in religion in particular would remain a strong determinant for permissiveness regarding life and death issues, whereas religious beliefs would be decreasingly important for such moral issues.

The analyses yield evidence that there does indeed appear to be a relationship between both religious beliefs and religious participation on the one hand and end-of-life morality on the other. As expected, religious beliefs appear less strongly associated with this kind of morality than religious attendance. Those who frequently attend religious services are clearly stricter than individuals who attend
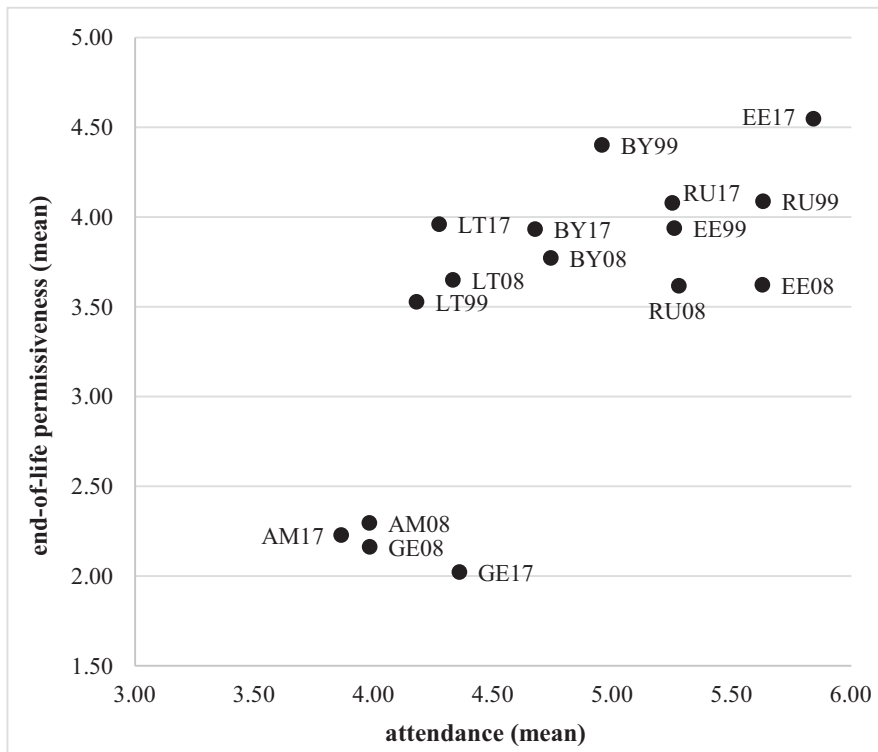
Fig. 4.11 Attending religious services and end-of-life morality in ex-Soviet countries ($r = .719$; $p = .002$)

religious services less frequently or never. However, it must be acknowledged that the impact of religion on morality is not as strong as might have been anticipated, nor do the analyses provide strong evidence of declining levels of the impact of religion on morality. As such, the further secularisation of European society cannot be demonstrated convincingly in Europe when it comes to the significance of religion for morality concerning life and death issues. After all, the relationship between both indicators of religion and end-of-life morality was already modest in 1990 in all five regions in Europe and remained modest. In addition, many parts of Europe were already highly secularised at the end of the last century and did not secularise much further. This may hint at a ceiling effect in the association between religion and morality.

In addition, our analyses made clear that throughout Europe the acceptance of abortion, euthanasia, and suicide increased, not only among non-religious people and people who rarely or never attend religious services, but also among frequent religious attenders and believers. Although the levels of permissiveness towards end-of-life morality are lower in Eastern Europe than in Western Europe, the trend among religious and non-religious people is similar. Europe becomes gradually
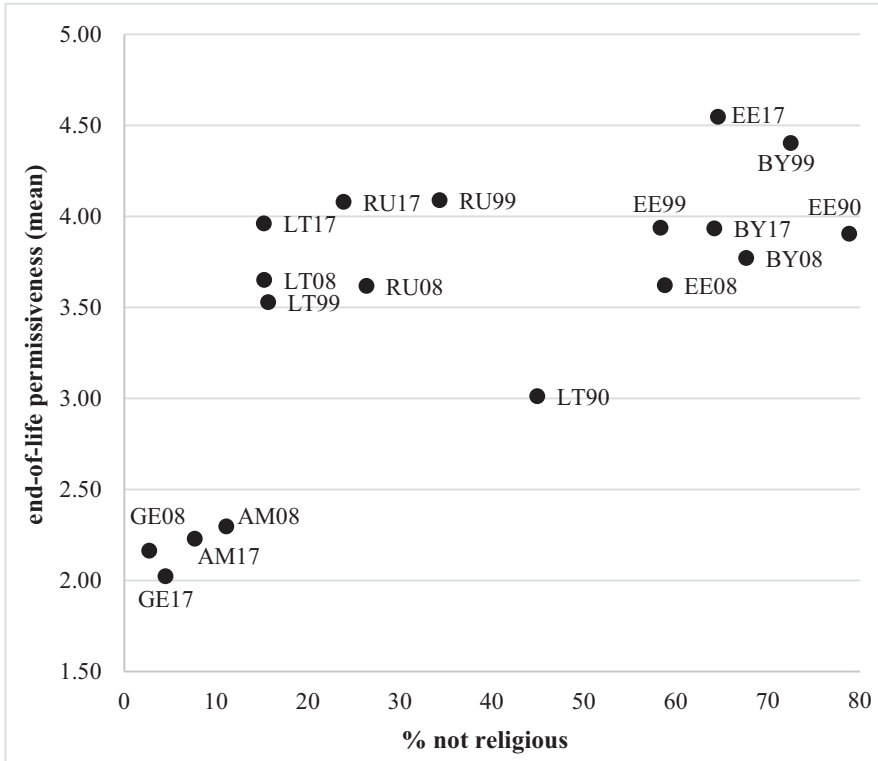
Fig. 4.12 Religiousness and end-of-life morality in ex-Soviet countries (*r* = .682; *p* = .002)

more permissive, but there is not much evidence that the impact of religion has declined. The association between religion and morality barely changed over time, and as expected, attending religious services indeed appears to be more strongly linked to such life-ending morality than religiousness. This substantiates the ideas of the integration perspective.

It should be noted, however, that religious participation is not as strong a predictor of morality as subjective religiousness in Eastern European countries. The interplay between religion and morality is different in these countries compared to the rest of Europe. This may be the result of Soviet rule, when 'religious organizations were strongly constrained or persecuted' (Norris and Inglehart 2004: 115). However, this breakdown of religious institutions did not destroy personal religious beliefs. Further, as Ančić and Zrinščak (2012) note, the competencies of the church as a religious institution concerned social issues in the main, and not so much questions of personal morality. It implied that differences between individuals who regularly attend religious services and those who rarely or never do so are less pronounced (Ančić and Zrinščak 2012; Halman and van Ingen 2015).

The analyses do support the idea of path dependency, however. In each region and within each region, each country appears to follow its own trajectory of

secularisation, with its own consequences regarding end-of-life morality. Inglehart and co-authors convincingly demonstrated that although countries develop in a similar direction they do not converge. The trajectories of change in religion and moral views they follow are country specific and determined by historical, economic, and political legacies. Such legacies cannot be denied and determine a country's position on the global cultural map (Inglehart 1997, 2018; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Country-specific in-depth analyses are required to address that issue.

To conclude, our study reveals that morality is still connected to religious practice and religious beliefs in a secularised Europe. However, the associations are not very strong and there are hardly any changes over time, which means that in Europe end-of-life morality is no longer strongly dependent upon religion. One could argue that religious institutions, being closely connected to religious practice, and religious belief systems such as subjective religiousness, are not the main drivers of end-of-life morality in Europe nowadays. This begs the question as to what the drivers of morality are.

Previous research explored whether there is some evidence that post-materialism replaces religion as a moral source (Halman and Pettersson 1996). According to Inglehart's (1977, 1997, 2018) well-known theory on cultural change, societies are gradually shifting from materialist to post-materialist values. One of the consequences is that the 'old politics of class conflict and, to some extent, religious conflict is being overlain, and will be steadily displaced, by a "new" politics centered on the conflict between materialist and post-materialist value orientations' (Deth 1995: 9–10). However, the conclusion of their exploration was that although post-materialism appears to be an important source of division, the role of religion in morality has not disappeared. As such, post-materialism has apparently not taken over the role of religion. The changes in moral outlook cannot therefore be attributed to either the declining levels of traditional religiosity or increasing levels of post-materialism. Changes in religiosity and moral orientation may be seen as part of an encompassing and more general development which is labelled individualisation. Increasingly, moral convictions and beliefs will be based on personal convictions and considerations. Such an individualisation process is not limited to one specific life domain, but embraces all sectors of human life. A consequence of this development may be that increasingly the sources of people's choices become varied and unknown, and hence people's actual choices become increasingly unpredictable. For some, religion may be important in certain circumstances, while others are guided in their moral choices by other sources.

Research shows, however, that many people use both moral and rational-instrumental arguments to justify their personal stances regarding end-of-life issues (Burlone and Richmond 2018). For example, religious individuals may refer to the sanctity of life or the alleged danger of a slippery slope and potential abuse. However, more secular individuals, who value individual autonomy highly, may use the same rational slippery slope argument as a warning against the artificial prolongation of life. This implies that it is not easy to predict how exactly a rational institution like science would act as a source of morality.

The rather low associations between religion and end-of-life morality in Europe seem to reflect the idea that value priorities are dependent upon the degree to which people experience security and that religion is no longer necessary to provide such certainties. Throughout Europe, these certainties are increasingly provided by the modern (welfare) state, and under such circumstance, the importance of religion declines. Conditions of growing security reduce 'the need for religious reassurance' (Norris and Inglehart 2004: 18). It is thus likely that country differences in acceptance of abortion, euthanasia, and suicide and the variations in the impact of religion on such issues are a consequence of the differences in the degree to which security is provided by the countries' welfare state.

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Dr Loek Halman (*1956) was Associate Professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology at the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Tilburg University (The Netherlands). He has been involved in the EVS project since 1984, first as a junior researcher and later as secretary to the EVS Foundation, member and chair of the EVS Executive Committee, and coordinator of the 1999 and 2008 EVS waves in the Netherlands.

Dr Inge Sieben (*1973) is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology at the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences of Tilburg University (The Netherlands). Her research interest is the comparative (cross-national and longitudinal) study of moral and family values. She coordinates the Erasmus+ KA2 European Values in Education (EVALUE) project. She has published in, amongst others, the *British Journal of Sociology*, *European Sociological Review*, and *Work, Employment and Society*.

Part II
In-Depth Analysis

Chapter 5
Political Values and Religion: A Comparison Between Western and Eastern Europe

Susanne Pickel and Gert Pickel

Abstract Against the background of successful right-wing populist movements in recent years, a question arises as to whether the democratic political culture remains stable in Europe's democracies. The EVS 2017 confirms that a high level of legitimacy is still attached to democracy, but that there are differences in support for the current democratic system. In Eastern Europe, we find a strong openness to alternative anti-democratic systems, which helps right-wing populists to gain influence and power. Prejudice provides a bridge between right-wing populists and religion. While socially engaged believers are pro-democratic, fundamentalist have an elective affinity with anti-democratic beliefs. Gender identities that do not follow the heteronormative pattern of binary couple relationships in particular prove to be a bridge to right-wing beliefs (Schneider et al., Zeitschrift für Religion, Gesellschaft und Politik (ZRGP) 5(2), 2021). It is possible that the ongoing progress of secularisation and modernisation in Western Europe is conducive to this. The validity of the secularisation theory must be assumed, because the East-Central European states had swung into line with Western European secularisation shortly after an upheaval of religiosity directly after 1989. If in the Russian region and Southeastern Europe the revitalisation process is confirmed, many Eastern European states have now reached the 'normal' level they would have had without socialist repression.

Keywords Democracy · Political culture · Religion · Secularisation · Eastern Europe · Attitudes

S. Pickel (✉)
Department of Political Science, University of Duisburg-Essen, Duisburg, Germany
e-mail: susanne.pickel@uni-due.de

G. Pickel
Department of Sociology of Religion, Leipzig University, Leipzig, Germany
e-mail: pickel@rz.uni-leipzig.de

5.1 Introduction[1] – Political Values and Political Culture as the Nucleus of Stable Democracies[2]

In recent years, Europe has been the scene of an extensive debate about the potential end of liberal democracy (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018). The successes of populist parties (especially right-wing parties) and movements worked as the main triggers. Just as questions were being raised about whether liberal democracy was still relevant at all, the anchoring of democratic values among citizens seemed to be crumbling and a political-ideological polarisation was spreading among many populations in Europe. Occasionally, there has been talk of a new cleavage forming along the lines of attitudes toward globalisation: cosmopolitans with an affinity for globalisation and modernisation are opposed by communitarians who feel overwhelmed by these developments (Norris and Inglehart 2019). These disputes have found their way into the image of a split in the European Union (EU) and the question of its general survival. Driven by divergent ideas toward migration and migration policy, as well as an emphasis on national autonomy and a strong sense of nationalism, *a new rift between Western and Eastern Europe began to emerge after 1989*. This is no longer an iron curtain, as it was 30 years ago, but a conflict of values that separates the two sides. Gradual but quite considerable differences are becoming entrenched regarding the anchoring of democratic values. In various Eastern European states, right-wing populist parties have been elected to government (Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 2017; Muno and Pfeiffer 2021; Stockemer 2019), undermining basic principles of democracy or even aiming to eliminate them, undoubtedly with the consent of larger parts of the population (Pickel et al. 2020). They find cooperative partners in almost all Western European countries, especially Denmark, France, Italy, Sweden, and Germany. Here, right-wing populist parties are either part of governing coalitions or are the strongest opposition party.

Remarkably, with the support of religiously influenced political groups, right-wing populist parties have succeeded in undermining democratic values and norms. This has been the case in Poland and Hungary, with PiS and FIDESZ-KDNP as governing parties respectively, and in Slovenia with NSi as a coalition partner. Coupled with the rise of right-wing nationalism, there appears to be a revival of pacts between churches suppressed during the socialist era and would-be autocrats. The question here is *whether religion and religiosity act as obstacles to anti-democratic developments*, or, guided by pragmatic opportunism, combine with often traditionalist-oriented positions of right-wing populists and anti-democrats.

Does a religiously influenced electorate share value concepts with right-wing populist parties in the sense of elective affinities? Can it be that such common goals are based on electoral affinities, especially between the values of religious people and right-wing populists (for example, in family values)? Do religious values perhaps combine with a desire for stronger political leadership and an emphasis on the national over the democratic? What remaining significance, if any, does religion have for European societies? Do such connections and a strengthened nationalism perhaps counteract the secularisation we have seen in Europe over recent decades (Pickel 2009, 2017; Pollack and Rosta 2017)?

If an *'alliance' between religion and nation* were to occur, democracy in the countries mentioned would be in even greater danger than previously assumed, especially as the stability of democracies is based on democratically shaped political cultures. Thus, it is not only democratic institutions that are needed, but also a *civic culture* with political support for democracy by a majority of citizens. The way in which democracy is exercised is anchored in the respective political cultures, and shapes not only the actions of political elites but also the voting behaviour of citizens. The right-wing populists did not make their way to power in Hungary, Poland, or Slovenia by coup, but were elected by the people. This legitimate acquisition of power raises the question as to whether, after 2015, the crisis of legitimacy for democracy that has been invoked for decades (Watanuki et al. 1975) is finally manifesting itself, especially in the young democracies of Eastern Europe, and bringing with it an erosion of democracy.

Only an empirically robust, comparative examination of political cultures in Europe can provide real information on this question. Fortunately, this is possible with the European Values Study 2017, including comparison over time with earlier survey waves (1990). Thus, for this chapter, we pose the research question: *How do political culture and democratic values compare across Europe in 2017?* In doing so, we would like to use the understanding of democracy as a reference for our comparison of political values to enable us to classify the approval of democracy, the current political system, political institutions, and authorities. In this context, 2017 seems to us a very good time to examine the endangerment of democracy in light of the Europe-wide strengthening of right-wing populism, which gained further momentum with the 2015 arrival of many refugees in Europe (Mudde 2019). We would like to extend this examination of political values to include the relevance of religious values or religiosity for democratic political culture. Thus, our second research question is: *What is the significance of religious values for political values under conditions of advancing secularisation?*

One thesis is that the success of right-wing populism is linked to a longing for (strong) leadership that varies regionally and counteracts the rule of law and the principles of liberal democracy seemingly anchored in Europe so far (Eatwell and Goodwin 2018; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017). A second thesis assumes that the higher potential for success of anti-democratic aspirations in the young democracies of Eastern Europe is due to the self-discovery processes of national communities. In this process, anti-democratic values – which are often not seen as contradictory to democracy – can increasingly be seen in some (especially Eastern

European) populations. In order to resolve the cognitive dissonance between the perception of anti-democratic political decisions and their justification with the desire to strengthen democracy, people accept narratives such as that of a managed democracy or an illiberal democracy that deviate from the liberal democratic order based on the rule of law. A third thesis relates to the relationship between religion and democracy: we assume that, despite all ongoing secularisation movements, a dogmatic religiosity and a rejection of religious plurality unleashes anti-democratic potential.

5.2 Political Culture and Understanding of Democracy – Theories and Conceptions

5.2.1 Understanding of Democracy

If one wants to debate the end of the contemporary nature of *liberal democracy*, one must first clarify its meaning. Minimalist concepts get by with the fact that 'elections' are held regularly in a political system (Schumpeter 1950). Intermediate, procedural definitions require a few more characteristics – freedom, equality, and control (horizontal and vertical accountability; Lauth 2004; Merkel 2004). Maximalist or substantive concepts add output and outcome elements to the definition of democracy (for example, social democracy; Fuchs 1999; Møller and Skaaning 2013). The key element of free, equal, direct and secret elections, often also referred to as fair, is common to all concepts – there is no democracy without genuine choice.[3] Political systems that fulfil at least this criterion, along with many democratic processes that function only poorly, are called electoral democracies (Diamond 1999; Merkel 2004; Møller 2006). The procedure of (genuine) selection from at least two candidates is so legitimising that even autocracies sometimes resort to it, giving themselves the veneer of being at least somewhat democratic (Wahman et al. 2013). Terms such as façade democracy work quite well here (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019).

Much more is required, however, to earn the designation *liberal democracy*. Citizens must enjoy full political and individual freedoms; civil rights must be guaranteed; citizens must have equal access to political decision-making; citizens must be equal before the law; and the separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches must function fully (procedural definition; Merkel 2004). We use this definition of a liberal democracy as our root concept. Restrictions on these rights and principles relegate the corresponding political systems to the realm of defective democracies. Depending on the restriction, they can be described as illiberal democracies (restriction of the rule of law); enclave democracies (veto players deprive elected representatives of access to certain policy areas); exclusive

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[3] This includes elections, such as in the USA, which appoint an electoral body.

democracies (parts of the adult population are excluded from the right to vote); or delegative democracies (governments override parliament and interfere with the judiciary) (Merkel 2010). Defective democracies already bear characteristics of autocracies. If these characteristics increase, they become hybrid political regimes.

We determine the so-called *informed understanding* (Shin and Kim 2017, 2018; Cho 2013, 2014, 2015) to correctly assess citizens' understanding of democracy. Citizens should be able not only to identify the attributes of democracy – the cognitive ability to recognise the essential attributes of democracy – but to distinguish them from the attributes of non-democratic systems (discrimination). From this type of questioning, it is possible to determine 'how well or poorly people understand democracy' (Shin and Kim 2018: 230–231), how broad the underlying concept of democracy is, and which attributes are preferred. We can also identify whether characteristics of democracies and autocracies are mixed. Welzel (2013) deduces the specific understanding of democracy of population groups from the combination of mentions of the characteristics of democracies and autocracies and identify four concepts of democracy: liberal (equal freedoms); social (redistributive justice); populist (provision of 'bread and butter'); and authoritarian (additional powers for the military and/or religious leaders). A liberal core understanding of democracy (freedom and civil rights) includes the criteria of 'free elections, equal rights, civil rights, and referendums' (Schubert 2012: 242; 2016: 289). Dalton et al. (2007: 147) write that '[a] basic understanding of democracy has apparently diffused widely around the globe (...) democracy embodies human values and (...) most people understand these principles', though not all equally within their respective societies.

When we speak of liberal democracy, we understand democracy as 'freedom, equality, and control' and 'liberal democracy' (Welzel 2013) as an 'informed' or 'enlightened' understanding of democracy (Cho 2015; Norris 2011).

Autocracies, in contrast to democracies, are more diversely organised. Hadenius and Teorell (2007) distinguish five main types depending on how political power is maintained. First, they identify the three modes of power maintenance in autocracies as inheritance (1); threat or use of military coercion (2); and election (3). The five main types of regime are then monarchies, with inheritance of rule according to fixed rules (1); military regimes in which the dominant political actors are military officers with a monopoly on the use of force (2); and electoral regimes that hold (semi-)pluralistic elections without political parties (3), with one party (4), or with limited multiparty systems (5). Subtypes also allow for hybrid regimes that carry characteristics of both autocracies and democracies. Other classifications of authoritarian regimes consider the rulers, for example, party, military, individual (Geddes 1999; Lauth 2004; Kailitz and Köllner 2012) and the forms of rule, for example, theocratic-authoritarian regimes (Merkel 2010). The *minimalist definition* at Polity 5 (Marshall and Gurr 2020) describes autocracy simply as the opposite of democracy.[4] Its exercise of power is characterised by closed or restrictive rather than open

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[4] Polity V. (2020). https://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html

procedures, and the structure of rule ranges from semi-pluralistic to monistic. Access to the ruling political, military, or monarchical elite, which claims a monopoly on power, is not gained through free and fair elections. The legitimation of rule is based on world views – ideologies or (pseudo-)religion – or on mentalities rather than on the sovereignty of the people. The claim to rule is extensive to total, for example, it spills over from the sphere of the political into the sphere of the private. A repressive to arbitrary mode of rule is not subject to any control or limitation by the rule of law (Merkel 2010). Autocratic understandings of political rule are characterised by a positive attitude toward strong leaders; one-party rule; the establishment of military rule if the government proves incompetent; the rule of religious authorities; and an obedience to authority. Characteristics of consent to authoritarian rule thus show features of a restriction of popular sovereignty, political rights, and civil liberties; subordination to (political) hierarchies; and the surrender of universal suffrage.

5.2.2 Theory of Political Culture Research

Political culture research serves as a good organising unit for political values that support such a liberal democracy. But what is meant by political culture? According to classical political culture research, political culture is the *attitudes and value orientations of the citizens* of a (usually nationally conceived) collective *that are oriented toward political objects* (Almond and Verba 1963; Pickel and Pickel 2006). Or, to put it differently, the citizens' collected attitudes and value orientations toward the political system of a country form a political culture. The attitudes are a consequence of historical processes and similar individual socialisation within a certain society or collective. A political culture maps the subjective side of politics in a society without placing the attitudes of individual citizens at the centre of consideration. This collective statement is achieved via an aggregation of the citizens' beliefs, which are surveyed in a representative manner. Thus, the main substantive goal of political culture research is to record the subjective framework conditions that promote or endanger the stability of a (democratic) political system. Political culture research resorts to an analytical understanding. In other words, every country has a political culture. The only question is what form it takes (democratic, parochial, participative, subjective, authoritative, etc.) and how the political culture relates to the political structure (congruent or discongruent).

Nevertheless, political culture research is not free of norms: If there is a lack of at least a positive-neutral attitude toward the political system, then in the event of a crisis (regardless of whether the crisis is economic, political, or social) the political system is subject to the risk of collapse. The majority of citizens are no longer willing to actively stand up for the current system and follow the existing rules and norms (Pickel and Pickel 2006, 2021; Fuchs 2002). The political structure transforms (this is reform) or collapses (this is collapse or revolution). The political structure – for example, the institutional system – must therefore meet the

expectations of the citizens. The key point of reference for the *stability of a political system* is the correspondence between political culture and structure: a democratic institutional system needs a democratic political culture in order to survive in the long term. The culture-structure congruence applies to all types and subtypes of political systems. Thus, a monarchy needs recognition just as much as military rule needs it if it wants to exist beyond a period of effective coercion, albeit a limited one. While the entire population does not have to share the same attitudes, the assumptions of political culture research aim at the beliefs of the majority of the population or at least politically relevant groups of sufficient group size. Only if no larger groups in a political system actively reject it, or even more problematically for the system want to abolish it, is its survival assured over a longer period of time (Diamond 1999). Conversely, it is assumed that the bulk of the population has political values that support the existing political system.

Since political culture is strongly value-based and is established through socialisation, a political culture usually develops slowly. In line with the considerations of value change research, these are processes that generally take place over generations (Inglehart 1977; Inglehart and Flanagan 1987). Political objects can be valued in principle or in the short term and based on performance. For this, Seymour M. Lipset (1959, 1981) focused his attention on the interplay between legitimacy and effectiveness. Legitimacy, borrowing from Weber's (2002) considerations, reflects the fundamental conviction of the legitimacy of the political system. It embodies a diffuse attitude of individuals toward the political system, usually accumulated over a long period of time (beginning with socialisation), which has a high degree of inertia toward outside influences and a high degree of consistency. Effectiveness also involves perceptions of political objects, in this case political authorities. There, the actual performance of the system and its actors is subjectively evaluated. Perceptions of effectiveness can be divided between political effectiveness and economic effectiveness. In the first case, the ability of political authorities to make effective political decisions is assessed; in the second case, their ability to produce positive economic outcomes is evaluated. While legitimacy should be relatively stable over time, assessments of effectiveness are subject to fluctuations and external influences. In democracies, a typical response to a crisis of effectiveness would be to replace political personnel by voting the government out of office. Only when this does not prove to be a successful strategy against the negatively assessed effectiveness of the political system do problems arise at the level of the general political order of a system – for example, a legitimacy crisis of the political system (Watanuki et al. 1975; Pharr and Putnam 2000). Different political objects in the political system can serve as reference points for political values and attitudes. Their distinction is based on considerations of David Easton (1975).

Easton systematises the form and goal of the relationship between citizens and political objects. By *political support* Easton understands an attitude with which a person orients themselves towards a (political) object. Like the term 'political culture', 'political support' is an analytical and not an evaluative term. According to Easton, all political objects can be positively or negatively supported. However, to maintain the persistence of a political system, positive political support must

predominate among the population. According to Easton's system-theoretical input-output model, the political regime receives support mostly when the citizens' demands on the system are met. Easton (1965) also identifies three objects of political support: the *political community* comprises the members of a political system and their basic value patterns. A sense of community and an overarching object classification (such as the nation and the people living in it) are the basis of this component of the political order, which manifests itself in a sense of belonging to the collective and a mutual loyalty among community members (Easton 1975). The support object, the *political regime*, includes the basic structure of the institutional system. The orientations refer to the institutions themselves – for example, the office roles – rather than the specific role holders. Political support of the object of *political authority* applies to the holders of roles of political authority. They receive political support because of the acceptance of the decisions they make. Citizens' evaluations result from their satisfaction with the outputs of the political system or political authorities (Pickel and Pickel 2006). According to Easton, authorities are the key object of specific support, which largely corresponds to Lipset's (1981) assessment of effectiveness. Diffuse support is to be distinguished from specific support: it denotes an approval of objects for their own sake and is further divided by Easton into the components of legitimacy and trust. Legitimacy is the product of citizens' perceived congruence between their own values and perceptions of the political system and its structure. Trust involves the hope that these objects, or the people supporting them, are making their decisions 'for the common good', and is based on socialisation experiences and generalised output experiences.

Easton, however, did not assume a difference between *normative* legitimacy – the recognition of a democracy with set characteristics (mostly equality, freedom, and control; Lauth 2004; Merkel 2010; Pickel et al. 2015) – and its factual recognition by citizens, *empirical* legitimacy, which is shaped by citizens' conception of a democracy. Accordingly, citizens do not grant recognition to the ideal form of democracy, but to how they imagine a democracy to be. The degree of divergence between the expectation of how a democracy (or political system) should be and how the current democracy (or political system) actually functions in one's own country contributes to citizens' satisfaction/dissatisfaction with democracy, along with economic performance. This complexity, including its interrelationships, is illustrated by a recent model (Fig. 5.1) by Susanne Pickel (Pickel 2016; Pickel and Pickel 2016).

There are numerous interrelated patterns of attitudes between the actual understanding of democracy, what citizens imagine democracy to be, and the diffuse and specific support for democracy (Ferrin and Kriesi 2016; Pickel et al. 2015). Perceptions of democracy shape perceptions of legitimacy and support for the current configuration of democracy in one's own country through a match between citizens' ideals and the real political system. In addition, attachment to the political community as the basis of the political system is reintegrated into the model. The political system in the country can be supported just as citizens must trust its institutions. Short-term, specific support for the performance of the political system
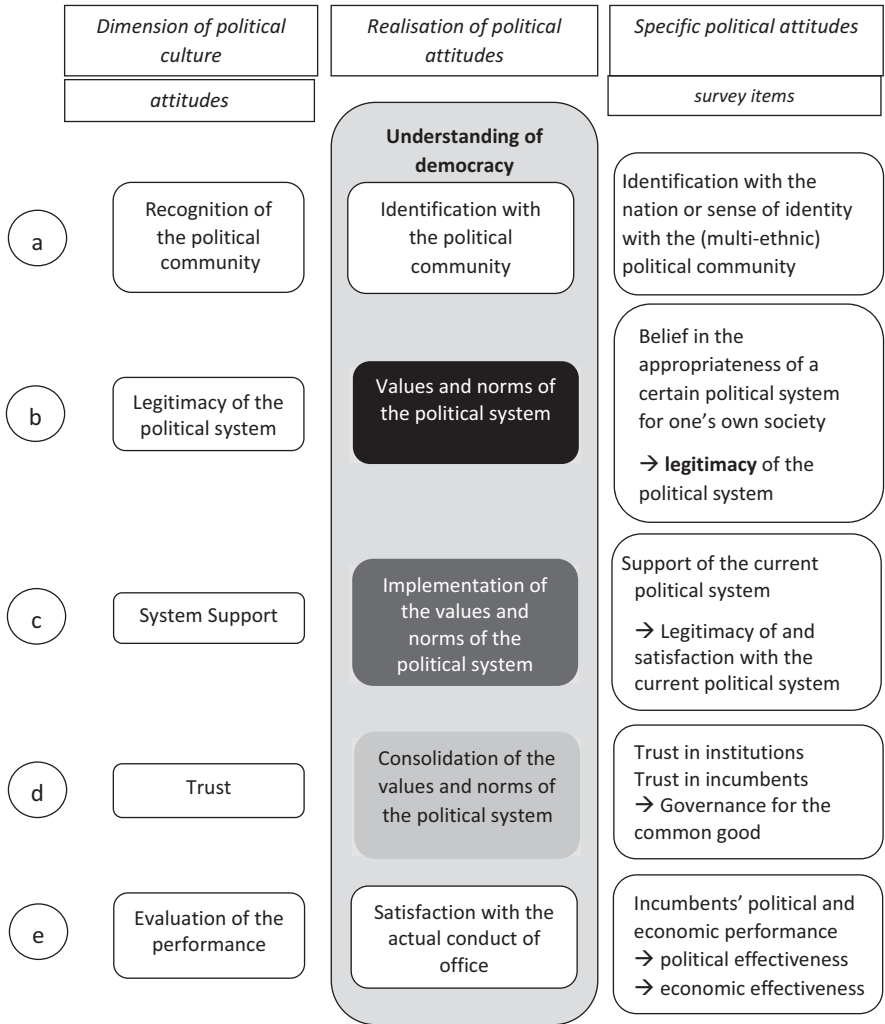
Fig. 5.1 Political culture, understanding of democracy, and political attitudes. Source: Pickel and Pickel 2016: 553; Pickel 2016; including ideas of Fuchs 2002: 37; Norris 2011: 24, 44

generates long-term trust and provides a reservoir of political governance that citizens can help shape by voting for and against specific political authorities. On the basis of the model (Fig. 5.1), the various dimensions of political culture become just as apparent as their realisation and the specific attitudes of citizens. The question of legitimacy and the more lasting components of research on political culture includes the question of the specific political values of a political community. Identification with this political community, the legitimacy of democracy and, to a slightly limited extent, attitudes toward the current political system (trust and system support), map these values as political attitudes.

5.2.3 Socialisation of Political and Social Values

In the presentation of the basic principles of political culture, the importance of the socialisation of (political) values has already been discussed. Easton and Dennis (1969) had earlier demonstrated the relevance of *political socialisation* for political culture. More recently, following the studies on value change by Ronald Inglehart (1977), the idea of shaping the people of a generation in their youth and early socialisation regarding their values became more firmly established. This includes religious and political values. Norris (2011) summarises the socialisation processes of a person's formative years (up to about age 29) as being framed by the socialisation agencies of family, school, and media. It is here that patterns of attitudes and references to political objects are formed and stabilise until the end of post-adolescence (Schuknecht et al. 2003). The political ideology and political system to which a person is exposed during this formative period, when they acquire basic, recurrent political experiences, become anchored in their value systems over the long term and hardly change even when the political system changes fundamentally, for example, through democratisation or the collapse of democracy. The media and school form the framework for the political information that individuals (can) receive. The freer these media are and the more openly they can report on political processes, the more likely consumers of these media are to learn about democratic principles and values (Norris and Inglehart 2009). This positive assumption is counteracted by the spread of false reports and 'alternative facts', especially in social media. There, no one checks whether what is being spread is true. One could say that for every assertion there is also a supporting opinion. This significantly changes the conditions surrounding political socialisation.

However, socialisation agencies do not convey political values alone. Just as political values are embedded in basic social value structures – such as self-expression or emancipation (modernisation), obedience, social equality, and national pride – so religious values and religiosity also correspond to them. Self-expression values and religious values do not seem to correspond well. This has also led to religious values being identified as traditionalist or materialist (Inglehart 1977), and a connection to other traditionalist views of life – for example, in the areas of family and sexuality. In this way, religious values interact with both social and political values, because religious values are also politically situated, through parties and associations. Adherents to religious values can therefore promote inclusion as well as exclusion or defend the status quo or progress, which illustrates the connection between religious and political values. If one were to follow the social capital approach according to Putnam (2000; Putnam and Campbell 2010), then religiosity would act as a strengthening factor for *social capital*, bringing with it trust and pro-democratic tolerance for plurality. However, if one follows the line of a connection between religiosity and traditionality that has been pointed out, this democracy-promoting effect is certainly questionable.

5.2.4 Hypotheses About the Formation of Democratic Political Values and Attitudes

In the following, we will reformulate these and related considerations into research theses. From these assumptions on the formation of democratic political values and attitudes, we can deduce that a preference for democratic political values is socialised in a democratically shaped social and school environment. Thus, a more extensive, higher education should have a pro-democratic effect.

1. *The higher an individual's (school) education is, the more likely it is that their conceptions of democracy will correspond to the ideal characteristics of a democracy.*

Considering the above thoughts, on a more fundamental level we assume effects of different value concepts. In this context, we assume that the desire for freedom is the main attraction of liberal democracy, which is widespread in Europe (Welzel 2013). Conversely, we can draw on the foundation of the theory of authoritarianism (Adorno et al. 1950), which assumes that political values are conveyed precisely through the form of education. With an upbringing increasingly oriented toward values of subordination and a traditional, occasionally even violent, socialisation, the tendency toward authoritarianism increases, going through the stages of authoritarian submission, conventionalism, and authoritarian aggression (Decker and Elmar 2020). A basic authoritarian attitude therefore increases the willingness to advocate autocratic values, while a loving upbringing that does not have too many sanctions and has the educational goal of self-realisation promotes a positive attitude toward democratic values.

2. *The more an individual emphasises self-expression values in their upbringing, the more likely it is that their conceptions of democracy will correspond to the ideal characteristics of a liberal democracy – and the more likely it is that they will support this form of rule.*

This thesis corresponds with Ronald Inglehart's reflections on the change in values: materialists, according to Inglehart's scale of values, tend increasingly toward autocratic values, while post-materialists tend toward democratic values. What matters here is the possibility of obtaining and processing information (Inglehart 1977).

3. *The more an individual consumes free media in the form of newspapers, radio, and television to obtain political information, the more likely it is that their conceptions of democracy will correspond to the ideal characteristics of a liberal democracy.*
4. *The more an individual consumes social media to obtain political information, the less their ideas of democracy will correspond to the ideal characteristics of a democracy.*

In this context, a nationalist, or especially a *völkisch* (folkish) nationalist, character often runs counter to these aspirations for a liberal democracy and leads to an exaggeration of national interests and one's own national or *völkisch* community (Eatwell and Goodwin 2018). This is also true when other characteristics, for example, socialist or equality-oriented understandings of democracy, take hold.

5. *The more strongly an individual's values are oriented toward emphasising the supremacy of their own nation, the less their conceptions of democracy will correspond to the ideal characteristics of a liberal democracy and the more autocratic the values found will be.*

It becomes dangerous for a democracy and a democratic political culture when the political-ideological fringes of the political spectrum grow and gain approval.

6. *The closer to the fringes of the political ideological spectrum an individual is, the less their ideas of democracy will correspond to the ideal characteristics of a democracy.*

Something similar can be assumed, as stated above, for the relationship between religious values, or religiosity, and democratic political culture. Picking up the ideas of Adorno et al. (1950) and Allport (1979) some hypotheses can be formulated:

7. *The more religious an individual is, the less their ideas of democracy will correspond to the ideal characteristics of a democracy and democratic values than non-religious people.*
8. *The more a religious person is involved in religious networks and religious communities, the less open they are to anti-democratic values and prejudice.*

The effects of such relationships are changing as a result of changes in the level of religiosity and ecclesiasticism. With regard to the development of religion in Europe, we refer to the considerations of secularisation theory, in its path-dependent orientation (Norris and Inglehart 2012; Pickel 2009; Pickel 2010a).

9. *Religious affiliation, religiosity, and religious values continue to decline in Europe, as described by secularisation theory. The developments are path dependent.*

For comparative analysis in particular, this form of secularization theory is more viable than the individualization thesis of religion, which is shaped by the sociology of knowledge. Nevertheless, its assumption of privatization is not ruled out, but it takes a back seat to secularization in the macro-level comparison. In the following, we will explore these theses using data from the European Value Study.

5.3   Spread of Democratic Political Culture in Europe

5.3.1   Distrust in Political Elites, and Occasionally a Yearning for Leaders

What is the real state of democracy's legitimacy in post-2015 Europe? Has the crisis of the legitimacy of democracy, which has long been invoked, finally begun (Watanuki et al. 1975; Pharr and Putnam 2000)? Even at first glance (Fig. 5.2), it is evident that there is an overwhelming recognition of democracy as the best political system and a broad desire for democracy in all populations in Europe.

Only in Russia does less than 80% of the population recognise democracy as the best form of government, despite an enormous increase since 1995 (when it was less than 60%).[5] In addition, a few other regional fluctuations can be seen, but these all turn out to be moderate at a high level. In this context, it is important to note that the legitimacy of democracy is linked to an almost equally widespread desire for a democratic system. This is evidenced by a comparison – not listed here – with a question in the EVS wave 2017 that focuses on how important it is for respondents
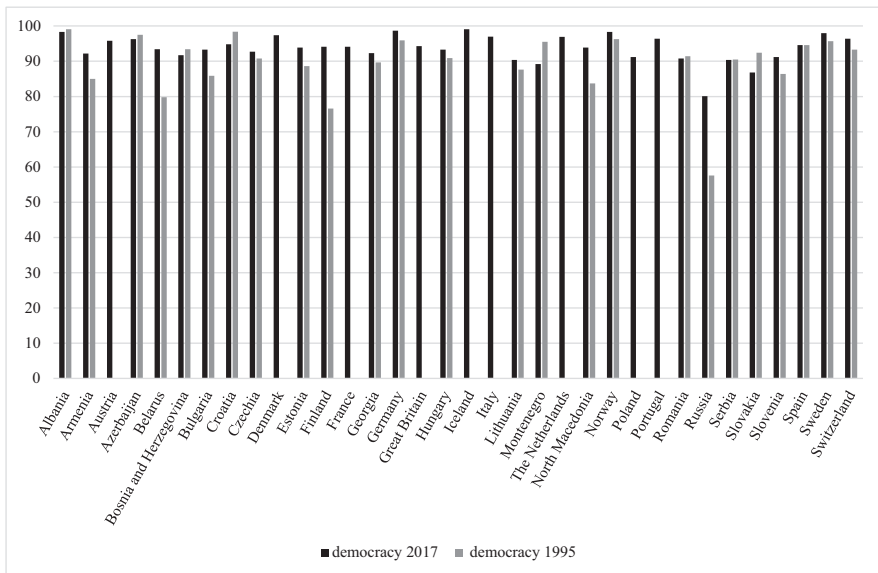
Fig. 5.2 Legitimacy of democracy in 1995 and 2017; own calculations. (WVS 1995; EVS 2017)

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[5] Since only data from the World Values Survey 1995 made it possible to compare the items used in a meaningful way, we used them for comparison. We realise that this is a different data resource than the EVS, but both indicators used and countries selected are the most appropriate operationalisations for the purpose of classifying the 2017 results.

to live in a democratic political system. The *high legitimacy of democracy* has remained markedly constant for many years, as a comparison with 1995 shows. The difference between 1995 and 2017 is most striking in Slovakia, where it amounts to only about five percentage points. This development corresponds with the theory of political culture research, which identifies a high temporal consistency of legitimacy as the starting point for the long-term survival of a democracy (Lipset 1981). Acceptance of the political values of democracy by citizens – this is what legitimacy is about – does not yet allow a direct conclusion to be drawn regarding the stability of a particular regime. To draw such a conclusion, one must look at the attitudes and values that affect existing democracies. An important aspect besides legitimacy is trust in political institutions (Easton 1965), as Fig. 5.3 shows.

And indeed, a look at the results on *trust in institutions* reveals the differentiated nature of the political culture. The closer citizens' judgements come to the politics of the day, the less favourable they are. Conversely, institutions such as the courts benefit from being able to keep their distance from day-to-day politics. Trust in the courts, for example, is the highest of the measured expressions of political trust in all European countries, except for Azerbaijan. Only executive institutions like the armed forces or the police, which are not listed here, can claim similarly high values. The civil service is usually in second place. By contrast, there is great distrust of political parties almost everywhere in Europe. This is also reflected in the generally low level of trust in parliaments. From the point of view of a democratic political culture, this is quite alarming: the core legislative institution of a (representative) democracy, its heart and soul if you will, has only limited access to the necessary political support (Easton 1975). The central instance for the mediation of citizens' interests in the political will-forming process in representative democracies, legitimised by elections, is not supported to the extent that would be necessary for a lasting stability of democracy over several generations (see Bréchon, Chap. 8, this volume). The extremely low trust scores in Albania, Croatia, Serbia, and Czechia raise concerns about a certain vulnerability of the democracies there during periods of crisis or when under pressure from charismatic leaders or populists (Lorenz and Anders 2021).

In Croatia and Albania, at least, this low level of trust may correspond strongly with people's assessment of their own countries as less democratic. They share this unfavourable but perhaps correct attitude with the citizens of Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and North Macedonia. If one adds the attitudes in Bulgaria, Serbia, and Romania, then in Southeastern Europe in particular one's own country hardly seems to give the impression of being a democracy. In view of the limitations on democratic rights and the functioning of institutions recorded by independent indices for determining the quality of democracies (Freedom house, Bertelsmann Transformation Index (2021; Freedom House 2021), Transparency International's Global Corruption Index (2021), Varieties of Democracy (2021), etc.), these assessments by citizens appear to be quite realistic. The good self-assessments of Belarus and Azerbaijan are somewhat different. Here, an experience with population surveys conducted in autocracies manifests itself: citizens express a high degree of satisfaction with their own system, which is judged to be democratic, even though it
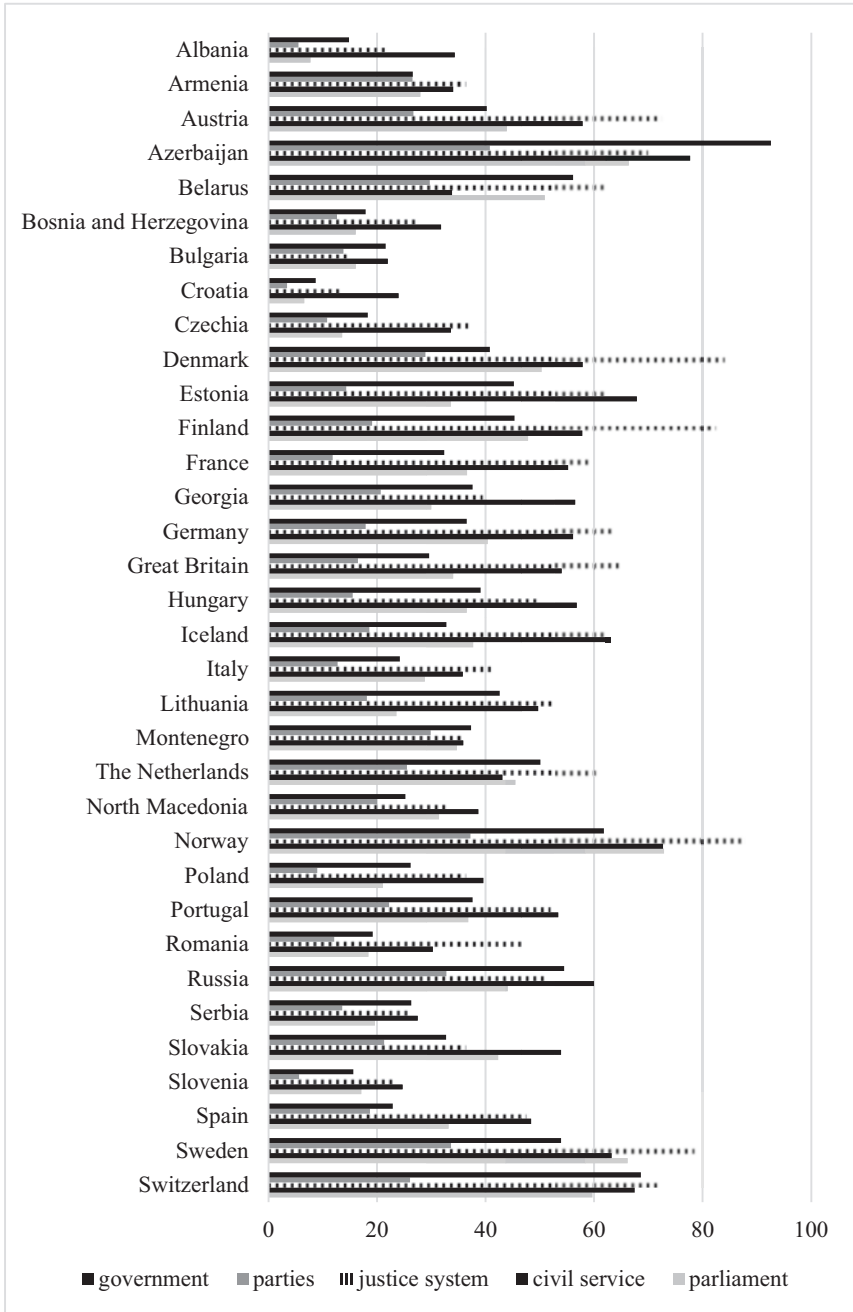
Fig. 5.3 Trust in political institutions. (EVS 2017, in per cent)

is an autocracy. In contrast to these attitudes, the existence of basic principles of democracy is doubted or denied in externally determined indices. Fear of surveillance when filling out questionnaires or the actual conviction of living in a democracy (as suggested in the state-directed media) are causes for these expressions of misjudgement. Accordingly, such assessments by citizens of the degree of democracy (Fig. 5.4) must always be interpreted carefully and with consideration of the contextual conditions (Pickel 2010b).

Corresponding attitudes are also found to a considerable extent in *satisfaction with the current democracy*, and satisfaction with the democratic system is lowest
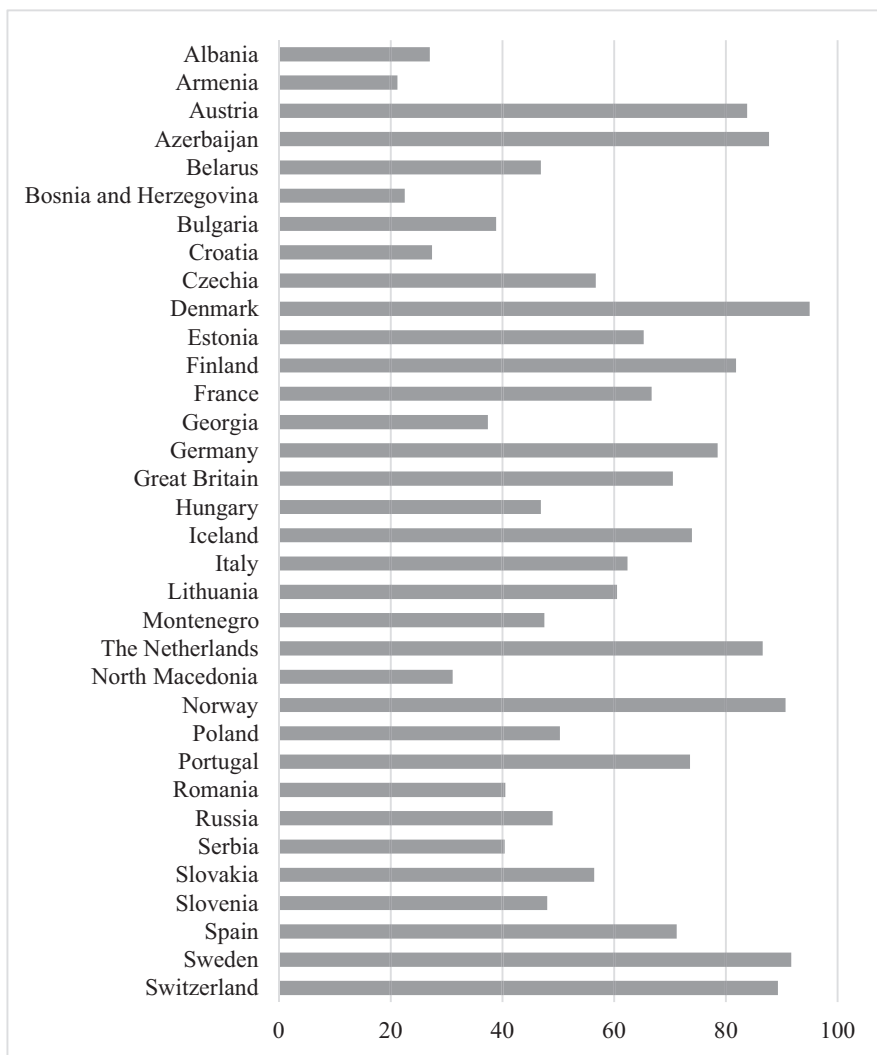
Fig. 5.4 Democracy in own country. (EVS 2017)

in countries that are not regarded by their citizens as democracies. One can see this as an obvious threat to the current political systems, but one can also take something positive from the result: Because no support is given to the current conditions (which are seen as undemocratic), and there appears to be an implicit demand for more democracy (Fig. 5.5).

Let us return to political trust. For a long time, distrust of the central institutions of democracy was ignored in political considerations because of the lack of notably popular alternatives to democracy. The assumption was that parties belong to representative democracy, and they essentially pursue the interests of their voters and do
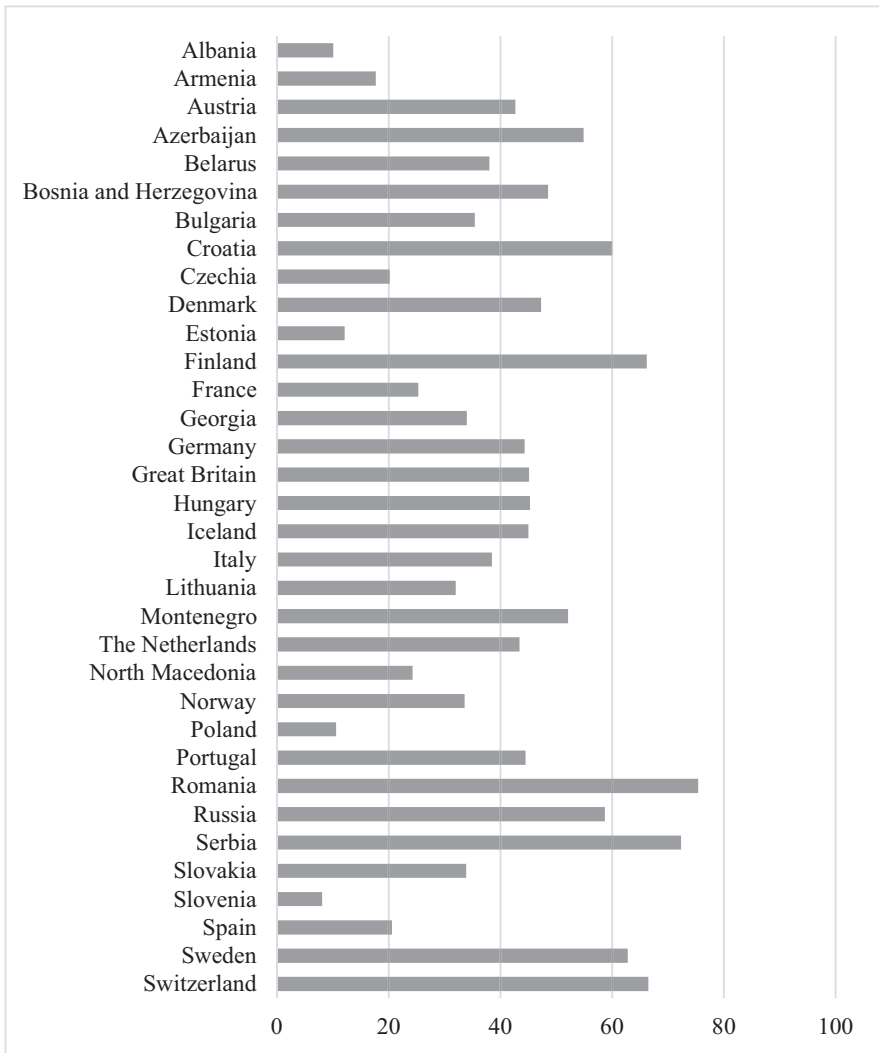
Fig. 5.5 Satisfaction with democracy in Europe in 2017. (EVS 2017)

not harm democracy. With the emergence of *populist movements* and (right-wing) populist parties in Europe, what had already been practised many times in Latin America, among other places, started to take place here (Mudde 2019). Alternatives to the established parties, in the form of charismatic leaders with slogans and programmes that are clearly different from those of established parties, make voters believe that they – unlike the familiar and established 'elites' – care about them (Diamond 1999). Apparently, the people experience a revaluation; they are heard and their wishes are taken into account. Real participation, however, is not the populists' primary goal. Rather, this line of argument serves to delegitimise the ruling parties, especially those from the bourgeois spectrum, and to mobilise dissatisfied voters for themselves. It depends on building important narratives and making use of them. One such narrative, essential for right-wing populists, is the rejection of migration and immigration (Pappas 2019). At the same time, right-wing populists are not interested in broadening social participation in the long term, as the examples of right-wing populist governments in Hungary and Poland show. There, the focus is rather on a strong homogenising and nationalistic nationalism as well as centralisation of a charismatic leader personality (Fig. 5.6).

To put it bluntly, the demands of populists and their supporters have a connection. A strong, charismatic leader makes decisions without parliamentary compromise, now and then with the help of referendums, because he usually knows what is good for his people. While the desire for a leader has risen slightly in Hungary since 1995, it almost surprisingly turns out not to be particularly high at all in Poland and Hungary. The situation is different in Portugal, Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Serbia, North Macedonia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Montenegro. In all of
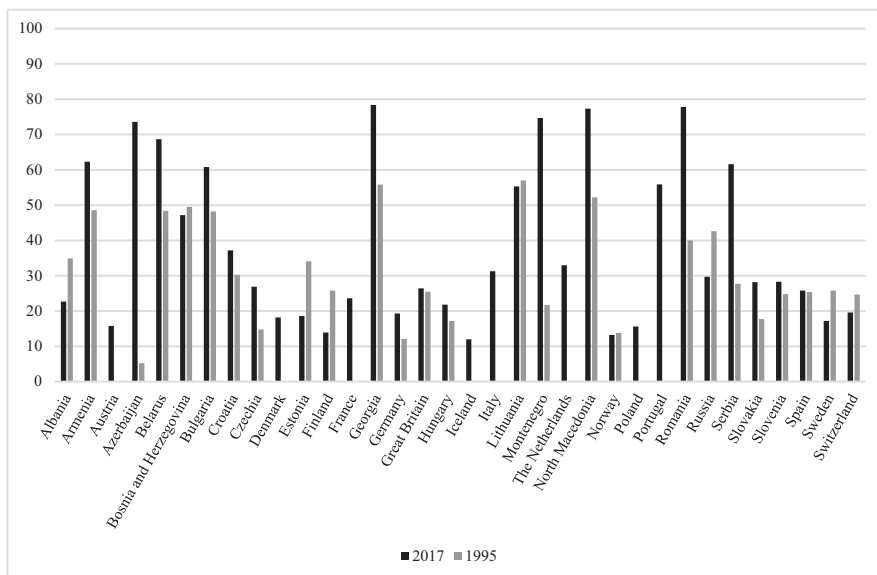
Fig. 5.6 Support of a strong leader in 1995 and 2017; own calculations. (WVS 1995; EVS 2017)

these countries, in 2017 at least half of the population wants a strong person to solve existing problems (for them). In all of these countries (except Portugal), the desire for a central leader has risen sharply since 1995. Together with the values from Fig. 5.9, this results in negative forecasts for the future of democracy in these countries: in times of political and economic uncertainty, citizens do not seek their salvation in increased participation and personal initiative, but instead desire a centralised solution to problems, although they actually prefer democracy as a political system (Fig. 5.2).

When all aspects of political support are considered together, there is strong support for democracy as the ideal and desired form of government. However, this is realised very differently in Europe – at least in the eyes of the citizens. Particularly in the successor states to the USSR and in Southeastern Europe, we find decidedly poor assessments of the quality of people's own democracy and dissatisfaction with the current democratic system. However, we also find considerable dissatisfaction with the reality of a democracy and distrust in key political institutions in Western Europe. Here, the mechanisms and institutions seem to be more firmly anchored and more resistant to hostility, from populists, for example, than in many Eastern European countries. Nevertheless, considerable *potential for dissatisfaction cannot be denied*, especially with regard to the parties and politicians. Both are not given much credit. Thus, the lack of alternatives to democracy, as well as the strong desire to live in a democracy, often keeps the democratic political system alive. But what do citizens actually understand by democracy?

5.3.2   Diverging Values – Diverging Understandings of Democracy?

To answer this question, we examined indicators of citizens' understanding of democracy (essential characteristics of democracy), some of which were included for the first time in the EVS 2017. Take, for example, the items free and fair elections, civil rights ('freedom' and 'control'), and the legal equality of men and women, which are generally regarded as basic values in a democracy. How do these combine with autocratic understandings of democracy (depicted by the introduction of military rule)? If the government turns out to be incompetent and the rule of religious authorities and an obedience to authority lead to a pattern of ideas about what the correct characteristics of a democracy are? For this purpose, we subjected the variables to a dimensional analysis, then recoded them, and finally calculated them into the index 'democracy minus autocracy'. The variables were all reversed in one direction – essential characteristics of democracy. Then the index democracy minus autocracy was formed in which the sum of the values of all six variables used was divided by six. The result is an autocratic understanding of democracy (values −4 and − 5) versus an *informed understanding of (liberal) democracy* (values +4 and + 5). We excluded the variable 'People receive state aid for unemployment', because

it reflects an understanding of social rather than liberal democracy, and social benefits appear desirable in both democracies and autocracies. Accordingly, it does not contribute to a better understanding of the differentiation between autocratic and democratic understandings (Table 5.1).

We call such respondents who score 4 and 5 on the index – for example, those who agreed to a high degree with all the actual characteristics of a democracy and at the same time rejected to a high degree the characteristics of autocratic regimes as characteristics of a democracy – *informed democrats* (enlightened democrats according to the enlightened understanding in Cho 2015). They recognise not only the actual characteristics of a democracy – free and equal – when they are presented to them, but also which characteristics of political regimes do not belong to democracy (Fig. 5.7).

Only seven European countries have more than 50% informed democrats: Albania, Austria, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. Mapping informed democrats against supporters of a strong leader (Fig. 5.8) shows that the attitudes go hand in hand, although multiple answers are possible. In almost all countries where there are few informed democrats, there is a correspondingly high level of leader support. In some countries, such as Spain, Portugal, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Russia, citizens get lost in the middle of nowhere between the political systems of autocracy, leader state, and liberal democracy (Aschauer, Chap. 12, this volume).

But does an informed knowledge of democracy lead one to view democracy as more legitimate? And what are the reasons for developing a positive view of democracy and an informed understanding of democracy?

Table 5.1 Two dimensions of political systems (EVS 2017)

	Factor	
	1	2
v135 democracy: people choose their leaders in free elections (Q39C)	.691	−.055
v138 democracy: civil rights protect people from state oppression (Q39F)	.667	.042
v141 democracy: women have the same rights as men (Q39I)	.663	−.010
v137 democracy: the army takes over when government is incompetent (Q39E)	−.045	.559
v134 democracy: religious authorities interpret the laws (Q39B)	−.160	.554
v140 democracy: people obey their rulers (Q39H)	.104	.454

Extraction method: Principal axis factor analysis. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation. The rotation is converged in four iterations
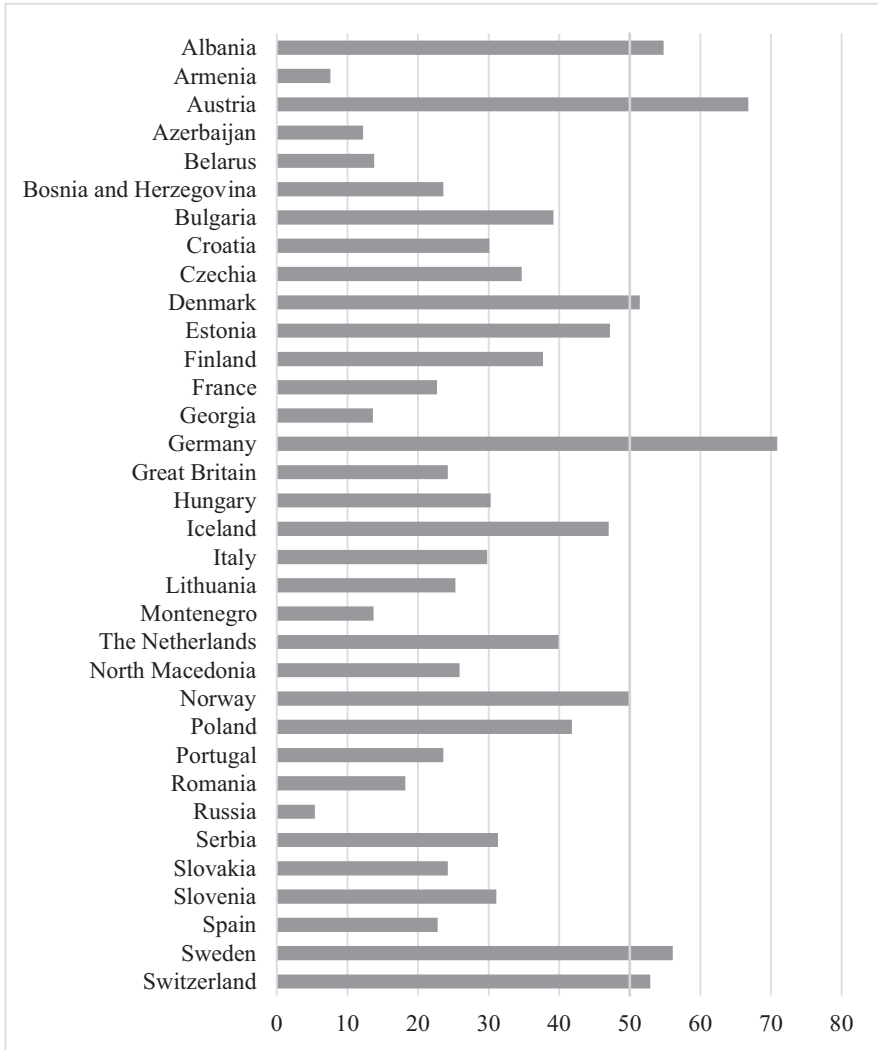
Fig. 5.7 Informed understanding of democracy in Europe. (EVS 2017, v133–v144)

5.3.3   Core Values, Frustration, Legitimacy, and Political Trust?

Who are the enlightened democrats, who are the autocrats, and who is longing for a strong leadership? Political attitudes do not stand alone. They are socialised through so-called socialisation agencies: family, school, friends, workplace, and the wider social environment as well as the media. In addition to political values, a person's value structure also includes social, family, and religious values. Together, they
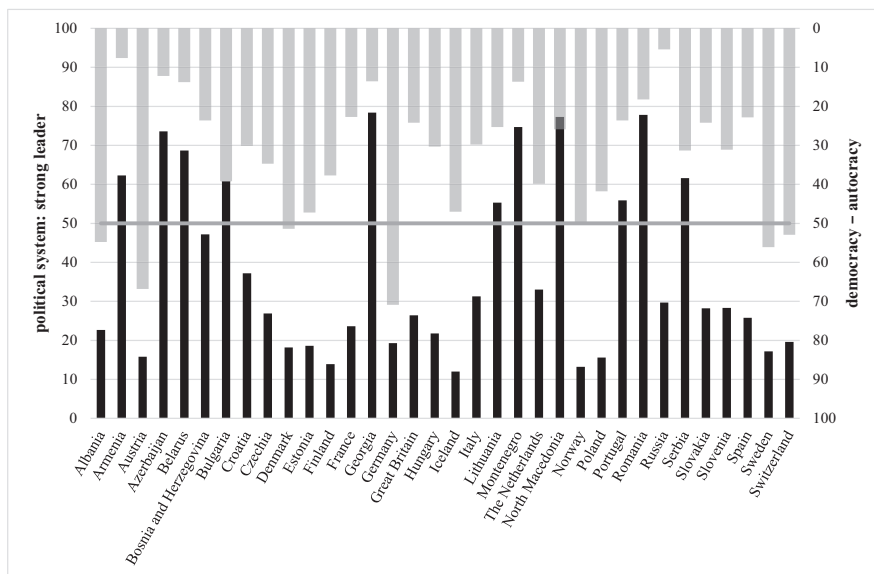
Fig. 5.8 Strong leader vs 'democracy minus autocracy' index. (EVS 2017)

form a web of values in which the ideas of good political governance, in our case a democracy, are integrated. Which value systems produce which conception of democracy, and which people are more likely to be satisfied with democracy and have political trust? We derive the *basic values* identified from the European Values Study survey from educational goals, which primarily represent the value spectrums of self-expression and traditionalism (Table 5.2). However, other factors may also have an influence. We have listed these in our theses. In the following, let us attempt an explanation of an informed understanding of democracy.

Since a breakdown across different country analyses would go beyond the scope here – and yielded barely any deviating results in the empirical test – we present the cumulative model of an individual regression across all respondents of the EVS 2017 (Table 5.2).

The result is clear: previously, the early researchers on political socialisation (Easton and Dennis 1969; Adorno et al. 1950) had been correct in their assumption that the transmission of political values in youth is of great importance for a person's later relationship to democracy. In this context, the understanding of democracy is the key mediator in the acceptance of democracy. Thus, the learned values of tolerance and respect prove to be a main explanatory factor for an informed understanding of democracy. The educational goal of a sense of responsibility and the existence of post-materialistic values also promotes an informed understanding of democracy. In contrast, a high level of religiosity, racist prejudices, and traditionalist educational values works against an informed understanding of democracy. The same applies to a rather right-wing position on the political-ideological spectrum and high consumption of social media.

Table 5.2 Informed understanding of democracy ('democracy minus autocracy' index, EVS 2017)

		Standardised Coefficients beta	Sig.
	Age: respondent (constructed) (Q64)	.035	< .001
	Sex	−.006	.238
Political performance	v39 how satisfied are you with your life? (Q10)	.055	< .001
Socialisation	v93 children to learn at home: religious faith (Q28I)	−.047	< .001
Agency 1 Family	v95 children to learn at home: obedience (Q28K)	−.065	< .001
Behavioural norms	v87 children to learn at home: hard work (Q28C)	−.034	< .001
and	v88 children to learn at home: feeling of responsibility (Q28D)	.078	< .001
Cultural values	v90 children to learn at home: tolerance and respect (Q28F)	.106	< .001
	v86 children to learn at home: independence (Q28B)	.052	< .001
Agency 2 School	Education education	.090	< .001
Agency 3 Media	v208 how often do you follow politics: on television (Q59A)	.015	.014
	v209 how often do you follow politics: on the radio (Q59B)	.032	< .001
	v210 how often do you follow politics: in the daily papers (Q59C)	.042	< .001
	v211 how often do you follow politics: on social media (Q59D)	−.021	< .001
Religion	v54 how often attend religious services (Q15)	−.076	< .001
	v56 are you a religious person (Q17)	−.038	< .001
Basic social values	v111_4 post-materialist index 4-item (constructed)	.104	< .001
Social equality	v221 important: eliminating income inequalities (Q62A)	−.046	< .001
Minimum social security	v222 important: basic needs for all (Q62B)	.163	< .001
Nationalism	v170 how proud are you to be a ... [country] citizen (Q47)	−.015	< .001
Xenophobia	v186 immigrants increase crime problems (Q52B)	−.003	< .001
Racism	v22 would not like as neighbours: people of different race	−.083	< .001
Political ideology	v102 political view: left–right (direction left position)	−.048	< .001

Why is it important to know how a certain understanding of democracy comes about? Why is the understanding of democracy as such important? Does knowing democracy mean loving democracy? Those who have an informed knowledge of democracy and define it as free, equal, and electoral also perceive democracy as more legitimate (Table 5.3). At the same time, this means that citizens perceive the democracy they imagine as legitimate. Accordingly, they are critical of political institutions: they place less trust in parliament and government the more informed they are about the actual characteristics of a liberal democracy. This influence of the

Table 5.3 Informed democracy and legitimacy (EVS 2017)

	Legitimacy: 'having a democratic system'	Satisfaction of democracy: 'satisfaction with democratic system'	Trust in parliament	Trust in government
	$R^2 = .128$	$R^2 = .320$	$R^2 = .470$	$R^2 = .485$
Age	.024***	.009*	.025***	.015***
Sex	−.014**	−.017***	.005	−.003
Education	.030***	.018***	.041***	.012**
'Democracy minus autocracy' index	.327***	.030***	−.027***	−.034***
'Having a democratic system'	–	.058***	.040***	−.002
Satisfaction with democracy	.074***	–	.206***	.259***
Trust in parliament	.065***	.264***	–	.528***
Trust in government	−.004	.343***	.544***	–

Standard regression coefficient: * sig. $p < .05$, ** sig. $p < .01$, *** sig. $p < .001$

understanding of democracy on the perception of legitimacy is more significant than that of any other orientation toward a political object.

If democracy in a person's country deviates from this conception, they are accordingly dissatisfied. However, perceptions of democracy have less influence on satisfaction with democracy than trust in parliament and government. Trust, in turn, arises from positive political experiences (satisfaction with democracy) and a general trust in political institutions and authorities. Trust also provides a certain degree of satisfaction with the current political system. The understanding of democracy thus essentially affects the perception of legitimacy, although other political objects – the current political system and its institutions – are also influenced by it.

5.3.4 Interim Conclusion – The Return of Different Political Values

Our analyses show that there are different distributions of understandings or informedness in relation to democracy. These are based predominantly on educational processes and general values. Religiosity also plays a role, but in a different way than one might wish from a liberal perspective. A high level of religiosity, for example, combined with a more traditional orientation of values, promotes authoritarian political values, which tend to be favourable for autocracies and unfavourable for democracies. These effects also have a mediated effect on the desire for democracy – namely, they have an inhibiting effect.

5.4   … and Religion?

5.4.1   Secularisation, Pluralisation, and Religious Revitalisation?

What is the significance of religion for the development of political values? It is worth taking a look at religious development. For Europe, there are three theoretical lines that can claim explanatory power (Pollack 2003, 2010a; Pollack and Rosta 2017; see also Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume).

Secularisation theory assumes a loss of social significance of religion, which arises as a consequence or accompanying phenomenon of *modernisation processes* (Bruce 2002; Pickel 2010a, 2017). In addition to the spread of rationalisation since the Enlightenment, it is the processes of functional differentiation, urbanisation, and the ongoing increase in wealth that make religion less relevant to the social life of modernising societies (Norris and Inglehart 2011). Secularisation is linked to the social and socio-economic context, is driven by multiple factors, and is also a slow, generational process (Bruce 2002; Pickel 2009; Voas and Doebler 2011).

Secularisation does not describe the disappearance of individual religiosity, but the decline in the importance of religion for society. Nevertheless, proponents of this approach see the effects of a loss of social significance on subjective religiosity: if religion loses social significance, then one's own religiosity is also likely to lose relevance for structuring one's own everyday life. At the very least, the number of factors that animate subjective religiosity decreases. Since religious socialisation takes place relatively early in life and a certain biographical stability is assumed, a breakdown of personal religiosity and religious vitality occurs via generational change (Norris and Inglehart 2011; Pickel 2017): with constantly progressing modernisation, the degree of secularity in a society increases from generation to generation (Pollack et al. 2012; Pollack and Rosta 2017; Pickel and Sammet 2012).

Supporters of *individualisation theory* reject the assumption of a 'rub-off' of institutional processes of secularisation on personal religiosity. Their central justification is the assumption of personal religiosity as an anthropological constant of human life: one cannot be human without transcending (Luckmann 1967). Accordingly, a decline in subjective religiosity is impossible, but a loss of meaning for the church and a decline in ecclesiality is. However, the supporters of this theory see themselves as differing from the secularisation theory; in their view, it is a transformation of the religious rather than secularisation that is taking place. With growing individualisation, 'selfcrafted' religiosities and new, private forms of religion are becoming established. There is no decline of religiosity, only of the (Christian) churches. A return of religiosity results partly from the fact that the personal forms of alternative religiosity have been invisible to the eyes of researchers until now. Only the recognition of new forms of religiosity (and spirituality) allows the idea of a return to emerge.

Adherents of the *market model of religion* focus on the dependence of religious vitality on supply in an open religious market (Stark and Bainbridge 1987; Stark

and Finke 2000; Stark and Iannaccone 1994). The basic condition of this approach is a constant demand for religious offers. Like the individualisation thesis of the religious, in this model every person is intrinsically religious and in search of religious offers that are suitable and exclusive to them. Religious vitality, which from the point of view of the market model oriented towards the rational choice theory mainly depicts religious actions, varies solely because of the competitive situation in the religious market. A diverse offer best meets the increasingly pluralist – but exclusive – demand of the seeking believers. This is most likely to come about under the framework conditions of a situation of religious competition uninfluenced by the state. A restriction of the religious market on the part of the state is problematic. This happens through systematic suppression of religion (see socialism in Eastern Europe), but also through conditions that look favourable, such as a state religion or a traditional preference for individual religions in certain countries. A close connection between state and church is seen as problematic, as it suppresses the religious pluralisation that increases religiosity (Casanova 1994). The search for exclusive offers provides opportunities for exclusive, clearly profiled providers who are interested in creating an identity for customers. Such an identity includes a strong community concept and an affective bond in the group. Such an understanding of religious identity is opposed to popular church concepts that are understood as non-exclusive. From the point of view of the market model, popular churches are not able to develop exclusive offers, as they have too broad a spectrum of members. A return of the religious and of religions (the spread and attractiveness of different faiths) occurs through the expansion of the plural religious offer. New providers are entering the market, occupying vacant niches, and increasing the overall religious vitality of the population through their new offerings.

If one looks at all three approaches, there is substance in each of them to explain the current developments of the religious, although it could be that they are differently suited to explain the situation and development in Europe (Pickel 2017). It is possible, even very likely, that all three processes are taking place – just not with the same strength. Let us now look at the empirical findings. The first thing to say is that in recent decades, mostly in Western Europe, attachment to religion has steadily declined. In line with earlier observations, Western European churches, especially the dominant Christian churches, are steadily losing members (Pickel 2010a; Halman and Draulans 2006). Attendance at religious services is also declining, and even the number of people who consider themselves religious has been falling steadily in Western Europe since 1990 (Table 5.4; Table 5.8 in Appendix). It seems that secularisation is overshadowing the simultaneous processes of individualisation and pluralisation (Inglehart 2018).

These processes take place in Europe against different cultural backgrounds. We speak of path-dependent development processes (Norris and Inglehart 2012; Pickel 2011, 2017; Halman and Sieben, Chap. 4, this volume). These vary not only in pace, but also in their starting point. In the early stages, Martin (1978) pointed out the influence of political positioning towards religion and cultural differences between the dominant religious communities. This can be seen in the different developments in Eastern Europe. The starting point in Eastern Europe is different from that in

Table 5.4 Theoretical explanatory approaches for religious change in the sociology of religion; own composition (Pickel 2009)

	Secularisation Theory	Theory of Individualisation	Theory of Pluralisation and Vitalisation
Authors	Brian Wilson; Steve Bruce; Peter L. Berger; Detlef Pollack; Gert Pickel	Thomas Luckmann; Grace Davie; Danielle Hervieu-Léger	Rodney Stark; Roger Finke; Laurence Iannaccone
Basic thesis	General differences between modernity and religion lead to a consistent decline of the social significance of religion	Institutionalised religion can lose significance, but because religious beliefs are an anthropological constant, only a change in forms of religiosity appear	There is a constant demand for religiosity and religious beliefs. Therefore, the level of religious vitaligy depends on the supply of religious products on the religious market
Relation to general theory	Modernisation Theory	Theory of Individualisation	Rational Choice and Market Theory
Projection	Continuous decline of all forms of religiosity	Decline of involvement in churches, but constant or increasing individual religious beliefs	Development of religiosity in relation to freedom and expansion of a religious market in society

Western Europe. Religious affiliation and religiosity were (unnaturally) reduced in most Eastern European states before 1989 as a result of the repressions of socialist regimes, which varied in intensity from country to country. Thus, all indicators of religiosity and ecclesiality were at a lower level in 1989 than they would have been without repression, simply because of social, cultural, and socio-economic developments. Accordingly, a return of religiosity in Eastern Europe was to be expected (Tomka and Zulehner 1999).

In parts, such revitalisation can be observed in Eastern Europe. Two trends have become apparent in recent years. On the one hand, there has been a constant revitalisation of religiosity and ecclesiasticism in the successor states of the USSR and in Southeastern Europe. On the other hand, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are moving towards the secularisation process of Western Europe, in part after brief revitalisation processes directly after 1989 (Pickel 2009, 2017; Zulehner and Denz 1993; Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). Cultural differences between religious cultures (mainly Catholic, Protestant, or Orthodox in character) and country-specific historical developments (for example, Poland, Czechia) produce differences in the state of religiosity, religious practices, and affiliation. Of course, it must always be kept in mind that all Christian faiths already have different directions in themselves. Thus, the internal diversity of the Protestants and the Orthodox Church is legendary. However, the trends are stable: the Central Eastern

countries, which are catching up quickly from a socio-economic perspective, are adapting to Western European secularisation, despite pro-religious political activities (see Poland), while Eastern European countries that are socio-economically worse off and countries where religion has a high significance for national identity (cultural defence; Bruce 2002) either maintain a high level of religiosity or can even expand it. The picture of a far-reaching *path-dependent secularisation* in Europe is confirmed, with policy- and culture-specific deviations in Southeastern Europe and the successor states of the USSR (Table 5.5; Pickel 2009, 2010a; Pollack et al. 2012).[6]

Development is one side. Another side is the *level of religiosity*. Just as secularisation continues unabated, we are by no means dealing with a secular Europe. Halman and Draulans (2006: 264) write that '[s]ecularisation may well be a European phenomenon, but this does not imply that Europe is homogeneously secular'. A deeper diffusion of religious ideas can only be found in East Germany, Czechia, Estonia, and perhaps more recently Sweden. Sweden presents an interesting case. Not only did the former Protestant state church not succeed in retaining its members, but there was a far-reaching loss of faith and commitment within the structures of the church. The case of Sweden makes it clear that secularisation is not necessarily a phenomenon that solidifies after people leave the church; even before leaving the church, they undergo occasional processes of detachment from the faith. In this case, the belief in God still occupies an independent position that remains for a while beyond religious practices or self-assigned religiosity, but then – according to the effect model of secularisation theory – also fades away through the change of generations (Inglehart 2018; Voas and Doebler 2011).

Contrary to what is assumed in the individualisation theory of religion, church membership, subjective religiosity, and faith are closely related. Thus, it is the social institutionalisation of socialisation and knowledge transfer that supports faith. Charles Glock (1954) previously pointed out the interdependencies of the dimensions of religious knowledge, religious experiences, religious practices, and religious belief (Huber 2003). This is shown by high correlations between the items measuring religiosity, but this is also impressively shown by a reliability analysis in which various indicators of religiosity (belief in God, belief in heaven, personal prayer outside of worship, worship attendance, importance of religion, importance of God) almost form a *dimension of religiosity* (Cronbach's α = .787, which corresponds to a strong scale with uni-dimensionality; similar findings Halman and Draulans 2006). This is not to say that there is no differentiation between church orientation and subjective religiosity: thus, the number of believers exceeds that of practising believers. However, the idea of 'believing without belonging' (Davie 2002) only works to a limited extent, since discontinuities in religious practices, but even more so in religious involvement (and identity), lead to delayed diffusion of faith.

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[6] The differentiation of the countries in Table 5.5 and the following figures follow only (historical) regional differences, which could be of influence in the distribution of religiosity.

Table 5.5 Religiosity in European comparison (state and development; EVS 1990/1991, 2017)

	Religious person		Church attendance (Mean for the year)		Membership of a religion	
	1990	2017	1990	2017	1990	2017
Northern Europe						
Iceland	75	52	3.5	3	96*	80
Finland	59	54	4	5	88	75
Sweden	31	30	5	5	77	64
Norway	47	38	5	5	89	64
Denmark	72	60	4	4	91	83
Western Europe						
Great Britain	57	40	10	8	56	41
France	51	40	7	5	61	43
The Netherlands	61	44	13	7	51	39
W-Germany	65	59	12	8	89	68
E-Germany	38	28	3	3	35	28
Switzerland	73	48	16*	6	88	70
Austria	81	63	18*	10	88	73
Italy	85	77	23	18	85	79
Portugal	75	77	23	15	92	80
Spain	67	51	18	11	85	64
Central Eastern Europe						
Poland	95	86	38	30	96	92
Hungary	57	56	14	8	55	47
Czechia	36	37	9*	5	40*	26
Slovakia	82*	76	21	19	78	75
Slovenia	73	67	15	11	71	64
Baltic Region						
Estonia	36*	38	4*	4	27*	21
Lithuania	83*	85	14*	12	84*	88
Russian Region						
Belarus	70*	63	4*	8	63*	66
Russia	64*	77	4	7	54*	54
Georgia	86*	95	10*	13	89*	94
Armenia	-	92	-	15	-	90
Azerbaijan	-	91	-	6	-	96
Southeastern Europe						
Croatia	72*	82	15*	14	88*	81
Romania	74	84	17*	21	94	96
Serbia	60*	80	6*	8	78*	62
Bosnia and Herzegovina	70	86	19*	19	70*	97
Bulgaria	52*	65	6*	8	66*	75
Montenegro	-	89	-	13	-	72
North Macedonia	66*	82	11*	15.5	91*	92
Albania	-	81	-	7	-	94

* = 1995–1999 World Values Survey data; data in per cent; marked in light grey = decline; marked in dark grey = increase; grouping of the countries along regional position in Europe

If we return to the European situation for religiosity as it presents itself in 2017, we can speak of developments that are shaping the religious landscape more and more along the level of modernisation of the countries. In the Eastern European countries, the former repression of the socialist governments has been overcome and a very high degree of religiosity has now been achieved. Since the previous state was quasi 'abnormal', these revitalisation developments cannot be used as a strong argument against the secularisation thesis (Pickel 2010a). A countermovement is the increasingly observable *interlocking of one's own national identity with religion in Eastern Europe*. This can be seen in the identity formation and identity assurance processes of the Eastern European states, some of which 're-emerged' after 1989.

5.4.2 Religious and Political Values – Signs of Covariance?

But what does this change in religious values mean for political values? If one follows the sociological classic Emile Durkheim (2008), one should assume an integrative power of religion. Not only does religion provide overarching group norms, but certain aspects of its content are also assumed to be socially positive and thus immunising against anti-democratic ideas. However, this positive assumption about the effect of religion and religiosity, especially regarding Christianity and its idea of 'love of one's neighbour', has come under repeated pressure. Although the Catholic Church moved away from its critical position on democracy with the Second World War, the danger of religions as conflict engines or 'fire accelerants' of conflict has been increasingly discussed since the 1990s (Fox 2004). Samuel Huntington's book on a *Clash of Civilisations*, which was widely and critically discussed, changed the view of religion (Huntington 1996). But even earlier, the ambivalences of the effect of religiosity were observed. As Gordon Allport put it, 'religion bears no univocal relationship to prejudice. Its influence is important, but it works in contradictory directions' (Allport 1979: 455; Allport and Ross 1967). And Theodor Adorno (Adorno et al. 1950) identified superstition and esotericism as closely linked to an authoritarian personality, though socially bound Christians were not. Overall, *the relationships between religion, religiosity, and democracy seemed complicated*. Not surprisingly, only a limited number of studies have addressed this relationship with a solid empirical basis in recent years (Fox 2016; Liedhegener et al. 2021; Pickel 2017; Pollack and Rosta 2017). However, it is precisely this relationship that is significant against the background of the often formative power of religion and faith for individuals and groups. Thus, one can also ask in a very practical way why right-wing populists and anti-democrats in Eastern Europe suddenly seek proximity to religious communities.

Let's take a closer look at the relationship between a democratic political culture and religiosity (Table 5.6). If we carry out a simple correlation analysis across all EVS countries, the results are somewhat worrying from a democratic perspective. All religious indicators, be it on the value level or on the behavioural level, are in tension with democratic political values and in a kind of electoral affinity with

Table 5.6 Democratic political values and religiosity – a difficult correlation (EVS 2017)

	Religious Person	Church attendance	Importance of God	Member: religious organisation
Having a democratic system	**−.05****	**−.04****	**−.06****	**.07****
Partial	n.s.	−.02*	n.s.	.03**
W	−.02**	−.02**	−.05**	.07**
E	.01*	−.02**	.07**	.02*
Democracy in own country	**−.09****	**−.05****	**−.14****	**.18****
Partial	−.02**	−.02**	n.s.	.09**
W	.02**	n.s.	n.s.	.15**
E	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.02**
Trust in parliament	**−.01***	**.01***	**−.03***	**.11****
Partial	.04**	.05**	.04**	.07**
W	.04**	.05*	.04**	.11**
E	.04**	.04*	.05**	n.s.
Strong leader	**.18****	**.09****	**.24****	**−.10****
Partial	.10**	.06**	.13**	−.03**
W	.08**	.08**	.11**	−.08**
E	.13**	.05**	.16**	.03**
Army ruling	**.15****	**.12****	**.22****	**−.10****
Partial	.08**	.09**	.13**	−.03**
W	.04**	.06**	.10**	−.11**
E	.12**	.10**	.16**	.05**

Pearson's *r* coefficient: * sig. $p < .05$, ** sig. $p < .01$; $n = 52,476$; first value (in bold) = general correlation; second is partial = partial correlation by controlling Western versus Eastern Europe (dummy); third and fourth = correlations in Western Europe (W) and Eastern Europe (E)

anti-democratic positions. There are clear correlations especially with the anti-democratic orientations of strong leadership and military rule. Security, order, and a certain tendency towards authoritarianism seem to be more widespread among more religious people than among less religious people throughout Europe. Opinions differ, above all, on the approval of the preferred system – for example, support for the system. While subjective religiosity works against a democratic political culture, albeit to a moderate degree, members of religious communities who are actively involved in it or in a religious organisation take an exactly opposite, democracy-supporting position. In line with *social capital theory* (Putnam 2000), a pro-democratic attitude is more frequently formed among religious members who are actively involved in face-to-face relationships. This contrasts with the more passive religious church members or religious fundamentalists.

On the one hand, one can assume that committed believers have a social understanding of religion. This is also integrated into civil society, which is closer to a civic culture than a subject culture (Almond and Verba 1963). Above all, however, it is the values that differ between church members. Among active members, these

point to plurality in society – a central feature of modern democracy. It is precisely this openness to plurality that is rejected by very religious people, or dogmatic or even fundamentalist believers. They orient themselves to traditions and are sceptical of corresponding modernisations. The more orthodox their religious attitude, the more this is the case (Roof 1974). Here again we find a *distinction between the religiously committed and the religious* (Table 5.6). Just as tolerance seems to decrease with increasing religiosity, so networking in the religious space has a positive effect on the spread and perception of tolerance. This then also defines positions on (pluralistically viewed) democracy (Allport 1979; Pickel 2019). Religious commitment and a social religion prove to be a bridge to civil engagement and civil society. A strongly individualised, perhaps even dogmatic religiosity, on the other hand, tends to create a separation from other social groups and people – and from democracy.

However, part of the effect found in global calculations is generated by differences between Western Europe and Eastern Europe. If one controls for region, the differences diminish, sometimes almost beyond recognition. The structure of the effects remains largely the same (religiosity and churchgoing) in relation to political ideas aimed at security, subordination, and control by authorities, without fundamentally and profoundly counteracting democratic values. Here, references to the approach of authoritarianism are obvious (Adorno et al. 1950). There is a striking *West–East difference* in the relationship between active members and the anti-democratic alternatives (strong leader, army rule). While this correlation is clearly negative in Western Europe, it is positive in Eastern Europe: the forces active in people's religion in Eastern Europe are closer to anti-democratic forms than those in the lives of non-active believers or the non-denominational, whereas in Western Germany these forces have an inhibiting effect on openness to alternative, anti-democratic, systems. Here one must perhaps also bear in mind that right-wing populists in some Eastern European countries are not the opponents of the system, but are actually in government. These country differences also show up in a simple aggregate data analysis (Fig. 5.9). Thus, perhaps with the deviations of Belarus and Poland, the micro contexts are mirrored at the macro level. In other words, in countries with a religious culture we also find a greater proximity to authoritarianism – and anti-democratic positions.

These findings are in line with country-specific findings from research on the relationship between religiosity and right-wing populism or religion and the election of right-wing parties (Arzheimer and Carter 2009; Billiet 1995; Huber and Yendell 2019; Pickel and Yendell 2018; Öztürk and Pickel 2022). But how is it that Christian religiosity does not seem to have an immunising effect against anti-democratic offers across Europe? One reason may be the proximity of Christians to certain value orientations. In the worst case, they represent the bridge on which religious people approach people with radical right-wing, right-wing populist, and anti-democratic attitudes (Johnson et al. 2011; Küpper and Zick 2011). These values, which are seen as unifying, are group-related prejudices and resentments (Tajfel 1982; Quillian 1995). Corresponding bridging constructions between right-wing extremists and religious people can be found in ethnocentrism, the rejection of migrants and people who are seen as culturally different, and racism, but also in a
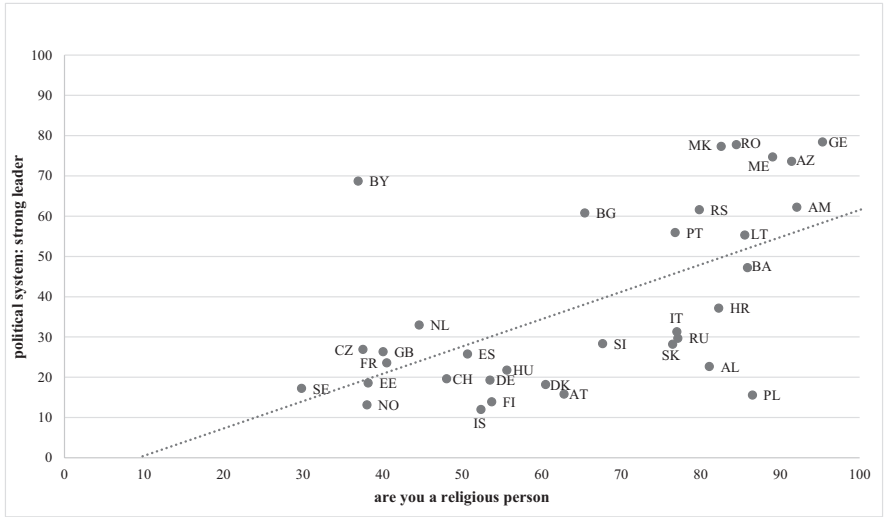
Fig. 5.9 Global connections between anti-democratic positions and religiosity; data in per cent per country. (EVS 2017)

fierce defence of heteronormative thinking (Billiet et al. 1995; Pickel and Öztürk 2020). This is also confirmed by analyses with the European Values Study 2017 (Table 5.7).

Just as corresponding prejudices and social distances promote or correspond to anti-democratic positions, so they are also seen in relation to religious ideas. There is a significant relationship between a lack of political support for democracy and social distancing (or rejection) of Muslims or people of other ethnicities (Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). Relationships are particularly strong between anti-democratic positions and rejection of homosexual parenthood.

Now we can have a look on the effects of religiosity. The higher the belief in God, the stronger the rejection of homosexuals. Deep faith elicits *rejection of non-binary heterosexual gender identities*, which has also been demonstrated in alternative studies in single countries (Fulton et al. 1999; Pickel and Öztürk 2020). The effect is the strongest in relation to prejudice. It seems that religious people are not only very traditional in their view on matters of sexuality, but they are also more open to a strong (and anti-democratic) prejudice (such as the advocacy of a strong leader, Fig. 5.10). The scatter diagram shows the distributions over European countries and demonstrate the social climate in the countries. This position (of anti-homosexual prejudice) harmonises with an anti-feminism embedded in right-wing populism and right-wing extremism, a thinking that finds favour among a not inconsiderable number of believers in Europe. However, social religiosity in the form of congregational ties and social commitment in the church sector diametrically opposes these expressions of religiosity. Following Robert Putnam's social capital

Table 5.7 Bridging values to anti-democratic thinking (EVS 2017)

	Would not like Muslims as neighbours	Would not like as neighbours people of different race	Homosexual couples as good parents as other couples
Having a democratic system	−.11**	−.11**	.13**
Democracy in own country	−.09**	−.11**	.24**
Trust in parliament	−.08**	−.05**	.12**
'Democracy minus autocracy' index			
Strong leader	.11**	.15**	−.27**
Army ruling	.10**	.14**	−.22**
Religious person	.06**	−.07**	−.30**
Church attendance	.05**	−.05**	−.21**
Importance of God	.05**	−.10**	−.40**
Member religious organisation	−.06**	−.05**	.12**

Pearson's *r* coefficient: ** sig. *p* < .01; *n* = 52,476
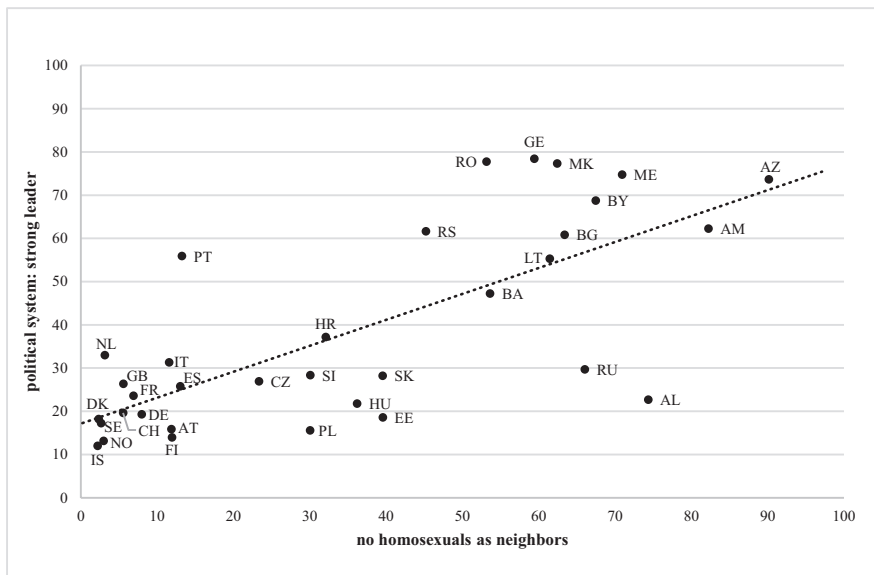
Fig. 5.10 Rejection of homosexuals as neighbours and advocacy of strong leaders in Europe; data in per cent per country. (EVS 2017)

theory, structures exist in the church space which provide the opportunity to counteract prejudices. Together with a dogmatic religiosity that is more burdened by prejudice, this produces the ambivalence of religiosity that was noted early on (Adorno et al. 1950; Allport 1979). Comparing reference groups, *prejudice against non-heteronormal gender identities* is significantly more common among dogmatically religious people than is prejudice against other social groups, including Muslims and migrants.

Looking at the country differences in Fig. 5.11, the Western European countries differ considerably from the Eastern European countries in the existence of corresponding prejudices and resentments. Here illustrated by attitudes towards homosexuals. As the enclosed scatter diagram shows, both approval of a strong leader and rejection of a homosexual as a neighbour are low in the Western European countries under study, with variations. These tolerant perceptions are largely a result of efforts of civil movements and politicians in recent years, as the frequencies show (Table 5.9 in the Appendix; Figs. 5.10 and 5.11). The situation is different in Eastern Europe, where prejudice against homosexuals and preference for a strong leader often harmonise at higher levels. Here, the rejection of homosexuals as neighbours reaches values of up to 90% rejection (Azerbaijan) (Fig. 5.11; Table 5.9 in Appendix). The relationship structure at the macro level is striking: although there is no completely linear connection, Albania and Portugal also fall outside the window that is being mapped, and a relationship between an authoritarian anti-democratic conviction and homophobia can be seen with slight fluctuations.

Similar patterns can be found for the rejection of members of other religious communities (Jews and Muslims) (Table 5.9 in Appendix). Here, historical-cultural circumstances promote differences, such as a predominantly Muslim culture. Nevertheless, in the predominantly Christian states of Eastern Europe, a widespread *rejection of Muslims can be identified as an important factor for the success of right-wing populists as a result of anti-democratic positions* (Adida et al. 2016). Here, political theming seems to be of great importance; otherwise the differences in Eastern Europe would also be difficult to explain. If the high rejection rate or social distance from Muslims in Armenia is still understandable because of conflict linked to religious affiliation there, other explanations are needed for the high prevalence in Lithuania, Czechia, and Slovakia (Table 5.9 in Appendix). In addition to political instrumentalisation, the low level of contact with Muslims, for example, for cultural reasons, also plays a role in the high level of distance (Allen 2010; Pickel and Öztürk 2018, 2020; Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume; Schmiedel and Smith 2018; Strabac and Listhaug 2007; Yendell and Huber 2020). In this context, Muslims and migrants are readily equated, as the classifications of the refugee movements in 2015 showed (Pickel and Pickel 2018, 2019). It is difficult to discern the clear share of religious imprinting and tradition, even if anti-Muslim demonstrations are carried out as a 'defence of the Christian West', where they fall back on early images of Islam and 'the Orient' and combine them with current prejudices (Said 1978). Cross-European structural references become clear on the macro level, as do connections between certain religious convictions and prejudices on the micro level.
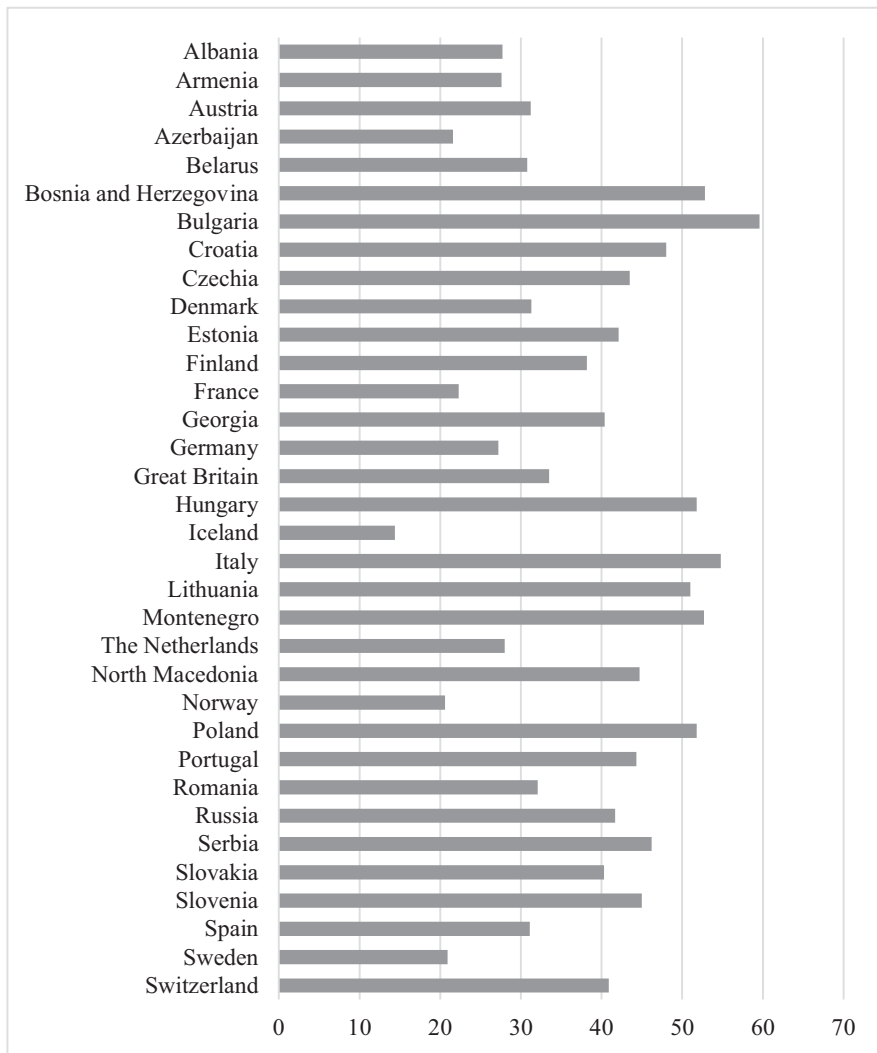
Fig. 5.11 Openness toward homosexuals in European comparison; data in per cent per country. (EVS 2017)

5.4.3   Interim Conclusion – More Secularisation, More Religious Pluralisation, More Prejudice?

Overall, it becomes clear that religious development in Europe follows several lines. The overarching development is determined by processes of secularisation. In line with theory – modernisation, especially socio-economic modernisation – works in

the direction of a loss of social significance of religion (Norris and Inglehart 2012; Halman and Draulans 2006; Pickel 2010a). This primarily concerns the number of believers and church members, but also religious practices and a religious self-image. Belief in God is still the most enduring, but even this is not protected from a diffusion process, which in the long term leads to the fading of belief in God among more and more Europeans. Secularisation continues to follow culturally, politically, and economically predetermined paths. This path dependency is linked to different rates of secularisation. It is accompanied by a religious individualisation and pluralisation. In Western Europe and East-Central Europe, this leads to visible secularisation processes, while in Southeastern Europe and the successor states of the USSR, processes of return to the 'normal religious state' and collective identity processes promoted by political-religious entanglements surpass the still weak secularisation processes that are also taking place (Pickel 2010a). This development still leads to a colourful picture of religious entrenchment in Europe in 2017. Above all, the picture of a less religious Western and Central Europe and a religious Eastern and Southeastern Europe is now increasingly emerging in 2017.

If one approaches the relationship between religion and religiosity and a democratic political culture, one could almost be inclined to see this development as positive. The reason is that there are relationships between religiosity and anti-democratic convictions across Europe. Especially in Eastern Europe, this (uncanny) proximity can be confirmed. However, it is an ambivalent relationship: just as exclusivist, dogmatic or fundamentalist believers cross the bridges of different prejudices to oppose liberal pluralist democracy, on the opposite side are socially and pluralistically minded religious people and church members who are among the strongest advocates of democracy. This difference is found in the relationship with members of other religious communities, as well as in attitudes towards other gender identities. The levels of approval, as well as the relationships, differ by country. The revitalisation is partly combined with an increasing closeness to nationalism and thus rather authoritarian structures, which cannot be reconciled well with a liberal democracy. The political coalitions of interest between churches and right-wing populist rulers in Eastern Europe also play a role here.

5.5 Conclusion – Democracy and Regression of Religion in Eastern Europe?

The results of our analyses of the EVS 2017 confirm trends such as that of *progressive secularisation for Western Europe and East-Central Europe at least, but also that of a high legitimacy of democracy*. A closer look reveals a mixed, if not ambivalent, picture at the level of political culture in 2017. On the one hand, the importance of and approval for the ideal – albeit diffuse – image of democracy is high. So there

seems to be no crisis of legitimacy for democracy, as it sometimes seems in public discourses. But massive differences in satisfaction with democracy – for example, support for the current democratic system – show to some extent the fragility of this legitimacy. Low levels of satisfaction with the implementation of democracy can be found in Eastern Europe especially. In the long run, despite the legitimacy of democracy as an ideal, this is a problem for the survival of democracy in everyday life. Dissatisfaction undermines aspects of a liberal democracy in particular. It helps that democracy can be understood in different ways. In *Eastern Europe, and therein countries of the Russian region as well as Southeastern Europe, we find a strong openness to alternative systems that are anti-democratic*. Thus, the desire for a strong leader and partial authoritarian rule is seen as compatible with democracy. This is clearly shown by the results of the index we constructed. In this way, right-wing populists also manage to gain influence and power, especially in Eastern Europe. They can mobilise citizens for themselves with corresponding ideas, mostly about collective horror scenarios. The important thing is to maintain the appearance of democracy, but a democracy of their own, nationalistic character. This way of thinking not only contradicts the definition of democracy, but also its most widespread liberal practice in Europe.

Prejudice and collective defence, such as those exercised against migrants and people who do not share established traditional values, *provide a bridge for proximity to right-wing populists, but also a bridge to religion*. Religious ideas work in two directions here: while socially engaged and thinking believers are pro-democratic and against prejudice, fundamentalist and dogmatic believers develop an elective affinity with right-wing beliefs that are anti-pluralist and then also anti-democratic. Above all, gender identities that do not follow the heteronormative pattern of binary couple relationships prove to be a bridge to right-wing beliefs and a problem for dogmatic and orthodox religious believers. These kinds of rejection are widespread in Eastern Europe. In Western Europe, on the other hand, they have decreased massively in the last three decades, which leads to a strong difference between Western and Eastern Europe in terms of structures of prejudice.

It is possible that the *progress of secularisation in Western Europe* is conducive to this. However, it is not possible to work out this relationship exactly and it may also be an ecological fallacy generated by a third variable – modernisation. The ongoing difference in development between Western Europe (secularisation) and Eastern Europe (mostly revitalisation) is recognisable. In Western Europe, a continuous dimishing of the importance of religion is also found in 2017. At least from here, the validity of the secularisation theory must be assumed, while the assumptions of the market model of the religious and the individualisation theory of the religious clearly fall short of this explanatory power (the same finding can be seen in Halman and Draulans 2006). The East-Central European states had already swung into line with Western European secularisation shortly after the upheaval. The end of anti-church repression in 1989 was only briefly enough to bring about a recovery of religious ideas there. Presumably, considerations of secularisation

theory, which see socio-economic gains as the central driving force for secularisation, are at work here. This is precisely what can be observed in East-Central Europe. In the states of the Russian region and Southeastern Europe, the revitalisation processes are confirmed. In the meantime, they have mostly flattened out. Many Eastern European states have now reached the 'normal' level they would have had without socialist repression, simply because of the combination of cultural imprints and the level of modernisation (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). The increasingly recognisable fraternisations of religious communities with political leaders also contribute to an interlocking of religion and nation as well as a nationalist revival of religiosity. In the sense of the 'cultural defence' formulated by Steve Bruce (2002: 39), a symbiosis is taking place. Corresponding developments can be observed in Russia, Poland, Croatia, and other countries. With a view to the research question posed at the outset – *how do political culture and democratic values compare across Europe in 2017?* – just as in Northern and Central Europe democracy still has a stable anchoring in the population and the understanding of democracy largely excludes anti-democratic elements, in Eastern Europe we increasingly find signs of a penetration of the understanding of democracy by anti-democratic, mostly authoritarian, ideas. Existing and fuelled prejudices and ideas of inequality in the population serve (most strongly in Eastern Europe, but not only there) as an element of mobilisation for (anti-democratic) right-wing populists. Regarding our second research question – *what significance do religious values have for political values under conditions of advancing secularisation?* – the picture is clear on the one hand and ambivalent on the other. Just as clear effects of religiosity on political values, mediated via the bridge of prejudices, can be discerned, so too, these have the opposite effect to some extent. *While socially committed believers oppose prejudices and anti-democratic attitudes, dogmatic, orthodox, and fundamentalist believers more often come into electoral affinity with anti-democrats* (Allport 1979). Against the background of a still widespread revitalisation in Eastern Europe, this relationship – viewed with some caution – appears to be a cause for concern if one looks at it from the perspective of a supporter of liberal democracy. There is thus a need for further research, especially in an international comparative approach.

Appendix

Table 5.8 Religiosity in European comparison (state and development) – additional indicators; own calculations EVS/WVS 1990/1991; 2017

	Religion as important in your life		What should children learn at home: religious faith		Belief in God	
	1990	2017	1990	2017	1990	2017
Northern Europe						
Iceland	56	40	50	6	85	58
Finland	38	33	13	7	76	61
Sweden	27	31	6	4	45	38
Norway	40	35	14	7	65	47
Denmark	31	23	9	5	64	55
Western Europe						
Great Britain	46	38	20	10	79	50
France	42	36	13	8	61	53
Netherlands	44	31	14	9	65	45
W-Germany	37	40	19	11	78	69
E-Germany	30	20	16	3	36	29
Switzerland	54	32	24	9	84*	67
Austria	59	50	23	12	87	75
Italy	68	66	35	18	90	84
Portugal	63	67	30	11	89	88
Spain	51	40	24	16	85	70
Central Eastern Europe						
Poland	89	80	16	33	97	93
Hungary	50	46	24	14	65	71
Czech Republic	22	22	9	11	42*	39
Slovakia	40	59	28	22	82*	77
Slovenia	44	36	21	9	63	60
Baltic Region						
Estonia	19	26	3	4	52*	48
Lithuania	42	50	21	14	86	86
Russian Region						
Belarus	30	56	6	10	43/78*	82
Russia	35	51	8	12	44/69*	78
Georgia	79*	94	32*	50	96*	98
Armenia	66*	83	12*	26	86*	91
Azerbaijan	83*	60	19*	14	98*	98
Southeastern Europe						
Croatia	56*	61	19*	29	81*	84
Romania	74	82	43	46	94	97
Serbia	56*	75	13*	31	69*	85
Bosnia and Herzegovina	74*	81	20*	37	85*	96
Bulgaria	28	61	11	19	40	81
Montenegro	53*	67	13*	33	65*	96
North Macedonia	66*	80	22*	31	84	90
Albania	60*	72	35*	18	94*	97

* = 1995–1999; Religion as important for your life = very important, and quite important; light grey = decline, dark grey = increase

Table 5.9 Expressions of social distance in Europe; own calculations EVS/WVS 1990/1991; 2017

	No Muslims as neighbours		No homosexuals as neighbours		No Jews as neighbours	
	1990	2017	1990	2017	1990	2017
Northern Europe						
Iceland	12	9	20	2		2
Finland		23	25	12		7
Sweden	17	7	18	3		1
Norway	21	7	19	3		2
Denmark	15	12	12	2		2
Western Europe						
Great Britain	16	6	33	6		2
France	15	8	24	9		4
The Netherlands	14	16	11	3		3
West Germany	20	11	33	7		3
East Germany	20	29	34	13		8
Switzerland	18*	14	19*	6		6
Austria	14	22	43	12		8
Italy	14	19	37	11		7
Portugal	19	13	52	13		11
Spain	12	20	29	13		12
Central Eastern Europe						
Poland	26*	34	66*	30		9
Hungary	18	38	75	36		20
Czechia	47	57	53	23		17
Slovakia	51	57	69	40		25
Slovenia	38	29	43	30		22
Baltic Region						
Estonia	21	32	73	40		11
Lithuania	34	66	87	61		36
Russian Region						
Belarus	24	22	79	68		14
Russia	16	20	81	66		12
Georgia	28*	34	77*	59		28
Armenia	42*	67	83*	82		36
Azerbaijan	18*	–	91*	90		24
Southeastern Europe						
Croatia	14*	15	46*	32		12
Romania	35	33	75	53		28
Serbia	27*	20	74*	45		12
Bosnia-Herzegovina	28*	26	56*	54		27
Bulgaria	41	21	67	63		19
Montenegro	29*	8	82*	71		10
North Macedonia	29*	14	67*	62		21
Albania	25*	0	71*	74		4

* = WVS 1995–1999

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Dr Susanne Pickel (*1968) is Chair of Comparative Politics at the Department of Political Science at the University of Duisburg-Essen (Germany). Her main fields of interest are: studies on democracy, political culture, political attitudes, and transition from and to democracy. Together with Gert Pickel, she is responsible for textbooks and edited volumes on democracy research, political culture, and methods of empirical political science. She is currently engaged in research projects on (co-)radicalisation of Muslim and non-Muslim young adults and on political representation and responsivity of people with and without migration biographies.

Dr Gert Pickel (*1963) is Chair of Sociology of Religion and Church at the Department of Sociology of Religion at Leipzig University (Germany). His main fields of interest are: studies on religion, democracy, political culture, political attitudes, racism, and prejudice. Together with Susanne Pickel, he is responsible for textbooks and edited volumes on comparative politics, democracy research, political culture, and methods of empirical political science. He is currently engaged in research projects on social cohesion, racism and social cohesion, understanding of the Bible, secularism and (co-)radicalisation of Muslim and non-Muslim young adults.

Chapter 6
Religion, Values and Politics: The Effect of Religiosity on Attitudes Towards Immigrants and Muslims

Regina Polak and Dirk Schuster

Abstract The European Values Study demonstrates a significant impact of religiosity on political attitudes. As an example, the authors investigate the effect of religiosity on attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims, as they are crucial for liberal democracy and a focal point of conflicts about values, politics, and religion. In three steps, the authors reflect on the complexity of this effect. First, selected theories about secularisation, individualisation, and pluralisation of religion are used to outline the development of religion in Europe and its role in the political arena. Second, the effect of religiosity in relation to sociodemographic factors is analysed. A cluster analysis forming socioreligious types offers a deeper insight, quantitatively and qualitatively, of the effect of religiosity on attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims in selected countries. Third, the results are theoretically interpreted. The authors demonstrate that religiosity is neither an independent influencing factor nor one that directly affects attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims. Rather, across Europe, the effect of religiosity is inseparably connected with sociodemographic variables such as 'age' and 'size of town' and depends on country-specific factors such as political discourses on migration, and religious historical constellations.

Keywords Religiosity · Religionisation · Anti-Muslim attitudes · Anti-migrant attitudes · Socioreligious typology

R. Polak (✉)
Department of Practical Theology, Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
e-mail: regina.polak@univie.ac.at

D. Schuster
Center for Museum Collections Management, University for Continuing Education Krems, Krems, Austria
e-mail: dirk.schuster@donau-uni.ac.at

6.1   Purpose, Objectives, and Context

The effect of religiosity on political attitudes and values as recorded in the European Values Study (EVS) is this volume's focus. In our contribution, we investigate whether religiosity affects political attitudes directly by utilising in-depth random samples based on the EVS data. With this approach, we wish to encourage a more interdisciplinary and multi-perspective interpretation of quantitative data. We consider it necessary to set up this broader heuristic framework because our 'spot checks' will demonstrate that universal arguments based on sociological theories of religion are becoming increasingly less adequate for explaining the diverse developments of religion in Europe.

The starting point of our considerations is the concept of 'embedded religion' as it is discussed in sociology (Giddens 1991; Madsen 2009), religious and cultural anthropology (Taylor 2007), religious studies (Coe 2012–2013), and practical theology (Zulehner 1989). According to Giddens (1991), the process of modernity leads to a disembedding of social institutions; for example, social relationships break away from their local context and individuals enter a reflexive relationship with institutions. This process also affects religion. Since the Reformation, religion has been disconnecting from local ties and membership of small-scale social groups has been eroded. Consequently, the natural shaping of everyday life through a religiously structured culture – shaped through rituals, symbols, and daily life practices – has gradually declined. Individuals change their relationship with (church) institutions while religious affiliations and religious world views decrease (Taylor 2007).

However, this process runs dialectically (Giddens 1991). While the social orders of ancient and medieval religions erode, new constellations arise. New socioreligious orders, new institutionalisations, new functions, and semantics of religion are emerging. This dialectic can also be observed today as religiosity increasingly loses its position as a relevant area of life, while subjective religiosities are simultaneously taking on new functions and meanings in transforming cultural and political contexts – independently of the traditional churches but induced by political and media discourses.

For our purposes, the dialectic concept of 'embedding' and 'disembedding' of religion is hermeneutically important because it argues that religiosity is not a 'pure' or even primordial social reality but is inextricably linked with sociocultural, political, and historical contexts. This is also assumed by Coe (2012–2013): 'Along with internal diversity and change over time, another fundamental tenet of a religious studies approach is to recognise the ways that religions are embedded in human cultures and not isolated in a discrete private sphere.' As values are at the core of human cultures, religiosity is always deeply connected with them and dependent on other variables.

Finally, a practical-theological approach suggests that the vitality of (not only) Christian religiosity requires corresponding social 'structures of plausibility'; for example, without being embedded in religiously structured, everyday cultures and

religious communities, religiosity as a lived practice 'evaporates'. This is based on the social structure of religiosity in modern societies, which are characterized by uncertainty and find themselves under a 'heretical imperative' forcing people to freely and consciously choose their faith. (Zulehner 1989, following the sociology of knowledge of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann).

The socioreligious developments documented by the EVS since the 1980s substantiate these theories, in particular for the religiosities in Western Europe that have traditionally been structured in a Christian ecclesiastic form. After a continuous erosion of institutional ties and affiliations, we can witness a constant decline of religious practice (prayer and attending church services), denominational self-image, and belief in God, as these are increasingly less socially embedded and supported (Polak and Schachinger 2011). This development was also clearly evident in the EVS 2017 (Pickel and Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume). After the continuous erosion of traditional church affiliation and forms of practice, belief in God – relatively stable in Europe for decades – is declining in many countries, even in those that have traditionally been dominantly Catholic. This can be seen in Table 6.1.

However, the need for an explanation arises when examining the noticeable country-specific differences and the 'outliers' that demonstrate increased belief in God between 2008 and 2017 (East Germany, Czechia, Sweden, Finland, Greece). These heterogeneous developments are also evident in other religious indicators (Pickel and Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume). Based on the theory of the dialectic between the embedding and disembedding of religion, the question arises as to

Table 6.1 'Do you believe in God: yes' (v57) between 1990 and 2017, in per cent (EVS 1990–2017)

	1990	1999	2008	2017
East Germany	32	29	20	31
Czechia	31	33	29	31
Sweden	38	47	35	34
France	57	56	50	50
The Netherlands	61	58	55	41
Denmark	59	62	59	50
Slovenia	55	62	62	58
Hungary	59	65	67	65
Finland	61	74	56	54
West Germany	64	70	67	63
Switzerland	n.a.	n.a.	68	65
Slovakia	64	76	74	67
Austria	77	83	72	68
Italy	84	88	84	76
Greece	n.a.	84	90	n.a.
Croatia	n.a.	91	86	81
Romania	89	92	95	95
Poland	95	96	95	90

whether the intensity of religiosity in the participating countries depends on other factors that shape religiosity in a manner specific to these countries. Are there any country-specific social, cultural, and political formations that can revitalise religiosity or belief in God? Can religious belief that has been decoupled from the Protestant churches be revived through new religious forms of practice? Does the political discourse of the right extremist populist party 'Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)' in what was East Germany, with its recourse to the 'Christian Occident', also affect the level of subjective religious self-assessment? Do the political references to 'Christian values' promoted in many European countries in migration policy discourses also change religious self-assessments?

These questions cannot be answered directly by the EVS. Nevertheless, they become relevant, reflecting the empirical findings presented by Susanne and Gert Pickel (Chap. 5, this volume). These authors prove the significant effect of religiosity on political values and attitudes relevant for liberal democracies. They show:

> *Prejudice and collective defence*, such as those exercised against migrants and people who do not share established traditional values, *provide a bridge for proximity to right-wing populists, but also a bridge to religion*. Religious ideas work in two directions here: while socially engaged and thinking believers are pro-democratic and against prejudice, fundamentalist and dogmatic believers develop an elective affinity with right-wing beliefs that are anti-pluralist and then also anti-democratic. (Pickel and Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume: 194)

Thus, religious attitudes can strengthen pro-democratic attitudes but also promote beliefs that contradict the ideas of liberal democracy.

The connection between the so-called 'normative-religious dimension' and attitudes that are incompatible with a liberal understanding of democracy was already proven by the EVS 2008. According to Arts and Halman (2011) persons who have a better-than-average marked religious self-assessment, e.g. they believe in God, go to church regularly and pray often, show a significantly higher trust in authoritative institutions such as the army and the Church; moreover, for these respondents, authority takes precedence over autonomy in their educational values, they are intolerant towards ethnic or social minorities such as immigrants and homosexuals, hold cultural homogeneity as a high value, prefer materialistic over post-materialistic objectives, are opposed to employed mothers and have a solid regional dominating identity compared to a European or even global self-image.

This connection has taken on a politically precarious significance, at least since 9/11. After the terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005), not only has the threat of Islamist political extremism arrived in Europe, but religion, pronounced socially and politically irrelevant by academia since the 1970s, has returned to the stage of politics. In the wake of these terrorist attacks, Islam in particular has become a defining issue in politics – especially noticeable in the policies on migration, security, and integration of several political parties and governments in Europe, such as those in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland (Mattes 2016). In the context of political processes and interests, the focus of religion goes far beyond adaptation to the new challenges of religiously plural societies. Muslims have become synonymous with undesirable immigrants: 'Populations which are hostile to migrants tend to

identify migrants with Muslims (and Muslims with migrants)' (Pickel 2018: 35). A universalised Christian religion has become a renewed feature of collective identity and is used as a symbolic demarcation to construct in- and out-groups (Mattes 2016). Furthermore, the so-called 'refugee crisis' in 2015 was used to accelerate the anti-migration dynamics that had already existed during the EU enlargement and resulted in a 'religionisation' of migration policies, not least through political framing and a media representation of Muslims as terrorists: 'The refugee crisis has contributed to a coagulation of position against Muslims' (Pickel 2018: 35). This resulted in a majority of European people viewing all refugees as Muslims: 'Islam is regarded as the most threatening religion, with at least one-third of the population feeling this way' (Pickel 2018: 28).

Consequently, many social, economic, political, ethnic, and cultural conflicts throughout Europe are interpreted as *fault line conflicts* (Huntington 1996) between Christian and Islamic cultures and values (Mattes 2016). Right-wing populist parties in particular have successfully served this interpretive scheme for years. Thus, the process of secularisation, which in Europe primarily affects the Christian churches, is accompanied by the development of a front between 'opponents and proponents of Islam' (Pickel 2018: 35), with both non-religious and religious people to be found on either side. Religion has become an authoritative line of difference in political discourses, serving as a distinction in political conflicts and becoming the subject of interdisciplinary discourses (Polak and Seewann 2019; Kiesel and Lutz 2015; Eberhardt and Bultmann 2019).

Is the effect of religiosity indeed as strong as it is assumed in these discourses, however? Is religiosity the central source of political attitudes? In the following paragraphs, we explore these questions by way of example. We test the hypothesis that sociodemographic factors and country-specific contexts have a significant effect on whether strong religiosity affects political attitudes and, if so, how. We assume that political discourses on religion also have a significant influence on the concrete shaping of religiosity. Although this influence cannot be tested directly with the EVS data, it will be included in our considerations.

The thesis that the effect of religiosity on political attitudes also depends on other factors has already been proven. For example, religious attitudes only lead to problematic political mindsets when combined with authoritarianism (Canetti-Nisim 2004). Religious identity markers, in turn, have a highly heterogeneous impact on political conflicts; for example, they can strengthen or weaken them, depending on the interpretation and practice of a religious self-concept (Werkner and Hidalgo 2016). The religiosity of religious movements emerges as a growing factor of influence in the context of politics against economic inequality (Ekrem and Birol 2012). Among Christians in the West, religiosity has recently functioned more and more as a cultural identity marker to segregate and exclude immigrants and Muslims (Pew Research Center 2018) and has a regional and heterogeneous (and diminishing) effect on voting behaviour (Pickel 2012). In combination with social engagement, it has a positive influence on social capital (Pickel and Gladkich 2012). Accordingly, a religious self-assessment as such is not sufficient to explain political attitudes. It is a variable dependent on other factors.

In testing our hyiqotheses, we focus on the question of how religiosity affects attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims. Based on EVS data from 2008, Stefanie Doebler (2015) found that perceiving religion as important and attending church regularly are more strongly related to racial intolerance in highly religious countries and in countries that have legacies of political instability, violence, a low GDP, and low migration rates. According to her findings, a high religious self-assessment has the most influential impact on racial intolerance, whereas religious practice has no relevant effect. However, according to our findings of the effect of sociodemographic factors, her results will have to be put into perspective.

Our focus on attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims is also relevant because these attitudes have become a core issue of serious political conflicts and reflect attitudes towards religious and cultural diversity. The recognition of diversity, however, is at the core of liberal democracies (Müller 2017). Pursuant to Article 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon, it is also included among those values on which the European Union is founded. Therefore, attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims do not merely concern moral aspects of tolerance but are at the heart of a policy of recognising diversity as an essential core of liberal democracies (Honneth 2010; Taylor 1992).

Attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims are not independent values, however. Rosenberger and Seeber (2011), for example, demonstrated that the adoption of *antipathetic attitudes* towards minority groups in Western European democracies depends neither on the size of the respective minority within a country nor on the strength of a right-wing populist party. Rather, the adoption by mainstream parties of right-wing populist and xenophobic motives in their political argumentation is decisive. Since the claim of a conflict between Christian and Islamic values plays a central role in these argumentations, again questions arise. Is it primarily the effect of religiosity that increases the rejection of immigrants and Muslims? Is the adoption of right-wing populist and xenophobic rhetoric by mainstream parties sufficient to explain the rejection of immigrants and Muslims?

To answer our questions, we structure our paper into three sections:

(a) The first section discusses theories of secularisation and individualisation to ask whether these are sufficient to explain the progressive decline of religiosity in Europe. Furthermore, we seek for an explanation for the paradox that religiosities are eroding across Europe while religion is gaining importance on the level of political discourses – not least in the context of migration. We assume that adding a theoretical pluralisation approach to the interpretation of the data could provide part of the answer here. Finally, we present a theoretical model of the phenomenon of the religionisation of politics and the politicisation of religion.

(b) In the second section, we examine the effect of religiosity, gender, age, income, and the size of town on attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims as an example to test our assumptions by using the EVS data (1). Examining the effect of political self-positioning on attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims in selected countries opens a relativising perspective on the effect of religiosity

(2). To explore this further, a cluster analysis comprising socioreligious types (3) and testing the attitudes of these socioreligious types towards immigrants and Muslims, including exemplary country evaluations (4) will finally document the heterogeneous effect of religiosity in Europe.

(c) In the third section, we interpret our findings and hope to sketch a differentiated picture of the effect of religiosity on political attitudes using the example of the rejection of immigrants and Muslims. We will make an argument for the need for further interdisciplinary research, as the results cannot be interpreted by theories of the sociology of religion alone.

6.2 Theoretical Framework

6.2.1 The Development of Religion in Europe from the Perspectives of Theories of the Sociology of Religion

The transformation of 'religion' in Europe has been discussed controversially in the sociology of religion over many decades. In their contribution, Susanne and Gert Pickel (Chap. 5, this volume) present secularisation theories, individualisation theories, and the market model of religion. We question the first two and then add pluralisation theory approaches. The market model seems of less importance, as in our view it ignores too much the cultural, historical, and political impacts on religiosity, that is its embeddedness. Regardless of contemporary economic tendencies in the socioreligious field, religion is never just a commodity that is consumed.

(a) Theories of secularisation

Classical theories of secularisation interpret secularisation as a consequence of modernisation processes (Pickel and Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume). In this process, religiosity does not necessarily lose significance for individuals, but it does lose relevance for society. However, because of a lack of structural and institutional anchoring in society, the loss of societal significance also leads to a decline in individual religiosity as a structuring factor for everyday life in successive generations. This development can also be explained with the model of (dis)embedded religion. According to Charles Taylor (2007), secularisation in this sense has had emancipatory consequences in the West since the Reformation, leading to the Enlightenment, the emergence of a scientific world view, greater individual freedom, and the pluralisation of life arrangements.

However, classical secularisation theories tend to overlook the dialectics of the process: the losses to which the process of disembedding leads can simultaneously force processes of re-embedding religious norms and practises in new contexts and formats, not least political ones. Religiosity can then regain social and political significance despite an individual decline in relevance. This is the main argument of

the political scientist Olivier Roy (2008) when he explains global religious fundamentalism. He demonstrates that the 'uprooting' of religion from cultural contexts need not necessarily result in its disappearance but can even lead to the strengthening of religion. Lacking an embedding in religious traditions and institutions, such a deculturalised religiosity can then be used to serve political functions and interests. This restructuring process is currently most clearly visible in Islamist fundamentalism. But such developments can also be observed among Christians in highly modernised societies in the West: in the politically ambitious Christian fundamentalism of right-wing Christian movements and international networks (Wäckerlig 2019); in political neo-nationalisms that refer to the Christian heritage in Eastern Europe, such as those of Hungary, Poland or Russia (Höhne and Meireis 2020); or, to a lesser extent, in the political recourse to Christian values and identities in Western European countries such as Austria and Germany (Rausch and Varga 2020).

Simultaneously, secularised societies are confronted with the incorporated religiosities of a growing number of immigrants – especially Muslims and Christians from the Middle East, but also Orthodox Christians from Eastern Europe and Catholic immigrants from the global South. Religious immigrants are usually more traditional and conservative regarding their values and attitudes toward family, gender, and politics (Höllinger and Polak 2019). If highly religious, they lean towards vague attitudes towards democracy (Norris and Inglehart 2002) – like highly religious people do in general (Arts and Halman 2011). They disturb the secular understanding of religion, especially in Northern and Western European societies, where traditional religiosities are considered to have been overcome as pre-modern relics (Schreiter 2008). Much more culturally embedded in a religiously structured everyday life, migratory religiosity can arouse an abstract concept of religiosity reduced to cognitive convictions. While despite its traditional character, the religiosity of migrants does not necessarily have to be incompatible with modernity, immigrants sometimes reject a Western secularised religious self-assessment because, from their perspective, it leads to the self-dissolution of faith (Polak 2017). The more self-confidently immigrants then claim public space and relevance for practising their religion, the more sharply visible the lines of conflict around the understanding of secularity and its relationship to religion become.

This calls into question the classical paradigm of secularisation. This paradigm is based on an indissoluble contradiction between a modern and a religious view of the world. However, this contradiction does not seem to exist in such a radical form among many immigrants (and autochthonous persons), who are quite capable of combining their religious way of life with secular norms, values, and principles (Berger 2014).

On a global level too, the social significance of religiosity and religion in secular societies, such as the United States or India, contradicts the classical secularisation thesis (Reder and Casanova 2010; Casanova 2019). In the course of the academic controversies about the so-called 'return of religion' around the millennium, Peter L. Berger (1999) revised his theoretical secularisation approach and proposed a global *desecularisation*. Furthermore, Jürgen Habermas brought the term 'post-secularity' into the academic discourse (Renner 2017), characterising the need for

liberal societies to reflect their own secularist biases as part of their self-definition and to make the surplus of religious resources fruitful for a secular society. Social and cultural studies also adjusted to the persistence of religious communities and institutions in society and now speak of 'multiple modernities' (Eisenstadt 2002) and 'path-dependent secularisation' (Pickel 2009). Moreover, secularisation can adopt heterogeneous political functions in different societies (Wohlrab-Saar and Burchardt 2011). It can be: (1) in the service of individual freedoms and rights (as, for example, in the United States); (2) in the service of balancing or pacifying religious difference (as, for example, in India or the Netherlands); (3) in the service of societal or national integration and development (as, for example, in France); or (4) in the service of the independently developing functional areas of society (as, for example, in early modern Western societies).

Finally, case studies in the history of religion and qualitative empirical studies question the universalistic paradigm of secularisation. For example, they argue that the causes of massive church departures in Germany from the second half of the twentieth century onward were not the result of modernisation processes but had social, political, economic, and cultural reasons (Krech 2013). On the other hand, secular school subjects such as 'Lebenskunde' (life studies) in Germany were introduced in Protestant rather than in Catholic-dominated states (Schröder 2020), which leads to the conclusion that the decline of religiosity cannot be explained by modernisation but by the removal of the compulsion for religious participation in school (Schröder 2020). Therefore, approaches based on the history of religion cast doubt on the secularisation theory of a universal rationalisation of the world. Secularisation is not a necessary consequence of modernity: 'Secularisation is struggling, not destiny' (Schlerka 2016: 132). It is a historically contingent phenomenon, a temporally conditioned episode with heterogeneous causes (Lehmann 2004).

Generally, a shift from theoretical secularisation models to empirical case studies can be observed in the sociological research on religion in recent years. These also include religious, historical, biographical, socio-cultural, and political aspects and developments. Therefore, Norris and Inglehart (2011: 106) state:

> To summarise, in postindustrial nations no empirical support that we examined could explain why some rich nations are far more religious than others, and the study failed to establish a significant link between patterns of religious behaviour and the indicators of religious pluralism, religious freedom, and the perceived functions of the church. But, of course, this still leaves us with the question that we considered at the start of the chapter: why are some societies such as the United States and Ireland persistently more religious in their habits and beliefs than comparable Western nations sharing a Christian cultural heritage?

In addition to modernisation processes, cultural value changes are also transforming religious attitudes. Inglehart (2021) attributes the worldwide decline in religion, which he has observed since 2007, primarily to the attitudes of the younger population regarding pro-fertility norms. Since 2007, an overwhelming majority (43 out of 49) of the searched countries – especially high-income countries – became less religious. Almost all high-income societies have recently reached a tipping point where the balance shifts from the dominance of religiously prescribed pro-fertility norms

(concerning gender equality, abortion, homosexuality, divorce) to the dominance of individual-choice norms. This value change forces the decline of religiosity, which is losing its influence on norms (Halman and Sieben, Chap. 4, this volume).

Additionally, the most recent international study of the sociology of religion by Detlef Pollack and Gergely Rosta (2022) documents a historically unprecedented secularisation in the religious strongholds of Europe and the United States. The study attributes this development to the rapidly dwindling belief in God and the preceding decline in communal religious rituals, the increasing value of self-determination, enjoyment of life and self-realisation, and a greater range of leisure opportunities. Moreover, as in Poland, too close a relationship between religious communities and political interests results in an increasing loss of liberal or already distant believers in particular.

Therefore, the transformation of religiosity cannot be explained solely by secularisation and modernisation processes. These theories must also consider changes in politics, intellectual history, ethics, and culture that are not just a result of but also an independent source of modernisation. The numerous relativisations of secularisation theories consequently call the universality of secularisation into question and make it necessary to proceed in an interdisciplinary manner when evaluating quantitative data.

(b) Theories of individualisation

These theories explain the decline of religiosity through a changed relationship between the person and social institutions. Based on the right to personal freedom, people are less willing to submit to institutions (especially hierarchical institutions), and they make individual demands on them. This leads to a decrease in ties to religious communities, the loss of relevance of institutionalised religion for personal life, and the internalisation and privatisation of religiosity. However, the most important representatives of this position (Thomas Luckmann, Grace Davie, and Danièle Hervieu-Léger) assume that individual religiosity remains constant despite the decrease in ties to religious communities. In contrast, we assume that from a certain point in this erosion personal religiosity also 'evaporates', as documented by the EVS between 1990 and 2017. From a social science perspective – differing from a theological one – there is no proof that a religiously interpreted relationship to a transcendent reality must be an anthropological constant.

This thesis is supported, for example, by the research of Heiner Meulemann (2018). Based on the EVS data for Western Europe, he proves that the decline in membership of a religious institution is followed, with a time lag, by a decline in religious practice and religious belief towards a diffused religiosity. To Meulemann, this is a contradiction in terms, since, as a product of secularisation, such religiosity does not take over faith and its forms of expression but retains a religious self-assessment without content. Consequently, it does not grow but continuously decreases. Accordingly, diffused religiosity is a transitional stage between religiosity and non-religiosity (Meulemann 2018). Simultaneously, Christian traditions such as rituals for framing biographical transitions are in great demand in Western European societies, increasingly for cultural reasons but unsupported by individual faith (Meulemann 2018). Also, EVS results for Austria support the hypothesis of a gradual

disappearance of religiosity and demonstrate that three-quarters of respondents now hold a purely immanentist world view, according to which the meaning of life lies in life itself and the laws of nature (Polak and Seewann 2019). In this context, belief in God appears to have become an abstract idea instead of a reality to believe in.

These developments are closely related to the fundamental change in the status and meaning of religion in society. According to Charles Taylor (2007), a modern world view forces religious people to legitimise the meaning and benefits of religion. Religion has thus come under suspicion for being irrational and pre-modern, especially in Western Europe. Unlike the situation in a society saturated with religion, non-believers no longer need to justify their world view, but conversely, believers are accountable. The associated power relations and cognitive dissonances consequently promote first the privatisation and second the disappearance of religiosity. The accountability of religious people also established itself in the second half of the twentieth century in the Soviet-dominated countries of Europe. Declared a 'private matter' in the initial phase of communism and socialism, religion was understood as an irrational counterpart to a scientifically explainable world and would die away in the course of social and economic progress (Schuster 2017). This view was also adopted by socialist thinkers in Western Europe and still plays a relevant role in contemporary and political discourses.

Approaches through individualisation theories thus provide plausible explanations for the transformation of religiosity in Europe, particularly in the transitional phase of diffused religiosity. They show possible points of contact that can serve interests other than genuine religious ones connecting with the 'remnants' of religiosity and taking over political functions. However, it is doubtful whether the 'amount' of religiosity will be preserved and whether and how the associated phenomena can be defined as religiosity.

(c) Theories of pluralisation

The previous considerations have reflected the strengths and weaknesses of the theories of secularisation and individualisation. Now we want to add theories of pluralisation, as they take into account the politics and history of religion for the interpretation of data and offer explanations for the disparity and heterogeneity of the contradictory developments in the socioreligious field in Europe.

Based on the sociology of knowldge approach that focuses on the reciprocal relationship between the social construction of reality and the constitution of religiosity, Peter L. Berger (2014) moved to such an interpretation model, which is based on the concept of *multiple modernities*. Thus, the existence of increasingly religiously and ideologically plural societies and the heterogeneous political discourses and practices responding to these developments also affect subjective religiosities. According to Berger (2014), the paradigm of the pluralisation of religion therefore allows for a better understanding of the connection between individual and political components. Heterogeneous pluralisation processes lead to a multiplication of actors in the socioreligious field. Globalisation, mobility, migration, and digital technologies enable new kinds of contacts, relationships, and forms of communication that dynamise the development of new and hybrid forms of religiosities. Simultaneously, they

open numerous new and politically explosive scenarios of conflict, as religious plu-
ralisation also increases the transformation of religious semantics and dynamises
new alliances with logics and interests other than religious ones, and particularly
with those of a political nature. Religious pluralisation, therefore, confronts the
whole world with the challenge of the 'two pluralisms' as the central global peace
policy challenge, which a twofold dialogue must answer: both the dialogue between
religiously diverse people and the dialogue between religious and non-religious
people within societies. To complicate this issue, Berger additionally highlights his
observation that most religious people also see themselves as secular, which under-
lines the necessity to develop theories beyond a strict separation between religion
and secularity. Also, Robert Wuthnow (2007) sees the development of a reflected
religious pluralism as the central challenge of the present. This confronts secular
societies and religious communities alike with the task of structural and substantive
transformation, the development of a new socioreligious order, and a public debate
about the place and status of religion in society.

Unfortunately, the conservative concept of religiosity of the EVS and the respec-
tive national samples, with their low representation of religiously diverse groupings,
makes it impossible to do justice to this approach in our analysis. But the challenges
of religious pluralisation with simultaneous erosion of traditional religiosity in the
context of political discourses must be in the hermeneutic background of our con-
siderations. A theoretical pluralisation perspective can contribute to a better under-
standing of the apparent paradoxes in the development of religiosity in Europe,
these being the coexistence of the loss of relevance of religiosity, the increasing
political significance of religion, and the contradictory effect on political attitudes.

6.2.2   Religion, Politics, and Values

Social sciences, religious studies, theology, and Islamic studies have been noting a
newly forming, tense relationship between religion and politics due to global politi-
cal developments for some time (Fox 2018). Depending on the historical and cul-
tural contexts in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East, this relationship
can present in heterogeneous forms (Eberhardt and Bultmann 2019). Religion
shows an ambivalent double face: on the one hand, religious actors can mediate in
political conflicts and promote dialogue and reconciliation between opposing par-
ties, and thus represent a central source for containing and preventing political,
socio-economic, ethnic, and cultural tensions (Czada et al. 2012; Weingardt 2007).
On the other hand, truth claims and identity patterns force 'friend-foe constructions'
and promote intolerance, violence, and armed conflicts, as can be seen not least in
religiously motivated terror or the Islamic State (Werkner and Hidalgo 2016).
Conversely, political contexts also shape religious attitudes and religious communi-
ties (Lehmann 2019). Whether religiosity is an independent variable, which politi-
cal interests can instrumentalise, or an intervening one, is a subject of academic
dispute (Werkner and Hidalgo 2016). In any case, the connection with political
contexts is evident.

This is impressively demonstrated in the volume *Transformations of Religiosity* by Gert Pickel and Kornelia Sammet (2012). The religious revival in Romania after 1989 was initially linked intricately to an economic crisis and social instability, and in the following phase to a growing association with national feelings. In Croatia, the decline of religiosity was combined with the growing importance of religion in the political sphere. The respective role of the church in the political sphere makes it possible to understand why church membership was on the rise in Russia, Romania, and Bulgaria after the fall of communism while it was declining in secularised East Germany and Czechia. In the secularised Western European societies, in turn, religiosity can and does promote social capital. A strengthened significance of religion in politics is also possible, as studies on religion and politics in Germany document (Pickel and Hidalgo 2013; Pickel and Liedhegener 2016): the institutional loss of importance of the churches does not exclude their relevance in civil society, as can be seen in their contribution to the controversial debates on religious freedom, biopolitics, euthanasia and protection of life, or the integration of Islam in Germany.

For our focus on attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims, the concentration on migration and Islam in political discourses on religion is of particular interest, as it affects the connection between religiosity and political attitudes. Regarding this hypothesis, Ivanescu (2010) speaks of 'religionisation of politics' and the 'politication of religion', for immigrants and Muslims represent not only the socially 'other' but also confront the secular nation-state with the challenge of cultural and religious plurality and thus with its self-image. This self-image is built on a national language and culture as well as on national institutions. Migration and Islam discourses are thus an expression of the 'struggle for individual and collective national identity, be it in terms of secularism, democracy or citizenship' (Ivanescu 2010: 309). Religion becomes a political issue.

This two-way process can also have an impact on the values of the autochthonous population. The religiosity of immigrants and Muslims appearing in the public sphere can challenge the values that have been agreed upon in a secular society, regarding, for example, attitudes towards family, gender, democratic and legal participation, or socially accepted religiosity. Conversely, religious immigrants and Muslims claim political interests based on their religiosity – particularly when they become increasingly self-confident in their struggle to have their identities and values recognised. Conflicts and power struggles are the result of and are fought out based on the distinctive feature 'religion' – sometimes even when it comes to 'secular' questions, such as legal, socio-economic, or political participation.

In the secularised societies of Western Europe, the postulate of a strict separation between politics and religion is thus called into question, as it proves to be a relative construct. This leads to power struggles for interpretative sovereignty and to European and Christian cultures and values being brought into opposition with Islamic cultures and values (Ivanescu 2010). In the countries of Eastern Europe, which are still in the process of nation-building, migration in turn calls the concept of the nation into question; here, religiosity is brought into play as a national identity marker (Pickel and Sammet 2012).

The so-called integration policy debates in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland provide another example of the religionisation of politics or the politicisation of religion. Astrid Mattes (2016) proves how Islam did not become a focal point of academic and political discourse in the aftermath of 9/11 or terrorist attacks but was problematised throughout this period mainly by the Christian Democratic parties to reformulate a universal collective identity oriented towards the Christian heritage, in an attempt to disguise a lack of political vision.

Finally, questions of values are also negotiated when the discourse on Islam in politics and academia is conducted against the backdrop of a normative concept of modernity and in the name of emancipation and progress (Opratko 2019). In these discourses, religiosity is viewed as unenlightened and irrational across the board. In the long run, this assessment applies not only to Islam but consequently to religion itself. This kind of *liberal-secular matrix* (Amir-Moazami 2018) is contrasted on the other side by a transnational, transatlantic fundamentalist Christian movement that fights the values of liberal democracies with reference to an alleged threat of 'Islamisation' (Wäckerlig 2019).

Value conflicts connected with religion are also evident in the European controversies over migration, asylum, and refugee policies. In their associated crisis narratives, the political opponents base their policies on 'European values' (Weymans, Chap. 3, this volume). While international organisations and civil society actors refer to the values on which human rights are based, right-wing parties refer to the protection of Europe's Christian identity and values (Goździak et al. 2020).

All the above-mentioned developments are likely to be reflected in attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims. Since religion is an essential reference point in political and value discourses, the question arises as to whether religiosity affects these attitudes and, if so, how. If, as we assume, religiosity influences the rejection or recognition of immigrants and Muslims only in connection with sociodemographic factors, religiously formatted value conflicts must be interpreted multi-perspectively in the contemporary political context in which the struggle for recognition of identity, culture, and values is also inseparably intertwined with the struggle for social and socio-economic participation and equitable distribution (Fraser and Honneth 2003).

6.3   Effect of Religiosity on Attitudes Towards Immigrants and Muslims

In the following section, we will document the heterogeneous effect of religiosity on attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims in four steps.[1]

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[1]We also tested the attitudes towards 'people of different race' as neighbours. The results do not differ from those regarding immigrants and Muslims, but are generally lower in percentages, e.g. this group is less rejected as neighbours than are immigrants and Muslims. While people of different race also experience discrimination, in most countries this term plays a minor role in political discourses.

6.3.1   The Effect of Religious Self-Assessment and Sociodemographic Variables on the Rejection of Immigrants and Muslims

First, we assume that the effect of religiosity relates to the sociodemographic variables of gender, age, income, and size of town. We do this by looking at the responses to the following EVS 2017 items: 'I would not like to have immigrants[2]/Muslims as neighbours.' In a first overview, the following results emerge:

(a) Gender and religious self-assessment

A simple mean value analysis of the EVS 2017 data shows no significant differences between men and women for all countries surveyed on the question of whether someone rejects having immigrants and Muslims as neighbours. Across Europe, between 22% and 24% agree with this statement. When we extend the subdivision by gender, including self-assessment as a 'religious person', 'not a religious person', or 'a convinced atheist', there are still no significant differences *within* the respective groups of religious self-assessments across Europe in the rejection of having immigrants and Muslims as neighbours.

However, apparent differences within the genders can be seen *between* the respective groups of religious self-assessment (Table 6.2). Religious persons significantly more often reject having immigrants and Muslims as neighbours. While 23% of the interviewed women with a religious self-assessment agree with this statement concerning immigrants, only 15% of the female convinced atheists agree with it (Muslims: 23% and 16%). This effect of religiosity is also evident among men: 23% of religious men would not want to live next to immigrants, while only 17% of atheist men would not want to (Muslims: 24% and 19%).

(b) Age and religious self-assessment

Mean value analysis for all participating countries shows that age affects whether someone likes to have immigrants or Muslims as neighbours (Fig. 6.1).

A detailed evaluation according to age cohorts (Table 6.2) shows that the age group of 65+ years showing a significantly higher rejection than the other age groups: More than a quarter of respondents disapprove of having Muslims as neighbours. Among immigrants, who are rejected as neighbours by 25%, the difference between the 65+ and the other age groups is the same.

When we take the religious self-assessment of the age cohorts into account (Fig. 6.2), it becomes apparent that the rejection of Muslims increases with age (likewise with immigrants, which we do not depict graphically here). Once again, the group of 65+ shows the highest values for rejection. In all age cohorts, religious people show the highest rejection values compared with non-religious people or convinced atheists. It is also noticeable that differences regarding religious self-assessment are clearly less pronounced in the middle-aged cohorts than in the youngest and oldest groups.

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[2] The EVS asks for 'immigrants/foreign workers'. We simplified this and only use the term 'immigrants'.

Table 6.2 'I would not like to have immigrants/Muslims as neighbours' (v24/v28), relationship between sex and religious self-assessment; also differences between age groups (6 intervals), in per cent (EVS 2017)

	Would not like as neighbours: immigrants	Would not like as neighbours: Muslims
male, religious person	23	24
female, religious person	23	23
male, non-religious person	21	22
female, non-religious person	19	18
male, convinced atheist	17	19
female, convinced atheist	15	16
under 25 years	20	19
25–34 years	21	19
35–44 years	21	21
45–54 years	21	21
55–64 years	21	22
65+ years	25	26
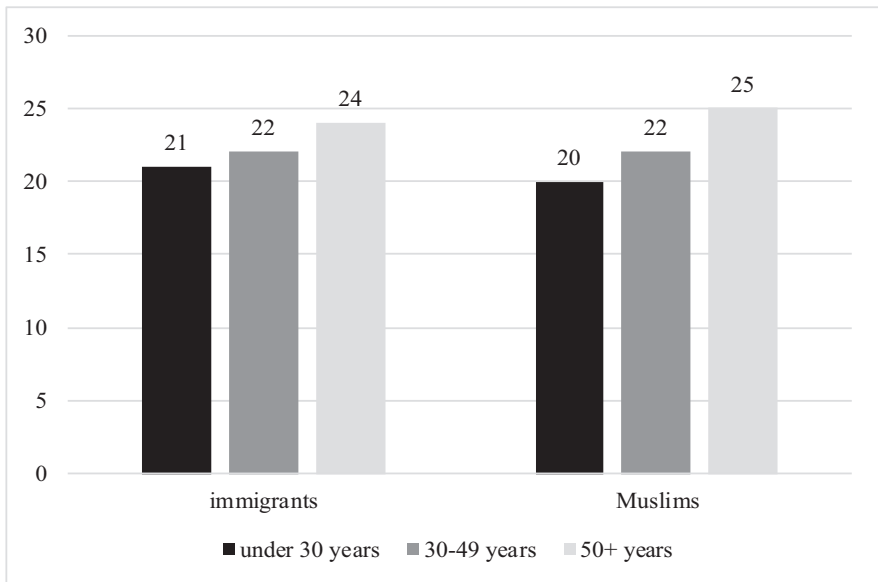
Fig. 6.1 'I would not like to have immigrants/Muslims as neighbours' (v24/v28), differences between age groups (3 intervals), in per cent (EVS 2017)
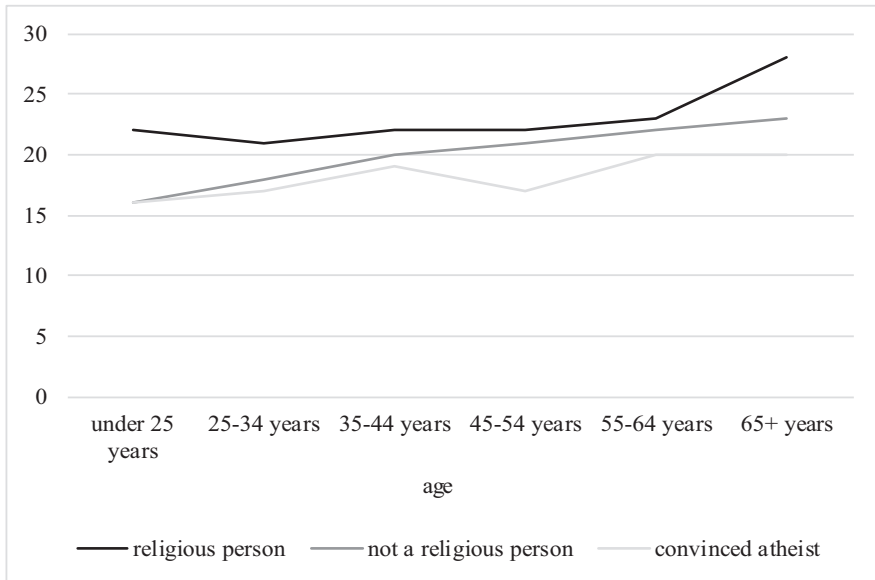
Fig. 6.2 'I would not like to have Muslims as neighbours' (v28), relationship between religious self-assessment and age group (6 intervals), in per cent (EVS 2017)

(c) Income and religious self-assessment

Figure 6.3 illustrates, that income[3] also plays a central role in relation to the rejection of immigrants and Muslims as neighbours.[4] Again, a religious self-assessment has a positive effect; however, it decreases with increasing net household income.

Concerning the rejection of having immigrants and Muslims as neighbours, gender again plays virtually no role in relation to income (Fig. 6.4), with a tendency towards middle-income people showing a small gender-related difference in rejecting Muslims as neighbors.

The combination of age and net household income again shows the effect of age (Fig. 6.5): it is the people over 45 with a low net household income who are most against having Muslims[5] as neighbours. Among the younger cohorts, income again plays a lesser role.

If we now look at the relationship between net household income and the size of town (Fig. 6.6), it can be seen that the latter has a clear effect on whether or not someone likes to have Muslims[6] as neighbours. The rejection is more pronounced in

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[3] For this purpose, we adopted the categorisation of net household income in low, middle, and high that is available within the EVS data set, based on the country-specific income figures.

[4] Similar numerical relationships can be found for all of the following questions with a view to immigrants. For reasons of space, however, we omitted the corresponding figures.
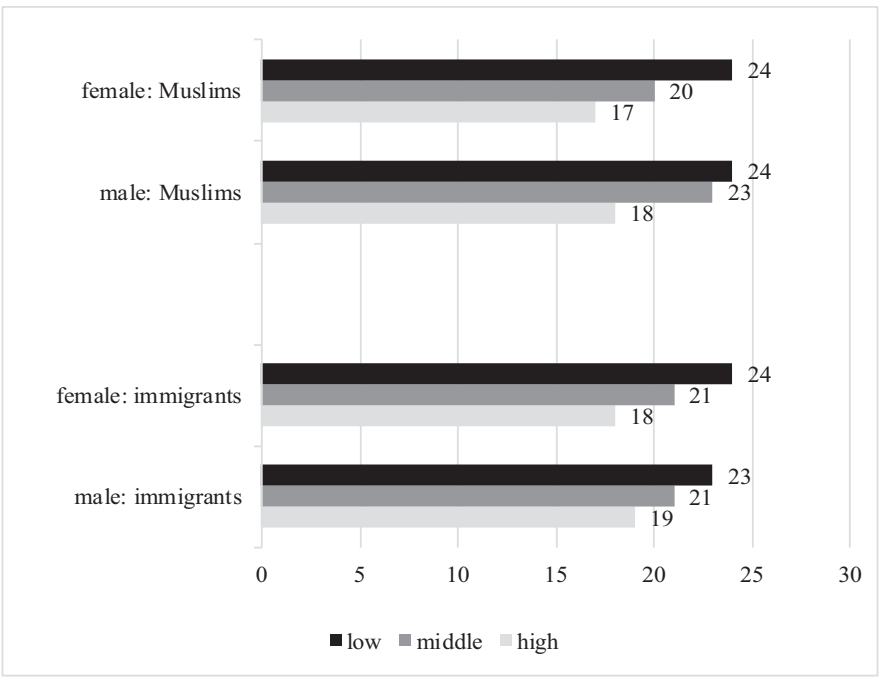
[5] Same with immigrants, not depicted.

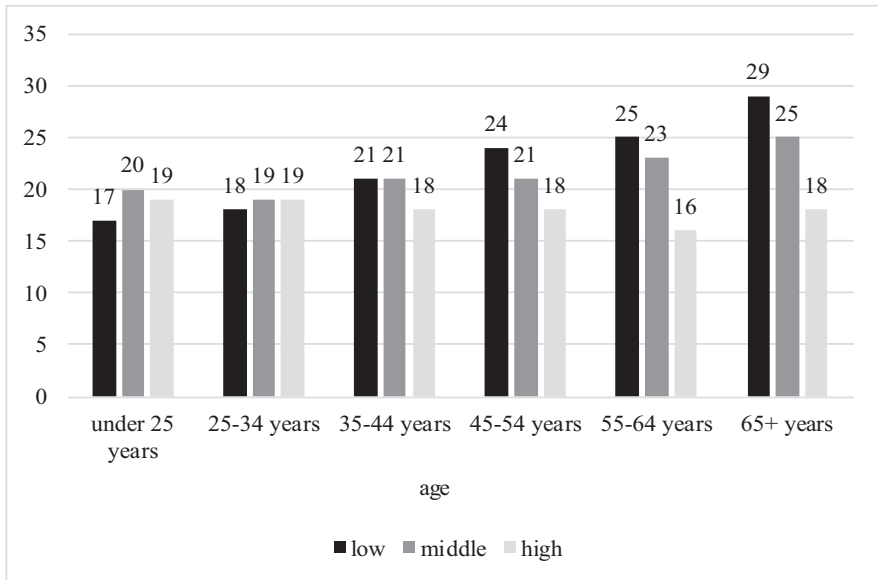[6] Same with immigrants, not depicted.
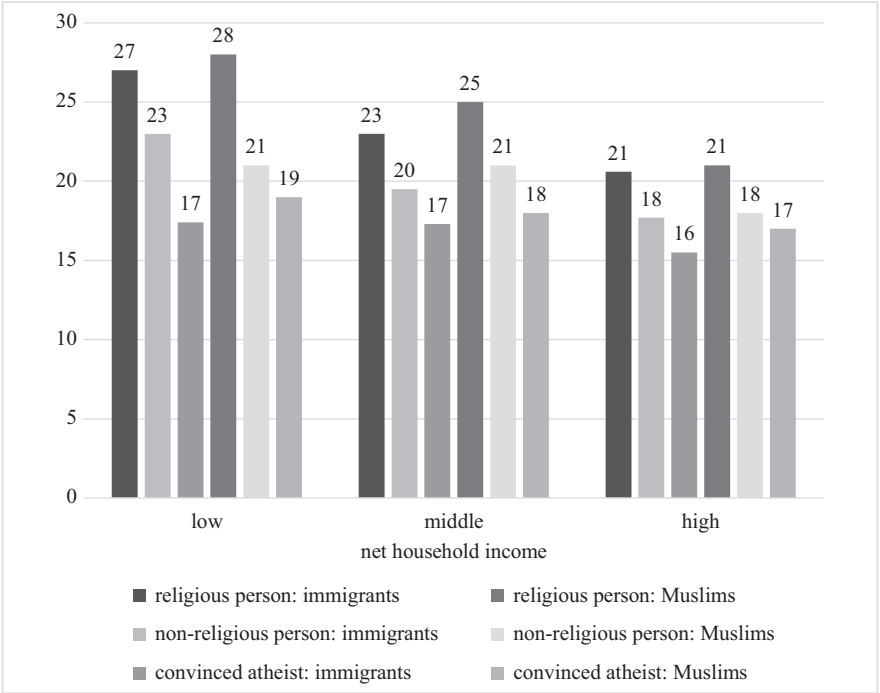
Fig. 6.3 'I would not like to have immigrants/Muslims as neighbours' (v24/v28), relationship between religious self-assessment and net household income, in per cent (EVS 2017)

Fig. 6.4 'I would not like to have immigrants/Muslims as neighbours' (v24/v28), relationship between sex and net household income, in per cent (EVS 2017)

Fig. 6.5 'I would not like to have Muslims as neighbours' (v28), relationship between age (6 intervals) and net household income, in per cent (EVS 2017)
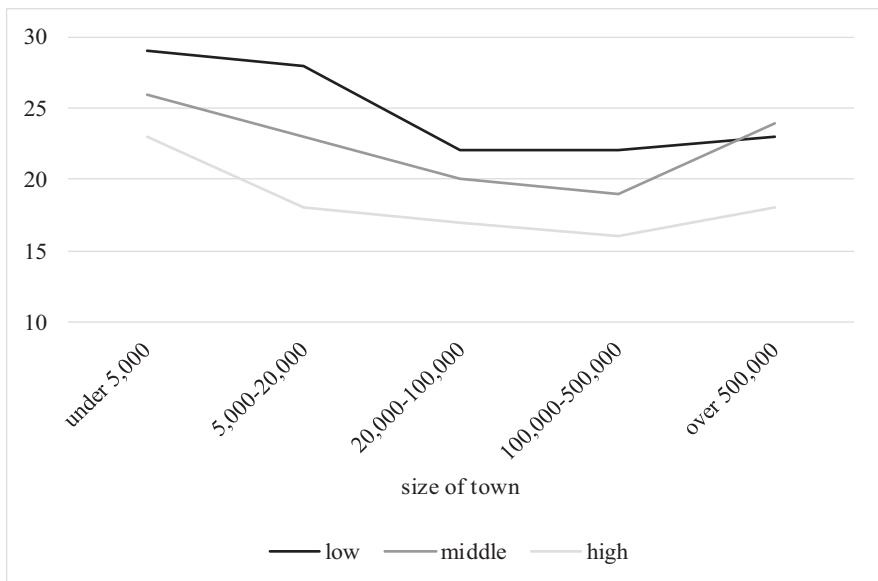
Fig. 6.6 'I would not like to have Muslims as neighbours' (v28), relationship between net household income and size of town, in per cent (EVS 2017)

all income groups in rural areas than it is in urban areas. Simultaneously, it increases in all groups in large cities, where low and middle groups in particular almost equalise.

(d) Size of town and religious self-assessment

In the next step, we take a closer look at the effect of the size of town on the rejection of having Muslims as neighbours (Fig. 6.7). A differentiated picture emerges:

Rejection is highest in small towns with up to 5,000 inhabitants, then decreases as the size of town increases up to 500,000 inhabitants (except for the 65+ group), and then increases again from a size of town of over 500,000 inhabitants (except the age group between 25 and 34 years and again for the 65+ group). Thus, although people in urban areas are generally less hostile towards Muslims than are people from small rural towns, the urban area as a social conflict zone seems to force the rejection compared with smaller medium-sized residential areas, where people usually learn to know each other more easily and managing diversity thus might be easier.

Concerning immigrants, the picture is slightly different (Fig. 6.8). In the metropolitan area (over 500,000 inhabitants), unlike the rejection of Muslims, no increasing rejection of having immigrants as neighbours is perceptible – except for a slight increase among 45- to 54-year-olds. Instead, it can be observed that rejection is greatest in rural areas, but thereafter the numbers remain relatively constant in each age group.
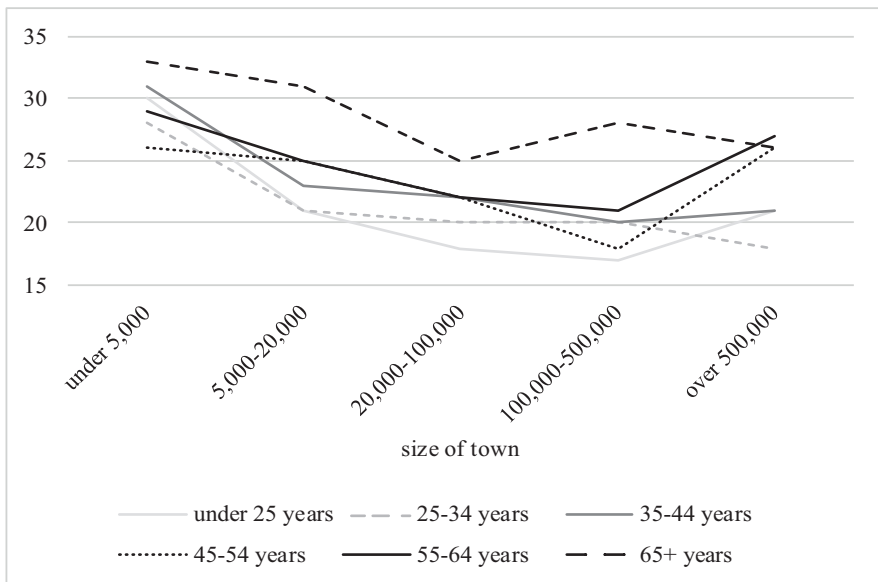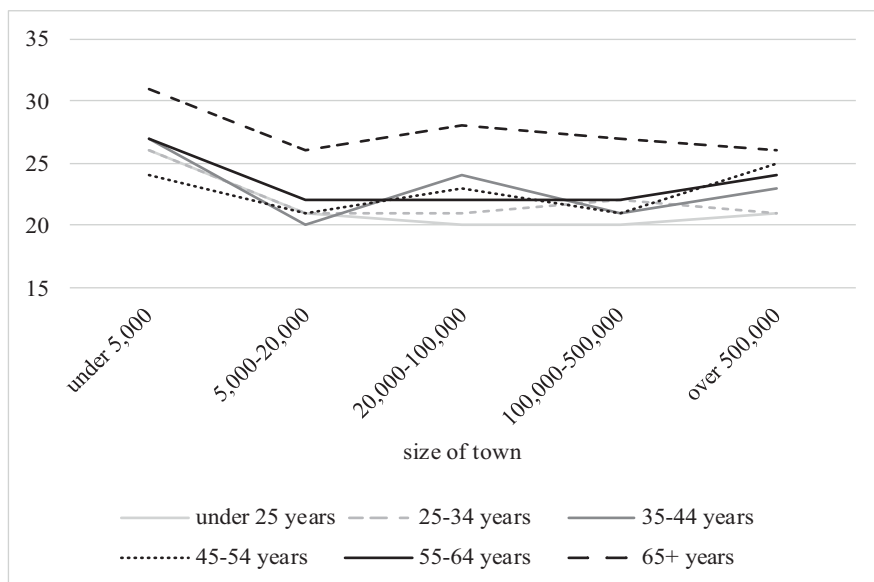

Fig. 6.7 'I would not like to have Muslims as neighbours' (v28), relationship between size of town and age group (6 intervals), in per cent (EVS 2017)

Fig. 6.8 'I would not like to have immigrants as neighbours' (v24), relationship between size of town and age group (6 intervals), in per cent (EVS 2017)

Combining the size of town with the religious self-assessment (Fig. 6.9), a comparison across European countries shows that religious people are more hostile towards Muslims than are non-religious people and people who describe themselves as convinced atheists, regardless of the size of town.

This difference is particularly visible in large cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Nevertheless, the rejection of having Muslims as neighbours is highest in village settings.

The results are different again when it comes to the question of not liking to have immigrants as neighbours (Fig. 6.10). Convinced atheists have the fewest reservations, but in villages up to 5,000 and cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants there are no relevant differences between religious and non-religious people. The effect of religiosity obviously plays a minor role or no role here, and the rejection of immigrants as neighbours is probably fed by other factors, such as for instance negative experiences, xenophobia, or political attitudes.

(e) Summary

The results of our first, very general overview support our claim that religiosity does have a significant effect on the rejection of having immigrants and Muslims as neighbours. However, it unfolds its effect in a highly heterogeneous manner. Social factors play a decisive role alongside religious motivation. Gender is not a distinguishing feature. It only leads to increased rejection of immigrants and Muslims in combination with a religious self-assessment. Age has a strong effect. While in the older groups the rejection of immigrants and migrants may be related to the
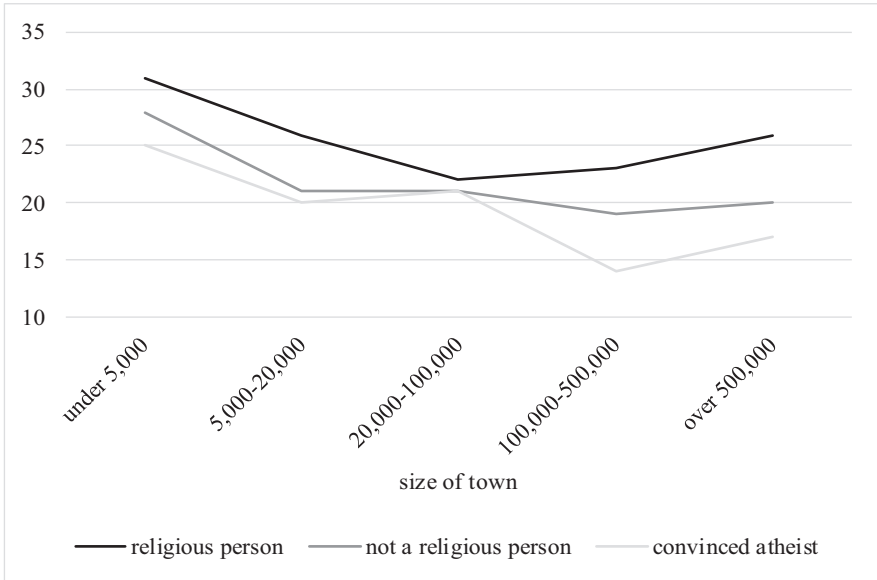
Fig. 6.9 'I would not like to have Muslims as neighbours' (v28), relationship between size of town and religious self-assessment, in per cent (EVS 2017)
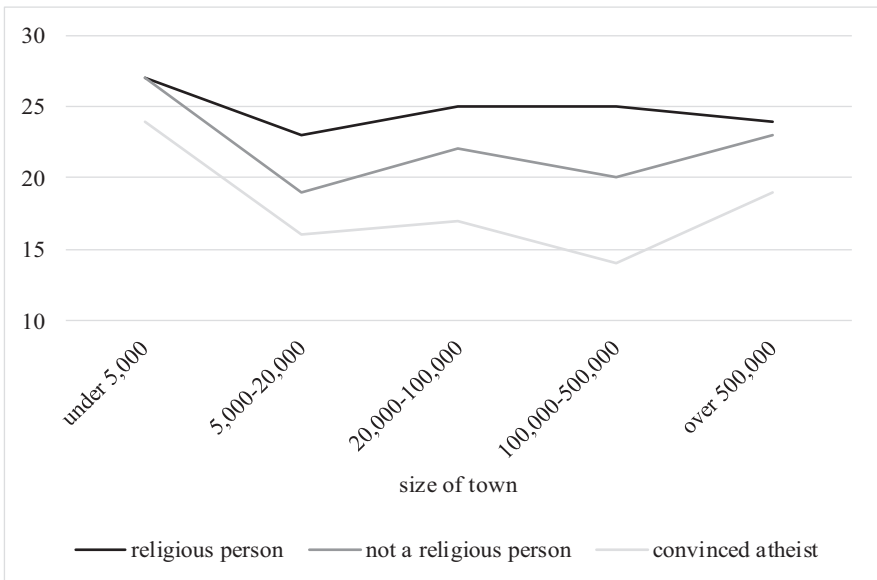

Fig. 6.10 'I would not like to have immigrants as neighbours' (v24), relationship between size of town and religious self-assessment, in per cent (EVS 2017)

difficulties of getting used to living in religiously diverse societies, the results from the younger generation could reflect experiences of conflict in everyday life but also the difficulties of young people – less religious than older people – in asserting their own religious identity in increasingly secular societies, which can lead to the use of religiosity as an identity marker. Furthermore, people of higher age and lower income show higher scores in their rejection of having immigrants and Muslims as neighbours. Living in a rural area also fosters negative attitudes. Here, a difference becomes apparent regarding attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims. Religiosity shows an effect on the rejection of Muslims as neighbours regardless of the size of the town, whereas immigrants seem to be rejected less and probably for motivations other than religious ones. These results suggest that the effect of religiosity may depend on the social structures of coexistence: the socially and religiously more homogeneous rural area is associated with higher rejection. In contrast, social mixing and thus coexistence is more natural in urban areas, but religiosity becomes more of a distinguishing feature.

Overall, these heterogeneous correlations show a complex interaction between religious and social motivation and point to further factors that come into play. Whether a religious self-assessment is the primary cause, how a religious self-assessment connects with social factors forcing rejection, or, conversely, whether religiosity takes on an ideological function or other influencing factors come into play, must remain open here.

6.3.2 The Effect of Political Self-Positioning on the Rejection of Immigrants and Muslims

One exemplary influencing factor is examined in the next step: the effect of political self-positioning on attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims. For this purpose, we compare Czechia, Hungary, and Austria – three countries in which migration policy with a strong anti-Islamic discourse has played a key role in political discourses in the aftermath of the refugee crisis in 2015. This has been compounded by political disputes over the admission of mainly Muslim civil war refugees from Iraq and Syria. At the same time, these countries differ in terms of their religious composition and regarding their share of immigrant and Muslim population: Czechia dominantly atheist, low immigrant and Muslim share; Hungary dominantly Catholic but with greater Christian diversity, low immigrant and Muslim share; Austria dominantly Catholic, high immigrant and Muslim share.

In a first step, we look at the development of political self-positioning in these countries between 2008 and 2017 (Figs. 6.11, 6.12, and 6.13):

In Hungary, a clear shift to the right can be observed in the political self-assessment of respondents during this period. In Czechia, an apparent strengthening of the political centre is noticeable in the comparison period. For Austria, an increase
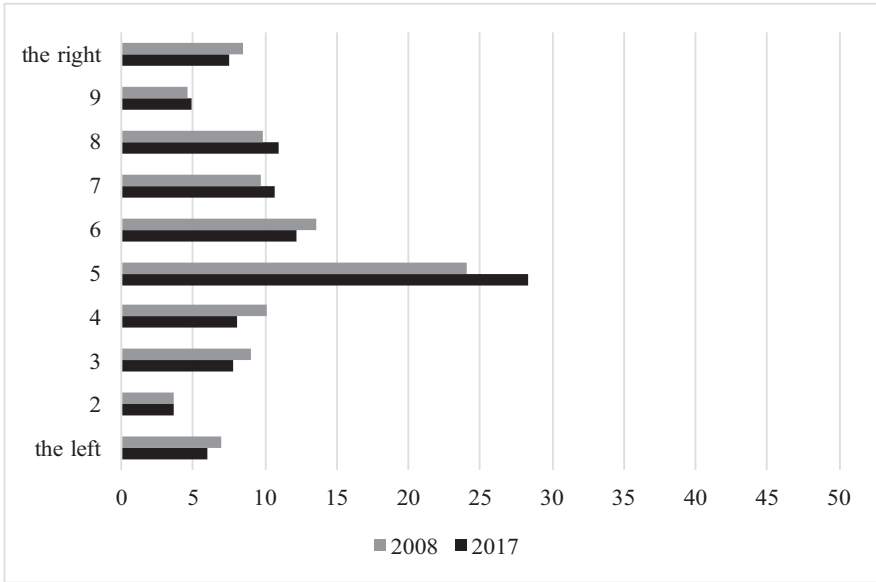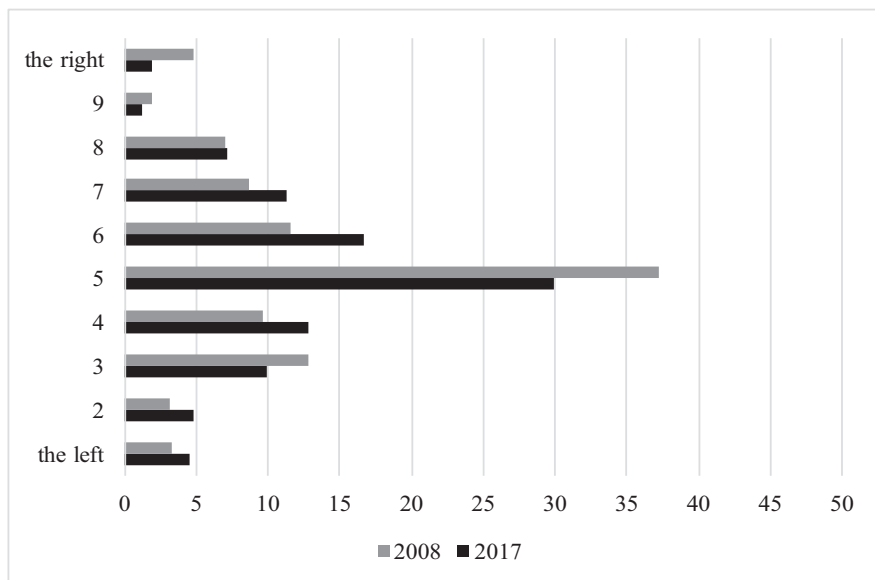
Fig. 6.11 Political self-positioning in Czechia 2008 and 2017 between 1 (left) and 10 (right), in per cent (EVS 2008 and 2017)
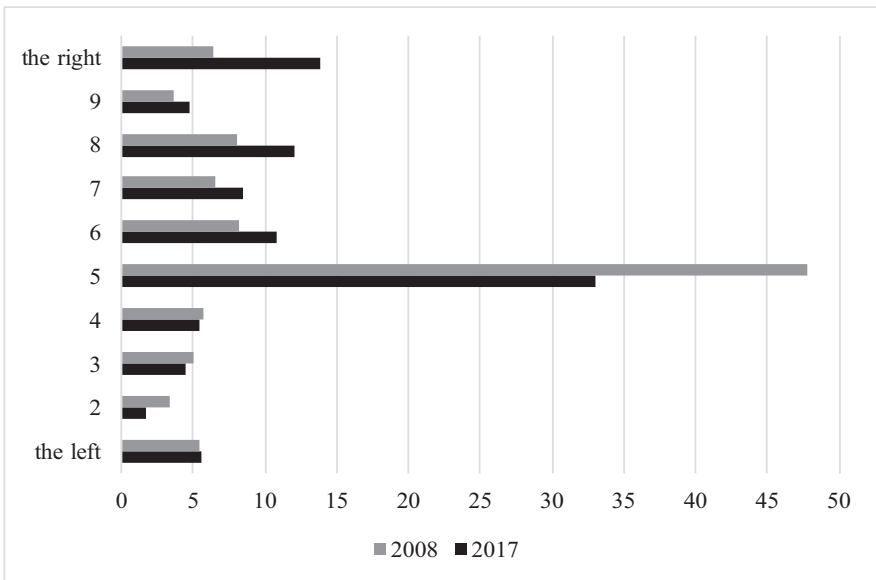
Fig. 6.12 Political self-positioning in Hungary 2008 and 2017 between 1 (left) and 10 (right), in per cent (EVS 2008 and 2017)

Fig. 6.13 Political self-positioning in Austria 2008 and 2017 between 1 (left) and 10 (right), in per cent (EVS 2008 and 2017)

in the area of 'centre-right' (6–8) is to be noted, but at the same time a strong decrease in the positioning as 'right'.

If we now look at the developments of religious self-assessment in the respective countries (Pickel and Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume: 194) and the rejection of having immigrants and Muslims as neighbours (Fig. 6.14), the latter increases significantly in Hungary, while there is no significant increase in religious self-assessment. In Austria, too, self-assessment as a religious person has changed little in the comparison period, but agreement with the statement that one does not like to have immigrants and Muslims as neighbours has fallen.

Comparing these trends, political developments and the associated discourses seem to have a stronger impact on the rejection of immigrants and Muslims than does religious self-assessment, which remains mostly stable. This can be illustrated by the example of Austria: while in 1990 only 14% and in 1999 only 15% agreed with the statement that they did not like to have Muslims as neighbours, the figure rose massively to 31% in 2008 but fell again to 20% in 2017. In Hungary and Czechia, agreement to these statements increased immensely throughout this period. In all three countries, a massive politicisation of the question of accepting refugees took place in the comparison period, which was characterised by anti-migrant and anti-Muslim views. But in Austria, the governing conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) adopted anti-migrant and anti-Muslim discourses from the right-wing populist Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) and established a restrictive migration and
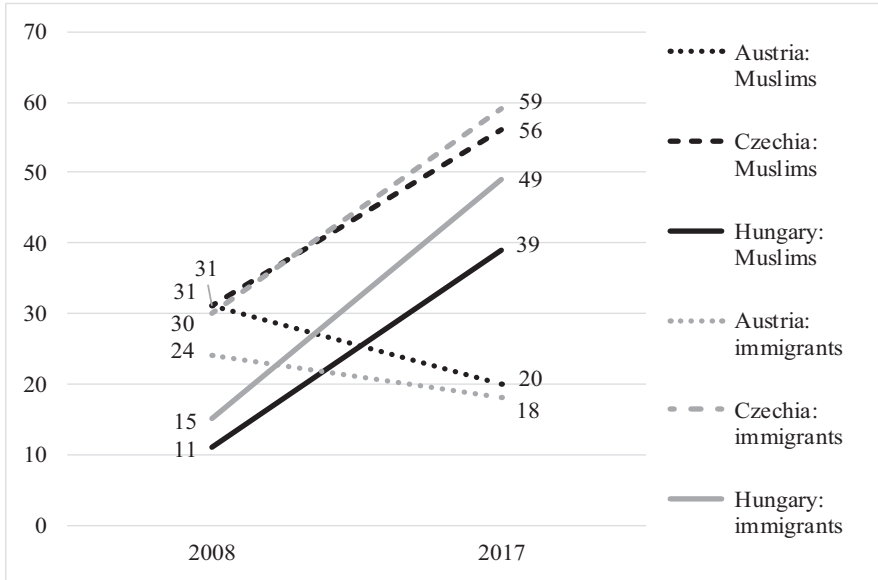
Fig. 6.14 'I would not like to have immigrants/Muslims as neighbours' (v24/v28), in Hungary, Czechia, and Austria, in per cent (EVS 2008 and 2017)

refugee policy. A high acceptance level of this policy by most of the population can probably explain the decrease, as the policy made people feel protected from unlimited immigration. At the same time, Austrian people are experienced in living in a society shaped by migration and diversity, especially in cities. In contrast, a lack of such experiences in Hungary and Czechia may strengthen the impact of an anti-migration and anti-Muslim political narrative that portrays the danger of an Islamic invasion and Muslims as religious fanatics.

However, the effect of religiosity is negligible. Political factors that change in the short term probably have more impact on attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims than do religious attitudes, which change more slowly.

These findings refute Stefanie Doebler's (2015) thesis that religiosity is the decisive factor for strengthening the rejection of immigrants and Muslims. On the one hand, the rejection of having immigrants as neighbours is increasing in two of the selected countries despite different levels of religiosity. On the other hand, the different political self-assessments alone do not explain the growing rejection. A more likely assumption is that, above all, the impact of media and political discourses must be taken into account.

Another country comparison reinforces the assumption that religiosity cannot be the decisive factor in the rejection of having Muslims as neighbours. With its strongly secularised population, Czechia records a massive increase. But the same tendency can be seen in pluralistic Christian Hungary and the Catholic-dominated

countries of Poland and Slovakia. In contrast, secular France remains largely stable, while in Germany, Austria, and Great Britain – three secularised countries, but with a relatively high religious diversity – rejection is falling. These country-specific differences give the impression that concrete experiences of living together in cultural and religious diversity in secular contexts may play a central role in addition to political discourses. Experiences of living in diverse religious neighbourhoods – such as in Great Britain – can probably mitigate the effect of anti-migrant and anti-Muslim political discourses.

6.3.3   A Socioreligious Typology (Cluster Analysis)

In the next step, we will use cluster analysis to present a socioreligious typology. After demonstrating that sociodemographic variables, in addition to a religious self-assessment, have an effect on the rejection of having immigrants and Muslims as neighbours across all European countries, we include variables measuring both religiosity and sociodemographics. With this cluster analysis, we identify groups that differ significantly regarding these influencing factors. We will then ask again whether these groups differ in their attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims and, if so, how.

(a) Clustering and distributions in detail

For this purpose, we compute a cluster analysis using Ward's linkage method and Euclidian distance as the heterogeneity measure, which aims to identify groups that are as homogeneous as possible. We first include religiosity in the cluster formation. In order to get a more differentiated picture, we supplement the variable on religious self-assessment with further variables that the EVS makes available for measuring religiosity: belief in God, the importance of God in one's own life, attendance at church services, praying outside of church services, and belonging to a religious denomination. This expansion should give us differentiated distinctions regarding the effect of religiosity, especially in relation to the intensity of religiosity – for example, whether a religious self-assessment is embedded in practical and institutional contexts or stands rather abstractly on its own. The distribution among the five clusters (Table 6.3) reveals different degrees of intensity of religiosity, with the intensity of religious self-assessment once again differing clearly from the religious practice associated with it.

Table 6.4 presents the distribution within the clusters in terms of religious denomination. It shows clear denominational differences. Thus, persons of a Catholic denomination are distributed much more evenly among the groups than are persons of a Protestant denomination, who are found more in the less religious groups. Muslims, on the other hand, are relatively evenly distributed in all clusters.

Table 6.3 Distribution within the clusters formed in relation to questions about religion and religious practice, in per cent (EVS 2017)

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
Belief in God – yes (v57)	99	93	85	55	16
God is important in one's own life (0–10) – mean value (v63)	9.1	7.7	5.8	4.1	1.6
Self-assessment (v56):					
Religious person	96	85	65	49	9
Non-religious person	4	14	32	35	64
Atheist	0	1	3	16	27
Religious service (once a week or more often) (v54)	41	16	3	3	8
Religious service (never, practically never) (v54)	30	26	31	48	0
Pray outside of religious service (once a week or more often) (v64)	94	49	14	17	0
Belonging to a religious denomination – yes (v51)	95	82	70	56	30

Furthermore, we include the variables of gender, age (subdivided into three age cohorts of under 30, 30–49 and 50+ years) and size of town in the cluster formation (Table 6.5).[7] Clusters with higher religiosity tend to be female and dominated by older persons. Regarding size of town, people within more religious clusters live primarily in villages or small towns, whereas people in less religious clusters live in bigger cities and metropolises.

Since we assume that country-specific constellations also have an impact on the effect of religiosity, we now examine the distribution of the clusters within ten selected countries. For this purpose, we selected two each with a similar character in religious terms: two majority Catholic countries (Austria and Italy), two majority Protestant countries (Finland and Sweden), two majority Orthodox countries (Romania and Bulgaria), two majority mixed countries (Germany and Hungary), and two majority secularised countries (France and Czechia).

Figure 6.15 shows how the five clusters are divided within each country:

The differences between the countries are visible. There are countries dominated by C1 (high religiosity, older, rural), such as Romania and Italy, and countries with a majority of C5 (low religiousity, younger, urban), such as Czechia and Sweden. In Romania and Sweden, one cluster each is dominant (C1 and C5), whereas in Austria and Hungary, the clusters are relatively equal in size. Accordingly, heterogeneous influences of religiosity are to be expected.

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[7] We did not include the net household income, because the very general EVS distinction between 'high', 'middle' and 'low' would have to be related to the respective country's GDP to be used for a cluster analysis. Furthermore, Pierre Bréchon (Chap. 8, this volume) has a special focus on the economic dimension.

Table 6.4 Distribution within the clusters formed in relation to the religious denomination (only people belonging to a denomination), in per cent (EVS 2017)

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
Orthodox	30	22	13	19	10
Muslim	5	6	4	3	1
Free church	3	1	1	1	1
Protestant	14	15	30	27	57
Catholic	46	55	51	49	30

Table 6.5 Distribution within the clusters formed in relation to sex, age groups (3 intervals), and size of town, in per cent (EVS 2017)

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
Sex					
male	34	44	49	47	56
female	66	56	51	53	44
Age (3 intervals)					
under 30 years	12	12	16	19	16
30–49 years	27	32	29	27	37
50+ years	62	56	56	54	47
Size of town					
under 5,000	20	46	14	40	8
5,000–20,000	24	29	13	27	13
20,000–100,000	21	19	25	22	29
100,000–500,000	19	3	22	7	25
500,000 and more	17	3	26	4	3

(b) Description of clusters

In the following summary, we describe the five socioreligious types found in the ten selected European countries.

Cluster 1: The Small-Town Active Highly Religious (C1) – 27%

The members of cluster 1 are 'highly religious': almost all persons in this cluster (96%) describe themselves as a 'religious person'; likewise, the question about belief in God is affirmed almost without exception (99%). With a mean value of 9.13[8] concerning the importance of God in one's own life, God also occupies an important position. Those from this cluster who attend a church service at least once a week represent 41%, while 94% pray at least once a week in addition to prayers during the church service. Likewise, almost all cluster members belong to a religious denomination (95%), distributed mainly among the Roman Catholic Church (46%) and Orthodox churches (30%) (Protestant churches 14%, Muslim community 5%). At 66%, women dominate this cluster. In addition, a high average age of

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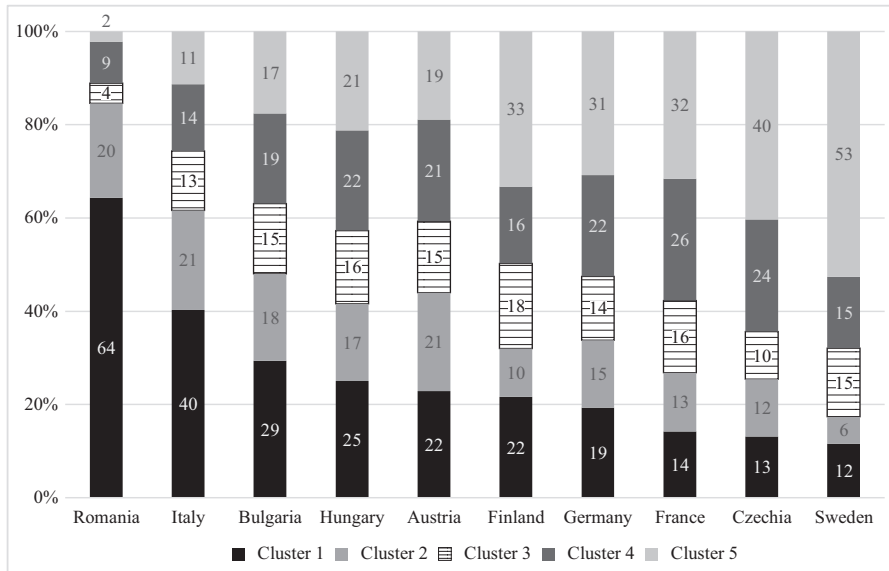[8] Range: 1 = 'not at all'; 10 = 'very important'.

Fig. 6.15 Cluster distribution within countries, in per cent (EVS 2017)

54.5 years can be observed, while those under 30 years of age, at only 12%, represent a clear minority compared with 62% of those over 50 years of age. This socio-religious type is mainly found in Italy (20% in cluster 1) and Romania (24% in cluster 1) and dwells in settlements with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants (20%), in small towns between 5,000 and 20,000 inhabitants (24%), and in smaller cities of between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants (21%).

Cluster 2: The Rural Part-Time Active Highly Religious (C2) – 16%
The members of cluster 2 are also characterised by a high belief in God (93%), and self-assessment as a religious person (85%) is also observed. However, the importance of God in one's own life ($M = 7.69$) is lower than among the members of cluster 1. Clear differences between cluster 2 and cluster 1 also become visible in religious practice: only 16% attend a church service at least once a week and 'only' 49% pray at least once a week outside the church service. A quarter (26%) even states that they never attend religious services. The distribution regarding denominational affiliation is similar to that of cluster 1: Roman Catholic 55%, Protestant 15%, and Muslim 6%. Those belonging to a religious organisation represent 82%, while 18% do not belong to any religious organisation.

The average age of 52.7 years can also be classified as high in this cluster, where again the over 50-year-olds old make up the absolute majority of the cluster members, at 56%. Under 30-year-olds represent a clear minority, at 12%. The female share also predominates in cluster 2 (56%). Another special characteristic of this cluster is that almost half of all cluster members (46%) live in settlements with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants. In terms of country distribution, the members of this

cluster are found in Italy (18%), Austria (13%), Romania (13%), Germany (12%), and Bulgaria (10%).

Cluster 3: The Urban Church Members (C3) – 13%

Cluster 3 shows a significant decrease in religiosity among its members, though 70% still belong to a religious denomination and 86% believe in God. However, God's importance for their own lives ($M = 5.81$) plays a much smaller role. Only 65% see themselves as a religious person. Religious practice is low in this cluster. Only 3% attend church services at least once a week, 31% do not attend at all, 14% pray at least once a week, and 25% do not pray at all. Those cluster members who are members of a religious organisation are mainly found in the Roman Catholic Church (51%) and in a Protestant church (30%). In terms of age structure, cluster 3 differs significantly from clusters 1 and 2, with an average age of 51.3 years and a share of 16% of those under 30 years of age. In terms of size of town, the members of cluster 3 predominantly live in urban or metropolitan areas (20,000–100,000: 25%; 100,000–500,000: 22%; over 500,000 inhabitants: 26%). The ratio of female (51%) to male (49%) is balanced. The majority of cluster 3 members live in France (14%), Germany (13%), Italy (13%), Austria (11%), Hungary (11%), and Finland (10%).

Cluster 4: The Rural Passive Part-Time Believers (C4) – 19%

People belonging to cluster 4 can be characterised as passive part-time believers. The cluster shows a slight 'female surplus' (53%). About half (49%) describe themselves as religious and 16% describe themselves as atheist. Worship is either attended only on certain holidays (45%) or not at all (48%); 43% do not pray at all. The belief in God is still predominant among the majority (55%), but the importance of God in one's own life can be classified as less important, with a mean of 4.1. The denominational affiliation is mainly distributed among the Roman Catholic Church (49%), Protestant (27%) and Orthodox churches (19%), and Muslim (3%). Only slightly more than half (56%) of the persons belong to a religious organisation.

A characteristic feature of the village active part-time believers is the relatively high proportion of people under 30 (19%). Nevertheless, people over 50 years of age make up the majority in this cluster (54% – average age 50.1 years). Slightly more than two-thirds of the persons in cluster 4 live in villages with a maximum of 20,000 inhabitants (under 5,000: 40%; 5,000–20,000: 28%). This group of people is found mainly in France (16%), Germany (15%), Czechia (12%), and Austria (11%).

Cluster 5: The Urban Seculars (C5) – 25%

The majority of urban seculars are male (56%) and do not belong to any religious denomination (71%). The number of those who identify themselves as religious (9%) is marginal compared with those who identify themselves as non-religious (64%) and as atheists (27%) in this cluster. Only 16% believe in God, but this faith has virtually no significance ($M = 1.59$) for their own lives. Nevertheless, religious services are attended – mainly on certain holidays, however (69%). Only 0.3% say they never attend religious services, while 86% never pray. Of the 29% who belong to a religious denomination, the majority are found in a Protestant church (57%)

(Roman Catholic 30%; Orthodox 10%; Muslim 1%). Cluster 5 has the lowest average age (48.6 years) of all the clusters, and for the first time, the 50+ generation is no longer the absolute majority in this cluster (under 30: 16%; 30–49: 37%; 50+: 47%).

Members of this cluster are rare in the village setting (8%). They are distributed relatively evenly among cities of 20,000 inhabitants or more (20,000–100,000: 29%; 100,000–500,000: 25%; 500,000 and more: 26%) and are found mainly in Sweden (16%), Germany (16%), France (15%), and Czechia (15%).

The composition of the clusters clearly documents the degree to which sociodemographic variables affect religiosity. Thus, the highly religious are mainly found among older women in rural regions, while the decline in religiosity is found mainly in the middle and especially younger generations and in urban areas, as well as in Western or already long-secularised countries with a high proportion of urban areas.

6.3.4   Attitudes Towards Immigrants and Muslims Based on the Socioreligious Typology

In the next step, we ask which attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims can be found among the five socioreligious types and we evaluate them with regard to age, gender, and size of town.

(a) Attitudes towards immigrants in relation to age, gender, and size of town

To this end, we first evaluate the EVS's exemplary questions assigned to the topic area of immigrants for all five clusters by means of a mean value calculation.

On the question of whether immigrants are taking jobs away from local people, there are significant differences between the clusters regarding the respective age cohorts (Fig. 6.16). While the youngest cluster of urban seculars (C5) generally agrees least with this statement, the 50+ generation clusters show significantly higher agreement. In C2 in particular, there is a significantly higher agreement with this statement across all age groups. In C4, the middle-aged cohort shows higher agreement. In the competition for jobs, age and spatial-structural contexts are probably more important than religiosity.

The response to the statement that 'Immigrants make crime problems worse' shows a different picture (Fig. 6.17). In four out of five clusters, the agreement increases with age. The influence of age is clearest in cluster 1. At the same time, all five clusters are close to each other. Obviously, people distinguish between labour market issues and crime problems.

As can be seen from Fig. 6.18, there are no significant variations within a cluster concerning gender. However, clearly noticeable differences can be observed between the genders *among* the clusters (due to age).
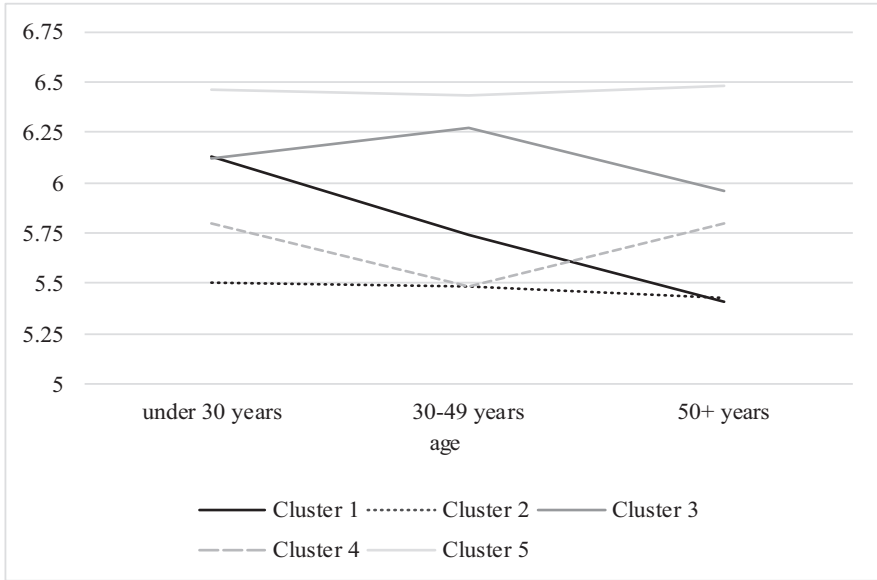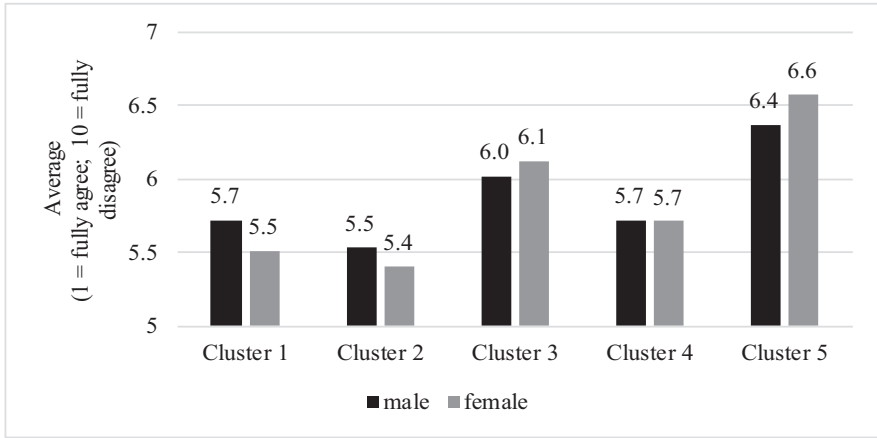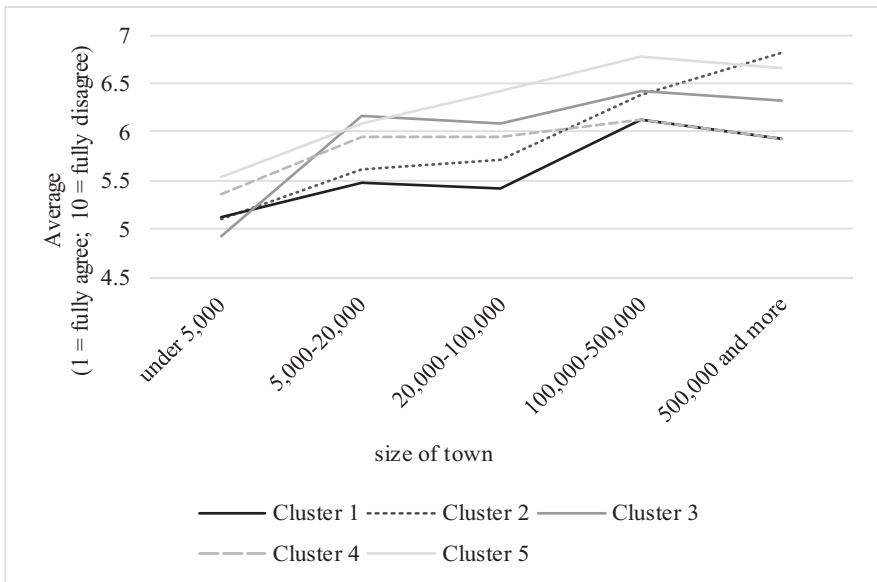
Fig. 6.16 'Immigrants take jobs away from local people' (v185), relationship between age groups (3 intervals) and cluster (EVS 2017)
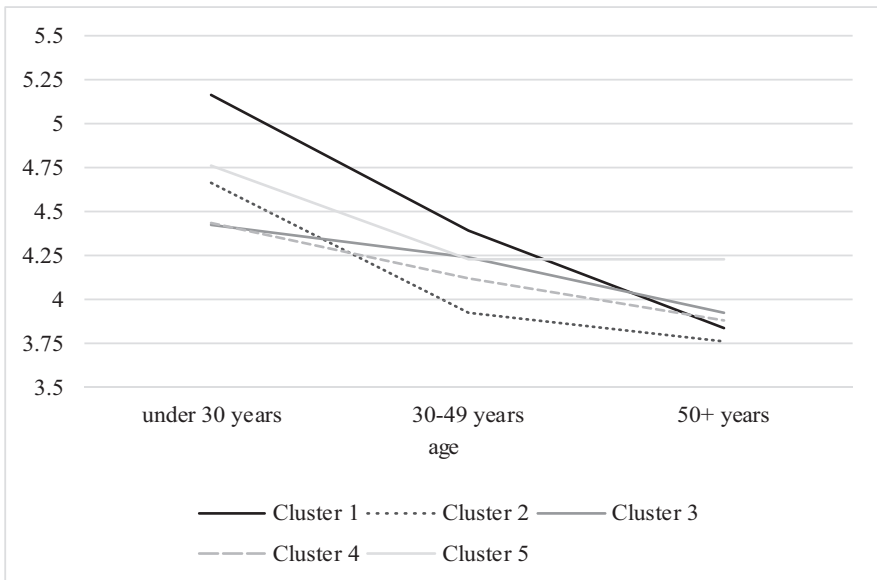
Fig. 6.17 'Immigrants make crime problems worse' (v186), relationship between age groups (3 intervals) and cluster (EVS 2017)

Fig. 6.18 'Immigrants take jobs away from local people' (v185), relationship between cluster and sex (EVS 2017)

Fig. 6.19 'Immigrants take jobs away from local people' (v185), relationship between cluster and size of town (EVS 2017)

The respective gender differences are also never more than a maximum of 0.2 points for all other Q52 statements. Gender does not lead to any notable differences in attitudes towards immigrants.

As expected, the size of town has an enormous effect on attitudes towards immigrants (Fig. 6.19 and Table 6.6). The rejection decreases with an increase in the size

Table 6.6 'Immigrants are a strain on a country's welfare system' (v187), relationship between cluster and size of town (average: 1 = fully agree; 10 = fully disagree; EVS 2017)

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
under 5,000	3.7	3.6	3.1	3.5	3.7
5,000–20,000	4.1	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.6
20,000–100,000	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.0
100,000–500,000	4.5	4.8	4.2	4,0	4.3
500,000 and more	4.3	4.8	4.2	4.1	4.7

of town. The larger the size of town, the less immigrants are seen as a threat in the labour market or as a strain on a country's welfare system. In small and medium-sized towns, rejection increases within the clusters.

The comparison of the rejection level shows that the respondents distinguish between different issues. Job competition is perceived as a much lower area of conflict than are crime and social welfare. This is remarkable, as concern about one's job can affect personal life more than the other two factors, which are more abstract issues on which perception depends much more on ideological interpretations and discourses.

(b) Attitudes towards immigrants, religiosity, and country

In the previous evaluations, there are no relevant differences between the highly religious and the less religious clusters. Religiosity obviously plays a minor role in a more complex approach compared with sociodemographic factors.

But if we now look at the rejection of immigrants within the selected countries, clear but highly contradictory differences become apparent. We present the highly religious cluster 1 (Fig. 6.20), using the example of agreement with the statement 'immigrants make crime problems worse'.

The two countries influenced by Catholicism show similar and, by international comparisons, relatively high approval ratings. However, the highest rejection of immigrants can be found in Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechia, and Austria – countries that are strongly characterised by problem-oriented migration discourses but of a quite different religious character.

Conversely, those two countries where secularisation is most advanced show extremely different means: in Czechia, the highly religious respondents strongly agree with this statement ($M = 2.85$), whereas in France, this statement is rejected ($M = 6.35$). In France, religious identity has less public importance compared with egalitarianism and ideological laicism, which are highly valued. By contrast, in Czechia, religious identity issues are far more relevant in a minority situation, and secularisation has other historical origins and functions than it has in France. Rich and secular Protestant Sweden, on the other hand, is similar in its approval rate to poor, highly religious Orthodox Romania.

These perplexing and contradictory results demonstrate that classical theories of the sociology of religion are insufficient to exactly identify the influence of religiosity. The influence of political discourses, the level of wealth and demographic
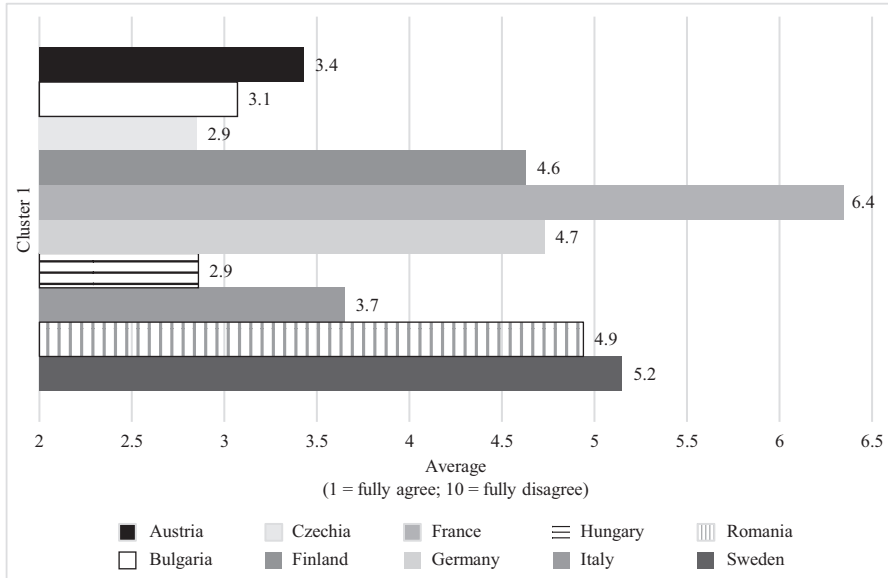
Fig. 6.20 Cluster 1: 'immigrants make crime problems worse' (v186) (EVS 2017)

composition, the historical and political culture in dealing with immigrants, the influence of religious communities on politics, and many more factors must be explored. Religiosity and sociodemographic variables do affect attitudes towards immigrants, but the country-specific situation has a strong and somehow independent effect.

(c) Desired social distance to minority groups

Finally, we look at the clusters with regard to the question of the rejection of having minorities as neighbours (Fig. 6.21). In addition to immigrants and Muslims, we also include people of a different race, homosexuals, and Jews, as religious motives could also be evident here. The picture remains complex and contradictory.

The high rejection of immigrants as neighbours is evident in all clusters. Although it is lower in the urban clusters (C3 and C5), it is the leading rank in comparison with other groups. The two highly religious clusters (C1 and C2) especially reject homosexuals as neighbours. The rejection of Jews as neighbours is high, especially among the two older and highly religious clusters. The comparatively low rejection of people of a different race may be due to the politically desired rejection of racism or heterogenous understandings of 'race' in Europe. This group also plays a minor role in political discourse. The rejection of Muslims runs through all clusters. Only the urban church members (C3) show a lower reservation here.

Using the example of the rejection of having Muslims as neighbours, the effect of sociodemographic variables within the clusters is now examined. An analysis according to age, size of town, and gender once again shows effects (Table 6.7).
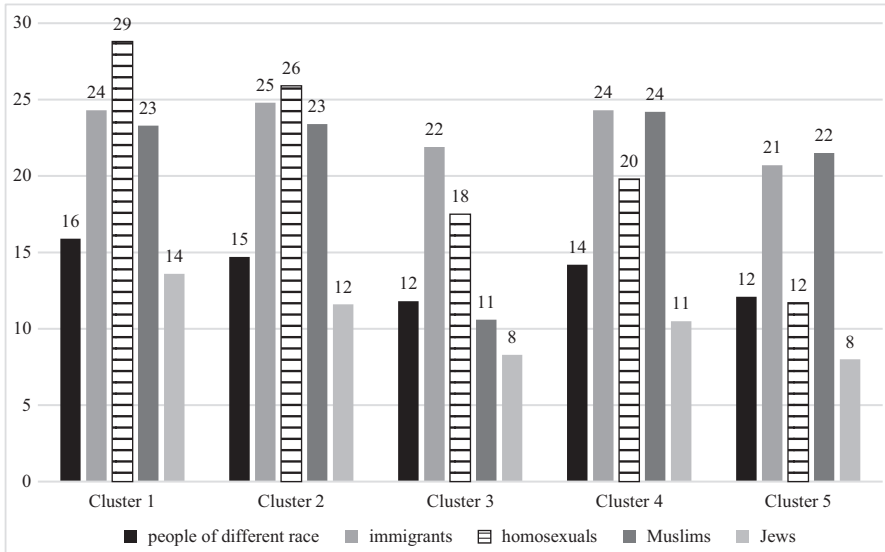
Fig. 6.21 Clusters 1–5: 'I would not like to have as neighbours' (v22, v24, v26, v28, v29), in per cent (EVS 2017)

Table 6.7 'I would not like to have Muslims as neighbours' (v28), relationship between cluster and age groups (3 intervals), size of town, and country, in per cent (EVS 2017)

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
Age (3 intervals)					
under 30 years	19	18	18	22	16
30–49 years	20	23	19	26	24
50+ years	26	25	22	24	23
Size of town					
under 5,000	29	27	30	28	33
5,000–20,000	26	22	21	23	27
20,000–100,000	21	18	22	21	23
100,000–500,000	22	28	16	22	18
500,000 and more	17	10	18	16	18
Country					
Austria	21	19	17	25	21
Bulgaria	14	18	19	19	16
Czechia	45	53	54	52	59
Finland	25	27	22	33	19
France	5	12	7	10	8
Germany	8	14	12	16	14
Hungary	43	38	36	41	33
Italy	19	18	22	16	13
Romania	33	30	34	33	34
Sweden	9	11	7	5	8

It is mainly the 50+ generation within the small-town active highly religious who would not like to have Muslims as neighbours. A similar picture emerges for the 30- to 49-year-olds compared with the under 30-year-olds in cluster 5 of the urban seculars. The high rejection of Muslims in cluster 1 might also be connected with the high age of cluster 1.

Differences of up to 15% in the rejection of Muslims as neighbours can be seen across clusters between villages with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants and large cities with over 500,000 inhabitants. The size of town seems to be more decisive than is religiosity.

Regarding gender there are no significant differences.

The clearest differences again occur in the country comparison and reinforce the doubt about a direct influence of religiosity on the rejection of having Muslims as neighbours.

In Austria, rejection is highest among the village passive part-time believers (C4), followed by the highly religious cluster 1 which is level with the low-religious cluster 5. In Bulgaria and France, rejection is lowest among the highly religious clusters compared with the other clusters. In a country comparison, rejection is generally highest in Czechia. With C5, the urban, non-religious cluster shows the highest rejection of having Muslims as neighbours, while the highly religious cluster 1 agrees least with this statement. A comparison of countries with similar religious backgrounds reveals the same contradictory situation: Bulgaria has a significantly lower approval rate than Romania, despite the strong Christian Orthodox character in both countries. In contrast to Romania, however, Bulgaria has a large Muslim community that has existed in the country for centuries, probably explaining the higher acceptance level. Other examples are the two secular countries of France and Czechia. While among the small-town active highly religious in France only about 5% disapprove of having Muslims as neighbours, about 45% agree with this statement in Czechia.

6.4   Summary

Our analysis attempted to contribute to a more detailed view of the empirically verifiable effects of religiosity on political attitudes. The results raise awareness of the close connection between this effect and sociodemographic variables and country-specific contexts. The more detail with which one investigates these relationships, the more difficult it becomes to interpret them solely with theories of the sociology of religion. As we argued that attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims are key issues for the acceptance of liberal democratic values, we focused on the effect of religiosity on them. We demonstrated that religiosity is not an independent variable but has complex connections to age, income, size of town, and in some cases to gender too across all European countries. Additionally, the respective country context influences the effect of religiosity, but in a heterogeneous and contradictory way. These results raise more questions than answers.

They can be better understood using the theoretical models presented in the first part of the chapter. Religiosity is always embedded in social, cultural, political, economic, and historical contexts. It unfolds its specific effects only in connection with other factors. It can change functions and meaning. The increasing secularisation across Europe verified in this volume demonstrates processes of disembedding of religiosity and the effects of sociodemographic factors. Religiosity is increasingly losing influence in daily life, and it seems that other factors are becoming more decisive in relation to attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims, such as country-specific political interests and discourses, religionisation of politics, politicisation of religion, and historical contexts. Therefore, when it comes to the rejection of immigrants – because they take jobs away, increase problems with crime, or are a strain on a country's welfare system – religiosity seems to play a marginal role. Political framings of Islam and Muslims and migration policies seem to have a stronger impact on attitudes towards Muslims than does religiosity, as is the case in Austria, Hungary, and Czechia. Historical traditions of religious coexistence, such as those in Bulgaria, or the reality of diverse religious societies or urban areas, such as in Germany, Austria, and Great Britain, seem to decrease rejection of immigrants and Muslims. In secularised France, with a long tradition of privatising religion and an ideological secularisation concept, the effect of religiosity on the rejection of immigrants and Muslims is significantly lower than in countries that are still Catholic dominated such as Austria and Italy.

These rather diverse effects of religiosity render questionable the premise of the individualisation theory according to which religiosity is an anthropological constant. Rather, it must be assumed that all measured forms of religiosity may disappear in some countries and thus lose their influence on values and attitudes. This can be seen in the example of the rejection of homosexuals as neighbours, which is deeply connected with religious attitudes and, therefore, much less pronounced among low-religious urban seculars and Northern European countries. However, a secularised world view does not immunise people against rejecting Muslims, as the cluster analysis for Czechia impressively shows. There, obviously anti-Muslim discourses also fall on fertile ground among non-religious people.

In general, universally oriented theories such as individualisation and secularisation no longer seem to fully explain the dynamics of the development of religiosity in Europe, as they do not take the contemporary macro-transformations of social and political impacts on a decreasing relevance of religion sufficiently into account. A theoretical pluralisation approach, which focuses on the interplay between the individual and politics, seems more appropriate, but subsequently requires interdisciplinary and qualitative case studies.

If, for example, we consider theories on the religionisation of politics or the politicisation of religion, it is hard to prove their effect on religiosities with the EVS data. However, such an effect cannot be directly confirmed at the level of individual religiosities in Europe. Political attitudes such as the rejection of immigrants and Muslims *are* connected to religiosity, but dependent on sociodemographic variables as proven across all European countries. Simultaneously, the effect differs across countries because of country-specific contexts such as the role of religion in a state

or political discourse: sometimes there seems to be nearly no effect, such as in France; sometimes religiosity can presumably be activated by political discourses, such as in Czechia or Hungary. This raises the question of the mutual influences between sociodemographic effects and country-specific circumstances on religiosity: to what extent are these interdependent?

To make further qualified statements, the effect of political attitudes (party affiliation, political preferences concerning specific topics) would have to be researched separately. Additionally, an interdisciplinary discourse analysis on the role of religion in state and political discourse would have to be added, and the effect of such discourses on values and attitudes would need to be made measurable. Considering our few results, one could ask whether short-term political and media debates have a much stronger effect on attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims than do religious attitudes. These can be instrumentalised for political interests but with different impacts, as the example of Bulgaria shows in comparison to Czechia, Romania, or Great Britain. To prove this on a country-specific basis would require political science presuppositions and interpretations of the history of religion, which we cannot provide here.

However, our contribution does reveal that religiosity at the level of individuals plays a vital role in the field of religious and migration policy conflicts, though it is by no means either the only or main factor. For example, the distinction and line of conflict between the values of an autochthonous, Christian population and an immigrant, Muslim population, which are repeatedly claimed in political discourses, cannot be substantiated, as the distribution of Muslims among the five clusters shows. Conflicts would instead be ignited based on the differences that show up along the cluster differences: between the high and the low religious, between the generations, between the rural periphery and the urban centres, and finally between groups of different income levels (see also Bréchon, Chap. 8, this volume). It is likely that religiosity in these more socially, politically, and economically structured conflicts can be used – as a trigger or through reinterpretation by either political or religious actors, and with diverse effects, both increasing or decreasing conflict. The effect of sociodemographic factors on religiosity, in any case, points to the fact that social, political, and economic conflicts can be turned into religious ones, especially among highly religious people. However, this does not happen in the same way in every European country.

Considering the strong effect of sociodemographic variables, it also seems necessary to include socio-economic issues while investigating the effect of religiosity on democratic attitudes, such as the acceptance of immigrants and Muslims. In a demographically ageing Europe, generational conflicts and conflicts between rural and urban regions and between European regions because of unequal distribution of power and resources and geo-historical differences are presumably more important than religiosity, which is losing relevance in everyday life. Religiosity, however, can become a source of interpreting these conflicts for both political and religious interests, and can result in religious identity politics. Taking the dynamics of secularisation into account, religiosity may intensify and fuel these conflicts, but it cannot (any longer) trigger them solely. The significance and effect of religiosity as such at

the level of the population seem to become less important than suggested by the discourses on the importance of religion in the political arena. Nevertheless, religiosity can be reinterpreted and reactivated by these discourses (Roy 2008). Consequently, investigating the impact of religiosity and religious identity politics on democratic values should be intertwined with, for example, questions of distribution policy (Fraser and Honneth 2003) and its effect on religiosity.

The effect of religiosity on political attitudes would now have to be researched in detail using other political attitudes. Attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims are only one of many possible examples to prove our thesis that religiosity has highly heterogeneous effects on other values because of its nature as 'embedded religion'. In our view, the more differentiated the analysis, the more questionable the thesis of a direct and immediate connection between religiosity and political attitudes becomes. The discrepancies demonstrated in our few examples make it clear that there is no one-dimensional, linear connection, but that a multi-perspective approach is necessary for interpretation. A complex mixture of socioreligious and socio-cultural conditions in history and in the present; political interests and discourses; the role of religious communities; the historical and current relationship between the state and religious communities; the culture in dealing with immigration; the level of integration of immigrants and Muslims; and the Islam-related narratives in a country, etc. must be consulted to enable one to determine the effect of religiosity in concrete terms more precisely. Therefore, quantitative analyses should be supplemented with other disciplines of research on religion.

Religiosity is not an independent factor, but only unfolds its effect in specific and concrete contexts. However, the erosion of religion at the level of populations does not mean that religion becomes irrelevant as a political factor.

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Dr Regina Polak (*1967) is Associate Professor and head of the Department of Practical Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna (Austria). She is a member of the research network 'Interdisciplinary Values Research' and the research centre 'Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society', both at the University of Vienna. Her research focuses on socio-religious transformation processes in Europe, values research, religion and migration, and interreligious dialogue in a migration society. She is also Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions.

Dr Dirk Schuster (*1984) is a university assistant (post-doc) at the Center for Museum Collections Management at the University for Further Education Krems (Austria) and lecturer at the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Vienna. He studied history and religious studies in Leipzig (Germany) and was also visiting scholar at the University of Hradec Králové (Czechia). His research interests are religion in totalitarian systems, atheism, the church history of the Transylvanian Saxons, and the so-called 'völkisch movement' (völkische Bewegung).

Chapter 7
Solidarity: A European Value?

Markus Quandt and Vera Lomazzi

Abstract Solidarity is considered essential for the sustainability of societies, both at the level of individual contributions to society and as an aspect of cooperation between countries. As such, solidarity is often called upon by politicians in a declarative way. In contrast to most prior work, we investigate an attitudinal perspective on solidarity, not behavioural or policy-preference perspectives. We look at questions such as the prevalence of solidarity attitudes among European populations, the degree to which the declared norm is shared among these populations, and whether solidarity attitudes have changed with consecutive crises in Europe. We also discuss possible antecedents of solidarity levels. Distinguishing solidarity by close and universal scopes, we find that both are associated with the identification of citizens with communities at different levels. In country and time comparisons, European societies display a good degree of homogeneity and stability. Close solidarity is more pronounced than universal solidarity, and this may have even increased over consecutive crises. There are clear differences in relation to socio-historical region, but only modest associations with the religious composition of countries in terms of denominations. One role of religiosity might be that of an identity marker, where more heterogeneity comes with lower levels of solidarity.

Keywords Solidarity · European crises · Identity · EVS · Latent class analysis

M. Quandt (✉)
GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Cologne, Germany
e-mail: markus.quandt@gesis.org

V. Lomazzi
Department of Management, University of Bergamo, Bergamo, Italy
e-mail: vera.lomazzi@unibg.it

7.1 Introduction – Is Solidarity in Europe at Risk?

The founders of a united Europe declared solidarity to be one of the core European values described in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. In 2007, the Treaty of Lisbon explicitly added solidarity to the core properties of an idealised European society: the member states share 'a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail' (art. 2).

With these words, the European Union normatively affirmed shared value orientations that enshrine a common transnational cultural horizon. For a long time, solidarity has been a consensual and apparently foundational value in the political discourse. Many political parties incorporate this value in their narrative. Solidarity is a point of reference not only among those parties inspired by socialism and close to the labour movement. Per the Catholic social teaching, in which solidarity is a key value, it also underpins the ideologies of Christian democratic parties (Stjernø 2005).

This background of declarative political statements may have given solidarity the appearance of a value somehow naturally shared among individuals, just because they belong to the same society. However, according to Grimmel and Giang (2017: 2), solidarity is not a value 'to be found out there, but must be created'. This perspective points to conceiving of solidarity more as a dynamic process than as a static value that remains stable regardless of changing conditions. Both at societal and personal levels, different conditions may produce different levels of solidarity (van Oorschot et al. 2005; similarly for work values Weiss and Hörisch 2021). In that vein, over recent decades, solidarity has allegedly been challenged by several factors mainly related to the cumulative crises facing the European countries: the banking and financial crises in 2008, with the subsequent economic recession; the refugee crisis; and, more recently, the COVID-19 crisis (Ferrera and Burelli 2019; Hatton 2017; Wallaschek and Eigmüller 2020). While it is quite easy to offer solidarity in times of wellbeing, the challenges to wellbeing and status quo can affect solidarity levels, mainly by drawing on – or even only threatening to draw on – scarce resources so intensely or for so long that readiness to share such resources dwindles (Aschauer and Mayerl 2019; Lahusen and Grasso 2018). The insecurities and fears deriving from these crises would thus open cracks where anti-solidarity sentiments can creep in.

The rise of populist parties and far-right movements, which built their success on these fears, raises concerns for solidarity at different levels (Lahusen and Grasso 2018). While these groups express the sentiments of distrust of parts of the population, disappointed by unsolved issues from unemployment to migration and asylum seeker management, they may also foster the erosion of solidarity at the individual level, by legitimising ethnocentrism, xenophobia, nationalism, and anti-European feelings. With elected populists entering political institutions and offices, they may also affect the shaping of policies and rules towards being more selective and discriminating regarding whom these policies grant the institutionalised solidarity of the state to. The process of de-solidarisation is particularly risky. Political observers

argue that the lack of between-groups solidarity is a threat for the cohesion and sustainability of democracies, giving further room for the rise of ethnic and nationalistic exclusiveness (Wallaschek 2019).

With this background, the complexity of European solidarity has attracted a lot of public and scholarly attention. Surprisingly, however, there is very little work that provides an empirical overview of the current *levels* of solidarity across European countries. This chapter strives to close this gap by investigating what the levels of solidarity are across the countries that participated in the three most recent waves of the European Values Study (EVS).

The chapter will proceed as follows. We first discuss the theoretical foundations of solidarity, very briefly touching upon a variety of aspects discussed in the extant literature. We then lay out the – largely exploratory – methods applied, and why we chose particular factors or variables from the available data. The first results presented will look at how solidarity relates to certain aspects of mass identification, thereby providing an initial validation of our measures of attitudinal solidarity. In the central part of the chapter, we then look at what levels of attitudinal solidarity prevail across the countries participating in the EVS, and how much they have changed, if at all, over time. Moving one step further with the exploratory analyses, we then look at some possible correlates for those levels of solidarity. The chapter closes with a speculative interpretation of these empirical explorations.

7.2   The Concept of Solidarity

7.2.1   *Socio-structural Foundations for Individual-Level Solidarity*

The first challenge for any empirical research on solidarity is focusing on a specific meaning of the term. Despite its relevance, solidarity is a 'fuzzy concept' (Rusu 2012: 72) that has been interpreted in a multitude of ways. A first distinction concerns the focus on solidarity as a societal or an individual quality. Durkheim (1893) famously conceptualised solidarity as a societal characteristic that describes different patterns of mutual dependence. For traditional societies, this would be *mechanical solidarity*, driven by the experience of similarity and a sense of belonging to a close community, which would not least be mediated through religiously based values prevailing in those communities. In modern, differentiated societies, *organic solidarity* should prevail, driven less by shared values and common collective orientations such as religious beliefs than by the mutual dependency of the societies' members that results from economic specialisation and societal division of labour. Contemporary scholarship often focuses on solidarity as an individual quality, referring to people's 'willingness to help others or to support the group one belongs to, without immediately getting something in return' (de Beer and Koster 2009: 15), but the relationship to Durkheim's basic, macro-level distinction is still discernible.

Recalling Durkheim's paradigm of organic solidarity, Steinvorth (2017) argues that solidarity between individuals in differentiated, complex societies would be the product of two opposing forces – while they are individualistic in their motivations, ideally they are also aware of their mutual dependency due to the high division of labour in their societies, and of the vulnerability of the preconditions that allow them to realise their individualistic goals – equality of rights; protection from wilful authorities; and protection from material risks and physical dangers – and all this regardless of most person-level characteristics, which are largely considered to be their own, private affair. By this reasoning, such knowledge of universal neediness in the face of larger challenges should facilitate a foundational willingness to cooperate for the mutual, and in sum collective, benefit (Habermas 1996, 2017).

A challenge with that kind of cooperation out of necessity would be that people might disagree about the right balance between resources invested into collective or cooperative tasks, such as controlling the risks mentioned above, and the short-term realisation of individual goals; further, such cooperation is easily exploitable when people do not contribute their 'due share' (Hechter 1984, 2018). These challenges bring the notion of solidarity as a socialised norm or value back in, even for modern, differentiated societies: the more people are intrinsically motivated to offer support and share resources, the easier it will be to sustain the required levels of cooperation. To the degree that traditional and modern societies are successful in socialising their members to be 'good citizens', the individual-level emotive expression of the norm of solidarity would then be phenomenologically similar to the 'mechanical' solidarity of Durkheim's traditional societies: in both settings, individuals would feel a sense of obligation to help others in their community if they are in need. What would be different between the idealised society types is how the communities are defined and perceived (per social proximity and similarity in the traditional setting, but likely by more abstract criteria in the modern setting), and how acts of solidarity are actually performed (per personal activities in the traditional setting versus 'differentiated', for example, professionalised and formalised methods, possibly through state institutions, in the modern setting).

7.2.2   Solidarity and Group Identification

That individuals have a sense of being part of some kind of community, of either the traditional, similarity-based type or the modern, universalistic-needs type, would then be essential for any solidarity norms to develop and be activated. But conversely too, it is the willingness to offer solidarity, or a lack of this willingness, that defines where the relevant community or in-group ends and the out-group begins: solidarity and collective identities are in a close reciprocal relationship. Empirical studies of this relationship have initially most often looked at the relation of solidarity as support for redistributive policies within a state and the identification with the imagined community of a nation, and have usually found positive correlations (Miller and Ali 2013), even if some authors have found that the positive effect of

national identity on welfare state support is contingent on the inclusiveness of the identity concept (Wright and Reeskens 2013).

This is in line with the theoretical mechanisms sketched above: on the one hand, the existence of binding community norms as implied in the formal citizenship to a state can produce enacted solidarity, but on the other hand, affective feelings of identity are conducive to more solidarity within a state (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Calhoun 2007). In a more recent body of literature, the same patterns have been confirmed for the larger community of the European Union: citizens' identification with the EU and their willingness to offer financial (state-level) support across European borders do reinforce each other (Díez-Medrano et al. 2019; Verhaegen 2018).

However, looking at a presumed macro-level correlate of group identification again at the country level, namely ethnic diversity, Janmaat and Braun (2009) surprisingly found that *higher* ethnic diversity – which they assume to indicate *lesser* identification – has a positive rather than a negative association with societal solidarity levels. For example, the lower the average ethnic homogeneity of a society, the higher would be the readiness to offer solidarity to the needy in the same society. While the authors can offer no explanation for this unexpected finding, we caution with a view to our own analyses presented later that they employ a different measure of solidarity that might be more vulnerable to policy preferences and ideological viewpoints.

An identity marker of similar relevance as ethnic belonging is religious belonging. Whereas some research has found evidence that the *substance* of religious beliefs affects the readiness to offer solidarity and concludes that persons with relatively higher and stricter religious commitment would be more ready to include out-groups into their scope of solidarity (VanHeuvelen and Robinson 2017), others have argued that religion has become the most important marker of cultural differences in modern societies (Brubaker 2013). There have indeed been political attempts to recite the Christian heritage of the (European) Occident with a view to mobilising in-group identification against immigration from non-Christian regions that is perceived as excessive (Challand 2009; Foret 2009). It should be noted that the two lines of reasoning are not necessarily contradictory, as the first refers to the intensity and content of religious convictions at the individual level, whereas the latter refers to the – possibly 'empty' – boundary-setting functions of declared religious belongings. In sum, the role of religious belonging is likely contingent on the degree to which belonging leads to certain convictions or is just 'yet another' identity marker.

7.2.3 Forms and Recipients of Solidarity

For the sake of completeness and clarification, we need to mention that previous solidarity research has largely focused on a variety of specific forms of solidarity *behaviours*, in the sense of activities or (agreement to) resource transfers in support

of the needy. Much of the comparative literature in the field investigates formal/institutionalised solidarity through welfare systems within states (Fernández Guzman Grassi 2019; Ferrera 2014) and on transnational solidarity between states (Ferrera and Burelli 2019; Grimmel and Giang 2017). Some studies adopting micro-level perspectives (Cinalli and Sanhueza 2018; Kalogeraki 2018; Lahusen and Theiss 2019; Maggini and Fernández 2019; Montgomery et al. 2018) refer to actional components of solidarity as, for example, taking part in actions of solidarity (for example, being an active member of a civil society organisation, marching for the rights of people in need, donating for a group in need, etc.).

One of the core questions specifically in relation to the research related to welfare policies regards the beneficiaries of solidarity and, more specifically, which social groups are considered to deserve help and in which form (Buß et al. 2017; van Oorschot 2006). Particularly in the last decade, in conjunction with the economic and refugee crises, the debate has also paid attention to the transnational dimension of deservingness, where attributions of deservingness apparently are also made towards whole societies (Wallaschek and Eigmüller 2020).

7.2.4   Short- and Long-Term Trajectories in Solidarity Levels

Although solidarity is not a core concept in Inglehart's theory of value change, solidarity as a value should follow the trajectory of the 'post-materialist' values: as a non-egoistic and less materialistic orientation, it should increase along with a society's wealth and levels of security (Inglehart 1997). To the degree that solidarity becomes internalised through socialisation, it would then resist short-term fluctuations in economic security and mainly change through cohort replacement. However, Inglehart would also grant the possibility of short-term period effects fluctuating around the 'general' trend, so that, for example, economic problems could also allow for some short-term decrease in expressed solidarity orientations. Nonetheless, the stronger effect should be with the socialised and thus per birth cohort stable value of solidarity. It is noteworthy that this pattern could not actually be strongly confirmed in the only direct empirical test we are aware of, which tested whether individual-level post-materialist values would predict solidarity orientations (only weakly), and which further tested whether society-level averages of post-materialism and of solidarity orientations are correlated (not at all) (Janmaat and Braun 2009). Given these results, some caution is in order about the hypothesis that there is a long-term association between solidarity and post-materialist value orientations.

Before the 2008 economic crisis, the general processes of secularisation, individualisation, and globalisation were intertwined with the processes related to EU enlargement, new migration flows, and the decline of welfare systems. In this scenario, the decline of nation states was supposedly leading to a weakening of national solidarity (Radtke 2007). With the economic recession, however, micro worries

related to the loss of control over personal outcomes assuring security (Schwartz et al. 2000) began to reinforce solidarity towards the in-group, with stronger attention directed towards people living in the neighbourhood and region, and to fellow countrymen. Similarly, Sortheix et al. (2019) found that benevolence values, siblings of solidarity, but also tradition and security preferences, increased later in the course of the financial crisis. The refugee crisis may have further prioritised in-group solidarity through identity mechanisms by providing a publicly visible 'out-group' that was evoked by nationalist/populist politicians, thereby strengthening the salience of more closed identity references (Delanty 2008).

Solidarity at the transnational level apparently encountered different mechanisms. EU enlargement may have increased cosmopolitanism (Outhwaite 2006), but the fact that new member states disproportionately benefited from structural funds challenged the legitimacy of (financial) solidarity at the European level (Grabbe 2006). Furthermore, new migration waves raised fears of new claimants moving into overstretched welfare systems, and have increased ethnic heterogeneity within European societies (Janmaat and Braun 2009). During the economic recession, spending cuts and increases in unemployment rates amplified conflicts about who deserves welfare benefits, challenging, for example, solidarity towards immigrants. The austerity measures imposed at the European level fuelled the first relevant wave of anti-Europeanism, and the failure of the EU in the management of the refugee crisis may have impacted negatively on transnational solidarity (Reinl 2020; Wallaschek and Eigmüller 2020).

7.3   Methodological Approach of the Chapter

As the discussion above has demonstrated, solidarity research can have many different angles, and most previous studies have chosen the important behavioural perspective of looking at acts that are helpful to others, either directly or in the form of supporting redistributive policies.

An alternative perspective is to look at the attitudinal expressions of solidarity. The possible research questions would in a sense be mostly the same as for the behavioural angle – who, why, how much, and under what conditions is solidarity offered? But they can be approached in a way that needs far less controlling for short-term situational conditions than can behaviours, which are naturally heavily contingent on individual resources, immediate opportunities and cues for action, and situational peculiarities at both individual and societal levels. This chapter therefore focuses on exploring *solidarity in its most generic expression as the subjective propensity to offer support to others*. Further to this methodological reason, looking at the normative dispositions speaks more directly to the normative angle taken by EU policy-level declarations, which posit 'solidarity' as a European value, so we can tentatively check how much those declarations relate to the lived reality of European societies, within and outside the European Union.

   The reason for our mostly descriptive approach is that previous literature has hardly ever investigated solidarity as a generic population attitude or 'value' across European populations. Rather, the focus has been on solidarity as actual acts of support, and on specific policy areas. Therefore, lacking strong theoretical expectations or well-established prior results on comparative levels of *attitudinal* solidarity, it seems justified to take a descriptive and inductive view of the matter. This will be informed by referring to the literature presented above, but not in the sense of formally testing an array of hypotheses. Rather, we will more modestly limit ourselves to plausibility considerations, thereby hopefully providing food for future, deeper analyses.

   Specifically, we will look at levels of solidarity attitudes in European countries, at the relationship of solidarity levels to subjective identification patterns, at possible regional clusters, and at possible time trends. Drawing from the literature reviewed above, we will tentatively enrich this with information about country-specific economic situations, immigration exposure, and the religious composition of the societies. In terms of analyses conducted, we will first check for the association between solidarity and subjective identification with the EVS 2017 data, we will then describe the trend of two facets of subjective solidarity over three EVS waves (1999, 2008, 2017), and finally we will relate those levels to the external factors just mentioned, in the practical form of very simple macro-level regressions.

7.4   Data and Measures

7.4.1   Data Availability

Three consecutive waves of EVS contain the relevant questions on subjective solidarity, which will be described below. The nature of the EVS as a repeated cross-sectional survey enables us to look both at country comparisons and at comparisons of societal averages over a time window of about three decades. To facilitate the latter, we will exclude samples from all countries that were surveyed only once in that time span.

   Table 7.1 shows all countries with at least two occurrences over all three waves, which yields 108 samples from 42 different countries, respectively regions. (Northern Ireland is traditionally sampled and treated separately from Great Britain, though both are part of the United Kingdom.) The 1999 and 2017 waves are both less complete in terms of country coverage than the EVS 2008 wave, so that we have a number of instances where a time comparison is only possible in reference to 2008, either looking before or after that wave.

Table 7.1 Overview of countries and EVS waves

	EVS 1999	EVS 2008	EVS 2017	Times surveyed
AL	0	1	1	2
AM	0	1	1	2
AT	1	1	1	3
BA	0	1	1	2
BE	1	1	0	2
BG	1	1	1	3
BY	1	1	1	3
CH	0	1	1	2
CZ	1	1	1	3
DE	1	1	1	3
DK	1	1	1	3
EE	1	1	1	3
ES	1	1	1	3
FI	1	1	1	3
FR	1	1	1	3
GB	1	1	1	3
GB-NIR	1	1	0	2
GE	0	1	1	2
GR	1	1	0	2
HR	1	1	1	3
HU	1	1	1	3
IE	1	1	0	2
IS	1	1	1	3
IT	1	1	1	3
LT	1	1	1	3
LU	1	1	0	2
LV	1	1	0	2
ME	0	1	1	2
MK	0	1	1	2
MT	1	1	0	2
NL	1	1	1	3
NO	0	1	1	2
PL	1	1	1	3
PT	1	1	1	3
RO	1	1	1	3
RS	0	1	1	2
RU	1	1	1	3
SE	1	1	1	3
SI	1	1	1	3
SK	1	1	1	3
TR	1	1	0	2
UA	1	1	0	2
Total	33	42	33	108

Table 7.2 Subjective concept of solidarity – battery of items

Q60: To what extent do you feel concerned about the living conditions of: (Very much, Much, To a certain extent, Not so much, Not at all)	
1.	People in your neighbourhood
2.	The people of the region you live in
3.	Your fellow countrymen
4.	Europeans
5.	All humans all over the world
Q61: To what extent do you feel concerned about the living conditions of the following groups living in your country: (Very much, Much, To a certain extent, Not so much, Not at all)	
6.	Elderly people
7.	Unemployed people
8.	Immigrants
9.	Sick and disabled people

7.4.2 Measuring Solidarity

The subjective concept of solidarity is assessed in the EVS via a battery of nine items (Table 7.2), which was first introduced to the questionnaire with the 1999 wave.[1] The instrument asks the respondents to express to what extent they are concerned about the living conditions of various groups of people.

In previous empirical analyses of the question battery (which are scarce – we are aware of Abela (2004); Lomazzi (2021); van Oorschot et al. (2005); van Oorschot (2006); Rusu (2012)), three substantive dimensions of solidarity have been identified that partly match the theoretical foci of 'proximity' and 'neediness' built into the items, but in an overlapping way with not entirely clear theoretical interpretations. Using data from the EVS 1999, Abela (2004) identified three dimensions of socio-economic solidarity: as concern for the living conditions of people with social closeness and similarity, for example, people living in the neighbourhood, the region, or the same nation ('local solidarity'); concern for those in need, like unemployed, older, and sick and disabled people ('social solidarity'); and concern for people with a larger cultural and social distance ('global solidarity'), including Europeans, immigrants, and, most generally, humankind. Lomazzi (2021) has recently confirmed that the same dimensional structure can still be found with the EVS 2017 data and has added the crucial information that the battery provides an

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[1] The battery had a tenth item in the 1999 and 2008 waves, which was dropped in the EVS 2017.

acceptable degree of measurement equivalence over the large majority of countries in the EVS 2017 sample for the 'local' and 'social' dimensions, but not for the 'global' dimension.

It is important to note that this instrument is measuring a subjective *preference* of the respondents for potentially offering solidarity to certain kinds of people, where these 'kinds' are defined by the varying degree of geographical and social proximity to the respondent for the first five items (Q60) and by aspects of their living conditions for the concluding four items (Q61). In other words, this instrument is a pure attitudinal measure, as it has only affective and cognitive components. Attitude measures can, of course, be partially driven by idiosyncratic factors such as individual personality traits (for example, different degrees of benevolence or neuroticism) and by very short-term situational cues in the interview situation, but these can usually be assumed to be random 'noise' when looking at societal averages of those measures. The factors relevant for our purpose, however, would be those that are systematically influenced by societal-level conditions, such as the socialisation experiences that particular groups of people in a given society made at a given period, or the restrictions and opportunities they constantly confront given their society's welfare system. We should therefore expect that the averaged responses to the EVS solidarity attitudes instrument do indeed reflect the prevalent societal norms about solidarity in a country.

7.4.3 *Sharpening Our Measure of Solidarity*

With our interest being in assessing societal preferences for solidarity in its most generic form, we have decided to narrow down the substantive focus of the measures by dropping parts of the question battery from our index building.[2] Specifically, it seems helpful to exclude the 'reasons for neediness' aspect from the indices entirely, so that what remains is the readiness to exert any solidarity at all, only distinguished by the degree of proximity of recipients and respondents, or, in short, the 'scope' of solidarity. The 'scope' aspect allows us to tap into whether respondents prefer recipients closer to themselves, or whether they are ready to allocate solidarity indiscriminately of proximity, that is, in a universalistic way.[3] This distinction adds a relevant angle to our analysis of differences between European

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[2] Note that the width-of-circle question is not designed to work like a Likert scale, where the individual items are meant to be interchangeable manifestations of the same latent construct. Rather, the items intentionally aim for how the respondents' solidarity is directed at *differently defined groups of persons*. This intended distinction should be obvious to respondents. Factor analytical methods can be meaningfully used to test for this theoretical distinction being followed or not, but they should not in this case be used to construct a latent variable in an exploratory way.

[3] We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that looking at the social scope of solidarity is by no means new: Zulehner and Denz (1993: 255) already introduced the terms 'Mikro-' and 'Makro-Solidarität' (micro and macro solidarity, corresponding to our 'close' and 'universal' solidarity) and come to similar conclusions.

countries. Further to dropping all the 'reasons for neediness' items from our index construction, we also omit item 3, 'your fellow countrymen', from the index building, because this is inherently fraught with an association with national identity. On the 'wide' end of the item range, the item on concern about Europeans has similar problems of being overlaid with connotations of identification with the European Union as a political project (which certainly has different levels of support in different countries, partly regardless of the general solidarity dispositions of the citizens of those countries), and of creating a different focus for countries that are geographically and culturally at the core of Europe and those that are on the periphery (for example, Armenia, Turkey). These associations might not only distort the narrow/ wide scope distinction by an unwanted element, but they would also induce an overlap of our solidarity measure with the concept of identity, which we understand as an importantly related but still a separate concept and therefore one that needs to be measured in a strictly distinct way. Supporting these decisions, Lomazzi (2021) in her analysis of the EVS 2017 data has found the 'countrymen' item and two of the four neediness items to be the most problematic in terms of measurement equivalence across the European countries, so it will likely improve cross-national comparability of our measures if we drop these particular items.

This leaves us with three items from which we derive two indices for each country by year sample: 'close solidarity' is computed as the average of responses given to the questions on being concerned about people in the neighbourhood and people in the region, whereas 'universal solidarity' is simply computed as the average of the responses to the question on being concerned about all humans in the world. The index values are coded such that higher scores indicate higher levels of solidarity, that is, the original response scale has been reversed.

7.5 Solidarity and Geographical Identification

The question of identity is highly important for any analysis of solidarity. However, measuring identity – as the subjective identification with large social groups – is inherently difficult, and EVS has introduced measures for this only in its two more recent waves. The questionnaire instrument that we can most directly relate to the solidarity measures with their discrimination by scopes is a battery of questions on 'geographical' identification, which asks for the respondents' subjective belonging to others, within certain abstract geographic borders. However, the response format used was not consistent over the EVS waves. We are therefore limited to using data only from the EVS 2017 wave for the analysis that includes geographical identification. The question battery, shown in Table 7.3, used a rating response format in EVS 2017.

We have built a single categorical variable from the five individual items by conducting a Latent Class Analysis (LCA), which yields a compact description of the most frequent combinations of identification patterns preferred by the respondents. We did this using the Latent Gold software, accounting for the multi-level nested

Table 7.3 Geographical identification

Q45: People have different views about themselves and how they relate to the world. Using this card, would you tell me how close do you feel to…? (Very close, Close, Not very close, Not close at all)	
1.	Your town or city
2.	Your [county, region, district]
3.	[COUNTRY]
4.	[Continent; e.g. Europe]
5.	World

structure of the comparative data (Magidson and Vermunt 2004; Vermunt 2003; Vermunt and Magidson 2016). LCA performs a sorting of respondents into 'classes', given the prevalence of statistically distinguishable response patterns. Yielding a categorical variable, that procedure can also describe a multi-dimensional construct through assigning cases with overlapping combinations from different traits into their own special categories. In our case, this is useful because the 'classes' in the resulting classification appear to be driven by different motivations. One is the preference for identifying with one or several of the abstract social circles *at all*; the other is the choice of *which* object of reference, or combination of objects – city, region, country, continent, or world – invites the strongest feelings of closeness. The present LCA yields four classes.

The largest class of respondents of 49% across all countries (country-wise class distributions are shown in the Appendix) is characterised by feeling close or very close to *all* the reference objects ('All Close'). The second largest class of 35% feels close or very close to their town or city, to their region, and to their country, but not close or not close at all to Europe or to the world. We thus have a clear preference for conventional and more 'local' reference groups in this class versus the wider references ('Local Close'). The third class comprises only 8% of the respondents, collecting those who feel close/very close to their own country, Europe, and the world, and who feel distant from the more local reference groups ('Local Distant'). The remaining 8% of respondents in the fourth class expressed closeness to *none* of the offered reference groups ('All Distant'). The Appendix provides the Latent Class item response profiles and the country-specific distributions of the estimated identification classes.

As a first piece for the emerging picture of solidarity distributions, we offer a look at relationships of solidarity with our classification of geographical identification. With only data from EVS 2017 available for this, we rely on the visual inspection of the bivariate distributions alone. Therefore, Fig. 7.1 shows the country distributions of solidarity levels over the four different classes we identified ('All Close', 'Local Close', 'Local Distant', 'All Distant').

The first observation is that there is a very consistent, even if sometimes only slight, slope to the distribution where 'close solidarity' levels are the lower, the lower are either the number and/or the 'closeness' of reference entities to which the class members felt a sense of belonging. In other words, 'close solidarity' is high for
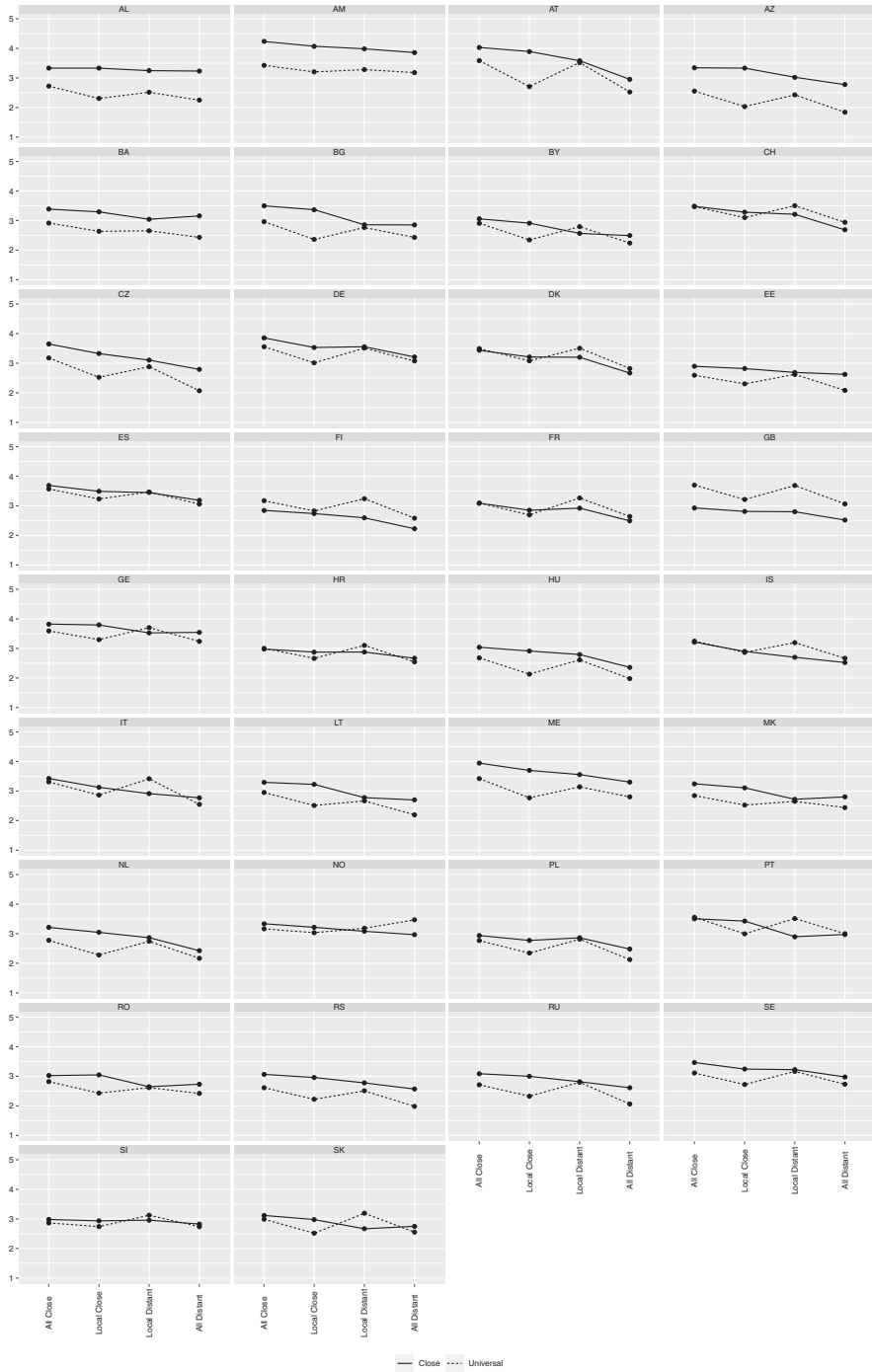
Fig. 7.1 Scopes of solidarity by geographical identity class

respondents who identify with all possible geographical entities, slightly lower if they identify only with the personally closer entities (neighbourhood, town, region, country), even lower if they identify only with the larger/more abstract entities (country, continent, world), and lowest if they identify with none of the entities. The only exceptions to this sloping pattern occur with the two small classes, which have extremely small case counts in some countries, for example, in Norway. This indicates a plausible relationship of close solidarity and local identification, which is not contradicted by the fact that those with high identification with *all* entities display the highest level of close solidarity.

The distribution of 'universal solidarity' by identification classes is similarly plausible. The highest levels of universal solidarity can be observed – in virtually every country except Norway – when either all ('All Close') or the more remote ('Local Distant') identities are reported as identification objects, whereas the levels of universal solidarity are lower for the two classes that only identify with the closer entities ('Local Close') or with none ('All Distant').

This reassures us that the distinction between the scopes of solidarity is meaningful, and that the relationship postulated in the literature between solidarity and identification can be observed to some degree, at least at the aggregated level.

7.6   Country and Time Comparisons of Solidarity Levels

Figure 7.2 shows the country levels of the two scopes of solidarity attitudes per our indices at all available time points. The lines in each country sub-panel thus display the averages of the indices over the two solidarity scopes, for at least two points in time.

The panel shows a compelling degree of similarity across most countries in important regards: First, the general mean levels of *both* scopes of solidarity are in the 2.5 to 3.5 range of the scale, with only Armenia, Austria, Georgia, Montenegro, and Turkey going noticeably above that, and only for 'close' solidarity. Nevertheless, between-country differences in levels of solidarity mostly concern both scopes in the same way, that is, if close solidarity is relatively low or high in a given country, so is universal solidarity. Second, the order of the levels is almost universally that 'close' solidarity is more pronounced than 'universal solidarity', with the notable exceptions of Finland for all time points, Denmark and Great Britain for two time points, and Czechia and Greece for one time point, with 'close' solidarity being markedly lower than 'universal'. Interestingly, these cases appear to have unusually low levels of 'close' solidarity rather than unusually high levels of 'universal' solidarity. Thirdly, for most countries, both indices are rather stable across time. For a few countries only, changes exceed a magnitude of 0.5 scale points over adjacent time points, with the steepest changes having occurred in Armenia, Austria, Czechia, Denmark, and Republic of Ireland. Regarding the direction of the changes, there are *more instances with increases of solidarity than with decreases*, and such increases appear to be larger over the second period, that is, between 2008 and 2017. The only
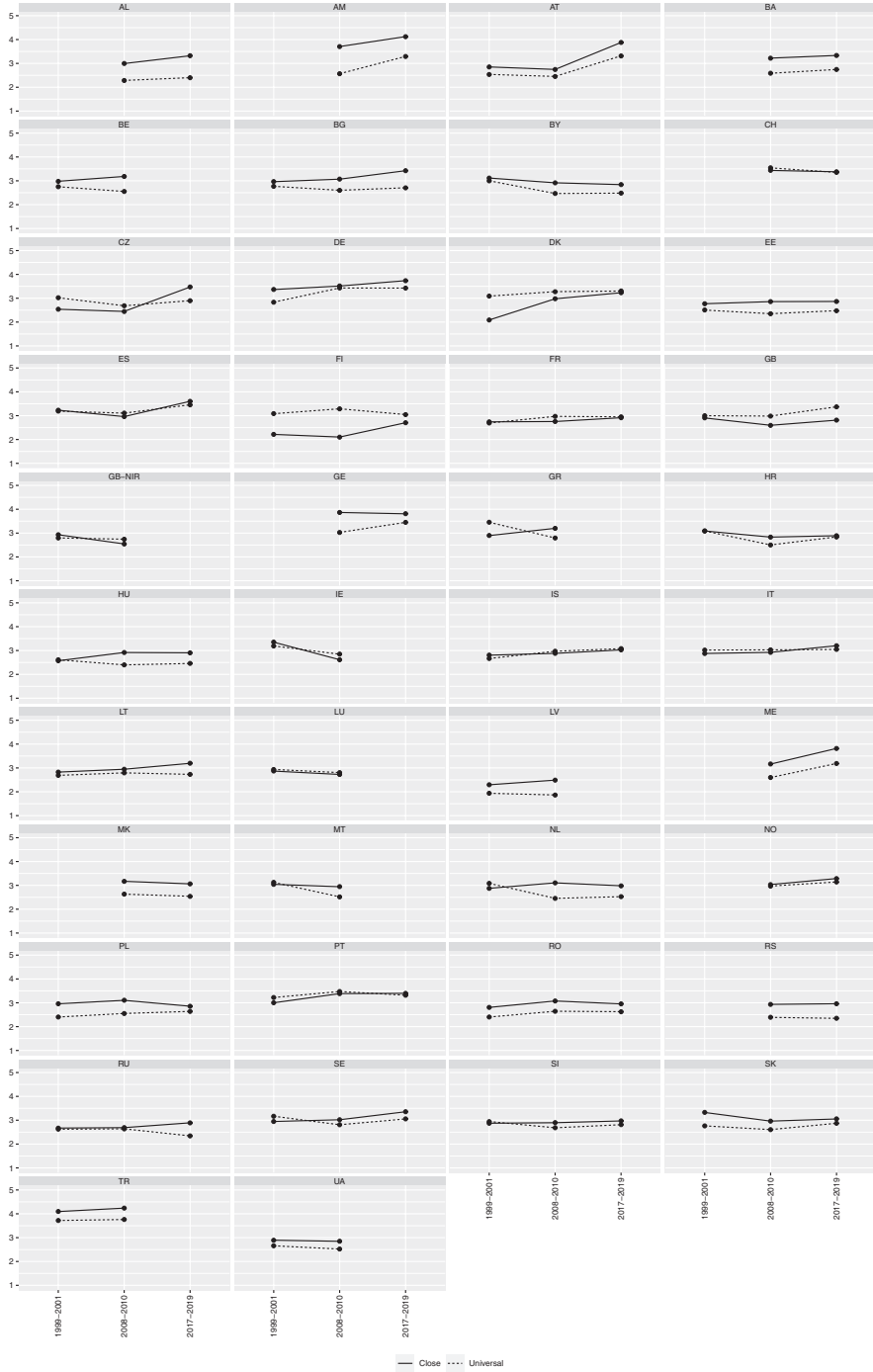
Fig. 7.2 Scopes of solidarity over three EVS waves

countries with decreases for both scopes of solidarity over all time points are
Belarus, Northern Ireland, and Croatia. Unfortunately, we do not have the complete
time-series for some of the countries with the steeper changes.

Having found that the levels of both solidarity scopes are not usually hugely dif-
ferent, we still need to better isolate the aspect of the spread between solidarity
scopes, as this might point at differentiated dynamic aspects for both scopes. As
discussed above, some researchers hypothesised that in reaction to the economic
and migration crises, solidarity in closer circles would increase at the expense of
wider (especially cross-national and out-group) solidarity, thus increasing the over-
all spread. We have therefore plotted the differences between 'close' and 'universal'
solidarity in a separate figure. If changes in spread are to be understood to be a
short-term effect right after the financial crisis, an increase of spread between the
two solidarity scopes would have occurred at the occasion of the 2008 to 2010 EVS
round. If it were understood as a lasting effect that more permanently shifts the soli-
darity levels, the spread should not decrease afterwards, or might even further
increase for the following observation instance too. However, between the 2008 and
2017 EVS waves, Europe also experienced the 'refugee crisis', the effects of which
would likely be confounded with any longer-term effects of the financial crisis.

Per visual inspection of Fig. 7.3, we find that for 21 countries (AT, BE, BG, BY,
CZ, DK, EE, GR, HR, HU, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, TR, UA), there is
an *increase* in spread in the earlier period, whereas ten countries (DE, ES, FI, FR,
GB/GB-NIR, IE, IS, LU, PL, SK) experienced a *decrease* in spread over that peri-
od.[4] Looking only at the 24 countries that were observed over all three points in
time, we find that for AT, BG, CZ, DK, IT, LT, RU, and SE, the spread continues to
rise in the second period. For BY, EE, HR, HU, NL, RO, and SI, the spread decreases
somewhat, having risen before, but usually the decrease does not fully compensate
for the earlier rise. For DE, ES, FI, and FR, a slight rise follows the earlier decrease.
Overall, we therefore see a substantial degree of heterogeneity in the trajectories
over time, but there is still a good majority of observations that have experienced an
increase in spread for the first period. It might be noteworthy that the highest single
increase occurred in Greece, the country that was hit first and arguably hardest by
the financial crisis. In sum, the visual interpretation of the results does not contradict
the notion that the crisis may have led to a moderate shift of the balance between
close and universal solidarity, but this shift would be due more to an increase in
close solidarity than to a decrease in universal solidarity. More robust interpreta-
tions will, however, require that we take additional factors into account that may
overlay, or also correlate with, changes over time.

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[4] Note that while most countries had their fieldwork between May and October 2008, there are
exceptions. Specifically, BE, FI, GB, IT, and SE had their fieldwork in the middle or second half
of 2009, so that the recency of the exposure to the financial crisis, which began in 2007, is not
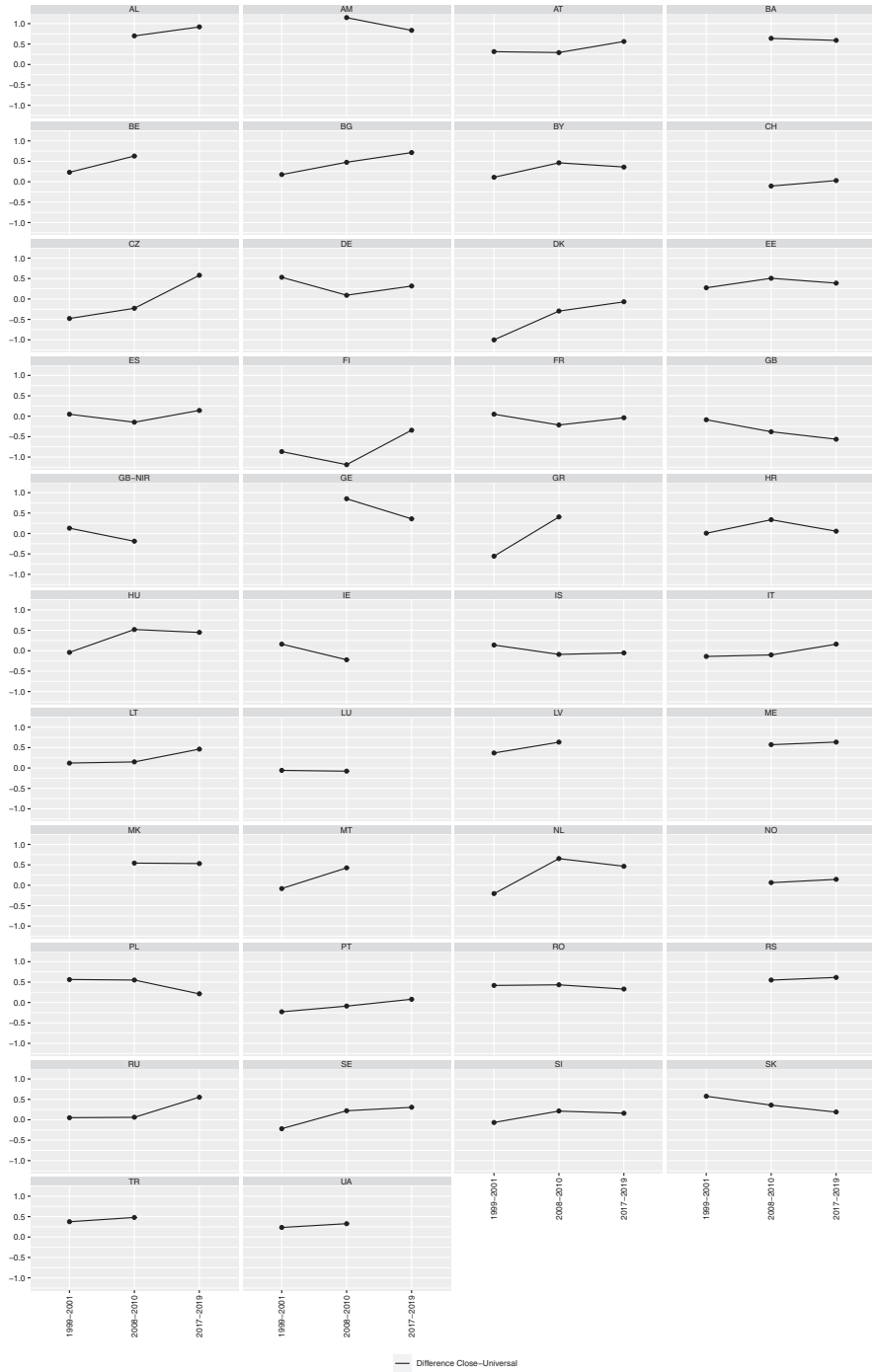entirely even.

Fig. 7.3 Difference in levels between close and universal solidarity, over three EVS waves

7.7 Exploring the Relation of External Factors to Societal Solidarity Levels

If we want to arrive at possible interpretations of the above comparative differences and trends, analyses of potentially correlated variables are necessary. We have done this by a set of rather simple multivariate regression analyses, which allow us to control for 'confounding' and joint effects of the relevant external indicators. Only by simultaneously looking at a set of possible correlating variables for our social solidarity types can we disentangle the *relative* contributions of each of these other variables, net of the other variables.

In view of the introductory discussion and the overall topic of this book, the most relevant indicators besides the time trend relate to the *religious composition* of the societies, to the *economic crisis* following the banking crisis that might have put solidarity demands under stress, and to the *migration crisis*, as indicated by sudden refugee inflows and increasing migrant shares. Further to that, we intend to control for the European socio-cultural *region* that a country is part of, to check for effects of a joint societal and normative development, and common political traditions and institutional setups, thereby filling the previous description at the country level with some substance. Below, we describe the measures used for each of these potentially relevant areas in more detail.

Religious Composition We consider three interrelated aspects of religious composition. First, we look at the shares of the most frequent religious denominations/beliefs (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Other (incl. Islam), No denomination) in the population, which we computed directly from the EVS sample data of each wave (European Values Study 2021). This allows us to check for possible effects of particular religious traditions, as far as these are still visible in the distribution of self-reported memberships. Second, we use an index of religious diversity, in short RDI (Pew Research Center 2014), to check whether the presence or absence of religious *homogeneity* has any effect on prevalent solidarity attitudes in a society. Although the aspect of diversity is technically implied in having the full set of denomination shares, using the RDI as a single measure allows us to separate the diversity aspect from any effects of a particular denominational category being dominant over others. This index relates to data collected by Pew Research from multiple sources with a reference year of 2010, and we apply it to all our cases regardless of time point, under the assumption that religious diversity and its effects do not change on the scale of single decades (Hackett et al. 2012). The fact that it is based on official statistics as well as on survey data should give this index high reliability. Finally, we also tested a measure of 'active' religious commitment, using the reported attendance at religious services. For this, we aggregated the reported attendance to a societal mean value of expected weekly attendance from the EVS waves (EVS Trend File: European Values Study 2021), following the methodology laid out in Biolcati et al. (2020). However, we refrained from including this measure into the final models reported below because its effects were largely redundant with the

share of Catholics in each country, and its presence in the regression models thus reduced the precision of the individual regression coefficients.

Economic Crisis As a measure of the economic stress on the overall society, as well as a proxy for individual-level economic insecurity, we draw on the standard measure of the unemployment rate. We use unemployment rates as reported by the World Bank of the year *preceding* the respective EVS to tap into the publicly perceived state of economic affairs, not the most recent state, which might not have formed the public discourse yet (World Bank 2020b).

Migration Crisis As measures of possible 'cultural' stress on any national in-group identification bases of solidarity, we used two indicators: one is of migrants in the overall population (World Bank 2020a), which accounts for all residents not born in the country of residence, regardless of when and why they migrated to that country. As this is available only in five-year intervals at full and half decades, we used the most proximal values for each EVS wave, that is, data from 2000, 2010, and 2015. The other is the proportion of new asylum applications in the overall population, which, in contrast to the previous indicator, would allow us to capture any short-term effects of the refugee crisis. This data was retrieved from UNHCR (2020), again with the non-annual data series (for 2000, 2007, 2016) being selected per proximity to EVS waves. The raw asylum application counts were converted to shares of the host country population count. This variable has no information for Belgium, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Serbia, Ukraine, and Turkey, which were therefore excluded from our analyses.

Socio-cultural Region
The five regions (Table 7.4) we distinguish are constructed by a mix of geographic proximity and political/cultural history criteria that might have their own influence on top of the separate country-level indicators described before, for example, in relation to a country's 'welfare regime' (Esping-Andersen 1990). The 'Northern' region comprises the Nordic countries, which are characterised by economic wealth, a high degree of political stability, a generous and universalistic welfare state regime, a Protestant religious background, and an early advent of secularisation. The 'Western' region comprises the Northwestern and Central European countries, which have a long history of industrialisation, had been most heavily affected by the Second World War, are relatively heterogeneous in terms of Christian denominations, have rather stratified welfare regimes, and were only more recently subjected to intensive secularisation. The 'Southern' region comprises the mostly Catholic or Orthodox countries around the Mediterranean (plus Portugal) that were not under Communist rule, but that nevertheless partly saw major political unrest and late democratisation after the Second World War, and which were not early adopters of industrialisation, fostering a rather conservative welfare regime. The 'ex-communist' region is heterogeneous in regard to traditional denominations, and with Albania even contains a country with Muslim majority, but the whole region had been subjected to the enforced secularisation of communist rule. Economic wealth is still

Table 7.4 Socio-cultural regions

Region	Countries
Northern	Denmark (DK), Finland (FI), Iceland (IS), Norway (NO), Sweden (SE)
Western	Austria (AT), Switzerland (CH), Germany (DE), Belgium (BE), France (FR), Great Britain (GB)/(GB-NIR), Republic of Ireland (IE), Luxembourg (LU), the Netherlands (NL)
Southern	Spain (ES), Greece (GR), Italy (IT), Malta (MT), Portugal (PT)
Ex-communist	Albania (AL), Bosnia-Herzegovina (BA), Bulgaria (BG), Czechia (CZ), Croatia (HR), Hungary (HU), Montenegro (ME), North Macedonia (MK), Poland (PL), Romania (RO), Serbia (RS), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK)
Ex-Soviet	Armenia (AM), Azerbaijan (AZ), Belarus (BY), Estonia (EE), Georgia (GE), Lithuania (LT), Latvia (LV), Russia (RU), Ukraine (UA)

weaker than in the aforementioned regions, and despite major internal and external (and violent) conflicts, in particular among the Balkan countries, the majority of the countries have achieved minimal stability of their polity. The 'ex-Soviet' region, finally, comprises the countries that were formerly part of the USSR and were thus most strongly subjected to the norms and restrictions of Soviet rule. Despite that, they later took different economic and political trajectories, with the three Baltic countries moving economically and politically towards the West, whereas most of the other countries of this group, including Russia, have experienced and/or are still experiencing violent external conflicts. Because of limited economic resources, welfare regimes in these countries are not generous despite the universalist Communist tradition.

To add detail beyond the *region* variable, which implicitly also encodes different institutionalised approaches to providing solidarity, we have also considered a measure of welfare-based redistribution. For this, we used the percentage of the GDP that was redistributed as social benefits to the households, as reported by the OECD (2020). However, this measure was not available for so many countries in our sample that we decided to drop the variable from the final models rather than drop the affected cases, having observed that the associations for the available cases were rather modest.

Finally, we have included the duration of EU membership for the EU members, to indicate integration with the 'European' country community. Non-EU members have been coded with a value of '0' on this variable.

A number of the variables described above represent strongly overlapping information, and they are also correlated with other relevant variables such as the Gross Domestic Product per capita that would often be included in such analyses, but which we decided to omit for the sake of parsimony, as it is again related to the region, the duration of EU membership, and the unemployment variables. The correlations between those variables that we do include are mostly below the threshold of $r \leq .5$, with the exceptions of RDI and the population share with 'no denomination/belief' (.62), and of the share of Catholics and the church attendance average (.67). Our final models included 92 valid observations with full data on all variables, from 34 countries.

Using 'close solidarity', 'universal solidarity', and the 'differences by scope' as dependent variables, we can also gain an impression of the differences between the association profiles among these three aspects of societal solidarity. In particular, the graphical presentations shown above have suggested rather stable level differences between certain countries. Are these related to the socio-cultural history clusters, or to the religious composition of societies? Further, we have observed a modest rise in levels of solidarity for a number of countries, with close solidarity increasing somewhat more than universal solidarity. Can this be traced back to any of the economic or cultural crisis indicators? Table 7.5 shows the core results of the respective regression models.

Beginning with 'close solidarity' and the change over time, we find that indeed the societal levels of close solidarity have increased between the 1999 and 2017 waves, and even in rather constant steps. Per convention, standardised regression coefficients ('Beta') above a magnitude of .1 are treated as substantial, and we see a Beta of .219 for the second versus the first wave and a near duplication of that (.397) for the third versus the first wave. For the region variable, where our model specification gives differences of four non-Northern regions versus the Northern

Table 7.5 Multiple regression results for three aspects of solidarity

	Close Solidarity $R^2 = .507$, Adj. $R^2 = .410$		Universal Solidarity $R^2 = .481$, Adj. $R^2 = .378$		Spread in Scopes $R^2 = .527$, Adj. $R^2 = .434$	
	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta
Constant	2.575		2.789		−.226	
EVS Wave (ref. EVS 1999)						
EVS 2008	.168	**.219**	−.031	−.042	.201	**.241**
EVS 2017	.311	**.397**	.125	**.167**	.187	**.220**
Region (ref. Northern Europe)						
Western	.301	**.315**	.123	**.135**	.184	**.178**
Southern	.137	**.129**	.138	**.136**	.007	.006
Ex-com. countries	.066	.083	−.310	**−.411**	.387	**.452**
Ex-Soviet countries	.158	**.170**	−.388	**−.435**	.555	**.548**
EU membership duration	.001	.039	.000	.023	.000	.016
Unemployment	.029	**.387**	.023	**.323**	.006	.074
Asylum appl., relative to population	68.581	**.280**	10.336	.044	58.107	**.219**
Migrant share	.008	**.128**	.005	.086	.003	.045
Religious diversity (RDI 2010)	−.090	**−.412**	−.073	**−.349**	−.016	−.068
Denomination shares (ref. share Catholic)						
Protestant	.000	−.019	.003	**.219**	−.003	**−.202**
Orthodox	.002	**.179**	.002	**.130**	.001	.053
Other (incl. Islam)	.003	.095	−.003	**−.103**	.006	**.174**
No denom.	.000	.014	.003	**.189**	−.003	**−.155**

region, we find that 'close solidarity' is least important in the Northern region, as all the coefficients for the other regions are positive, with the Western countries giving the relatively highest priority to close solidarity, and the ex-communist countries only showing a negligible difference to the Northern countries. EU membership duration has no discernible relationship with 'close solidarity', after controlling for the other variables.

Our three crisis indicators – unemployment rates, asylum applications, and migrant share – all have *positive* associations with the levels of close solidarity. This is despite the time trend (which is moving in parallel to the crises developments and thus likely absorbing some of the effect of the substantive variables!) also having substantial associations. Going by the standardised coefficients, the economic indicator and the sum of the two foreigner-related indicators have a roughly equivalent weight.

Lastly, the religious composition indicators (denomination shares and RDI) have mixed associations with close solidarity. Religious diversity has a strong negative association with close solidarity, which would indicate that the members of more religiously homogeneous societies have a higher subjective motivation for internal solidarity. This effect is present independent of the specific content of the religious beliefs, that is, even very secular societies, if homogeneous in their secularity, should on average have higher solidarity levels than less homogeneous but more religious societies. The beliefs or denomination shares as such have only minor or no associations here with the share of Catholics as reference category, with only the share of Orthodox in the population making a difference beyond the .1 threshold.

Moving on to 'universal solidarity', we find that the time trend is almost absent here, with only a moderate increase for the last EVS wave. In contrast, the regional differences are much more pronounced than for close solidarity, with both the ex-communist and the ex-Soviet countries being markedly below the universal solidarity levels of the remaining regions. We stress again that we intentionally removed the 'concerned with Europeans' item from the universal solidarity index to reduce a possible conflation of the index with attitudes towards the European Union, which often would not be a positive identification object in many of the Eastern countries, and recently even for some of the EU members in that region. We conclude that populations in the two Eastern regions do indeed have on average lower 'universal solidarity' levels, whereas their levels of 'close solidarity' are on par with those of the Northern and Southern regions.

For the crisis-related indicators, we observe that universal solidarity apparently moves in the same direction as close solidarity in relation to unemployment rates, whereas the migration/refugee indicators show no association with universal solidarity.

The religious composition has, in contrast to 'close solidarity', markedly stronger associations with 'universal solidarity'. Notably, it is especially higher Protestant shares that are associated with a higher preference of the overall populations for universal solidarity (although it would not necessarily be the Protestants among those populations who foster that attitude most strongly), but societies with higher

Orthodox and higher unaffiliated population shares also display higher levels of universal solidarity.

The right-most columns of the regression results in Table 7.5 reflect the contrast between close and universal solidarity in a more concise manner, and therefore the regression coefficients also reproduce the differences between the coefficients for the two components of the scope spread measure. Our simple regression model accounts for the variation in differences between the two solidarity measures even better than for the variations in the absolute levels of the two component measures, with an adjusted R square value of .434 indicating that 43% of the variance in the country-level scope difference data can be related to our indicators. In summary, we observe that in the two more recent EVS waves, the edge of close solidarity over universal solidarity is positive but remains constant; that the Northern and Southern countries have no preference for close solidarity over universal solidarity, while the other regions have a clear preference for close solidarity; that the only 'crisis indicator' with a differential relation to solidarity is the asylum applications, but more asylum applications accompany a stronger preference for close solidarity; and that, among the denominations, the more Catholic and more Orthodox societies prefer close over universal solidarity.

7.8 Discussion and Conclusion

7.8.1 Limitations of Our Study

Before we proceed to offer some speculative interpretations, it is important to remind readers of the limitations of our study. The first and perhaps central limitation is that we started our study on a surprisingly blank slate, in terms of established knowledge about levels of attitudinal solidarity in European populations, and of the potential causes of between-country differences and changes of such levels over time. Not yet having a body of descriptive core observations and well-developed hypotheses as a starting ground has led us to follow a very explorative approach. Our methodology was geared more at generating hypotheses rather than at testing them. This leads to the second limitation, which is that even for the regression analyses presented, we cannot and do not claim to have provided rigorous tests for any of the substantive statements made in this chapter. Also, for achieving a better understanding of the actual cognitive and emotive processes at work in the respondents, it is desirable to include the individual level in the analyses. We will hint at several relevant individual-level hypotheses in the next sub-section, which would mandate us to conduct multi-level regressions for any future analyses. Such multi-level models would also provide opportunities for a more statistically appropriate specification of the time-related dependencies in our repeated cross-sectional data. Finally, the available set of country cases in our data is on the one hand rather comprehensive in terms of covering Europe, but on the other hand neither provides

complete coverage nor is the product of a controlled random sampling process, which makes systematic inference from our results to the whole 'country population', that is, to all European countries, an uncertain endeavour.

7.8.2   A Summary and Some Possible Interpretations

The first core observation was that a plausible association pattern for both of our solidarity indices with different types of geographical identification exists, which on the one hand underlines that the distinction of close versus universal scopes of solidarity is analytically meaningful, and on the other hand demonstrates that solidarity and mass identities are indeed interrelated. Second, we observed that the levels of close solidarity are higher than the levels of universal solidarity in most European countries. It is not unlikely that the positive relationship between solidarity and identification also explains why close solidarity is usually more pronounced than universal solidarity, considering that narrower references for identification are overall much more prevalent than wider references.

Further, we have found systematic variation in the levels of solidarity over the European regions, with the Northern and ex-communist regions having the lowest levels of close solidarity, whereas the levels of universal solidarity are lowest in the ex-communist and ex-Soviet countries. These regional differences remain after controlling for the differential exposition of the countries to some economic, social, and religious factors with their own relationship to solidarity levels, which gives credibility to the notion that solidarity levels are also engrained in the institutions of a society, and/or in long-lasting socialisation patterns that differ between societies. Obviously, we cannot offer a specification of what exactly explains these regional level differences, and it could easily be that very different, region-specific processes have led to such similar solidarity levels. For example, following the reasoning of van Oorschot (2006), the Northern countries might have lower close solidarity levels because of their more generous welfare systems, which 'substitute' personal-level solidarity with institutionally provided solidarity, whereas the ex-communist countries, employing different welfare systems, might have arrived at solidarity levels of about the same magnitude because of different in-group identification levels, or because of different values in other realms.

Of special relevance for the focus of this volume is the observation that the religious profiles of our societies – that is, their dominant denominations or confessions – are *not* the dominant drivers for differences in close solidarity levels, while they may have a certain role in shaping universal solidarity attitudes (VanHeuvelen and Robinson 2017). A puzzling aspect of that role is the difference between the more Catholic societies on the one hand and the societies with higher shares of other Christian denominations plus unaffiliated on the other hand. We observe less universal solidarity in more Catholic countries, without being able to offer an explanation for that.

Another, apparently at least as relevant, aspect of religious composition is its diversity within a country. High diversity has a very distinct *negative* effect on both forms of attitudinal solidarity, meaning that, in our sample, societies with a more homogeneous religious belief composition also muster higher levels of solidarity. This is interesting also because it runs in the opposite direction of what Janmaat and Braun (2009) found for the association between ethnic diversity and their measure of solidarity in earlier EVS data.[5] In conjunction with the earlier observations about the relationship between solidarity and subjective identification, this could indicate that the main effects of religious belonging on solidarity are mediated through religion working as an identity marker, with higher religious diversity possibly creating too many perceived internal group divisions for sustaining solidarity directed at in-groups. However, that hypothesis would imply that the negative effect of diversity on solidarity was mainly present for close solidarity and clearly weaker or even absent for universal solidarity, because universal solidarity should be much less sensitive to an identity-based in-group/out-group discrimination. In contrast to the latter expectation, our data still show a quite substantial association of diversity with universal solidarity, although it is indeed weaker than the association with close solidarity. Again, we must note that such hypotheses would be more appropriately tested with individual-level data.

Finally, one core insight of our study is that levels of attitudinal solidarity have *not* been generally decreasing in the European countries that the EVS surveyed, despite fears that the successive crises had induced such an effect. If changes occurred in the picture of general stability within most countries, those changes were more often increases than decreases in solidarity. The *positive* association of close solidarity attitudes with our indicators of economic problems and of 'cultural stress' per migration inflows then speaks against the suspicion that enduring crises would exhaust the populations' overall readiness to offer solidarity to others in their own society; rather, the opposite appears to be the case. And even for universal solidarity, which can also be read as solidarity with out-groups, there is no negative crisis effect. Two alternative explanations for the modest increases in expressed solidarity attitudes come to mind. One is that the normative preference for solidarity is increasing over time, that is, solidarity as a 'moral value' could have become more important, thus following the trend claimed by some values researchers that values in most contemporary societies are slowly moving towards more benevolent, more universalist, and less materialist orientations along with ever increasing material affluence (Inglehart 1997; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). The other, and quite contrasting, explanation for the increase in solidarity attitudes would be that respondents were in fact expressing a higher concern for others *because they perceive such concern to be more justified in times of crisis* (see Janmaat and Braun 2009 for a similar line of reasoning in relation to the wealth of countries). Although the positive association between crisis indicators and close solidarity attitudes does not

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[5] One explanation for this could be that our measure of solidarity is more generic and less conditioned on deservingness considerations than the operationalisation used by Janmaat and Braun (2009), who drew on two questions about reasons for unemployment/being in need.

disprove the former interpretation, that association is certainly more in line with the latter interpretation, where the rising 'concern' for others would then be a reaction to worsening conditions in the societies. But again, whereas our exploratory analyses have helped us formulate this question, they were not designed to settle it, and more detailed, individual-level analyses that we could not offer in the limited space of this chapter would be needed to better understand the actual process of change in solidarity attitudes.

And even more caveats are in order here. As we stressed above, attitudinal solidarity cannot be equated with enacted, practical solidarity, which therefore may follow very different pathways and may thus still have decreased in reaction to the crises. Also, note that the positive population average association between crisis indicators and subjective solidarity levels would still allow that some smaller segments of the population do experience *negative* crisis effects with *decreasing* attitudinal solidarity, and it might be those smaller segments that drive the public discourse and the relative success of populist parties. This might then be triggering reactions in institutionalised solidarity, starting a downward cycle with feedback to individual-level attitudes. Such delayed reactions to the crises are not likely to be visible yet in the European data at large, but the notion might merit closer study of the solidarity trajectories in such countries that have already experienced distinctively populist politicians in leading offices.

7.8.3 Conclusion

Our study is a first attempt at describing prevailing levels of attitudinal solidarity in Europe. We have found plausible patterns and interesting trajectories. On the one hand, knowing the country-level differences and trends in solidarity attitudes as described here can already be useful in understanding, for example, policy developments in those countries. In that sense, we have already produced a new set of helpful macro data. We have also begun to sketch some speculative hypotheses about what might explain these patterns. With attitudinal solidarity being a construct that is, per its definition as an attitude, necessarily founded in humans' minds, most of these hypotheses look at individual-level cognitive and affective processes. Therefore, we believe that, on the other hand, the next steps in future research should be to account for these individual-level processes in much more detail than we could achieve in this explorative study, so that the social meaning of the country-level aggregates can be better understood.

Appendix (Figs. 7.4 and 7.5)

Fig. 7.4 LCA response profile for geographical identification (probabilities for responding 'very close' or 'close', given that a respondent was assigned to class x)
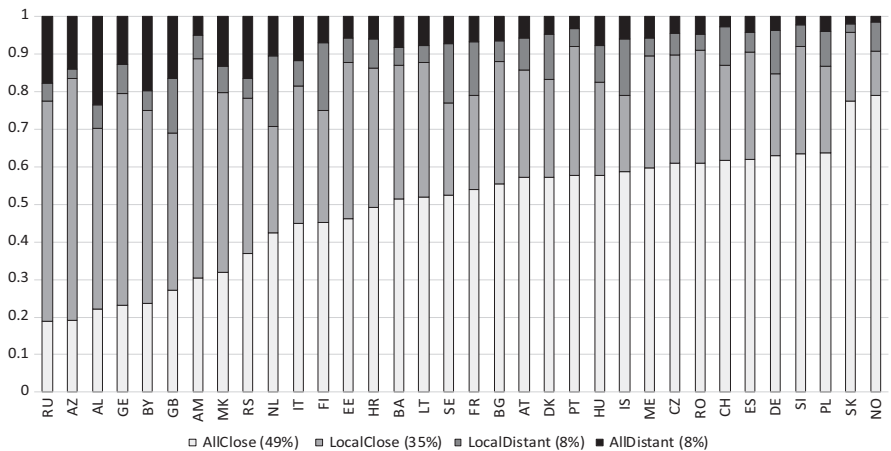

Fig. 7.5 Estimated shares of the classes per country, sorted by size of 'All-Close' class

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Dr Markus Quandt (*1968) is a senior researcher and team leader at GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences in Cologne (Germany). His research is based on quantitative surveys in cross-country comparative settings. Substantive interests focus on political and social participation in relation to collective goods problems in individualising and rapidly changing societies. Methodological interests concern the comparability and validity of survey-based measures of attitudes and values. He is affiliated with the group conducting the European Values Study.

Dr Vera Lomazzi (*1978) is Assistant Professor in Sociology at the Department of Management at the University of Bergamo (Italy). She is board member of the European Survey Research Association (ESRA) and secretary of the Executive Committee of the European Values Study. Her substantive research mainly focuses on the cross-cultural study of gender equality and gender role attitudes, solidarity, and social change. She has a specific interest in the quality of the instruments adopted by large cross-sectional survey programmes and on their measurement equivalence.

Chapter 8
The Invisibles: Religious and Political Values Among Different Social Classes

Pierre Bréchon

Abstract Poverty and social exclusion can be defined as an accumulation of impediments: lack of work and income, bad housing, low education, maltreatment, disempowerment, loss of dignity. Types of poverty are indeed diverse, with the poor including both those who have inherited poverty and those who are newly poor in the age of globalisation. The first group is probably less visible than the second, more claiming. The poor present specificities of values. At the religious level, they are rather more believing – particularly in relation to paradise, and they practise their religion more. The discrepancies between social groups are greater when it comes to political matters. The invisibles are more individualistic and less individualised. They are less politicised but nevertheless more dissatisfied with those in power, and they mobilise less strongly in public action (voting and political protest). They do not easily trust others or institutions. They are less attached to democratic values, and they demonstrate greater xenophobia and nationalism. They therefore share many features of populism. These specificities of political values essentially correspond to perennial trends in poor classes. Differences in religious and political values between countries and geographical areas are also very large. But in each part of Europe, we observe value differences between social groups.

Keywords Poverty · Social exclusion · Religion · Politics · Values

With the development of industry, the social question emerged in the nineteenth century among many thinkers who were concerned about the situation of workers, especially children. In France, Victor Hugo's (1862) novel *Les misérables* was an eloquent testimony both to the misery of the time and to the emotion it aroused in the population, an emotion that transcended borders, since this work was very

P. Bréchon (✉)
Institute of Political Studies, Grenoble-Alps University, Grenoble, France
e-mail: pierre.brechon@iepg.fr

quickly translated into several languages. In England at the same time, Charles Dickens (1861) achieved similar success by recounting the lives of workers and the poor in, for example, *Great expectations*.

8.1   Sociology of Social Classes, the Poor, and Underprivileged

The nascent sociology also looked at the fate of workers. This was notable in the work of the French conservative Frédéric Le Play, a social reformer who militated for the moral education of workers. The attention paid to the workers, an emergent social category, is also found in socialism and particularly in the work of Karl Marx. Marx insisted on the existence of two fundamental classes in conflict, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, with the former exploiting the latter. But in his historical and political works, he identified a large number of classes or parts of classes according to the position of social actors in events. If the proletariat could become aware of its exploitation and the spearhead of the revolution, it would remain a fringe of the marginalised, the *lumpenproletariat* or rabble proletariat, often unemployed, with no class consciousness or political activity and proving to be completely apathetic. Their image was not good: Marx and Engels judged them as unstable, lazy, and uneducated. Potentially violent, they were sometimes used as strike-breakers in the pay of the most conservative capitalist reaction. The working class continued to be a subject of study for the nascent sociology, as shown, for example, by the work of Maurice Halbwachs (1912, 1933), a disciple of Durkheim. He developed a very objectivist approach, studying the transformations of the budgets of this social group in several countries (Germany, the United States, France): food expenses decreased while clothing and housing expenses increased, bringing the working class lifestyle closer to that of the employees. At the same time, the German sociologist Georg Simmel (1908) developed a relational analysis of poverty. The poor were not defined by a very low objective income level and very poor living conditions, but by the way in which they were considered by society. Society defined the poor as isolated, lacking in integration, and potentially dangerous, and they therefore had to be provided with help so that social order could be maintained.

In the US in the 1920s, the Chicago School developed empirical sociological studies based on a participatory observation methodology, particularly adapted to penetrate a social milieu of marginalised people. Anderson (1923), who was himself a hobo for a long time, exposed the lives of day labourers who moved from one temporary job to another on construction sites or in the fields, highly mobile geographically – moving illegally on freight trains – and generally young and single. Their world was characterised by resourcefulness and implicit moral rules regulating the social relations of their isolated community. This type of approach, close to romantic narratives, had an undeniable posterity. It was, for example, the approach of Lewis (1959) in Mexico, who explained that poverty in his country was not

fundamentally different from that in other countries of the world. Photography was also used to document the situation of the poor in the US in the 1930s (Walther 2016).

In the context of the 'Glorious Thirties', the problems of precariousness tended to be somewhat forgotten. Some sociologists insisted on the evolution towards gentrification of the working class (Goldthorpe et al. 1969). With the increase in standard of living and school education, the working class would move closer to the middle classes. But it would partly retain the values and culture linked to its origins. Similarly, for Richard Hoggart (1957) there was an original culture of poverty – specific cultural forms that identified this population. Popular culture was not a substitute for the culture of the dominant classes; it was not simply the result of conditioning – a receptacle of mass culture – but had its own dynamics.

Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) analyses were quite different. The working classes were dominated by values without real originality, as values were infused by the dominant class. They certainly had a 'popular taste', but were also described as vulgar and barbaric. This position could be seen in culinary tastes, an attraction for what was nourishing and cheap – bread, starchy foods, and pot au feu – but also red meat. Taste was also linked to representations of the body, which had to be fleshy, full of strength, and virile! This applied on the political level too. The working classes had no real political culture and therefore could only be dominated; they excluded themselves from the political field. Bourdieu was interested in the working classes, but not really in the poor and excluded, except in *La misère du monde* (Bourdieu 1993). His theories were structuralist and therefore did not change much, since the same structures lasted over time. In contrast, those of Alain Touraine et al. (1987) during the same period were much more dynamic. He insisted on the internal differences within the working class. May 1968 was not carried by the traditional working class but by engineers, technicians, and highly qualified, educated workers who demanded a different society and were the agents in an anti-technocratic revolution.

In recent decades, the sociology of poverty has often been associated with action research in charitable organisations. Among them, we can take the example of ATD Fourth World,[1] which stands out for its sociological analysis:[2] extreme poverty and social exclusion are defined as an accumulation of impediments: lack of decent work, insufficient and insecure income, material and social deprivation, social and institutional maltreatment, unrecognised contributions, suffering in body, mind and heart, and disempowerment (ATD Fourth World 2019). The movement refuses simple assistance and wants to involve excluded populations in actions to help them regain their dignity. Working with institutions, ATD Fourth World defends access to the rights of individuals and their families in terms of housing, health, schooling, professional training, culture, and citizen participation, etc. It also wants to change the way society views the excluded. Jean Labbens (1978) has studied poverty in the

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[1] The movement was founded in 1957 by Father Joseph Wresinski after he had lived through the misery of a French shantytown. Today the organisation is present in about 30 countries.

[2] The movement worked extensively with the sociologist Jean Labbens.

slums of different countries. He underlines the lack of will of the populations concerned, who have experienced failure since childhood and have become fatalistic about their future.

With the slowdown of the economy from the 1980s onwards, the sociological analyses of social classes once again insist on the development of precarious and insecure categories of population. In the public debate, there is even frequent reference to the 'new poor' and more recently to the 'losers of globalization' (Kriesi et al. 2006). Globalisation is giving rise to a new structural divide between its winners and losers, and it recomposes the political space of different countries. These new poor are often 'downgraded', thrown into precarious, part-time, or dead-end jobs, sometimes in poverty, by the transformations of the economy, the loss of jobs, and the deskilling of workers. Exclusion and extreme poverty seem to be on the increase today. Many people are losing their sense of social integration, with its stable employment, numerous social relations, and security in life. They are in the process of becoming precarious, with fragile and partial employment, often without insurance and decent incomes, and they have strong fears concerning their future situation (Duncan and Paugam 2002; Gallie and Paugam 2002; Promberger et al. 2018) or that of their children (Guio et al. 2020). The marginal social categories are therefore very diverse, consisting of the traditional poor with an inherited poverty – the fruit of decades of living in misery and accumulating impediments – and the new poor, precipitated into this situation on a regular basis as a result of economic transformation. The former are little talked about: they are invisible and do not have the necessary resources (notably education) to assert their place in society. This lack of resources leads to a feeling of inferiority, social isolation, low politicisation, poor understanding of the world, and high levels of abstention from elections (Braconnier and Mayer 2015).[3] The latter are more likely to protest, as the yellow vest movement in France in 2018 and 2019 clearly highlighted (Guerra et al. 2019). If we refer to Hirschman's (1970) categories, the inherited poor are on the *exit* side in terms of political culture, whereas the categories in the process of becoming precarious are more on the *voice* side. Neither of the two would be strong supporters of *loyalty* to institutions.

8.2 The Values of the Disadvantaged: Assumptions and Methodology

All that we have just recalled concerning the poor and the excluded, both in the literature and in sociological analyses over the last two centuries, shows quite clearly that social conditions have an important effect on people's values. And this has

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[3] The study is based on more than 100 interviews conducted in social centres prior to the French presidential elections of 2012 and a quantitative survey of 2000 people to gain a better understanding of how disadvantaged groups vote.

already been demonstrated for a long time, notably by Inglehart (1977, 2018). He develops a theory of the evolution of a country's values in relation to the security felt by the population. With the entry into an era of plenty, people's main goals in life change, with more and more Westerners wanting above all a better quality of life, opportunities for self-expression, and more participation in democratic decisions. With economic recessions, backlashes occur, generating a return to materialist concerns and populism (Ignazi 1992; Norris and Inglehart 2019), characterised by authoritarianism and anti-systemic and anti-elite attitudes. Obviously, these attitudes affect the most disadvantaged populations in particular, while the winning categories of globalisation still carry post-materialist values and a desire for individual autonomy (Welzel 2013; Gonthier and Bréchon 2017).

The objective of this chapter is therefore to analyse the values of the disadvantaged categories of the European population, particularly in terms of their religiosity and political values. Given that surveys on the values of Europeans have not been constructed with this aim in mind, it is first of all necessary to discuss the most suitable European Values Study (EVS) variable for this research – without forgetting that the precarious are probably undervalued in all surveys because people in these categories have little appetite for responding to sophisticated quantitative survey questionnaires. However, it can be hypothesised that the results of these surveys allow us to understand the values of the precarious by comparing them to those of the privileged circles. The invisible people outside the survey would be even more typical of the value system identified among the precarious people present in the survey.

Several socio-economic classifications are available in the EVS data file: the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), the Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale (SIOPS), the European Socio-Economic Classification (ESEC), the EGP class schema (from the name of their creators Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portocarero), and the International Socio-Economic Index (ISEI) (Züll 2016). These scales are strongly related to each other, with Cramer's *V* ranging from 0.50 to 0.70, indicating an extremely strong relationship.[4] We have chosen to use the ISEI classification (Ganzeboom et al. 1992; Ganzeboom 2010) because it is the most comprehensive and synthetic measure of the individual's social situation, taking into account as it does not only occupation but also family income[5] and education levels, controlled by age. Moreover, it has the great

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[4] Recall that Cramer's *V* measures the intensity of a relationship between two variables and that it varies between 0 and 1, that is, between the total absence of a relationship and a complete relationship of implication. Around 0.10, the relationship is generally significant but of very low intensity.

[5] In the last EVS wave 2017, income is measured in deciles per country, which makes it in principle independent of the country's level of development. This is not fully verified. When we cross the income variable recoded in three categories with the geographical area, the *V* of Cramer is 0.09 and 0.16 with the country itself. If income had been recorded in gross terms, the relationship between income level and country of residence would certainly have been much more important.

advantage of being a continuous scale.[6] We recoded this scale of social positions into four groups of roughly identical size, to isolate the most disadvantaged quartile, which can then be compared with the three most advantaged groups.[7] This threshold is obviously arbitrary. In reality, there is not one precarious group at the defined boundaries; rather, the level of precariousness is a continuum. The presentation in four groups, however, makes it possible to clearly show the differences between the bottom and top of society.

The religious and political dimensions to be taken into account must also be considered. Concerning religion, are the popular categories and the precarious more or less religious? According to a commonplace, the precarious should be less religious since religion displays a strong osmotic relationship with the culture of domination, against which the exploited working classes struggle. On the contrary, it could be thought that they would be more religious because they are more subject to the hazards of life and therefore have a greater need for religious comfort and the promise of happiness beyond this world. But they could also be more religious because they are more traditional, adopting new attitudes and values less easily. To try to separate these theories, several dimensions will be used – a global scale of religiosity, but also a scale of belief in God, a scale of belief in an extra-worldly future, a measure of practice (prayer and attendance at services of one's faith) – as it is possible that the precarious are more religious on one dimension of religiosity and less on another.

In relation to political values, we will test the theory of apathy and populism of the most popular classes. The political apathy of the working classes has long been emphasised by many authors (Almond and Verba 1963; Di Palma 1970): the low level of education of the working classes is said to explain their low political competence and the lack of confidence in their legitimacy to express themselves in the political field. Precarious populations should be weakly politicised and participate less than other social categories through voting or protest forms of demand.

Populism is a difficult concept to define (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017), but can be characterised by strong support for a series of connected values: nationalism, xenophobia and mistrust of immigrants, authority, leader worship, distrust of elites who do not understand popular expectations. The most precarious would be expected to show dissatisfaction with power and have little trust in institutions and more generally in others, who are easily seen as a threat. They are expected to be

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[6] In the integrated EVS data file, comparability between 2017 and the previous waves are not assured because the measurement of family income was not done in the same way. We will consider the distribution of the 2008 ISEI by quartile, which will make it possible to consider changes over 10 years in the values of the disadvantaged, but not to measure the evolution of precariousness from one wave to the next.

[7] Two issues – having been unemployed for more than three continuous months or having received social assistance for at least the same length of time in the last 5 years – could have been a measure of precariousness. But the relationship with the ISEI is not very strong ($V = 0.12$). In fact, 8% experienced both situations. In this group, 58% have incomes in the first two deciles but 22% in the top five deciles. The experience of unemployment and social assistance therefore does not affect the lower end of the social scale only.

more xenophobic than the average population, as they compete with immigrants in the labour market. They may also be less attached to democracy and prove to be more authoritarian, in line with the analyses of Stouffer et al. (1949), Adorno et al. (1950), Eysenck (1954), and especially Lipset (1959).

In previous publications, I have distinguished two major value orientations: individualisation (that is the tendency to value the autonomy of individuals) and individualism (that is the pursuit of one's personal interest in all circumstances) (Bréchon 2017, 2021a). The EVS 2008 data clearly showed that disadvantaged social categories were more individualistic and less individualised. One can expect the same trends to be observed in the EVS 2017 data.

For the analyses, we have selected 22 European countries in EVS 2017 (where the survey has been carried out since at least 1990), which can be grouped by geographical area into Western Europe (Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, The Netherlands), Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia), Southern Europe (Italy, Portugal, Spain) and Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden).

All results will be weighted according to the country's population size and sociodemographic variables.

8.3 Who Are the 'Precarious'?

According to Eurostat, at the threshold of 60% of the median income of each country, 17.3% of the Union's population lived in poverty in 2016. At the threshold of 40%, which can be considered a threshold of extreme poverty, it was 6.4%. But the gaps between countries are wide. At the 60% threshold, they range from 11.6% in Finland to 25.3% in Romania, and at the 40% threshold from 2.2% in Finland to 13.5% in Romania. The poor are most numerous in Romania, Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Italy. By contrast, the Scandinavian countries and France have the lowest rates. These poverty percentages also provide a comparative picture of the degree of inequality between countries.

In the EVS 2017, for the lowest ISEI quartile, 40% are located in income deciles 1 and 2 and only 5% in income deciles 9 and 10 (Cramer's V[8] = 0.25). They also have fewer qualifications: among people with only primary education, 53% belong to the precarious category, whereas this is the case for only 4% of individuals with a master's or doctoral degree. There is an overrepresentation of people who have experienced unemployment and have been receipt in social benefits among the precarious: while 22% of people who have not experienced these situations are in the 'precarious' group, 41% of those who have known both are in the precarious group. But being currently unemployed is also an important element of precariousness. The rate of precariousness rises to 42% among the unemployed and to 34% when it

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[8] In the rest of the chapter, we will abbreviate the use of this statistical test with only *V*.

is the spouse who is concerned, while having a part-time job (less than 30 h a week) does not change the level of precariousness, either for the interviewee or for their spouse. And precariousness is significantly higher among people of foreign nationality (34% versus 24% among nationals).

We can also verify the weight of family socialisation on current precariousness. This can be seen first of all at the economic level: among the interviewees whose parents 'had difficulty making ends meet' and 'replacing broken things', the rate of precariousness rises to 37%, while it is only 17% among those whose parents had no financial difficulties. We also observe the impact of family socialisation at the cultural level. Six questions asked whether the father and mother 'liked to read books', 'liked to follow the news', and 'discussed politics' with the respondent. In this way, a scale of family culture can be constructed. The rate of precariousness rises from 39% among those whose parents were not at all educated to 12% among those whose parents were highly educated ($V = 0.18$). The survey also provides information on the level of education attained by the father and mother; here again, the link with the respondent's precariousness is quite strong: when the father and mother have a low level of education, the rate of precariousness rises to 33%, whereas this rate is only 9% when the father and mother have a high level of education. These results show that there is indeed an inherited precariousness that is transmitted from one generation to the next.

Moreover, precariousness is more rural than urban. When the respondent lives in a municipality of fewer than 5,000 inhabitants, the precariousness rate is 35%, whereas it is only 18% in cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants ($V = 0.11$).[9] The explanation is most certainly linked to the social composition of rural areas, with less schooling, more low-skilled jobs, and lower incomes.

At the family level, precariousness seems to be associated with a high number of children: it is 21% for people without children, but 33% for three and 39% for four or more children. Regarding family status, precariousness is particularly high among widows (40%) or separated people (34%). Part of the precariousness rate among single parents can be assessed by looking at two-person households consisting of a single adult living with a child aged 16 years or younger. Here, 32% of the parents are classified in the 'precarious' group compared to a rate of 24% in the survey as a whole.

Depending on age, precariousness is greater among old people, particularly among those aged 70+ (36%), but there are apparent variations depending on the country and social policies in relation to seniors. Precariousness is very similar among men and women.

It should be added that the underprivileged have a certain awareness of their situation, since more of them recognise that they are not happy: 54% of the underprivileged say they are little or not at all happy, compared with only 36% of the most privileged quartile. Awareness is, however, very relative, since 46% of those in precarious situations say they are quite happy.

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[9] This link is verified in all countries except Iceland.

8.4 Precariousness and Religious Attitudes

8.4.1 Global Religiosity According to Social Position

The survey includes a large number of indicators of religiosity. I selected ten that allow us to construct a very solid scale to measure the average level of religiosity of individuals.[10] When we consider this level of religiosity according to social position for the 22 countries (Table 8.1), it becomes clear that the differences are small, even if they are statistically significant. For an average level of religiosity of 3.7 in 2017, it is 4.1 in the most disadvantaged group and only 3.4 among the most privileged.[11] These small differences are found in all geographical zones, but are weaker in Western Europe and Nordic countries. The underprivileged thus appear in many countries as a little more religious than do the other social categories, but the differences are much smaller than those generated by the geographical area because of an extreme religiosity in Eastern Europe and a very weak one in Nordic countries.

For the last 10 years, global religiosity seems to have been stable for the whole of Europe, with the same average of 3.7 in EVS 2008. However, this stability hides contrasting trends. Religiosity has continued to decline slowly in Western Europe (−0.2) and the Nordic countries (−0.4), but it has risen sharply in Eastern Europe (+1.0) and a little in Southern Europe (+0.2) (Pickel & Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume).

Table 8.1 Average religiosity index[a] by social position[b] and geographic area (EVS 2008 and 2017)

Social position	Western Europe		Eastern Europe		Southern Europe		Nordic countries		**Average**	
	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017	**2008**	**2017**
Very low	3.6	3.4	4.3	5.2	4.4	4.5	3.4	3.0	**4.1**	**4.1**
Rather low	3.1	3.1	3.8	4.9	3.6	4.1	3.2	2.9	**3.6**	**3.8**
Rather high	3.6	3.3	3.8	4.5	3.9	3.9	3.4	2.7	**3.7**	**3.6**
Very high	3.4	3.0	3.7	4.5	3.7	3.6	3.1	2.7	**3.5**	**3.4**
Average	**3.4**	**3.2**	**3.9**	**4.9**	**3.9**	**4.1**	**3.3**	**2.9**	**3.7**	**3.7**

[a]The index ranges from 0, totally without religiosity, to 10, positive on all indicators
[b]Measured by the ISEI index, recoded into quasi-quartiles

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[10] The ten indicators are: being part of a religious organisation; attending religious services at least once a month; praying at least once a week; feeling religious; believing in God, in a personal God or life force, in life after death, in reincarnation; finding God important in one's life (7 to 10 on the scale); finding it important to encourage religious faith among children. For each one, we count the number of indicators where the person shows religiosity. The index thus goes from 0 to 10 and is very consistent, since Cronbach's α is 0.82.

[11] One could object that our lowest category is too broad (24% of the European population) to truly isolate the most precarious. In fact, a variable in eight positions with 10% to 15% per category does not really change the distribution: the average religiosity ranges from 4.1 among the most precarious to 3.4 among the most advantaged. The intensity of the relationship remains very low ($V = 0.05$ according to the two crossings).

Globally, there was a slight trend in EVS 2008 towards a stronger religiosity of the precarious, but rather smaller than in EVS 2017.

The differences by country seem to be due less to the level of economic development than to the dominant religion of the population. Table 8.2 shows that Protestant and multi-faith countries have the lowest religiosity, while religiosity is much higher in Orthodox countries. Religiosity in Catholic countries seems average, but is in fact very heterogeneous, ranging from 2.6 in Czechia to 6.2 in Poland, because of truly diverse, national histories and cultures (Polak & Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). However, small differences in religiosity according to social position can be found in almost every national culture (except in Germany, Estonia, and Slovakia).

Let us now consider specific dimensions of religiosity to see if this slightly stronger sensitivity of the precarious to religiosity comes from belief in God, belief in an extramundane future, or simply from more frequent practice.

8.4.2   Precarious People Believe a Little More in God

Three questions provide a fine measure of belief in God (Table 8.3). According to the first question – which is quite simple, since it is dichotomous – 65% of Europeans believe in God. However, this percentage rises to 72% among those in precarious situations and falls to 57% for the highest social positions. The second question is a little more precise: 28% say they believe in a personal God and 38% in a kind of spirit or life force God, while 18% are non-believers and 16% agnostics. The precarious believe more often in a personal God and less in a life force.

The third question measures the importance of God in one's life on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 10 (very important). Here, four Europeans out of ten attach a high importance to God, while the same proportion finds God not important. The gap according to social position is confirmed.

Table 8.2 Average religiosity index by social position and dominant religion in the country (EVS 2017)

Social position	Catholic[a]	Orthodox[b]	Protestant[c]	Multi-confessional[d]	**Average**
Very low	4.3	5.7	3.5	3.3	**4.1**
Rather low	4.0	5.3	2.9	3.4	**3.8**
Rather high	3.7	5.1	2.9	3.7	**3.6**
Very high	3.5	5.0	2.9	3.3	**3.4**
Average	**3.9**	**5.3**	**3.0**	**3.4**	**3.7**

[a]Catholic-dominated countries: Austria, Czechia, France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain
[b]Predominantly Orthodox countries: Bulgaria, Romania
[c]Predominantly Protestant countries: Denmark, Finland, Great Britain, Iceland, Norway, Sweden
[d]Multi-denominational countries: Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands

Table 8.3 Beliefs in God according to social position (EVS 2017)

Vertical %	Social position				Average
	Very low	Rather low	Rather high	Very high	
Believe in God: no	28	33	37	43	**35**
Believe in God: yes	72	67	63	57	**65**
Don't think there is a God/life force	14	17	18	22	**18**
Don't know what to think	18	18	15	14	**16**
Believe in some kind of spirit or life force	32	36	42	41	**38**
Believe in a personal God	36	30	25	23	**28**
Importance of God in their life: weak (1–4)	32	38	42	50	**41**
Average (5–6)	18	18	19	15	**18**
Strong (7–10)	50	43	38	35	**41**

Table 8.4 Beliefs in an extramundane future[a] (EVS 2017)

Vertical %	Social position				Average
	Very low	Rather low	Rather high	Very high	
Belief in life after death	53	49	50	44	**49**
Belief in paradise	52	44	39	31	**42**
Belief in hell	37	32	25	20	**29**
Belief in reincarnation	27	27	27	21	**25**

[a]Questions are dichotomous (yes/no). *V* is significant at 0.06, 0.15, 0.14, and 0.06 respectively

In total, the differences in belief in God according to social position are slightly larger than for overall religiosity. A synthetic scale based on the three questions shows that strong belief in God is 37% among the precarious and only 24% in the highest category.

8.4.3   Precarious People Believe More in a Future Beyond This World

Those in precarious situations have more expectations and beliefs about the world to come (Table 8.4). Here, 53% believe in an afterlife (44% for the betteroff), 52% believe in heaven (only 31% for the betteroff), and 37% believe in hell (20% for the betteroff).[12] As for reincarnation, it is probably not (yet?) sufficiently anchored in European culture to seduce many, whatever the social category.

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[12] In all waves of the EVS surveys, for a long time it has been observed that individuals believe more in heaven than in hell. This is partly linked to the evolution of ecclesial strategies that no longer play much on the fear of hell to guide the actions of their faithful, and also to the evolution of theologies that today value God-given salvation, whatever the actions of individuals.

It is therefore for belief in heaven and hell that the differences according to social position are the most marked. One may be tempted to explain these stronger gaps by the situation of the precarious: living with difficulty in the present, they may have more reason to hope for salvation beyond this world.

8.4.4 Precarious People Are a Little More Often Followers of a Religion and a Little More Assiduous in the Practice of Their Religion

In the precarious group, 65% said they belonged to a religion, compared to 56% of the advantaged group, and 48% say they trust the church compared to 38% in the most advantaged group. They claim less atheism than others (8% of convinced atheists in the precarious group, 16% in the most advantaged group): 29% attend a religious service at least once a month (compared to 22% at the other extreme) and 41% say they pray every week, compared to 29% of the most advantaged. Thus, in terms of both group and individual practice, those at the bottom of the social scale are somewhat more religious. Their religiosity is therefore not marked by anti-institutionalism. Rather, they are conventional believers. This is in line with a stronger explanation for their religiosity and their greater difficulty in adopting new values.

After taking into account all the dimensions of religiosity tested in the survey, we can conclude that the responses are very consistent. Regardless of the dimension, the same phenomenon is observed: a slightly greater importance is given to religious attitudes by the disadvantaged categories of the population. The commonplace expectation that religion would be strongly implanted among the bourgeois while popular categories would be more secularised is therefore not at all verified. Perhaps this representation may have been true in the past, but in any case, it is no longer true. It must be added, however, that the differences are generally quite small. This tends to mean that the consolations of religion – making people hope for another world that would be more favourable to them – do not constitute a very powerful driver of their religiosity. The explanation for this slightly stronger religiosity of the precarious would instead lie in more traditional and more conventional value systems, with a weaker propensity for change. An examination of the political attitudes of the precarious makes it possible to confirm this interpretation.

8.5   Precariousness and Political Attitudes

If the links between precariousness and religious attitudes are not extraordinarily strong, do we find a stronger relationship between precariousness and political values? Let us begin by examining the general attitudes of those who are precarious.

8.5.1 More Individualistic But Less Individualised Precariousness

In previous works (Bréchon and Galland 2010; Bréchon 2017, 2021a), I have shown that individualisation should not be confused with individualism, as is extremely common. The values of individualisation correspond to a desire for autonomy in choices in all areas of life, especially in relation to sexuality, the body, and death (Halman & Sieben, Chap. 4, this volume). More and more, each person wants to choose their own future and to overcome social constraints. '*Each person has their own choice*' could be the maxim of individualised people. Individualism corresponds to a very different attitude, consisting in always seeking one's own interest and never acting in solidarity with others. The maxim of individualists is '*each person for themselves*'. From surveys on values, one can distinguish the two attitudes and thus construct two different scales of attitudes.

The individualisation scale has 15 indicators: five relate to permissiveness of morals (accepting homosexuality, abortion, divorce, euthanasia, suicide); three relate to the meaning given to work (it allows one to have initiative, to achieve something, to have responsibilities); five take into account essential qualities to be encouraged among children (independence; responsibility; imagination; tolerance and respect for others; determination and perseverance); and two relate to essential objectives to be prioritised for the country (freedom of expression and citizen participation in political decisions). Aggregated, these 15 indicators synthesise the will of individual autonomy in all areas of life (Cronbach's α[13] at 0.75, 23% variance explained on the first factor of a principal components analysis). The individualism scale is constructed with 17 indicators: nine measure lack of solidarity with others (not feeling concerned about one's neighbours; people in the region; members of the same country; Europeans and the whole world; the elderly; the unemployed; immigrants; and the sick and disabled); two concern the degree of interest in politics; four are about political non-participation (not signing petitions; not participating in boycotts, demonstrations, and strikes); one concerns the lack of associative participation; and the last one concerns not wanting to give money to prevent environmental pollution. Again, aggregated, a consistent measure of individualism is obtained (α at 0.86, 33% variance explained).

The two scales are, depending on the country, either almost statistically unrelated or inversely proportional: the more individualised one is, the less individualistic one is. For the sample as a whole, the Pearson's r is −0.34. Thus, the desire for individual autonomy is more frequent among people who are open to the world and concerned about the future of others. But what about precarious populations: are they more or less individualised, more or less individualistic than privileged categories?

For individualisation (Table 8.5), the answer is clear whatever geographical area is taken into account: precarious populations are much less attached to the values of

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[13] In the rest of the chapter, we will abbreviate the quotation of this test with only α.

Table 8.5 Low individualisation (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low	54	85	67	32	**64**
Rather low	41	79	57	25	**53**
Rather high	29	65	47	14	**38**
Very high	19	59	37	8	**27**
Average	**34**	**74**	**53**	**18**	45

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 54 are classified as low in relation to individualisation*

Table 8.6 Strong individualism (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low	63	81	61	51	**65**
Rather low	54	75	57	47	**59**
Rather high	44	71	50	41	**49**
Very high	31	61	38	33	**37**
Average	**47**	**73**	**53**	**41**	53

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 63 are classified as highly individualistic*

individual autonomy than privileged categories (from Western Europe to the Nordic countries: $V = 0.22, 0.17, 0.16, 0.19$). However, the table also shows that the differences according to geographical area are significant and even slightly higher overall: from very low to very high social position, the relationship with geographical area shows V at 0.22, 0.24, 0.22, 0.26. Low individualisation is most common among the disadvantaged in Eastern Europe (less developed and more religious countries) at 85% (with the exception of Czechia), whereas it is much rarer among the wealthiest in the Nordic countries (highly developed and highly secularised countries), at 8%. A country's economic development, the personal situation of individuals, and level of religiosity are probably the most explanatory variables relating to the level of individualisation.

The answer is just as clear concerning individualism (Table 8.6): whatever geographical area is considered, precarious populations are more individualistic than privileged categories (from Western Europe to the Nordic countries, $V = 0.18, 0.11, 0.13, 0.11$), the relationship being the most intense in Western Europe. Here again, strong differences are also observed according to geographical area: whatever the social category considered, the relationship with geographical differences indicate $V = 0.14, 0.14, 0.15$ and 0.17 respectively.

The two tables above therefore have a very similar structure because of the inversely proportional link between individualisation and individualism. A country's low economic development and the precariousness of individuals lead to a greater focus on oneself (and therefore less value placed on solidarity with others) and a low value placed on individual autonomy. These results should not lead to the stigmatisation of countries or social groups, but an attempt should be made to

explain the differences recorded. It is possible to think that the material situations of individuals play a strong role in their value system, even if other influences are significant. For example, strong religiosity, which greatly hinders the valorisation of individual autonomy, on the contrary favours the values of solidarity somewhat: among those in precarious situations, strong individualism goes from 62% among the most religious to 71% among the most secularised ($V = 0.07$). The relationship is significant but nevertheless weak.

The most individualised people value the rights of individuals more than they do their duties. So, it can be expected that the precarious population categories, like the most religious, will remain attached to a culture of duty. The sense of duty can be measured through three questions that can be used to construct a scale: considering work as a duty for society,[14] having children, and taking care of one's elderly parents. This what is observed in the results: the most precarious are 49% in relation to valuing a sense of duty compared to only 30% of the most privileged ($V = 0.10$).

8.5.2   Low Politicisation Level of Precarious People

Even if politicisation is a dimension included in the scale of individualism, it is interesting to consider more specifically the level of politicisation of the precarious. Two questions measure this level fairly well: attaching importance to politics in one's life and being interested in politics, each with four modalities of response, which makes it possible to construct a scale. Here, 36% of precarious people are very weakly politicised compared to only 11% of the most privileged quartile. The relationship is therefore quite strong, especially in Western Europe (Table 8.7). This relationship is hardly surprising, since all surveys – for a long time – have shown that there is quite a strong link between politicisation and level of education. But it should also be noted that the geographical area has almost as strong an effect on politicisation as does social position. And it can be observed the relatively strong

Table 8.7 Very low politicisation (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low	34	39	41	18	**36**
Rather low	25	31	32	15	**28**
Rather high	16	29	22	8	**19**
Very high	7	20	19	5	**11**
Average	**20**	**31**	**30**	**11**	**24**

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 34 are very weakly politicised*

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[14] Regarding the question whether it is good or bad that work is less important in our lives, only 32% of those in precarious employment agree, compared to 45% of the most advantaged group. Those in precarious employment find it difficult to imagine that work occupies less space in their lives.

politicisation of precarious people in the Nordic countries. These have long imple-
mented a policy of politicising disadvantaged groups that has been successful
(Milner 2002). But the phenomenon can also be explained by the Protestant culture
of these countries (Bréchon 2021b).

8.5.3 Strong Political Discontent of the Precarious, Low Political Participation

Two questions, with scales from 1 to 10, measure the degree of political dissatisfac-
tion of the population: are people satisfied with the way the country's political sys-
tem works and do they think the country is democratically governed? The two
measures are closely related ($V = 0.31$) and can therefore be analysed together by
isolating the most dissatisfied part of the population (Table 8.8).[15] Those at the bot-
tom of the social scale are more dissatisfied than others, but the differences are rela-
tively small ($V = 0.11$). In fact, this relationship is sensitive only for Western Europe
and the Nordic countries[16] ($V = 0.14$ and 0.16). For Eastern and Southern Europe,
there is no difference according to social position: almost the whole society is very
dissatisfied with political functioning.

   If Europeans are often quite dissatisfied with the policies of their governments,
do they express this in action? Political participation has two distinct components –
a more conventional form through the frequency of voting and a more active form
through citizen actions. Concerning voting, the EVS 2017 questionnaire asks
respondents to say whether they always, often, or never vote in three distinct situa-
tions: local, national, and European elections. An index of electoral participation
can thus be constructed. Concerning active participation, such as protest, four forms
of commitment are taken into account: signing a petition, boycotting products, dem-
onstrating, and going on strike.

Table 8.8 Strong political discontent (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low	58	67	59	32	**60**
Rather low	56	70	57	35	**59**
Rather high	46	69	61	25	**52**
Very high	41	71	60	18	**47**
Average	**50**	**69**	**59**	**26**	**54**

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 58 are very dissatisfied with
the political functioning of the country*

[15] That is, all those between 2 and 12 on the scale from 2 to 20.

[16] The Nordic countries are characterised by a much higher level of satisfaction with their national
policies.

For electoral participation, a distinction was made between those who say they always vote in all three types of elections and those who are much more abstentionist (Table 8.9). The two least favoured categories are more abstentionist than the others. The relationship exists regardless of the geographical area ($V = 0.15, 0.12, 0.13, 0.17$). This result is consistent with what is observed in all surveys. The low voter turnout of the popular categories is explainable by their low political competence, which is itself linked to their level of education.

The more people are regular voters, the more likely they are to express themselves actively in the public space. For each question about so-called protest participation, three answers are possible: has already done so, could do so, will never do so. By constructing an additive scale (ranging from 3 to 12), it is in fact the protest potential of individuals that is measured (Table 8.10). The table shows the low protest potential (from 10 to 12), representing 40% of the population. This is much lower among those in precarious conditions than in the more privileged categories ($V = 0.24$). The relationship is more intense than with voting. It may be thought that, for the precarious, it is easier to vote than to protest. Voting costs little, and the invitation to fulfil one's electoral duty is strongly reminded by the authorities and by the candidates during the campaign. Protesting requires a more costly commitment and the social incentives to engage are weaker. It is known that even in social movements to defend the popular groups, it is generally not the most disadvantaged who mobilise the most. Popular discontent with politics generally seems to lead to withdrawal from action rather than mobilisation.

The low protest potential is particularly high in Eastern Europe, while in the Nordic countries citizen action is much more frequent. In these countries, again there are smaller differences according to social position. Precarious groups in these

Table 8.9 Low voter turnout (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low	60	56	45	56	**55**
Rather low	56	61	40	60	**53**
Rather high	48	53	31	49	**45**
Very high	41	43	29	39	**39**
Average	**51**	**55**	**37**	**49**	**48**

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 60 have a low voter turnout*

Table 8.10 Low protest potential (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low	43	77	56	31	**54**
Rather low	40	67	44	26	**47**
Rather high	27	57	36	20	**33**
Very high	18	48	28	16	**24**
Average	**31**	**65**	**42**	**22**	**40**

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 43 have a low protest potential*

countries seem to be much more capable of mobilising for political action than in other parts of Europe. National political cultures, which are the result of regional histories (and in particular their religious matrix), strongly influence individual protest potential.

8.5.4 Low Trust in Others and in Institutions

Trust in others is a very important element of social cohesion and of the dynamics of societies, as well on the economic, social and political level. People who trust others are also more open and tolerant, and are much more sociable and active in associative life. By contrast, mistrust of others promotes attitudes of withdrawal (Zmerli and van der Meer 2017). Precarious categories, which seem to have fewer economic, human, and social resources, could well be characterised by low trust in others.

The survey includes first of all a general dichotomous question on trust in others: can most people be trusted, or should we always be careful with them? Respondents are then asked whether they themselves trust different categories: neighbours, people they know personally, people they are meeting for the first time, members of another religion, and finally those of another nationality. These six indicators are strongly interrelated and can be summarised in a confidence scale ($\alpha = 0.83$, 48% variance explained on the first axis). Table 8.11 shows that precarious people admit to less trusting others. The relationship is particularly strong for Western Europe ($V = 0.24$), but weaker elsewhere (respectively $V = 0.17, 0.13, 0.16$).

The phenomenon can be explained according to a mechanism once put forward by Ronald Inglehart (2018): when you are poor, there are many risks in spontaneously trusting those you do not know, and being abused by them would have serious consequences for someone who is precarious. By contrast, it is much easier for economically advantaged individuals to take risks in their social ties. We can broaden the explanation: to trust others, one probably needs first to have sufficient confidence in oneself, and above all to 'know how to deal with' others in order to negotiate what is expected of them. Those who do not have the know-how and interpersonal skills are likely to be more fearful, to feel inferior, and to favour cautious attitudes. However, trust in others also depends on national cultures. Here again,

Table 8.11 Low trust in others (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low	59	77	62	25	**63**
Rather low	49	75	61	25	**57**
Rather high	41	64	56	17	**47**
Very high	26	57	44	11	**33**
Average	**43**	**70**	**57**	**18**	**50**

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 59 have a low trust in others*

Table 8.12 Low trust in institutions (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low	62	68	61	43	**62**
Rather low	66	71	63	41	**65**
Rather high	59	75	66	37	**62**
Very high	50	76	62	30	**54**
Average	**59**	**72**	**63**	**37**	**61**

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 62 have low trust in institutions*

there are huge variations by geographic area, with Eastern Europeans showing enormous mistrust of others, probably due to the long communist era, while Scandinavians show very strong trust in others. Precarious people in the Nordic countries trust others much more than the advantaged categories in Eastern Europe.

When one trusts others, one also tends to have more trust in collective institutions. One might therefore expect that precarious people, who have just been shown to trust others less, would be more critical of institutions. Trust in institutions is measured in fine detail using a long list of 18 collective institutions. The results show that, as in previous EVS waves, trust is generally strong for the institutions of the welfare state (education, health, and social security systems) and the maintenance of public order (army and police), but medium for the intermediate bodies and low for the central institutions of the political system. Nevertheless, the more one trusts one institution, the more one tends to trust others as well. So, a global scale of trust can be built in order to analyse its relationship with the social position of individuals and to see whether the 'precarious' are indeed less confident in collective institutions[17] (Table 8.12).

Rather surprisingly, this is not really the case at the European level: there is no gap in institutional trust for three out of four social categories. Only the very advantaged show slightly less distrust. In fact, the results should be considered by geographic area. Trust in institutions is much lower in Eastern Europe. And in these regions, precariousness loses all influence on institutional support because society in its entirety does not trust institutions, which are looked down upon.[18] For Western Europe and the Nordic countries, by contrast, the expected relationship is observed, even if it is not very strong ($V = 0.12$ and 0.11): the precarious have less confidence in institutions. But national cultures remain very strong. Here again, the Scandinavian precarious appear much more confident than those in other geographical areas.

Given the strong diversity of the institutions taken into account, are there greater differences between precariousness and certain types of institutions? This is not the case. Even for the institutions of the welfare state, the precarious do not show greater trust than the other categories. Theoretically, these institutions should be favorable to them, since they give them free access to essential common goods. But they may

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[17] Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$, 35% of explained variance on the first axis.

[18] In Eastern Europe, the relationship seems even almost reversed: it is the privileged categories that tend to be a little more critical towards institutions.

also be aware of the shortcomings of these organisations and their insufficient openness to disadvantaged groups. It is only in the Eastern countries that a fairly large difference can be observed: the low level of trust in these welfare institutions is 44% among the precarious but rises to 62% among the more privileged. It is impossible to know whether this phenomenon can be explained by strong criticism by the rich of institutions that consume a lot of credit and contribute to taxes that are considered too high, or by a greater awareness among the disadvantaged of the benefit that these institutions would give them in less developed countries than in the rest of Europe.

8.5.5   Not Very Sensitive to the Left–Right Divide and More Often to the Right

Political values can also be identified through ideological orientations. The left–right scale is the most classic tool for measuring this orientation in a global manner (Fuchs and Klingemann 1990; Knutsen 1995). In the EVS survey, everyone is asked to place themselves on a scale ranging from 1 for the left to 10 for the right. For the sample as a whole, the most striking fact is the importance of non-response among people at the bottom of the social scale: 23% of the most precarious say they cannot position themselves, compared with only 7% in the most advantaged group. Moreover, the most precarious people are less clearly on the left than the most affluent (Tables 8.13 and 8.14). On the other hand, there is almost no difference for the centrists (5–6) and the right (7–10). The precarious of today thus appear in line with what Karl Marx said about the political values of the lumpenproletariat; they do not at all constitute a conscientised proletariat, the spearhead of the revolution.

The differences between social groups in non-positioning are quite strong whatever the geographical area: the strong non-positioning of the precarious, which may be due to a lack of political competence as well as to a rejection of party politics, seems to be to the detriment of the left. The differences according to cultural area are also very important: the non-positioning is strong in Eastern and Southern Europe, in connection to the weak politicisation in these two geographical areas. And positioning on the left is minimal in Eastern Europe: the memory of the

Table 8.13 Non-positioning on the left–right (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low	17	31	27	6	**23**
Rather low	15	26	25	7	**20**
Rather high	11	21	19	4	**14**
Very high	5	14	13	1	**7**
Average	**12**	**24**	**22**	**4**	**16**

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 17 do not position themselves on the scale*

Table 8.14 Positioning on the left (1–4) on the left–right scale (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low	21	13	22	27	**19**
Rather low	25	14	25	30	**22**
Rather high	28	17	30	32	**27**
Very high	37	19	42	34	**35**
Average	**28**	**15**	**28**	**31**	**26**

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 21 position themselves on the left side of the scale*

Table 8.15 Strong xenophobia (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low	16	54	26	15	**28**
Rather low	17	50	24	14	**27**
Rather high	11	46	20	12	**19**
Very high	7	37	17	6	**14**
Average	**12**	**48**	**22**	**11**	**22**

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 16 show a strong xenophobia*

communist era could explain this disavowal of the left. The left–right positioning is a very synthetic value measure, and certain groups can be on the left in certain political dimensions and on the right in others. So, we must now consider more specific political dimensions.

8.5.6 Xenophobia and Strong Nationalism Among Vulnerable Populations

Data show that left–right orientation is fairly predictive of xenophobic attitudes, which are much more developed on the right and among people who are weakly politicised. Xenophobia is measured using five questions that encompass: wanting to reserve jobs for nationals when they are scarce and not wanting to have as neighbours people of another race, foreign or immigrant workers, Muslims, and Jews. In this way, 22% of the population are considered as having a high level of xenophobia. The links are important in terms of both social position and geographical area (Table 8.15).

Eastern Europe appears very specific, with an enormous level of xenophobia,[19] probably partly explained by the very strong nationalism of this geographical area, where the national community and the ethnic inter-self are privileged, in a context

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[19] No Eastern European country is immune to the phenomenon. High levels of xenophobia are found in Czechia (67%), in Lithuania (61%), in Bulgaria and Slovakia (59%), in Hungary (58%), in Romania (46%), in Poland (38%), in Slovenia (37%), and in Estonia (36%).

Table 8.16 Strong nationalism (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low	29	52	34	23	**36**
Rather low	23	46	31	17	**30**
Rather high	17	37	27	13	**22**
Very high	10	30	24	9	**16**
Average	**19**	**43**	**29**	**14**	**26**

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 29 show strong nationalism.*

of recurrent conflicts towards national minorities. But, independently of this geographical factor, for each zone, xenophobia is much stronger at the lower end of the social scale. The explanation often put forward is the competition for employment between precarious nationals and foreigners, which fuels their enmity. But the explanation also lies in the weaker school education and a general orientation towards more authoritarian and nationalist values among the precarious (Bréchon 2012).

Xenophobia and nationalism are very generally coupled (here $V = 0.28$). There is also a link with the left–right scale ($V = 0.14$). And so, as might be expected, the precarious are much more nationalistic than the advantaged categories. The scale used in relation to nationalism includes a question on national pride and five questions on the conception of nationality: being born in the country; having national origins; respecting the law and institutions; speaking the language; and sharing the culture ($\alpha = 0.73$). Nationalism is strong everywhere, but with significant differences according to social position and geographic area (Table 8.16).

Because of its history and also because of current events, Eastern Europe is very strongly nationalistic, whereas the Nordic countries are not so. Whatever the geographical area, the precarious are more nationalist than the other social categories. It is probably their low education level that explains both their xenophobia and their nationalism (Hjerm 2001). This low level of education probably also explains their lack of openness to Europe and the world: while 37% of the disadvantaged say they have little attachment to Europe and the world,[20] this is the case for only 22% of the most advantaged group.[21] Being in positions of identity withdrawal, one might also expect that the precarious would be more favourable towards the death penalty than other social categories. This is indeed what is observed. Only 42% of those in precarious situations say it is 'never justified', compared to 54% of the most privileged.

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[20] From a battery of five indicators of geographical identity: whether or not one is attached to one's city, region, country, Europe, and the world, with four different types of responses, we use the two largest spaces – which are very strongly linked ($V = 0.51$) – to construct a scale that makes it possible to identify those who say they are strongly attached to Europe and the world.

[21] On the other hand, there is no link with social position on the question of whether the enlargement of the European Union should continue or whether it has gone too far. It is a question of political judgement and not of values and openness to globalisation.

And those in favour of the death penalty (on a scale from 7 to 10) represent 27% of the most disadvantaged, compared to only 14% of the most advantaged.[22]

8.5.7   A Very Relative Attachment to Democratic Values

It was previously noted that dissatisfaction with the functioning of the political system was very high and that the precarious were even more dissatisfied than the others. But are the precarious people strongly attached to democratic values and are they more or less attached than other social groups? Several questions help to answer this question. At first glance, democracy seems to be well entrenched in the political culture of Europe as a whole (Table 8.17): 95% consider democracy to be a very or fairly good political system and, on a scale of 1–10 to measure whether it is important to live in a democratically governed country, 61% choose the maximum answer. But doubts about a true commitment to democracy arise when one observes that a government of experts is considered a good political system by 54%, that leadership by a strong leader (who does not depend on Parliament and elections) can satisfy 28% of the population, and governance by the military can satisfy 11%.

Precarious populations tend to broadly share a positive vision of democracy with society as a whole, considered a good system by 91%. However, significantly fewer find democratic governance very important, and there is greater sympathy for a government of experts or that of a strong leader. To refine the diagnosis, a scale was

Table 8.17 Importance of democratic government compared to support for other political systems (in per cent; EVS 2017)

	Social position				
Vertical %	Very low	Rather low	Rather high	Very high	**Average**
Democratically governed country:					
Not important (1–5)	11	8	5	3	**7**
Somewhat important (6–7)	12	10	7	5	**9**
Important (8–9)	27	25	23	22	**24**
Absolutely important (10)	51	57	65	71	**61**
A good political system:					
A democracy	91	94	97	98	**95**
A government of experts	59	57	51	49	**54**
A strong leader (without parliamentary and electoral constraints)	36	34	24	16	**28**
That the army rules the country	17	14	8	4	**11**

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[22] This gap according to social position exists in all geographical areas but is very small in Eastern and Southern Europe.

Table 8.18 Finding very or fairly good at least two undemocratic political systems (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low (11–24)	30	39	27	20	**31**
Rather low (25–37)	24	41	27	19	**29**
Rather high (38–59)	18	29	21	11	**20**
Very high (60–88)	10	21	14	8	**12**
Average	**20**	**34**	**23**	**14**	**23**

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 30 find at least two undemocratic political systems very or fairly good*

constructed with the four types of political systems considered in the questionnaire to distinguish between those who exclusively support democracy (find it a very or fairly good system and find the other three very or fairly bad) and those who also accept an undemocratic system, two or three. Only 40% of Europeans are 'exclusive democrats', 37% support at least one undemocratic political system, and 23% two or more. Consider the latter group to discern its importance by social position and geographic area (Table 8.18).

Anti-democratic attitudes are much more common among precarious populations, regardless of the geographical area considered, even in Eastern Europe, where the anti-democratic culture is the most widespread.[23] Here again, school education certainly plays a major role.

8.5.8 Precarious People Who Are a Little More Social and Less in Favour of Economic Liberalism

The political values of left and right generally have an economic and social dimension, with those on the left denouncing social inequalities while those on the right defend freedom of enterprise and competition between economic actors. In the EVS survey, one can construct a scale of attitudes opposing liberal economic orientations to social positions.[24] The scale is not very coherent ($\alpha = 0.51$), which shows the complexity of opinions in these areas (Gonthier 2017). Here, 45% of the sample expressing the most social orientation are retained (Table 8.19).

Whatever the geographical area, the precarious are a little more demanding of social policies, but their anti-liberalism is not virulent. Basically, one can consider the precarious as quite ambivalent. They want social policies that are favourable to

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[23] Romania is a particularly worrying case. Only 8% of Romanians are exclusive democrats, while 72% consider at least two undemocratic systems to be good.

[24] It must be noted that the most precarious wish for more income equality, but there is only a small gap between social groups: 40% of the most precarious wish for more egalitarian incomes against 29% of the most advantaged ($V = 0.06$).

Table 8.19 Favouring a social orientation of policies (in per cent; EVS 2017)

Social position	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Southern Europe	Nordic countries	**Average**
Very low (11–24)	50	51	52	41	**50**
Rather low (25–37)	48	47	47	36	**47**
Rather high (38–59)	43	37	49	34	**43**
Very high (60–88)	41	31	50	33	**40**
Average	**45**	**43**	**49**	**36**	**45**

Reading: *Out of 100 Western Europeans of very low social position, 50 show social rather than liberal orientations in economic matters*

the poorest, but they also wish to improve their situation within the framework of the liberal system in place. Precariousness does not often lead to radicalism but rather generates moderation in political expectations. The above statement is confirmed by the results of several other items about income equalisation, and on the need for a society to eliminate major income inequalities as well as to guarantee basic needs for the entire population and to recognise people on their merits. While a weak relationship exists with the ISEI index for the two questions on income inequality, there is no difference for the latter two. Demanding social policies, precarious people also expect economic growth and job creation. One question invites a choice between the priority given to environmental protection, even if it slows growth and some lose their jobs, and the priority given to economic growth and job creation, even if the environment suffers in one way or another; 45% of those in precariousness give priority to economic growth, compared with only 25% of the most advantaged. Once again, there is a significant gap in all geographic areas, with the Nordic countries being particularly sensitive to environmental protection, while those in Eastern Europe are not very sensitive.

8.5.9 Intolerance of Deviance: Small Differences by Social Position

The survey tests a range of behaviours usually considered deviant, such as incivility. The results show a massive rejection (Table 8.20). White-collar deviances (acceptance of bribes and false tax declarations) are even more stigmatised than blue-collar incivilities (fraud with social benefits and public transport).

One might have thought that the precarious would be particularly severe in relation to white-collar deviance and indulgent for blue-collar fraud. However, there is very little difference according to social position: tax cheating and bribes are equally condemned according to social position; benefit fraud is condemned a little less by precarious people, but precarious people, by contrast, are a little more severe with regard to incivilities regarding transport tickets. These moral judgements are therefore not strongly dependent on the social positions and interests of the precarious.

Table 8.20 Never finding deviance justified (in per cent; EVS 2017)

| In % | Social position | | | | |
	Very low	Rather low	Rather high	Very high	**Average**
Accepting a bribe in the course of their duties	78	79	80	80	**79**
Cheating on your tax return if you can	67	68	70	69	**68**
Claiming benefits beyond what one is entitled to	59	63	66	65	**63**
Arranging not to pay for your ticket on the train or bus	59	57	56	50	**56**
Taking drugs, marijuana or hashish	64	59	53	45	**56**

Reading: *Out of 100 Europeans of very low social position, 78 never find it justified to accept a bribe (answer 1 on the scale)*

They broadly share common morals and would even be more conformist, especially with regard to drugs: they are much stricter in this area, whereas the privileged tend to be much less so, whatever the geographical area.

8.5.10 How Have the Political Values of the Precarious Evolved Over the Last 40 Years?

Using data from EVS 2008 and earlier waves, I demonstrated (Bréchon 2012) that the level of authoritarianism of the working class had been fairly stable since 1981[25] and that the difference with other social groups has been erased because of a reinforced authoritarian demand in the privileged circles. At the same time, the anti-democratic and nationalistic workers were on the rise, but their xenophobia was declining (though mainly among skilled workers). Table 8.21 shows that, from EVS 2008 to 2017, the strong valorisation of authority increased in the sample as a whole (+7 points), but there is a very small difference according to the social position of individuals. Anti-democratic attitudes have moved very little (except among the most privileged), and the same is true for nationalism. Xenophobia is declining in all social categories, with the same gap of social positions. The precarious are always more favourable to undemocratic political systems and more strongly nationalist and xenophobic.

Let us now consider the changes between 2008 and 2017 for the other political values taken into account, and first for individualisation and individualism (Table 8.22). Individuals' desire for autonomy has increased slightly and this slow evolution is observed in all social groups. By contrast, evolution concerning individualism is very clear: it is strongly decreasing in all social categories, but

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[25] Data from 13 European countries, excluding Eastern Europe.

Table 8.21 Level of anti-democratic attitudes, nationalism, and xenophobia (in per cent; EVS 2008 and 2017)

Social position	Strong authority		Strong anti-democracy		Strong nationalism		Strong xenophobia	
	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017
Very low	17	25	30	31	34	36	33	28
Rather low	15	22	30	29	29	31	30	27
Rather high	15	22	22	20	22	22	26	19
Very high	14	21	22	12	17	16	19	14
Average	**15**	**22**	**25**	**23**	**25**	**26**	**27**	**22**

Table 8.22 Political values and social position (in per cent; EVS 2008 and 2017)

Social position	Weak individualisation		Strong individualism		Very weak politicisation		Political discontent	Would not vote	Weak protest potential	
	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2008	2008	2017
Very low	68	64	73	65	39	36	60	27	62	54
Rather low	56	53	74	59	32	28	57	26	52	47
Rather high	43	38	65	49	22	19	48	19	41	33
Very high	29	27	56	37	15	11	46	15	32	24
Average	**48**	**45**	**67**	**53**	**26**	**24**	**52**	**21**	**46**	**40**

nevertheless more at the top of the social ladder than at the bottom. So the social gap is stronger than before.

The level of politicisation is very stable, which is hardly surprising. As for political discontent, we have seen that it is significantly more developed among the precarious; the same scale cannot be constructed for EVS 2008, but a comparable question is selected, measuring dissatisfaction with the way democracy functioned in the country (1 to 4 on a 10-point scale). This strong critical tendency towards politics was therefore already present in EVS 2008. And, as in EVS 2017, criticism did not very often translate into action: precarious people said more than others that they would abstain if a general election were held next Sunday,[26] and they are still very reluctant to show their anger through political action, even though, overall, the potential for protest is growing.

Table 8.23 continues the comparison with EVS 2008. The scale presented in Table 8.11 could not be constructed at that time, but the classic dichotomous question distinguishing between trust in others and caution towards them was present in the two waves. A wide gap between social categories can be observed. The general attitude of caution is therefore permanent among the precarious.

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[26] Again, the same scale cannot be constructed as in EVS 2017 (Table 8.9).

Table 8.23 Political values and social position (in per cent; EVS 2008 and 2017)

Social position	Caution others		Institutions:[a] no trust		No answer left–right		Left-oriented		In favour social		Intolerance to deviances[b]	
	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017	2008	2017
Very low	75	76	45	62	28	23	22	19	54	50	51	54
Rather low	72	71	47	65	21	20	23	22	46	47	44	54
Rather high	60	61	43	62	15	14	24	27	40	43	45	54
Very high	48	45	38	54	11	7	28	35	36	40	42	48
Average	**64**	**64**	**43**	**61**	**18**	**16**	**24**	**26**	**41**	**45**	**45**	**52**

[a]The EVS 2017 scale takes into account 18 institutions, the EVS 2008 scale only 17 (social networks were not tested in 2008 but, in fact, very few people trust them)
[b]Choose four or five times 'never justified' for deviances in the public space

The low level of trust in institutions has risen sharply since 2008,[27] in roughly equal proportions for all social categories. This weakening is therefore a general phenomenon linked to the loss of trust in elites.

The orientation between left and right was already a dimension of values that was not always understood and accepted by the Europeans. The non-response rate was already very high in 2008. For those who express an orientation, there is a decrease to the left at the bottom of the social scale and an increase to the right. The left appears to be losing popular categories, in line with the rise of right-wing populism in these popular categories. At the same time, expectations of social orientation are slightly increasing in all social groups. Finally, it should be noted that intolerance to deviance is increasing in all social groups.

8.6   Summary

Even considered globally, without being able to take into account all the internal specificities of precariousness, our analyses show that people at the bottom of the social ladder present specificities of values. At the religious level, the precarious are slightly more religious and practice more than the more privileged categories. This is an unexpected result in relation to the commonplace expectation that popular categories would be more secularised than the well off. I have tended to explain it by a slightly stronger conformism in the popular categories.

Differences in political values are more important than in religious matters. The precarious are more individualistic but less individualised. They are less interested in politics and they position themselves less often on a left–right scale, probably because of a lack of knowledge and insufficient political landmarks among some of them to display a general political identity. This does not prevent them from being more dissatisfied with those in power, but they mobilise less strongly in public

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[27]The difference in measurement at the two dates (17 institutions in one case, 18 in the other) cannot explain the rise recorded.

action, whether through voting or social and political protest. They do not easily trust in others and in institutions. They are less inclined to left-wing values, they show greater xenophobia and nationalism, and they are less attached to democratic values. However, they are a little more supportive of social policies and a little less supportive of economic liberalism. These specificities of values are not epiphenomena, but correspond essentially to perennial trends, which are deeply rooted in the sociology of this group.

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Dr Pierre Bréchon (*1947) is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Sciences po Grenoble (France), which he directed from 2002 to 2005, researcher at the PACTE laboratory (joint research unit: IEPG/CNRS/UGA), EVS programme director for France, and member of the Theory group of the European Values Study (EVS). He works on the sociology of values and opinion, on electoral behaviour and political and religious attitudes in France and Europe, and on the methodology of quantitative and qualitative surveys. He is the director of the collections Politique en Plus and Libres cours Politique at the Presses Universitaires de Grenoble.

Part III
Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Chapter 9
Ethical and Theological Approaches to the Value Discourses in Europe

Christof Mandry

Abstract The chapter first identifies those issues that arise when an ethical concept of value is transferred from the individual to a political community. It then argues that European values should be understood as political values associated with Europe as an 'imagined community'. Based on a discourse history of European values in the context of European integration in the twentieth century, the historical-political process in which value semantics prevailed over other identity-related expressions is established. European values and the understanding of the European Union, it can be shown, are to be understood as the solution to a political problem, namely how the EU can function as a democracy without being a state in its own right. European values thus fulfil a certain fundamental political function, which can be more precisely characterised as a bridging function between the different historical experiences and cultural imprints of the European communities. The ethical implications of this function of values are then discussed, with the tension between universality and particularity playing a central role. The chapter concludes with reflections on the current challenges facing European values and, with them, democracy in Europe.

Keywords European values · European integration · European identity · 'Political imaginary' · Constitution of the EU · Political ethics · European studies

C. Mandry (✉)
Department of Catholic Theology, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main,
Frankfurt am Main, Germany
e-mail: mandry@em.uni-frankfurt.de

9.1 The Rise and Fall of the Concept of Value in Philosophy and Ethics – A Historical Problem Outline

Talk of values is so familiar and common in everyday speech that it must appear remarkable that the concept of value is rather marginal in philosophy and theology. Indeed, the concept of 'value' is a newcomer in philosophy and theology, in a sense even an upstart, having begun its rise in the middle of the nineteenth century. This was followed, from the middle of the twentieth century, by a fall every bit as swift. Both this short boom and the persistent relevance of values in everyday speech make sense when one considers the changed problematics of the situations in which axiology, or the philosophy of value, arose.[1] Philosophy adopted the concept of value from the field of political economy when the concept of goodness lost its integrative power as the importance of German Idealism waned after the death of Hegel, and the elements of that concept – being, truth, and beauty – entered the discourse as topics in their own right. A little more pointedly, one might say that Being no longer implied duty, nor truth and beauty, taking away the metaphysical correlation understood within idealism. Ever since, Being is understood as factuality with no inferred duty. Conversely, the concept of goodness, previously so central to philosophy, lost its ontological pre-eminence. This situation gives rise to various philosophies of value. Neo-Kantian philosophies of value assume, on the one hand, that values do not 'exist' but rather 'apply', whilst insisting, on the other hand, that they are something objective. Philosophies of value, which recognise not only ethical but also theoretical and aesthetic values, are chiefly an attempt to respond to the relativism that results from objectivity being reduced, more and more, to the factuality of Being. The surge of interest in the concept of value received a huge boost from Nietzsche's provocative proclamation of the 'revaluation of all values' (Schnädelbach 1999: 197; 203–204), in which Nietzsche appears to expose all evaluations as subjective, voluntaristic determinations serving solely the advancement of the 'will to power'. Philosophy of value, in contrast, justifies the objective validity of evaluations by these being derived from values which are in some way the preconditions for the possibility of those evaluations; the values are conceivable without reference to the subject to be valued. Here, already, we see the central problem that neither neo-Kantian philosophies of value nor Scheler's phenomenological philosophy of value can convincingly solve: how, exactly, can we imagine an 'ontological status' for values that is distinct from both 'Being' and 'Duty'? This unsolved ontological problem was, in the end, the point at which the philosophy of values failed. It was already mistrusted by contemporaries, such as Max Weber, who insisted that the sciences must be free from value judgement. Weber (2019) did, however, concede that the realm of evaluation continues to exist as the battleground of settlements.

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[1] I base my arguments on the lucid philosophical-historical taxonomy of Schnädelbach (1999, 197–231). For the theological aspects, see Breitsameter (2009).

The philosophy and ethics of values had lost their importance by the end of the 1950s at the very latest.[2] Admittedly, this debate left an unresolved problem which continued to be addressed, along lines that are significant to today's research in the field of 'values', even if the concept of value is barely deployed at all in that research. With the resurgence of the empirical sciences, along with the philosophy of logical positivism and its successors in the philosophy of language, ethical statements – norms, commandments, prescriptions – were in danger of becoming the preserve of the non-scientific and the non-rational. How can one demonstrate that ethical norms are distinct from wishes and preferences, and that reasoned arguments can be made for or against their validity?

The ethical debate after the Second World War was thus focused, on the one hand, on the justification of ethical duty. On the other hand, however, there was criticism of the narrow concentration of ethics on duties and norms. The 'revival of virtue ethics' points to two weaknesses of deontological ethics and its concentration on rational justification: the rational justification of a norm may prove its validity, but it is not capable of *motivating* actual obedience. Norms, meanwhile, command the performance or cessation of certain acts, but are incapable of suggesting fulfilling life aims and lifestyles that are *worth living*. Here we have identified two subjects that bring us back to the concept of value, even when, as already stated, this features so rarely in the ethical discourse of philosophy and theology. Modern approaches to virtue ethics in fact address the question of motivation for ethical conduct along with the question of a life plan and the structure of an effective life. MacIntyre (1985) thus falls back on Aristotelian thinking to defend courses of action and life plans against the accusation of relativism. They are good, in the sense of virtuous, if they conform with the behavioural standards of a community, which is thereby seen as a moral community. Individual freedom takes a form that is worth living within the context of a community. Charles Taylor (1994), in contrast, abandons Aristotelian virtue Ethics, positioning his thoughts within the development of modern subjectivity. An individual behavioural approach can no longer simply derive from purportedly 'objective' precepts. Rather, a viable individual behavioural approach must be born out of authentic personal convictions. Having said that, authentic individual convictions themselves are not established purely by decision, but must also be recognised within a social setting, so that they are both socially embedded and individually authentic. Taylor draws here on Harry G. Frankfurt's (1971) differentiation between first-order and second-order desire, which he develops as strong and weak evaluations. Weak evaluations, according to Taylor, are evaluations in which a person refers to their own desires and ranks, or prioritises them in order to realise them more successfully. In contrast, strong evaluations take place when a person judges their desires on a qualitative basis, assessing whether or not they are actually worthy of desiring, that is, if they are authentic

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[2] In the Federal Republic of Germany, value ethics once again had currency in the 1950s, promising as it did an objective basis for evaluation after the excesses of National Socialism. In 1958, this was reflected in an epoch-defining judgement of the Federal Constitutional Court which classified civil rights as an 'objective system of values' (Henne 2005).

desires. Strong evaluations give birth to a form of 'moral map', on the basis of which a person can assess their own conduct and life and judge whether they are following the path of their strong evaluations. They are thus capable of authentic self-evaluation rooted, ultimately, in their moral identity. The rationality of strong evaluations and moral maps is not to be understood in the same way as rational norms with their basis of logically compelling arguments. Rather, the rationality of moral maps and moral identities is to be understood historically. It is, in essence, connected with the personal identity, which Taylor understands intersubjectively: an individual identity develops in relationship with other individuals, to whom one relates by means of differentiation. Moral identities can only develop when they learn what can be adopted as meaningful, that is, they recognise the composition of the spectrum of possibilities for a meaningful and fulfilling life. At the same time, this implicitly includes the possibility of an individual life plan being recognised by others as meaningful and authentic. Communication about this is possible in the form of weak rationality, specifically by means of narrative, explanation, and validation, showing why particular desires and life goals appear as meaningful and attractive to someone. Hans Joas (2000) also builds on this last point, focusing on liberating values from the suspicion of both existential determination and a pure adoption of societal expectations. He, too, insists that values are something considered by someone to be valuable and important, and that this attribution of value is not trivial for the person concerned but rather of eminent importance, without which that person would not be who they are. In contrast to moral norms, however, the commitment to values is not seen as a limitation of freedom but indeed as the exact opposite, a gain in freedom, because the committed attribution of value opens up attractive ways of living. The commitment to values takes place not as a consequence of a decision or of compelling argumentation. Rather, it is the attraction of the value itself that drives the commitment, triggered by an experience in which this value, in some way, imposes itself. Joas characterises this as a combination of self-formation and self-transcendence: a person commits to values that they experience as valuable and attractive, and at the same time transcends themselves, because the experience of values is connected with the fact that the values are, so to speak, valuable 'in themselves'. This means that the experience that they are valuable for me is connected with the fact that their value does not absorb in it, but goes beyond me and my way of life. The association with experience thus both ensures the significance for the individual and establishes a situation in which it is possible to discuss values. Joas calls this 'value generalization' (Joas 2013: 178–181). Because values are connected to experience, which subjectively guarantee their significance for the individual, and because these experiences can be narrated, the conviction of value can be shared and made comprehensible intersubjectively. Underlying this is an awareness that values expressed in abstract terms (such as freedom, tolerance, recognition, a love of peace) may be validated by a multitude of experiences, and that this may be the basis for generalisation of values.[3]

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[3] See for example the discourse ethics of Apel and Habermas.

With this survey of contemporary thinking on values, we have reached a point in the discourse where there is a solid conceptual basis for the European debate on values whilst specific questions remain open. The insights attained include, first, that values are always the values of someone who appreciates them and finds them attractive. Second, values are not to be equated simply with desires or preferences; rather, they are those convictions that are critically applied to one's own desires and conduct. Values express the aspirations one has for one's own actions, not because of any rational requirement or societal expectation, but because they form part of an authentic self-image. And in this way, values are, third, intrinsically connected with a person's moral identity. This does not, however, imply that the only values that are authentic are those with which one differentiates oneself from others. Shared values may be based on shared or common experiences; shared values may also arise in the course of value generalisation, if the sharing of different experiences leads to shared value convictions. The unresolved questions are related to the fact that, until now, we have only considered values from an individual perspective: what are the value convictions of a single person? First, it is, however, not clear if there are also collective values, and, if so, if they arise in any way other than as the aggregation of individual values. Do communities also have values of a different nature to the individual, in a sense private, values of their members? Or do members in their role as citizens have independent values? Ultimately, this is suggestive of the quasi-objectified values in state institutions – for example, in constitutional and legal systems and in the structures of the welfare state. Second, consideration must be given to the relationship of collective experiences and narrative to values. The historical experiences of the peoples of Europe are indeed very different, and their views of history and of themselves are shaped by their respective narratives. What does this mean for shared values and for the possibility of value generalisation? Third, a weighty question relating to the legitimacy of values remains to be addressed. It is, in the end, conceivable that even authentic values may be morally worthless, and experience may cause very different values to be subjectively plausible. How is value criticism and justification that does not take the form of a mere external set of demands for value convictions possible? And we have not yet even looked at the concrete values that form the primary focus of European value discourse. Value discourse does, in fact, also encompass competing values – freedom and authority, human rights and traditional values, individuality and loyalty to the community. And where the values themselves are not contested, the frameworks of the cultural and/or religious world views in which they are defined and interpreted are. What role can shared values play in a modern Europe, culturally pluralist and socially diverse, where we must expect that values will always be contested? In this setting, a reflective examination of the political context and function of the European value discourse is essential.

9.2   The Political Context of the European Value Discourse

The motivation behind the question posed by the European Values Study (EVS) on shared values in Europe is not purely academic; there is a political context here. The study is about the foundations of a European cohesion, which in its turn may serve as the basis for the political community of the European Union – however one may choose to define the nature of this community. Behind the scenes of the enquiries into European values there are continual negotiations about whether there is a basis for the political integration of the European states, how robust this basis is, and how political processes have in turn influenced the value convictions of the citizens of Europe over the decades during which these studies have been conducted. The implicit assumptions deserve to be clearly stated. First, it is taken as given that the foundations for political integration are to be found at the level of individual attitudes and convictions (rather than being primarily located at the level of the member states). Second, it is taken that the issue is the values of the citizens (rather than their interests, fears, cultural conditioning, or experiences). Finally, and this is perhaps not quite as obvious, the focus is also on the potential reciprocal interplay between values and European political developments: on the one hand, we have values underlying and (more or less) supporting political integration, and, on the other hand, we have the processes of European and national politics influencing values, changing, strengthening, or weakening the commonalities within the value profiles of the European people. These interrelationships will be discussed below from the perspective of philosophical and theological research on Europe. How can we interpret the cohesion of Europeans which supports and bears European integration into a European Union – a precarious cohesion, for it is historically not at all obvious but rather extremely improbable? Why is such cohesion expected from something as vague as 'values'?

The rest of this analysis shall proceed as follows. First, the discussion of European values is placed within the conceptual concept of the debate about the political identity of 'imagined communities' – for in the context of European integration the question of European values is about the identification of the citizens with the 'project' of European unification, which is the argument of this chapter; put simply, it is about the European (political) identity. Next, this is then sketched historically on the basis of two questions. When did the subject of a European identity appear on the European political stage? What are the terms of the discussion around this identity? As will be shown, the subject of identity came to be articulated in a semantic of values relatively late. This historical survey of the discourse will then be subject to a brief evaluation in terms of the specific European values identified in the political discourse and how the function of these values and the value discourse are to be judged. Following from this, a number of systematic questions will be discussed. What is the level of tension between universality and particularity within 'European values'? What is the relationship between the obviously politically normative value discourse and empirical value research? How can the normative function and potential power of European values be determined between the moralisation of politics and the trivialisation of ethics? The chapter concludes with an outlook

encompassing the current plight of the European Union and the challenges for a European 'political imaginary' (see Castoriadis 1987).

9.3   The European Union as an 'Imagined Community'

One of the philosophical and sociological insights of the last century is that a political community is not a 'natural' entity that exists, in a sense, in and of itself; rather, states and communities must be understood as contingent (see, for example, Langewiesche 2000; Paul 2020; Wimmer 2013; Yack 2012). This means that political units are not self-explanatory but essentially require explanation. This has been demonstrated primarily using the example of the modern state. The concept of nation is, in Benedict Anderson's influential term, an 'imagined community' (Anderson 2006). The number of members is too large for cohesion to arise from personal connections. Furthermore, the division of labour in a modern community means that the members are primarily connected with one another by means of anonymous cooperative relationships. As a consequence, the cohesion must refer to imagined commonalities. These mental concepts – a shared history, a common culture, an essence that binds – are historical in nature: they are subject to transformation, they arise and change on the tide of social and economic processes, reflecting in part profound cultural images. It would appear obvious to interpret them as constructions produced by social discourse processes. This draws attention to the fact that they are, on the one hand, the result of supra-individual developments, reflecting economic, cultural, and general social change, and, on the other hand, also influenced by social discourse, the object of, as a rule, mediated disputations. These disputations are eminently political in the sense that they are concerned with defining the 'Us' by means of outward, and often also inward, demarcation. Belonging to a political community, and demarcation as separate from those who do not belong, is in itself a political process. It is plain to see, in the light of European history, that this can take on extremely violent characteristics. We will return to this when we examine the function of values in this context.

Before this, however, it is worth noting that one cannot assume that cohesion will ever be completely beyond dispute in modern societies. Rather, the questions of the purpose of a polity, the interpretation of one's own history, and the legitimate focus of an appreciative relationship to the polity – that is to say, of the identification as a citizen with the polity – are always contested. These questions are fundamental, politically and ethically, because they exist at the level of facilitating bases for a democratic society and a democratic political structure. In this context, French intellectual Ernest Renan spoke of the 'plébiscite de tous les jours' (Renan 1882), a general desire to belong and to assume the role of citizen in mutual recognition. Renan can be interpreted as saying that democratic culture is a demanding form of society and government, as it does not arise from cultural necessity and is not stabilised by fear and compulsion (as a dictatorship). Rather, it depends upon the active, if not always express, resolution (in the sense of an attitude of resoluteness) of its citizens in favour of this specific polity. In contrast to the role of a simple subject,

democracy requires a decisive commitment of the citizens to their own role. And this incorporates the recognition, at least implicitly, of a shared responsibility for the polity. Where this fails, the erosion of the democratic society cannot be resisted: the democratic is in a sense always fragile.

These insights are probably more relevant now than it could have appeared in the decades after 1989, when Europeans celebrated the expansion of democracy in Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Today, democracy is no longer unchallenged, either in Europe or globally; on the contrary, it is competing with other social systems which represent variants of authoritarian regimes. Democracy and democratic attitudes are at present not uncontested within Europe. For the European Union, the problem of the 'imagined community' is compounded. We assumed that a political community depends on an idea of belonging. This is relevant to the European Union insofar as it is intended to represent a political unit and not just an economic system. It is not clear, however, which of the familiar, culturally defined concepts of imagining oneself is suited to producing a vision of society with a genuine sense of European cohesion. Popular concepts such as people ('ethnos') and nation are not viable, for there can be no question of the existence of a European nation or a European people. Rather, there are many European peoples and nations, namely the member states. While there is some dispute as to what exactly the European Union should represent, whether it is a confederation, a federal state, or a political unit 'sui generis', there is no doubt that it is built on the foundation of the member states and their peoples; it does not supplant them. There is no European supra-nation. It is the contention of this chapter that European values, and the characterisation of the European Union as a community of values, can in a sense fill the void, providing the concept for imagining a political European cohesion. As will be shown, however, values are in no way the most obvious candidate for this role, representing instead a compromise solution. Whether, and to what extent, values may provide a viable foundation for European unity, shall ultimately be a matter for discussion.

9.4   Historical and Political Contextualisation in European Integration After 1945

It is interesting to note that 'values' in no way played a continuous central role in European integration after 1945 (see Weymans in this volume). This becomes clear when examining treaties and other official documents, analysing the semantics used where the motivations, goals, and foundations for European integration are described. Such political, programmatic statements are found mostly, although not exclusively, in the preambles to the treaties. Initially, in fact, values are barely mentioned in a specific way, with value semantics only becoming established relatively late in the official European discourse, so that at the end the European Union is described as a 'community of values'. Three phases of varying lengths can be identified with reference to values in significant documents of European unification: a short first phase, driven by political motivation, from 1948 to 1954; a longer phase

focused more on economic and technocratic integration, where values play a reduced role; and finally, a third phase from around 1990 until the Treaty of Lisbon (2007), where European values become a central point of reference for discussions of European unification.[4]

9.4.1   Values in the Context of the Far-Reaching Integration Plans 1948–1954

In Europe, the years following the Second World War were characterised on the one hand by the establishment of geopolitical blocks, resulting in the division of Europe and the Cold War. The establishment of these blocks, on the other hand, led to the Western integration of the states of Western Europe, first and foremost the Federal Republic of Germany, with wide-ranging consequences for the economic and social reconstruction of Western Europe and the political integration of the democratic states. This situation allowed the pan-European movements, most of which traced their beginnings to the time before the Second World War, to significantly bolster the case for European integration (Gilbert 2012: 16–20; Maras 2021; Schmale 2019). The years 1948–1953 seemed to be completely driven by European unification, even to the point of a European Federation – admittedly in terms primarily of Central and Western Europe. The Council of Europe was founded in 1948, conceived as a nucleus for a federated Europe, followed in 1951 by the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and, a short time later, the European Political Community, intended to incorporate both the ECSC and a European Defence Community (Volkmann and Breccia 1985; Loth 2015: 20–74). These plans collapsed in 1954 when the French national assembly said no to the European Political Community. For the purposes of our question, however, we can clearly state that, first, the plans for European unification in the early phase after the Second World War were aimed at quite extensive political integration and in no way purely economic, and, second, that reference to European values was very much present. A look at the Council of Europe, established as a step towards European unification, is worthwhile in this context. The preamble to the Statute includes the words:

> Reaffirming their devotion to the spiritual and moral values which are the common heritage of their peoples and the true source of individual freedom, political liberty and the rule of law, principles which form the basis of all genuine democracy. (Council of Europe 1949)

Admittedly, it soon became clear that the United Kingdom would not itself participate in European integration within the Council of Europe. In view of the apparent willingness of the US and the UK to agree to German rearmament, France adopted a change of strategy to protect itself from a militarily and economically reinvigorated Germany. French and German heavy industry was to be placed under the

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[4] In the following, I base my arguments on the findings of my investigation as published in Mandry (2009a: 82–101).

control of a joint authority and thus outside national control. This approach – the Schuman Plan – instigated the ECSC, established by treaty in 1951. The preamble to that treaty states:

> Resolved to substitute for age-old rivalries the merging of their essential interests; to create, by establishing an economic community, the basis for a broader and deeper community among peoples long divided by bloody conflicts; and to lay the foundations for institutions which will give direction to a destiny henceforward shared. (Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community 1951)

Again, in the Treaty Establishing the European Defence Community, the signatory states refer to 'the spiritual and moral values which are the common heritage of their peoples' (Preamble, fifth recital). Considered in the context of our question as to the evaluative concepts underlying the ideas of European unification, these statements from the treaties afford various observations. First, the goal of ensuring peace in Europe and in the world is repeatedly singled out. This is contrasted with 'age-old rivalries' and 'bloody conflicts'. Undoubtedly, this can be explained in terms of the situation in the immediate post-war period and the Cold War. Second, the treaties – with the exception of the ECSC Treaty – refer to the topos of shared spiritual and moral values, understood as a 'common heritage'. Alongside the semantics of value, reference is also made to principles and ideals, which are largely used synonymously. It is true that these shared values are not seen as a secure foundation for unification but rather as endangered; unification itself is intended to protect and uphold this heritage of values. As such, they are far more a motivation for unification as a prerequisite. Third, the treaties mentioned present themselves as part of a long line of steps towards a more united Europe, equipped to face a 'shared destiny'. The European 'community of destiny', then, is not a diagnosis of the times from which we infer integration; rather, it is of the future, something aimed for by bringing the political fields in question under communitarian control. Fourth, it is not at all clear what constitutes the European heritage and what the spiritual and moral values consist of. Faith and intellectual traditions such as religion, Christianity, the Enlightenment, and human rights – things that will later become very controversial – are not mentioned. Where values and principles are mentioned, they can best be seen as an open list, at the head of which are individual and political freedom, peace, democracy, and the rule of law. More clarity appears unnecessary in this historical situation, as the meaning was to an extent self-evident for the signatory states to these treaties: the overthrow of communism/Stalinism and fascism.

9.4.2   The Phase of Economic Integration and the Gradual Recognition of a Value Vacuum

After the unification ambitions centred on the Council of Europe and the European Defence Community and European Political Community failed in 1954, sector-based economic integration shaped the path out of a political dead end. This

approach dealt considerably more gently with the national sovereignty of the treaty states. Following the example of the ECSC, the treaties signed in Rome in 1957 established the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and the European Economic Community (EEC). Free trade, customs union, and the harmonisation of social laws were pursued, things favourable to an open market with cross-border competition. In accordance with this reorientation, the leadership role passed from the pan-European movements to the experts in economic and administrative processes – European civil servants and parliamentarians. This was the age of the European technocrats (Joerges and Vos 1999). These communities could in fact be seen as further steps towards European unification, but this was only addressed in a very reserved way in the treaties. Both the EURATOM and EEC treaties are completely silent on the subject of values, and they do not focus on principles or ideals. In their place we find aims and purposes which are closely focused on the respective treaty objects. Overarching aims are limited to expanding prosperity and furthering economic and social progress, and even peace in Europe is given a subordinate place if mentioned at all. This represents a significant change from the mood in earlier years and the tone of the early treaties. Of the three regimes, the EEC is the most important and at the same time the most functional and sober; many see it as a pure partnership of convenience. During this phase, the idea of a political community appears for the most part absent from the political arena.

As Thomas (2006) has shown, however, this changed during this phase in which 'Europe' was largely understood as an economic project. This arose as a consequence of various applications to join or associate with the EEC lodged by non-democratic governments. On the matter of conditions of admission, Article 237 of the EEC Treaty states tersely that: 'Any European state may apply to become a member of the Community'. Initially, only economic criteria were discussed as conditions of admission. This changed in 1962 when Spain, at the time still ruled by Franco, applied for association, with the goal of later taking out full membership. Driven by economic interests, most EEC member states, above all France and Germany, were positively inclined towards the Spanish application. Resistance was voiced only by members of the European Parliamentary Assembly, particularly the Social Democrats and Socialists. The question now needed to be addressed as to whether membership of the EEC could be considered purely on the basis of economic fit and economic interests, or whether in fact the European communities should see themselves, beyond this, as an alliance of democratic states with a shared, solid, and ultimately normative concept of state and society. In 1961, the Political Commission of the European Parliamentary Assembly established a working group to look into this matter. This produced the Birkelbach Report, named after the group's chair. The report's recommendations included the following conditions of admission: a democratic form of government, respect for human rights, and recognition of the principles of the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. Unions and civic groups also participated in the subsequent political discussion. In view of the problem that the EEC Treaty was silent on these conditions of admission, other sources were cited in the debate. These included the constitutions of the EEC member states, with a consensus on the principles mentioned: was it not then

clear that those principles must also apply to European integration? In addition, the preamble to the EEC Treaty[5] and the Statute of the Council of Europe took on the character of reference texts containing the foundational political principles of European unification, already recognised by the member states. In October 1962, the Commission deferred the Spanish application. In the years that followed, this fundamental argument about the political nature of the EEC and its associated values resurfaced several times – for example, when the EEC suspended its Association Agreement with Greece after a military junta overthrew the democratic government in Athens in 1967 (Thomas 2006: 86–87; De Angelis and Karamouzi 2017).[6]

Even in this second phase, where values scarcely played a role in the political debate, various observations may be made. First, it is clear that the fundamental self-image of European integration as a political process amongst democratic states had to fight for acceptance. The system integration, implemented by technocrats, had left the normative political questions implied by integration undefined. At issue was the insight that even as an economic partnership of convenience, the EEC is at the same time an alliance of democratic states and that membership therefore requires more than mere economic fit. Second, such fundamental normative expectations of political action can only be effective when they are discussed and demanded in parliamentary forums and in public. Civil society, in this case unions and exile groups, must join the debate. Third, the debate reveals the significance of reference texts. In this case, these were the Preamble to the EEC Treaty and the Statute of the Council of Europe. The public debate requires recognised points of reference for discussions of the expectations and the reality of political processes. Finally, it must be pointed out that European unification was not 'always' a value-based process. Rather, this insight had to assert itself. Only through a public political process could it be established that European integration, initially an economic nexus of increasing depth and expanding membership, is also a political project, and that this project must reflect the values that define its member states as (Western) democracies. The European Community (EC) becomes a community of values to the extent that this insight shapes political debate and political reality. Looking back, this can be recognised in the formative period of this second phase. Value semantics are not at the core but rather secondary. 'Values' were still a conservative issue. This did not change until the 1970s, when the transformation of values in Western societies and social pluralism became topics of debate.[7]

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[5] The sober wording of the preamble to the EEC Treaty does not actually say a great deal, but the debate nevertheless dealt extensively with the resolution to preserve and strengthen 'liberty'.

[6] The Association Agreement with Turkey, in place from 1963, was also suspended by the EEC between 1980 and 1986 after a military coup in Ankara. The failure to fulfil these 'political' criteria was one of the reasons that the Commission and the European Council repeatedly refused Turkey's application to join the EC (1987). The political criteria, together with the economic criteria and the acquis criteria formed the Copenhagen Criteria (1993), finally being adopted in Article 6 of the EU Treaty with the Amsterdam Treaty (1999).

[7] In this sense, the empirical research on values at this time – such as Inglehart (1977) – itself contributed to the transformation of the image of 'values' (Zingerle 1994).

9.4.3 Reunified Europe's New Interest in Values

The third phase must therefore be understood in the context of a generally increased awareness of values. This can also be seen in the growing importance of value semantics in European political and institutional discourse. The period from the late 1980s to the Treaty of Lisbon (2007) was shaped by sweeping political events and developments. Above all, of course, there were the events of 1989. As the division of Europe came to an end, the international balance of power shifted. By this time, after several rounds of expansion, the EC already encompassed 12 members. It soon became clear that the states of Central and Eastern Europe saw their future 'within Europe'. The eastward expansion to 25 states, completed in 2004, was thus already under way from 1989. Other decisive events include the Balkan wars from 1991 to 1995 (Bosnia) and to 2001 (Kosovo, Macedonia): war and conflict were taking place in the heart of Europe. These wars posed far-reaching questions for the peace narrative of European unification. What do commitment to peace and striving for peace mean in such circumstances? What can the basis and criteria be for taking sides and possibly even engaging militarily for humanitarian purposes? (Glasius and Kaldor 2006; Hayden 2013). Two distinct lines of discourse come together in this context: the question of a 'European identity' and the question of the constitutive values and principles of European unification.

Interestingly, the topic of European identity entered the political stage in 1973 with the Copenhagen 'Declaration on European Identity' published by the nine EC foreign ministers (Copenhagen European Summit of Ministers of Foreign Affairs 1973). In view of the developing aim to steer Europe towards a non-economic area of activity, specifically foreign affairs, the member states felt the need to formulate the foundations of such political harmonisation. The declaration was targeted both inwards, for the political discussions within the member states, and outwards, for partner states with whom the EC wished to manage its relationships. After the disagreements of the past, according to the statement the unity of the EC member states was now built on values arising from a shared heritage which should now also form the basis of further shared trade:

> The Nine wish to ensure that the cherished values of their legal, political and moral order are respected, and to preserve the rich variety of their national cultures. Sharing as they do the same attitudes to life, based on a determination to build a society which measures up to the needs of the individual, they are determined to defend the principles of representative democracy, of the rule of law, of social justice — which is the ultimate goal of economic progress — and of respect for human rights. All of these are fundamental elements of the European Identity. (Copenhagen European Summit of Ministers of Foreign Affairs 1973: I.1)

Combining unity with cultural and national diversity was thus declared to be a special feature of European identity. The connection was particularly influential in the budding field of European cultural politics. This encompassed practical matters such as extensive cultural exchange and the selection of a succession of cities as 'European Capital of Culture' (Patel 2014) as well as symbolic matters, with a flag,

anthem, and other political symbols bringing a tangible experience to unity and cohesion in diversity. In this context, the 'European heritage' and European values take on the function of statements of a political identity, that is, they should enable, support, and strengthen the identification of citizens with an imagined European community.

The other line of discourse – the question of constitutive values and principles for membership in the EC and EU – also increasingly relates to values. At the end of this discourse narrative, the European community of values became an established expression and a statement of identity. The 'Austrian Crisis' in the year 2000 served as a catalyst for this development (Karlhofer 2001). The 14 other EU members considered it necessary to take diplomatic measures against Austria when a government including the right-wing FPÖ party came to power there for the first time in 2000. The reaction in other member states, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council, and also in Israel was characterised by unease and outrage when this populist party, associated with xenophobic, racist, and antisemitic polemics, joined the government of a member state. Could this be reconciled with the spirit and values of European unification? Was this not in conflict with the foundational principles of the EU? After a great deal of outrage and diplomatic escalation, the decision to de-escalate was taken and a report commissioned from a committee of 'wise men'. On the basis of this report, the measures were revoked in 2000. The whole process significantly invigorated the debate on European values and the EU as a community of values (Hummer and Pelinka 2002; Mandry 2009a: 93–96). At the heart of the dilemma was the fact that, on the one hand, it was considered problematic when a (democratically legitimised) party of government in a member state openly campaigned against migrants, minorities, and European integration, whilst on the other hand EU law did not provide any means of imposing official sanctions. The constitutional law of the EU clearly did not allow for action against a member state whose political direction was seen to be irreconcilable with the values, ideals, and principles of Europe. Two issues were now in need of clarification. First, what exactly constituted the values of Europe? Second, rules and processes for situations of conflict had to be developed and incorporated in EU law. In clarifying the question of values, the EU treaties, the Statute of the European Council, and the European Convention on Human Rights again played an important role. The report of the 'wise men' had already comprehensively established the role of these reference texts; methodologically, it continued the approach of the aforementioned Birkelbach Report. From these texts, and from the draft of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights,[8] produced at the same time, the discussion distilled those principles of EU constitutional law already accepted and seen as constitutive into a set of values to serve as the foundation for membership in the EU and for the cohesion of the EU itself. Reference texts thus once again played a decisive role in the debate. Furthermore, rather than principles and values existing alongside one

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[8] The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights was produced by a European convention in 1999–2000, formulating an express protection of basic rights for EU citizens (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2007). It was incorporated into the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007.

another, the value semantic now took pre-eminence. The official description of the EU as a 'Community of Values' is firmly established.

The values of the Union were once again discussed in detail during the EU constitutional convention, which met from 2002 to 2003 to produce a coherent constitutional treaty for the EU. At this time, there was already wide-ranging agreement on these values; the disagreements were primarily related to embedding the values in an overarching historical, religious, and world view setting in the preamble. We will return to this discussion briefly later. In the end, the Article in the constitutional treaty containing the values of the Union was incorporated unchanged in the Treaty of Lisbon. Ever since, the EU treaty has stated that:

> The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail. (TEU: Art. 2)

The treaty convention represents the high point to date in debates on European values. Intensive parliamentary, political, and public discussions explored how to comprehend the value foundations of Europe, and the extent to which they present an evaluative basis for affirming European unification as a political project. This question may remain controversial, as was already seen when referenda in France and the Netherlands rejected the constitutional treaty. Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the 'European values' are a significant point of reference in European debates about the Union. Can the EU essentially be accepted as a political unit above the many European states? Do European values describe an attractive political model worthy of affirmation and, if necessary, defence (Voßkuhle 2018; Koskelo 2020)? And finally, do the politics of the EU actually honour these values? Since 2003, this last function has been the most frequently invoked, calling on European values as a critical standard for specific policy (Ferreira et al. 2016). Examples include the EU's refugee and migration policy (Ceccorulli and Fassi 2022), international trade and development policy, and foreign and security policy (Merkl and Koch 2018).

9.5   Analysis: European Community of Values

In European values and the concept of a community of values, the European value discourse has found a political and ethical solution for a political problem. The challenge was to make a political community conceivable that was solid and robust enough to form a basis for the acceptance and affirmation of a democratic, supranational European Union. The community of values is intended to characterise the 'we' of Europeans, mutually recognising one another as citizens of the EU; only in this way can the EU function as a democratic system rather than merely an economic partnership of convenience. The extent to which the adoption of European

values for this purpose is a compromise solution remains to be determined, however. The answer to this question is twofold. The first part has already been mentioned: the European values were all that remained when the alternatives for this function had been eliminated. In political imagination, other dimensions normally play the decisive role in constituting the 'we'. First and foremost, one turns to the nation, a unifying history, a common culture, and language. A European nation and a common language can be discounted immediately; it is less clear with a common European culture and European history. There has indeed been a lot of discussion about both, most recently in the context of the European constitutional convention. We can only look at the result of the debates here. In terms of culture, there were two discursive problems. The first was that, whilst everyone assumes the existence of a shared or unifying European culture, it is very difficult to reach a consensus about what it actually is. Many cultural assets were discussed: Greek philosophy, Roman law, Gothic architecture, European networks of art and literature, Europe's classical music, the culture of the Enlightenment, Jewish and Christian faith traditions, and much more. But what is actually characteristic of European culture? The problem is not that it is notoriously difficult to reduce culture to content, but rather that European culture is so diverse that the identification of specific cultural assets or traditions would necessarily have inserted a hierarchy into this variety. To put it another way: 'culture' is not viable as an imagined basis for political cohesion because it is associated with ideas of centre and periphery. The second problem here is that it is hardly possible to keep religious traditions out of European culture, but the importance of religion in general, and of Christianity in particular, is one of the most controversial topics in European discourse. The double 'preamble battle' during the two European conventions (on the Charter of Fundamental Rights and on the Constitution) showed that it is simply impossible to formulate a consensus on the 'cultural roots' of Europe or of European values, because the discourse participants, depending on their point of view, either insisted on incorporating the recourse to religion or religions or insisted on not doing so (Schlesinger and Foret 2006; Leustean and Madeley 2009; Barbulescu and Andreescu 2009; Mandry 2009b). In the end, the only solution was to not mention any cultural, religious or world view tradition in the preamble.

The second part of the answer is that 'values' are particularly suitable as a compromise solution, because they make it possible to avoid the conflict over the differences just outlined. Values such as human dignity, freedom, equality, and the rule of law are attractive and sufficiently profound, and at the same time abstract. Taken together, these characteristics make them amenable to being perceived as the result of varying cultures and traditions. In a sense, the value semantic builds a discursive bridge between different notions of European culture because it can be conceived as the abstraction of the moral content of very different traditions. It is also striking that pluralism, tolerance, and non-discrimination were all given prominent positions in the list of European values. It has already been pointed out several times that the self-image regarding foundations for cohesion in modern societies will always remain controversial. Values such as tolerance, pluralism, and non-discrimination attain their significance specifically in such societies and for such discourses. For as

'differential values' or 'meta values', they are values for conducting controversial discourse, such as discourse about values, culture, and history (Mandry 2009a: 215–222). As such, they must therefore be considered amongst the fundamental values of a democratic and pluralist polity, in stark contrast to authoritarian regimes, where they have no place.

In this context, we can now explore the discourse context between European values and European history. During the Constitutional Convention, as well as elsewhere in the European identity debates, the reference to history has played an eminent role. European unification is understood both as a consequence of the cataclysmic martial past with its dictators and totalitarianism, and as a guarantor against a relapse into the violent resolution of conflicts and anti-democratic activity. Between 1989 and the early 2000s, this was the dominant Europe-wide narrative, a continuation of the beginnings of the pan-European movement immediately after 1945. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, European values appeared evident, and for the Central and Eastern European politicians of that time (and that generation), returning to Europe meant reconnecting with cultural and civil common ground that had been so violently torn away, politically expressed through democracy, the rule of law, human rights, equality, etc. Admittedly, it was already plain to see that the historical experiences of the various European societies were very diverse. It did indeed make a difference whether a country found itself east or west of the Iron Curtain, and whether, in the Second World War, a country had caused or experienced occupation, devastation, and the extermination of large portions of the population. The value discourse, and the self-description of Europeans within the ideal of the community of values, made it possible to bring these diverse experiences and narratives together at a more abstract level. As different as the experiences may be in detail, they are nevertheless intertwined as the experiences of Europeans, and they can be narrated in such a way as to lead to a better, more attractive future, subject to European values. Thus, European political identity is indeed characterised essentially by demarcation; yet this demarcation is first and foremost not a demarcation from that which is outside, but rather a demarcation from internal history, the dark sides of which are to be kept at a distance. In the sense of Joas, we have thereby achieved a value generalisation.

Today, separated from the debates of the European Constitutional Convention by almost 20 years, we can see that the roof of European values, arched above the differences between the EU's member states, is fragile (see Polak Chap. 2 in this volume). European values are undoubtedly an important pillar in the European self-understanding, and it is scarcely possible to conceive of the constructive-critical Europe discourse without the EU's expectation of itself to be a community of values. The fact that the zeitgeist has changed cannot be ignored, however. Today, it would perhaps not be possible to achieve the same level of consensus on the foundational values of Europe and the EU. This is also related to the fact that history has not stood still, and Europeans have had new experiences of membership. The experiences in the individual member states are not only very different; they are also narrated in different ways. For the experiences of the present continue and extend the prior narratives. We can see here that political processes such as globalisation,

with its competitive pressure and the relocation of jobs, along with migration within and to Europe, are experienced very differently and framed in very different narratives. In particular, the migrations of the period 2010–2015 have touched on the understanding of sovereignty in many states, making a lasting impact on political debate (Krastev 2017). The strengthening of populist forces in almost all EU member states, and the right-wing governments in Poland and Hungary, with their EU-critical programmes, clearly show that the European values have lost some of the historical experiential justification. In the context of the Russian attack on Ukraine and the very different political reactions in Poland and Hungary, it is clear that there is far more at play here than just the political stability of the EU – namely, the continued existence of a free and democratic Europe. Without a commitment to hold fast to European values, and to strive for them, this will not be possible. For the history of European integration is identical to the expansion and establishment of democracy in Europe. The European values are therefore not just some picturesque element in an elite European discourse, merely camouflaging a realpolitik with very different motives; rather, they form the absolute political and ethical foundation for responsible, liberal politics.

9.6   Universal Values? An Outlook

Finally, we need to return to a question posed at the beginning, namely, the tension between the universality and particularity of European values (see Polak, Chap. 2, this volume). On the one hand, values could appear insurmountably particular. This is related to their being grounded in experience, and to the fact that values do not exist without people that appreciate them and make them a component of their own (individual) identity. In the case of European values, which we have characterised as political values, there is the additional matter of them motivating European cohesion. The EU, however, is a particular political community. On the other hand, the European values such as human dignity, democracy, freedom, and human rights are in essence universal values, and there is no sense in attempting to claim them as in some way European cultural assets or particularly European characteristics. If, however, they are universal, how can they serve as central points of reference for the particular European political identity? This tension is, however, very easily resolved. We have already shown above, with Joas, that values as abstract concepts point beyond the experiences that make them so valuable for an individual or a community. As soon as they are expressed as values, the claim is also expressed that they are valuable for others and could be connected with their experiences, too. This applies even more to those values whose attractiveness inherently encompasses the claim of universality, as is the case with human dignity, freedom, and human rights. The fact that universal values are adopted and appreciated on the basis of particular experiences is thus not contradictory but in fact logical. In a somewhat different way, this also applies to the question as to whether, and how, universal values can in fact be central to a particular identity or a particular community. As was shown with

reference to Taylor and Frankfurt, strong evaluations are qualitative (moral) assessments of one's own desires, judging them on the basis of authenticity, that is, whether they genuinely belong to the self-image of a person or community. The demarcation associated with every identity is thus not primarily outwards, looking to other persons, but rather inwards: it is a demarcation from the other person that I could be but do not wish to be. It is a cantus firmus of European discourse by which, with the European values, Europeans demarcate themselves from the Europe that determined their past. This past, and the political style it represents, is a dark, ever-present temptation. In principle, the states of Europe could at any time relapse into rivalry, totalitarianism, and warlike assertiveness. With their commitment to values, they express the desire to no longer be like this, but instead, in solidarity, to follow the path of peace and democracy. This special motivation for these universal values alone differentiates the European community of values from other states or communities committed to the same values. Furthermore, universal values are universal because of the generality and abstractness of their normative expectations, but the moment they actually guide behaviour and are decisive in terms of policy, they become connected with specific history and institutions. Their realisation is therefore by necessity particular, and the identification with universal values is combined with their implementation in specific institutional arrangements. The European model of welfare state furnishes an example here: for Europeans, this is a specific realisation of the values of equality, human dignity, solidarity, and non-discrimination, and a means of demarcation from other liberal democracies such as the US (Kaufmann 2012; Kleinman 2002).

A further problem, associated in a different way with the universality of values, is more difficult to deal with. So far, our discussion has been mostly restricted to why Europeans are motivated by these values, which we could describe as values of social and liberal freedom, and why they see them as central to their political community. In view of the global conflict between value systems, however, the following question cannot be avoided. Should they not consider themselves bound by these values simply for moral reasons? For are not human dignity, democracy, and freedom simply valuable and right? What could we hold against persons, political movements, or governments, when they state that they interpret their history and their recent experience very differently and in consequence do not adopt European values, instead finding authoritarian, undemocratic values attractive and valuable? Intuitively, many would contend that it does indeed make a difference whether one feels bound by universal values that emphasise the dignity and freedom of all people, or instead prefers chauvinistic and narrow-minded values. The problem lies in the fact that the normative expectation of universal values on the one hand is (for some people) the source of their essential attractiveness, but on the other hand the universality goes normatively beyond attractiveness and is overshadowed by an expectation of duty. For insofar as values judge and determine behaviour, they have a normative core: they express a duty. The expectation of duty of universal values can be ethically and rationally argued, in contrast to the expectation of validity of particular value systems. Unfortunately, however, the fact that universal values can be justified in logical argument does not provide a way out of the dilemma. This

may explain why they are morally superior, but this in itself does not provide a motivation for considering them binding. It would, however, be rash to conclude that it is therefore pointless to seek discourse in the event of a conflict in values. For a commitment to values does not arise by itself; rather, it depends on a cultural, narrative, and discursive context which imbues experience with language and comprehension. One of the essential tasks and challenges of democracy, and, indeed, of free societies, is to care for the language, narrative, and possibilities of experience that are essential to authentic commitment to democratic (European) values. This also includes a speaking about European values that demonstrates their universality as valuable and preferable, rather than making them trivial and ridiculous. Maintaining value convictions experienced as valuable, keeping them alive in new social and political situations, is a long-term task. An essential argument here is that universal values can be ethically justified. The fact that the European values surely offer Europeans a better future than the values currently being paraded in the attack on Ukraine bridges the gap with experience. An essential insight from the European value discourse of the last 70 years must be that there is also a *responsibility for values*. Commitment to values does not arise by itself; nor can it survive by itself. Commitment requires decisive effort. It demands earnest, imaginative, and convincing value discourse which does not shy away from confrontation and at the same time realises the values under discussion by the very way in which the discussion is conducted. The EVS investigates the value systems of Europeans. It thus produces valuable insights into the situation in which this responsibility for values must be accepted by acts of discourse and narrative.

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Christof Mandry (*1968) studied Catholic theology and philosophy in Tübingen (Germany) and Paris. Following academic positions in Tübingen, Berlin, Erfurt, and Saarbrücken, he has held the professorship for moral theology and social ethics at the Department of Catholic Theology at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main (Germany) since 2015. His research and interests lie on the one hand in the area of the conduct of life and the identity of moral persons, and on the other hand in the areas of political ethics (European Union, social pluralism, migration) as well as bioethics and medical ethics (ethics in healthcare, medical ethical decision-making issues).

Chapter 10
Values and Economy: How Companies Deal with Values

Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi

Abstract This contribution deals with the importance of values in business written from the practical perspective of working in the field of business ethics, and sustainability in different functions and for more than 15 years. Focusing on a practical approach, it discusses the handling of values in management and communication. It demonstrates how the concept of values originated in the economic sphere and always included the idea of ideal values insofar as they establish and regulate social relationships. The article explains why an ethical approach to corporate values, based on the normative stakeholder view, is necessary, so that values can fulfil their orientating function. Hence, corporate ethics is a suitable topic for reflection. In addition to the motivations and drivers that lead companies to deal with normative values, the contribution describes which values companies actually proclaim. While the question of an ethical assessment of motivation is not discussed in detail, the challenges companies face in their values management and communication are described. Using the example of human rights based on the value of human dignity, the contribution shows how these challenges ultimately affect the corporate context and what steps can be taken. It closes with questions at the interface between corporate ethics, values management, and legislative initiatives.

Keywords Shareholder approach · Stakeholder approach · Business ethics · Values management · Values communication · Human rights · European legislation

B. Coudenhove-Kalergi (✉)
Vienna, Austria
e-mail: barbara.coudenhove-kalergi@pwc.com

10.1   Introduction

'Economy' is a social phenomenon. If we talk about the economy in the sense of the market economy, we sometimes forget that it is an integral part of society, developed by humans, and not a separate, independent system. Economy and society are not opposites. Economy follows its own inherent economic logic; however, as a social phenomenon it is tied to the norms, rules, values, and rights of society. For this reason, I use a normative approach to values, as I want to point out the relevance of normative values for businesses, which influence corporate governance and interaction with business stakeholders. I examine the handling – or management – of values in business operations as opposed to a different understanding of values, such as the concept of brand value to differentiate a company from its competitors or as company culture, which organises the collaboration within a company. (Nevertheless, I am convinced that all these concepts are closely interconnected and influence each other.)

Therefore, I first deal with the areas of tension arising from the determination of company values and their attribution by various stakeholders. In a second step I try to justify why company values require ethical reflection. To understand companies' handling of values I must then look at the most important drivers of the debate on a values orientation in the business context, closely connected with the debate on corporate responsibility.

From a company perspective, company values must bring a concrete benefit for the company in the market. Therefore, I describe the values that companies postulate and communicate to the outside world, what functions values fulfil, how they are categorised and managed, and what challenges arise if there is no ethical reflection.

One of the current challenges in values orientation for companies that I observe as a practitioner is the debate on the responsibility of companies to uphold and protect human rights. I therefore show why human rights as a universal catalogue of values are relevant for companies and how they affect corporations and challenge their handling of values – as well as their understanding of corporate responsibilities – on different levels. As new regulatory initiatives from the European Union (EU) have brought a new impetus in the debate, I conclude with upcoming research questions to better understand the influence of values on companies.

10.2   Why Values Are Relevant for Business

10.2.1   Thoughts on the Relation of Economy and Society and the Role of Values

The ancient Greek word 'oikonomos', from oikos (οἶκος: 'house') and nomos (νόμος: 'rule', 'law'), was discussed by early philosophers such as Aristotle as a concept for considering the use of wealth in a reasonable way. Today we observe a

tension between the economic sphere and the societal sphere: while economy focuses on profit and growth, society focuses on cohesion and the common good. How to reconcile the two is a longstanding question that revolves around the ever-changing expectations and demands of society places on corporations, which operate in an area of tension between social responsibility and economic success (Beschorner and Schmidt 2005). A well-known statement in this context says that 'companies cannot be successful in societies that fail' (anonymous).

For the sociologist Émile Durkheim, the functioning of markets is closely connected to the moral conduct of economic actors (Durkheim 1960). What orientation do companies need so that their actions take social demands into account and can thereby do justice to their role as part of society? A common understanding is that ethical values give guidance and serve as a benchmark for judging the actions of individuals and thus organisations. To be able to justify or evaluate those actions, criteria are indispensable. When we argue ethically, we regularly refer to norms, rights, values, or principles. Many ethical norms can be traced back to underlying values, which are abstract standards of orientation for individuals or organisations. They are fundamental and deeply anchored ideas about what is right in a community (Fenner 2008).

When companies orient themselves towards values that are defined by one-sided interests or goals such as profit maximisation, conflicts with their stakeholders and with society can arise. To give orientation for actions in which the multitude of social demands are taken into account, corporate values must be ethically reflected upon. There can thus be no discussion about corporate values without the concept of normative (business) ethics. Business ethics deals with the question of which moral values companies must meet in their actions. The purpose is always to improve business practice, dealing primarily with the practical impacts of and solutions for morally dubious economic activity. Specifically, it is about employees who might find themselves facing the dilemma that can arise between corporate mandate and moral action, where individual and organisational values need to be reflected upon and justified. Companies develop visions or mission statements to establish values as motivation, orientation, and a strategy tool of the company (von Groddeck 2011). However, the concept of values in economics has additional meanings.

10.2.2   The Concept of Values in Economics

Historically, the concept of values originated in economic life and spread through economics and philosophy to sociology. Today's understanding of values is still predominantly associated with the economic aspect as material values (Pfeifer 1997). However, from an economic perspective, too, values have a double meaning. Adam Smith, moral philosopher and founder of modern economics, observed in his landmark publication *The Wealth of Nations* that there are two concepts of value: 'value in use' and 'value in exchange'. The former expresses the utility of a commodity and the latter the power of purchasing other goods that the commodity

carries. In addition to the price (value in exchange), value in use means to satisfy subjective needs or preferences, as a prerequisite to determine a price (Smith in Reinhold 2013). A product or service also needs objective criteria to determine its value in exchange. These are input factors such as land, capital, or labour. However, a purely objectively determined value, which arises from the properties and input factors ascribed to the good, but also the subjective relation to values, falls short of the modern economic understanding of value. Likewise, an economic definition of value, which arises from a purely subjective assessment of usefulness, and which evades external examination, is not economically justifiable (Mödritscher in Reinhold 2013).

10.2.3   Area of Tension: Shareholder Value Versus Stakeholder Value

From a business perspective, the concept of values is mainly associated with company value. Companies have the primary task of creating values and goods (Schüz 1999) and are themselves classified as economic goods. The actual company value arises from the interests of the respective company's stakeholders. Companies can thus be described as a prerequisite for the material and immaterial satisfaction of the stakeholders' benefits and needs. Since the company value results from the various stakeholder interests, companies must orient their actions towards these diverse interests. These are in turn based on different individual and societal moral concepts that the company must consider. When balancing these different interests, the economic constraints or goals are often a stronger factual imperative than are moral considerations. Since companies operate in an environment characterised by competition, the company value often only results from the evaluation of a few stakeholders – usually the shareholders, as they provide (risk) capital for a financial return. The guiding principle of the underlying management concept – the shareholder value – is profit maximisation, as this will also maximise the shareholder return.

In recent years, the shareholder value paradigm has become a subject of increasing criticism for its one-dimensionality and short-termism, which are said to undermine sustainability at the expense of, for example, the wellbeing of the employees, the environment, or a healthy development of a firm (Ulrich 2008; Thielemann 2010). A study[1] commissioned by the European Commission in 2020 concluded, for example, that there is a 'trend for publicly listed companies within the European Union (EU) to focus on short-term benefits of shareholders rather than on the long-term interests of the company' (European Commission 2020a: vi). Data analyses

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[1] It has to be noted, however, that scholars have massively criticised precisely this study as a 'biased, unrepresentative and highly politically motivated survey of literature and empirics' (University of Copenhagen 2020: 2).

indicate, for example, an upward trend in shareholder pay-outs as well as a declining ratio of capital expenditures (CAPEX) and research and development (R&D) investment to revenues since the beginning of the twenty-first century. It is then argued that short-term time horizons that fail to capture the full extent of long-term sustainability risks and impacts could amount to 'overwhelming environmental, social and economic consequences for companies, shareholders, investors, and the society at large' (European Commission 2020b).

This also shows that the shareholder versus stakeholder and short-term versus long-term approaches create areas of tension and conflict in several ways: The interests and moral standards of different stakeholders may not be adequately taken into account; and the understanding of short-term versus long-term decisions in a company may be completely differently interpreted.

10.2.4 The Normative Stakeholder View

Therefore, the question of the legitimate claims of stakeholders[2] needs to be looked at more closely to understand how, why, and which stakeholders are addressed by companies. An approximation can be found in the stakeholder value concept. It assumes that companies, especially large corporations, have great impact on the living realities of the people who are affected by the actions of companies (Parmar et al. 2010). Therefore, a company needs the legitimation of its stakeholders. There are two perspectives on stakeholder management: the strategic approach integrates all stakeholders in the overall strategy of the firm to maximise profits; the normative approach, on the other hand, asks which stakeholder interests are legitimate and therefore makes an ethical claim, which poses a challenge for the ethical management of a company. In addition to the question, 'Which values should the company create?', the questions, 'For whom should values be created?' and, 'Who has to bear the internal and external costs of the value creation process?', have to be answered (Ulrich 2008: 474).

The normative stakeholder view addresses the fundamental role and function of the company in society based on moral principles and offers guidelines for the decision-making of the company management. The main assumptions of the stakeholder theory are justified by normative principles: (a) stakeholders are persons or groups with legitimate interests in procedural and/or substantial aspects of corporate activities. They are identified by their interest in the company, regardless of whether the company has a corresponding interest in them. And (b) the interests of all stakeholders have intrinsic value. This means that each stakeholder group

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[2] Stakeholders are generally defined as 'any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objective' (Freeman 1984: 46) whereby the notion of profit maximisation is supplemented, if not replaced, by the viability of a company.

deserves consideration for itself and not just for means-end considerations (Donaldson and Preston 1995). This is why corporate actions must be subjected to ethical reflection.

10.2.5 The Relevance of an Ethical Foundation for Company Values

The noticeable social pressure, which in the worst case can lead to boycotts or strikes, for example, initially creates an extrinsic motivation for companies to meet the demands of more responsible action. A one-sided orientation towards economic values such as profit maximisation makes a proclaimed socially responsible behaviour implausible. If concepts that are meaningful in terms of their objectives to promote corporate social responsibility (CSR) are then misused as a strategic tool to promote sales or improve the company's image, without taking into account the claims of other stakeholders, companies will lose their credibility and social trust. For companies to be able to fulfil their responsibility to meet social demands, they must be considered in the company's action orientation – for example, in the corporate values. To find a consensus on a common value base between company and society, a level is needed on which the respective moral and value concepts can be reflected. This level of reflection is ethics.

To be relevant in practice, it is necessary to further discuss the term legitimacy. Peter Ulrich, Swiss economist and the founder of integrative business ethics, proposes a view where 'legitimacy establishes a relationship between raised claims, an intended action or regulation on the one hand and the moral rights of all concerned on the other hand' (Ulrich 2008: 251). Principles such as justice and freedom as criteria must be considered in such a way that the moral justification of a claim raised, or of an action taken or not taken, is reasonable and compatible with real life and its consequences. Therefore, a legitimate action considers all consequences and safeguards the moral rights of all affected. The consequences of legitimate actions can be justified as 'responsible' or 'reasonable' to all those affected (Ulrich 2008: 251).

It makes clear that values, and particularly shareholder value, need an ethical perspective to justify the legitimacy of a business enterprise – and that this is in the self-interest of a company. If a company loses its social legitimacy, it will not only lose its 'raison d'être' as a social actor, but also its business foundation. It becomes apparent too that values have an orientation function for companies. Since it is the meaning of companies to create added value (regardless of the management approach), they must comply with the demands of those who attribute values to companies. This does not yet result in ethical corporate values. For this purpose, the claims of those who evaluate the company must be ethically legitimised. To conclude, it can be said that company values are considered ethically legitimised if the intended actions arising from their orientation function do not limit the moral rights of others.

In summary: From a macroeconomic point of view, values primarily have the function of satisfying needs. In the context of business administration and strategic decision-making, it becomes clear that the interests and demands of a company's stakeholders define the value of the company. Since it is the task of a company to create added value, stakeholder claims also have a normative character for entrepreneurial activity.

10.2.6 Drivers and Influencing Factors for the Value Debate in the Corporate Context

There are various reasons behind the impetus to discuss values in their normative function in the corporate context. Companies carry out business in increasingly complex framework conditions that change faster and more unpredictably than ever before. Against the background of longstanding developments such as demographic change or multiple crisis phenomena such as global warming, declining biodiversity, growing inequality, or the COVID-19 health crisis, the discussion about the importance of values in general as well as their relevance in and for companies is steadily increasing.

Values such as trust and responsibility in the context of markets and corporate actions experience a renaissance in public debate whenever they become an issue. So, on a macro level, the call for values is often the response to crisis and conflicts. The Volkswagen emissions scandal and the accounting scandal of the German fintech company Wirecard are among the latest examples – both wrongdoings wiped out large amounts of financial value. Furthermore, the negative effects of globalisation (poverty, human rights violations, ecological degradation, and exploitation of natural resources) are a long-running issue.

The financial crisis in 2008 that subsequently led to a crisis of confidence in the financial system and its institutions was also a strong driver in the value debate,[3] as lack of morality was identified as a possible explanation for the economic crisis in general and especially for the 2008 financial crisis (Katona 2020). This crisis in confidence paradoxically spurred on increasing expectations of companies too. The findings of the Edelman Trust Barometer[4] 2021 state that 'business is not only the most trusted institution (…), but it is also the only trusted institution with a

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[3] In global media coverage of the 2008 financial crisis, which started off with the Lehmann bankruptcy, the crisis was largely referred to as a crisis of confidence. In 2009 the Brussels-based Center for European Policy Studies CEPS (Roth 2009) analysed the effect of the financial crisis on systemic trust using Eurobarometer data and came to the conclusion that, when trust breaks down, the social system is threatened with unrest, and the democratic legitimacy of the political system as well as the legitimacy of the market-based economy is endangered.

[4] The Edelman Trust Barometer is an annual survey of people's trust in the four societal institutions: government, business, media, and NGOs. In 2021 the online survey was carried out in 28 countries with 33,000 respondents.

61% trust level globally, and the only institution seen as both ethical and competent' (Edelman Trust Barometer 2021). Market failures, market crises, and the negative impacts of corporate actions as well as increasing expectations on businesses are the most important reasons for the claim to act morally and in a value-based manner.

Another driver is the notion of values as a success factor. Research consistently shows that values play an important role in shaping an individual's personal and professional ethos (Treviño et al. 2006) and ultimately their decision-making and behaviour in the corporate context. The interest of managers is therefore directed towards making values visible and usable as indispensable success factors – especially as an adequate reaction to public outcry in times of scandal. There is a growing interest in value-based concepts such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Corporate Citizenship, and Shared Value or Ethical Investment, as well as in value management (von Groddeck 2011). While on the one hand value-oriented practices are increasing in companies, on the other hand sceptical reactions can be observed too. To treat values as a success factor – as a means to an economic end – is criticised as morally flawed (von Groddeck 2011). At this point it should be noted that companies can only operate as companies. However, it shows again that an ethical approach to values is key to the credibility and legitimisation of a company.

In addition, the promotion of European values in and through the economy as well as through regulation drives the debate. Critics believe that the concept of European values could give the impression that the European Union is building a monopoly of values that it seeks to impose (Weymans, Chap. 3, this volume). In fact, the European Commission invokes the concept of European values in documents directed at businesses – for example, in the communication concerning CSR (A business contribution to sustainable development) (European Commission 2002) or in its trade strategy (Trade for all), in which explicit reference is made to the need to 'promote and defend European values' (European Union 2015: 7).

Finally, the societal shift in values – more precisely the change in attitudes towards certain values – drives the debate and thus the reactions of companies. The political scientist Roland Inglehart (2018) argues that post-materialistic values such as self-actualisation or personal autonomy moved to the forefront in most industrialised countries after the Second World War. Consequently, values such as freedom of expression, environmental protection, tolerance, and equality featured increasingly in political and social discourse. The World Values Survey shows that the proportion of materialists has decreased compared to post-materialists (Inglehart 2018). Sociologist Andreas Reckwitz (2017) links the value of self-actualisation with a trend to singularity, which he describes as striving for uniqueness and exceptionality, not just as a subjective wish, but as a paradoxical social expectation. Accordingly, '21st century men' always strive for the extraordinary to realise themselves, if this serves to secure their social status. This is also true where, on the one hand, companies try to build a strong brand image externally, while at the same time they singularise themselves internally in order to be an attractive employer for potential and existing employees and to retain them in the long term ('double singularization', Reckwitz 2017).

The European Values Study (EVS) also shows a change in values. In the area of 'work expectations', however, it notes the impression over a period of 30 years that the expectations concerning work 'have evolved very little', whereas when the motivational factors – separated into 'intrinsic' factors (content of work, on what work enables a person to achieve) and 'extrinsic' factors (material advantages the work brings) – are observed, it also supports a post-materialist interpretation of the motivation for work: 'when the economic development of a country progresses, its population seeks less material satisfaction and places emphasis on personal fulfilment and collective responsibility' (Tchernia 2017: 129).

Looking at the Austrian results of the EVS 2017 in the area of 'work and family' (Verwiebe and Seewann 2019), it appears that gainful employment plays a less important role in people's lives according to the values of 'family', 'friends and acquaintances', and 'free time'. Gainful employment does not become secondary, but the desire for a better balance between life and work is growing. In the results of the Austrian survey, the central value of 'work', with 48% compared to 'free time' with 46%, almost balances out. In the results of the survey 10 years earlier, the ratio between work (54%) and free time (44%) was clearly different.

Europe-wide, the central value of 'work', determined as the importance of work in life, was considered 'very important' by 53% of those surveyed across 22 European countries[5] compared to 56% in 2009. However, the results differ from country to country. In the period from 1990 to 2017 the importance of work in life in Austria declined strongly by more than ten percentage points from 61% to 49%. While similar developments can be observed in some other countries such as Czechia (decline from 60% to 50%), Norway (73% to 63%), or Denmark (with an even stronger decline from 51% to 36%), in some countries the importance of work in life increased. In Germany 'work' became slightly more important (44% to 46%), while in Italy a stronger increase can be observed (62% to 74%), similar to Spain (64% to 71%) and Portugal (35% to 45%). The other central value, 'family', shows a different picture. The 'importance of family in life' increased Europe-wide between 1990 and 2017 from 82% to 78% across the 22 countries. Except for the Netherlands (where the importance of family declined slightly by one percentage point), an increase – on a high level – can be observed in all other countries. These data also underpin the social desire for a better balance between gainful employment and family.

Companies react in their business strategies as well as in their communication strategies to the value shift in society. This can be observed in the way companies address their customers with 'fair' and 'organic' products and potential employees with flexible working hours or career planning and planning of life phases, or in the way they openly take positions on social developments such as climate change, gender issues, or sustainable development in general.

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[5] Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

10.2.7   Religion as Source for Company Values?

In my practical experience religion – or in particular – Christian values as a source of values in companies seems to play a subordinate role. One of the reasons for this could be that in secular communities belief is seldom made public in professional life. However, values play a role at the level of the individual in the company, especially with executives. In the past few years, platforms for networking, further education, and inspiration for value-oriented leadership that relate to the Christian faith and its values have emerged in German-speaking countries. Examples include the Association of Catholic Entrepreneurs[6] (Bund Katholischer Unternehmer - BKU) in Germany, whose members come mainly from family businesses, the working group of Protestant entrepreneurs, also in Germany, or the Forum of Christian Executives in Austria.[7] (Forum christlicher Führungskräfte). There are also Christian professional networks, for example the German Association of Catholic Lawyers. The objectives of these organisations are similar in that they promote value-oriented leadership in the sense of Christian values and support their members to orient themselves to Christian values in everyday business life – even in dilemma situations.

It cannot be concluded from the (in some cases long-term) existence of these organisations that religion and Christian values are systematically used as a source of orientation in companies. However, the thesis can be put forward that, on the individual level of managers, who describe themselves as Christians, these values play a role in their understanding of leadership.

In the area of family-owned businesses, this thesis is supported by Astrachan et al. (2020), for example, who describe and analyse the role religious values and spirituality play in the formation of organisational ethical practices in faith-led family firms. In an article published in 2020 they state from their research that 'the inclusion of morally binding values such as religious – or in a broader sense, spiritual – values fundamentally alter organizational decision-making and ethical behaviour' and that '[s]uch beliefs are often rooted in the founder's religious convictions that are conveyed through generations, permeating the business and shaping organizational values and culture' (Astrachan et al. 2020).

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[6] The more than 1000 members come mainly from German family businesses. The BKU (Bund Katholischer Unternehmer) regularly takes a stand on Germany's economic and social policy, but also discusses value-based management and regularly organises a large congress on this topic. The organisation claims to help translate the premises of Christian social doctrine into concrete action orientation and to offer direct assistance for everyday business and leadership questions. The BKU states as one of its goals that 'in a disintegrating value system, the BKU offers orientation towards the Christian image of man and practical answers to ethical questions' (https://www.bku.de/internet/idee.aspx).

[7] The Forum of Christian Executives in Austria (Forum christlicher Führungskräfte) wants to support women and men in leadership functions in business, the churches, and Christian organisations to make concrete contributions to deepening Christian values in economic management issues, and to enable them to engage in public discussion on the subject of business and values (https://www.wertevollfuehren.at/de/ueber-uns).

10.3   The Challenge of Dealing with Values

As noted, companies are not value-free spaces. The demands on companies to act in a socially responsible, ethical manner are high. The management of material and ideal values has thus become a central challenge for corporate management. Contemporary management understands value-based management as an important design element in the company that contributes significantly to economic success.

10.3.1   The Benefits of Values for Corporations

In a corporate logic, values must contribute to the success of the company in a market economy – that is, they must be useful, regardless, at least at first, of which value is stated or whether a company is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to act in a value-based way. The benefits of an ethical value orientation, however, are evident in several areas: it secures the very foundations of entrepreneurial freedom and competitiveness under global conditions; and it addresses human beings holistically. It can also fill the void of generally binding valid (ethical) value orientations, which is closely connected to a compensation for an economic and socio-political framework through voluntary self-commitment, for example, in order to avoid regulations and thus ensure entrepreneurial freedom (Kleinfeld 2003). The normative function of values can also help companies to prevent undesirable behaviour by employees.

10.3.2   Value Functions in Companies

Values have different functions (Polak & Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). Apart from their orientation function, they have a motivational function. They have a regulatory function, because they regulate behaviour in a society and are accepted as binding. Values have an explanatory function, as they explain the actions of individuals or organisations and how these actions lead to 'social transformation processes' (von Groddeck 2011: 39). To justify and rationalise actions of individuals or organisations, values also have a legitimation function. At this point, they convey a 'why'. Corporate values make visible what a company means by 'the ethical good' the company wants to strive for with its activities beyond the business logic (Schmidt in Beschorner and Schmidt 2005). From the perspective of management, more functions of values are named: values create identity, focus, unity, and motivation. They articulate the ethical attitude of a corporation and help to build trustful relationships between a company and its stakeholders and thus strengthen the company culture (Yeldar Radley 2010).

A survey of 3000 family businesses from 53 countries by the consultancy service PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC 2018) shows that corporate values are becoming more important in employer branding. Accordingly, around three quarters of the family businesses considered in the survey state corresponding values, with 73% using their values to promote the company brand for employees and applicants in the so-called 'war for talent' (PwC 2018: 8). From the perspective of applicants too, corporate values are highly relevant. According to the recruiting platform Glassdoor (Glassdoor's mission & culture survey 2019), the majority of adults across four countries (US, UK, France, Germany) would consider a company's culture (77%) and a company's mission and purpose (79%) before applying for a job, and 73% would not apply to a company unless the company's values aligned with their own personal values (Glassdoor 2019). The 'International Index of Corporate Values' by the agency network Ecco (2013) questioned more than 3000 employees in five countries and more than 4300 companies in 13 countries about corporate values. The results show that 98% of the companies state corporate values and that corporate values are important for 80% of the employees because these values have an orientation function as well as a business benefit (Ecco 2013).

The results of these studies show that, at least conceptually, efficiency or profitability and ethical value orientation are no contradiction in terms. Integrity in the sense of compliance with the law plus alignment to ethical values is seen as the basis for trust and credibility and thus an indispensable basis for entrepreneurial success. As such, integrity is becoming a competitive factor. However, this conceptually constructible win-win situation depends on how values are dealt with in the company – how they are communicated and brought to life. A clear statement of what a company values, together with evidence of how this guides business practice, will help to build trust with stakeholders. A random approach, where values are not clearly defined, have not undergone a normative reflection process, or are a mere strategic approach, can lead to the abuse of values as a means to improve the interaction of companies with society and their expectations of businesses – with negative effects for both actors, such a greenwashing allegations, loss of customer confidence, or damage to reputation and image.

10.3.3 Which Corporate Values?

Many companies openly refer to their corporate values on their websites, in reports (for example, annual reports and corporate sustainability reports), or in management tools such as ethics codices or corporate governance codices. Companies also refer to their importance for management, internal actions, and external relationships. Most companies have so far communicated rather traditional values – such as respect, performance, responsibility, or trust – in their mission statements.

The PwC (2018) study shows that honesty, integrity, sustainability, respect, and employee orientation are particularly important. In the International Index of Corporate Values (Ecco 2013), values innovation, quality, and customer satisfaction

can be found at the top of the value scale, followed by integrity, environment, and expertise. A study by the British communication agency Yeldar Radley (2010) analysed the value communication of FTSE 100 companies in the public domain regarding the concepts that lie behind the communication, the wording of the communication and the communication channels the companies used. The research found that out of the FTSE 100 companies, 75 stated values publicly. Altogether, 332 values were expressed in more than 200 different ways, which were then allocated to 37 clusters according to synonymous meanings. The top ten value clusters, ranked top to bottom, are: integrity (35 mentions), teamwork (28), respect (24), customer (23), innovation (16), trust (15), people (15), performance (13), openness (12), and responsibility (12). Most of the FTSE 100 companies used the term 'values' to describe their moral standards. Companies used the word 'values' either on its own or as part of a compound phrase (such as 'core values') or by turning the noun into a verb (such as 'we value'). A smaller number of businesses chose 'principles' as a synonym, usually in the context of a phrase like 'our guiding principles' or 'our business principles' (Yeldar Radley 2010).

In looking at these proclaimed corporate values, it becomes clear that they are of different quality and situated on different levels. Therefore, in a corporate context there are efforts to classify values according to their quality or intention to 'manage' them. On a business level, this is implemented through value management systems.

10.3.4 Value Management

The term 'value management' has found its way into corporate management in recent years, mostly in the sense of corporate responsibility. Schüz, for example, defines value management as 'the skilful handling of values, which not only does justice to the individual values but also the vital needs of the social and natural environment' (Schüz 1999: 37). Accordingly, value management has two meanings, the management *by* values and management *of* values. Today, it is widely accepted that responsible corporate management must be based on moral values and demands and, at the same time, no longer solely on the morals of individuals; rather, it must be systematised. However, the virtues of the individual – their moral convictions – are crucial pillars of successful value management – together with the moral quality of the company as an organisation with systematised processes, incentives, control mechanisms, and leadership culture. An effective and sustainable value management thus supports organisational and individual morale and the implementation of values. As a company-specific instrument, a value management system defines the core values of the company and helps to bring them to life in business practice. The value management system provides moral criteria for screening cooperating partners and internal and external stakeholders. It is thus part of strategic management (Wieland and Schmiedeknecht 2010).

Another function of value management is that of risk prevention, as it can address potential areas of tension between legality and legitimacy as well as illegality and

illegitimacy across all hierarchy levels. This is based on Luhmann's system-theoretical concept of risk, in which risks that have been taken based on a conscious decision are assigned to an actor who must also take responsibility for them (Fürst 2005).

Further areas of application of value management lie in organisational change processes (for example, mergers and acquisitions, cultural change processes, corruption prevention, project management, diversity management). Several instruments of value management have emerged over the years, including codes of ethics, vision and mission statements, codes of conduct, purchasing policies, personnel selection policies, and action guidelines for sensitive business areas.

10.3.5   Value Communication

While value management should ensure that the company values serve as a binding orientation in the face of increasing competition, corporate communication should convincingly represent the company's actions and strategy, maintain and strengthen trust in a company or brand, and ultimately convince more people of the value of a company. In summary, while value management should create integrity through the consistency of processes, communication should ensure that actions and processes are perceived as consistent. In practice, corporate communication is a business function to achieve corporate success and is therefore largely dominated by marketing thinking. When values are communicated, problems of credibility can often be observed, which can damage the value orientation and reduce trust.[8] In connection with a company's value orientation and value communication, it is therefore necessary that communication management and value management relate to one another. For example, they need a common conceptual basis – the value management provides the strategic statements and arguments for communication (Behrent 2004).

In the field of value communication, it can be observed that companies must be able to connect to many heterogeneous demands in their surroundings. They must do this in a way that enables them to stay open towards their stakeholders and at the same time minimise potential contradiction or rejection. This practice of communicating values suggests security in a time of uncertainty and transition (von Groddeck 2011).

As noted above, companies communicate their values openly on their websites and in their reports. However, it is important that managers understand the diversity of values in general as well as their company's values when they are communicating

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[8] The 2009 communication campaign of the German utility RWE is considered to be an impressive greenwashing case study in German-speaking countries (Greenpeace 2009). In the period of the campaign, in which the group marketed itself as 'green', the share of renewable energy produced was a meager 2.4%. The image campaign was directly related to the 2009 climate summit in Copenhagen.

them and engaging with different stakeholders. Therefore, it is useful to categorise values to make their quality visible – and in the end improve their management.

10.3.6 A Question of Handling: Categorising Company Values

From a purely strategic (management) point of view, values can be subdivided according to the intended use. Wieland (2004) offers a practice-oriented categorisation of values. He differentiates between four categories: performance values, communication values, cooperation values, and moral values. Performance values include benefit, competence, willingness to perform, flexibility, creativity, innovation orientation, and quality. They serve the achievement of strategic business goals. Communication values include respect, belonging, openness, transparency, understanding, and willingness to take risks. They relate to open communication both inside and outside the company. Cooperation values include loyalty, team spirit, conflict management, openness, and communication orientation. They primarily concern behaviour within the company. Integrity, honesty, fairness, contractual loyalty, and responsibility are understood as moral values. They relate to behaving with integrity and fairness.

A practical approach suggests organising company values according to their intention in communicating them internally and externally into another four categories. First, core values are the principles that guide all company's actions and serve as its cultural cornerstone. They must be maintained at all costs, as they are the source of a company's distinctiveness. Second, aspirational values are those a company needs if it is to succeed in the future, but which it currently lacks. These values need to be carefully managed to ensure that they do not dilute the core. Third, permission-to-play values reflect the minimum behavioural and social standards required of any employee. And fourth, accidental values arise without being cultivated by leadership and take hold over time. These values usually reflect the common interests or personalities of the organisation's employees (Lencioni 2002). Yeldar Radley (2010) proposes another categorisation with three clusters: behaviour, where values like 'responsibility', 'openness', and 'courage' all describe how an organisation's employees should act; focus, where companies think of values as a way of signposting what they believe is important ('customer', 'safety', and 'environment'); and belief set, such as 'diversity', 'trust', and 'honesty'.

Awareness of the implicit and explicit values that guide the corporation's activities is essential, however. Two questions arise in this context. First, how are the values of a company developed? Second, are these values handled differently according to their categorisation? Regarding the development – or rather definition – of company values, three approaches exist in theory: a top-down approach (definition by the board or management); a bottom-up approach (definition based on a discussion process integrating employees and managers); or a mixed approach, where a first draft by the board is discussed and amended by employees before it is finalised (Frey in Niedermeier 2014). In practice, however, external service

providers such as public relations or consulting agencies often develop company values that complement a marketing and communication strategy with appropriate formulation (Lotter and Braun 2009).

Regarding a differentiated approach to values, the evidence lies in the practical handling of values. The consequence of a practice of not putting too much of an effort into the development of company values is a superficial handling of those values. Values are defined and further stated in codices, guidelines, or regulations as to which actions are expected. The actual actions and implementations only partially correspond to these recorded descriptions, however. A quote from von Groddeck (2011) proves that values in a company do more than evoke positive associations:

> Transparency, trust, respect, openness, commitment and integrity. Values play an important role in the communication practices of organizations. Superfluous, irrelevant, too abstract, window dressing and lies – at the same time this form of communication provokes scepticism and cynicism and creates moral expectations. (von Groddeck 2011: 12).

10.3.7   Challenges for Normative Value Management

Values are used to describe the organisation as a uniform identity. At the same time, however, the organisation must be capable of adapting to changes in society and society's changing values' hanging values to be successful in a competitive environment. As a result, values are (sometimes unconsciously) instrumentalised and communicated opportunistically (von Groddeck 2011). This is a challenge for normative value management. Can companies even deal with values in an ethically correct and integrated manner in a constantly changing value environment? And how?

The prerequisite for any further work with values is firstly to be aware of the different types of values and secondly to deal with them seriously (normatively). All stakeholders can relate to values particularly well when it is clear what they mean for the company. Therefore, there must be a co-developed understanding of each value, which consequently excludes a top-down definition of the company values.

It is important to deal with values of different types differently. This means, for example, handling the values from Wieland's (2004) category of performance, which mainly serve the achievement of strategic business goals, in a way that is different from the handling of values from the moral value category, which describe desirable behaviour.[9]

One conclusion is therefore that value management – that is, finding suitable measures and instruments for the practical implementation of values and defining

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[9] My experience from numerous workshops on values development with companies and the exchange with experts clearly showed that dealing with strategic values such as team spirit or innovation must be different from dealing with values such as appreciation or fairness. It is important to agree on how these moral values can be made tangible in daily business, because they have to work in the organisational culture.

responsibilities – is not enough on its own to prevent instrumentalisation. Therefore, values must be subjected to ethical reflection. This is particularly important in the case of moral values such as the claim that companies should act in accordance with human rights, which gain relevance in the current debate on the role of companies in society – especially in globalisation.

10.3.8   The Categorical Imperative as an Ethical Principle Against Instrumentalisation and as a Justification for Human Rights

For the philosopher Immanuel Kant, intrinsic human worthiness is based on the capacity for practical reasoning, especially the capacity for autonomous self-legislation under the categorical imperative: 'Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law' (Kant 1996: 31).

In his view, the only way to make sense of the human will as the foundation of a universal moral law is to conceive human beings as ends in themselves. This idea is expressed in the second formulation of the categorical imperative: 'So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means' (Kant 1996: 38). Thus, Kant presents 'dignity' as the opposite of 'price': while price is a value for which there can be an equivalent, dignity makes a person irreplaceable. Therefore, the notion of human dignity expresses a requirement for the non-instrumentalisation of persons.

According to international law, the relationship between human dignity and human rights is situated between a foundational principle of equal respect for every human being and the concrete norms that are needed to make that principle in social life concrete. Human rights derive from human dignity. The notion of human dignity attempts to respond to the question, 'Why do human beings have rights?' The answer is that they are entitled to rights precisely because they possess intrinsic worth (Andorno 2014).

10.4   Human Rights as Universal Normative Values for the Economy

10.4.1   What Are Human Rights?

In this fundamental sense, human rights are an ethical approach and pronouncement as to what should be done (Sen 2009). Human rights can be understood as moral concepts and thus moral rights, as they address claims that are directly connected to

the basic possibility of living a human life in dignity. Human rights, as the most important and fundamental category of moral rights, therefore, protect those freedoms that are most essential for a dignified and self-determined human life (Sen 2004). Because of their fundamental nature, they are pre-positive and pre-political rights, neither dependent nor based on their codification into positive law (Wettstein 2012).

Today, the concepts of human dignity and human rights are of fundamental importance to the constitutions, legal frameworks, and legal systems of modern society. Human rights are egalitarian and pre-state rights that all people are inherently entitled simply because they are human beings. They claim respect, protection, and compliance by state or supranational sovereignty. They are universal, inalienable, indivisible, and interdependent (Fremuth 2020). They apply per definition to all people worldwide. The United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 in particular has made the concept of human rights universal and contributed greatly to its dissemination into legal systems around the world. The UDHR does not have a binding status under international law. Nevertheless, many of its contents have been incorporated into national constitutions. Other parts, such as the prohibition of torture and slavery, have long been mandatory in international law. In order to make parts of the human rights declaration more effective, the UN passed two human rights pacts in 1966. The civil pact regulates civil liberties and political rights, protecting the right to freedom of expression, freedom of information, and freedom of assembly, for example. The social pact, in turn, includes economic, social, and cultural rights. According to this, people have the right to work, to education, and to an adequate standard of living, among other things.

10.4.2   Human Rights as a Catalogue of Values

Modern international law recognises every person as a subject who can demand that the state guarantee their human rights. Human rights also have a meaning that is detached from the rights holders: They establish a value system. A state that recognises and respects human rights is thus integrated into a system of internationally prevailing values. This can also apply to organisations, as stipulated, for example, in Article 2 of the Treaty of the EU, which describes respect for human dignity and the protection of human rights as values:

> The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail. (TEU: Art. 2)

Although the criticism has been made that values outside the law have been made into to a protected good and used for interpretation, the idea that human rights are

also an expression of values has prevailed. This can be observed, for example, in the allegation that the West wants to use human rights to impose its values on other cultural areas (Fremuth 2020).

10.4.3 Relevance for the Economy: Why Should Companies Deal with Human Rights?

Current global developments influence the discussion about human rights. In particular, the question of the role of companies to respect human rights is debated. States are the primary addressees of human rights; they also have a monopoly on law enforcement. This is true for supranational organisations such as the EU too. With the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which came into effect with the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, the EU has one of the most modern human rights documents in the world. However, can private persons – human beings or legal persons – be addressees of human rights too? The basic rule is that human beings hold human rights but are not bound by them. It is argued that the binding of private individuals to human rights is rejected because this could endanger their character and effectiveness, so most of international human right documents do not include human rights duties (Fremuth 2020).

However, for many years there has been a discussion about the binding of companies, especially multinational enterprises[10] (MNEs), to human rights. Their activities along their supply chains and their production methods affect human rights in a variety of ways such as working conditions, health or environmental impacts, or exploitation of natural resources. In the accelerating globalisation process, states are said to be losing power to fully control social, economic, and even political processes. Against this background, the effectiveness of the state as the sole protector of human rights has been questioned. Consequently, the call for extending human rights responsibility to non-state actors in general and into the private sphere in particular has become louder as numerous cases of human rights abuses committed by MNEs, particularly in countries with a weak governance and poor law enforcement, have become public (Wettstein 2012).

Even though human rights do not bind MNEs directly, there are approaches that justify a soft liability of human rights principles for corporations, such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (OECD 2011). As already stated, the respect for human rights by corporations can be justified from an ethical perspective too. Wettstein states:

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[10] Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) are corporations that have global value chains and subsidiaries in foreign countries. As global players, their financial strength often even exceeds the Gross National Product (GNP) of states.

> The very question of why and to what extent the international human rights regime should include also private actors is crucially dependent on ethical reflection. However, what such questions rarely address is the fundamental moral nature of human rights obligations as something that matters independently and irrespective of their implementation or enforcement. (Wettstein 2012: 744)

He argues further that the benchmark against which the human rights conduct of companies should be judged cannot comprise legal or political conceptions only – or strategic considerations (because it is allegedly good business to uphold human rights). It is necessary to also include the moral dimension of human rights for the derivation of corporate human rights obligations of companies (Wettstein 2012).

10.4.4   Normative Frameworks Addressing Companies to Respect Human Rights and Their Function

In the late 1990s, following some high-profile allegations of corporate involvement in human rights abuses, the UN Commission on Human Rights began to explore the relationship of business and international human rights obligations. This led to the appointment of Professor John Ruggie as Special Representative on the responsibilities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises with regard to human rights. His work produced a framework that has since become the state-of-the-art model in the debate on business and human rights: The UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights (United Nations 2011). In 2008 Ruggie proposed a three-pillared policy framework: (1) the state duty to protect against human rights abuses; (2) the corporate responsibility to respect human rights; (3) access to effective remedy for victims of human rights abuse. This framework has since influenced the debate on business and human rights as well as the revision of other internationally recognised normative documents aimed at companies, such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises or the Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.

The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises were first negotiated in 1976 in a comprehensive international consultation process between company representatives, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, and governments, and were contractually agreed between the governments of the OECD countries and several other countries. They are recommendations to globally active corporations and provide non-binding principles and standards for responsible business conduct (RBC) in a global context consistent with applicable laws and internationally recognised standards, as well as practical support to enterprises on their implementation. The voluntariness of the guidelines is relativised by the publicity effect and the contractual obligations of the states. Today, the guidelines encompass nine areas: employment and industrial relations, human rights, the environment, information disclosure, anti-corruption, consumer interests, science and technology,

competition, and taxation. In their current version of 2011, they include a duty of care and responsibility for the conduct of foreign business partners (OECD 2011). Since 2011, sector guidance documents have been developed, which address MNEs in areas such as the extractive sector, the garment sector, and the agricultural sector. Furthermore, certain high-risk areas are covered, such as child labour or conflict minerals.

The Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy – the so called MNE Declaration was first negotiated 1977 between workers' organisations and employers' organisations and governments, adopted by the governing body of the International Labour Office (ILO) in 1977, and amended in 2000 and 2006, with a revision in 2017. It covers areas such as employment, training, conditions of work and life, and industrial relations. All principles build on international labour standards, which are laid down in the eight fundamental ILO conventions and recommendations.[11] The preamble of the declaration refers to the contribution of corporations to basic human rights, and the declaration sets out principles and recommendations, which governments, employers' organisations, and workers' organisations, as well as multinational enterprises, should follow on a voluntary basis (International Labour Office 2017).

In addition, the United Nations Global Compact (2000), launched by the UN in 2000, is an orientation instrument for corporations regarding human rights. It is based on the self-interest and voluntary commitment of the participating companies to respect, implement, and promote ten fundamental sustainability principles in the four areas of human rights, labour norms, environmental protection, and the fight against corruption. The compact is a business network and explicitly refers to the companies' value systems and the need of a principles-based approach (United Nations Global Compact 2000).

The ILO Declaration and the OECD Guidelines are the leading international instruments developed and formally adopted by governments and formally supported by business and workers' organisations. The UN Global Compact is an international initiative developed by intergovernmental organisations. Those three are the most frequently mentioned and used in the guidance documents produced by companies. The fact that they stand out from all other instruments or initiatives because of their direct connection to government and the strong commitment on the part of business and employee organisations is important (OECD Secretariat 2009).

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[11] Since 1919, the International Labour Organization has maintained and developed a system of international labour standards aimed at promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and dignity. International labour standards are legal instruments drawn up by the ILO's constituents (governments, employers, and workers) and setting out basic principles and rights at work. They are either Conventions (or Protocols), which are legally binding international treaties that may be ratified by member states, or Recommendations, which serve as non-binding guidelines.

10.4.5 Anchoring European Values in the Economic and Trade Policies

Besides the normative frameworks, some of which are presented above, values such as human rights are promoted and transported in trade relations between states. The EU, with its relatively young self-image as a community of values (Weymans, Chap. 3, this volume), has committed to promote its European values – including human rights – vis-à-vis non-EU members. One of its instruments is the EU economic and trade policy. In 2015, the EU presented a new trade strategy – Trade for all (European Union 2015) – with a strong focus on trade and investment. One of the main pillars of this strategy is to base trade policy on EU values such as human rights, sustainable development, and fair trade. The EU has thus made clear that it wants to reinforce corporate social responsibility initiatives and due diligence across the production chain, with a focus on the respect of human rights and the social – including labour rights – and environmental aspects of value (European Union 2015). In addition, in 2016 the EU presented its new Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy for the European Union (European Union 2016), which states explicitly that not only are migration and trade or energy security important, but the promotion and the export of its values and principles are important too.

This is one of the reasons why the EU is often perceived as a normative actor that has several mechanisms in the economic policy area available to follow this strategy, such as trade agreements and trade preference programmes, foreign trade agreements, or even development aid (Niezen 2017). This has also led to policy fields that were previously treated separately becoming increasingly interwoven as a result of the horizontal character of values and human rights. The European Commission is taking action in different policy areas to promote decent work in global supply and value chains and has announced further measures. These policies include trade; development cooperation; labour and human rights dialogues and policies; sectoral policies; neighbourhood policies; and measures related to corporate responsibility, public procurement, corporate reporting, sustainable finance, due diligence in conflict minerals supply chains, the environment, and consumer policies. This has direct influence on business enterprises.

10.4.6 Current Developments in Europe and Legislative Initiatives

As part of the system change in Europe, it is widely acknowledged that the economic and financial system is a central driving force behind ecological and digital change. To promote sustainable and responsible behaviour by companies in the long term, the EU is in the process of developing a legislative proposal on sustainable

corporate governance, which deals, among other things, with human rights, ecological due diligence, and due diligence across all economic supply and value chains. In the past few years, several European countries, as well as the EU, have already adopted or started to consider legislation that embeds elements of human rights due diligence (HRDD) into law.[12] Other European institutions, United Nations bodies, and international organisations have discussed or acknowledged the need for binding regulation to promote the implementation of HRDD and to improve access to justice for victims of corporate-related human rights abuses. This type of regulation is also gaining support from parts of the business community, which considers it a means to help them better implement their responsibility to respect human rights and secure a more level playing field in international competition (Business & Human Rights Resource Center 2020).

The notion of the European Green Deal, proclaimed as Europe's 'man on the moon moment' in December 2019 by European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen (Lory and McMahon 2019), has set in motion several legislative and regulatory projects directly addressing companies and their governance. The Green Deal is not just limited to environment and climate policy, but encompasses several projects aimed at improving the governance of companies in dealing with their social responsibility and with human rights (European Commission 2019).

The most important proposed legislation initiatives in this context concern mandatory due diligence legislation regarding human rights and the environment in combination with promoting sustainable corporate governance as well as the revision of the non-financial reporting directive of 2014. Both initiatives are in the process of preparation. Based on the consultation process (European Commission 2020a) as well as draft documents, certain conclusion can be drawn as to what to expect for the businesses.[13]

1. Due diligence duty. The Commission planned to present a combined proposal on due diligence duty and sustainable corporate governance already in 2021, however due to disagreements concerning regarding the scope as well as proportionality of some of the drafted measures the proposal has been delayed until 2022. The preliminary drafts on mandatory due diligence legislation are designed to address companies of all sizes and will not be restricted to MNEs. The proposal sets out a horizontal mandatory corporate due diligence duty to identify, prevent, and mitigate against adverse human rights, health, social, and environmental

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[12] For example: UK Modern Slavery Act (2015); French Duty of Vigilance Act (2017); Dutch Child Labour Due Diligence Act (2019); the German parliament passed the draft of the Supply Chain Act on 11 June 2021. The draft of the European Commission "Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive" (June 2021) is currently being negotiated in the European Trilogue obliging companies to review and prevent if necessary human rights and environmental risks in the value chain.

[13] I have this information as a participant in the ongoing working groups Company Law and CSR, 2018–2021, of the European employers' umbrella organisation Business Europe, which works across Europe on answering consultations and developing position papers and arguments for representing interests in this matter.

impacts in all sectors and covering the value chains. It also combines elements of transparency (reporting requirements), enforcement, and liability measures (including fines and banning from public procurement). The covering of all tiers of the supply chain means that companies will be obliged to check sub-suppliers, their sub-suppliers, and so on too. This means that a company needs to have mechanisms, processes, and instruments in place to identify risks of human rights violations, prevent such violations, and guarantee access to remedy. This will pose a huge challenge, as supply chains are networks with ever-changing suppliers depending on multiple different products and their ingredients. In addition, the civil liability of companies is suggested, so that companies that do not exercise all due care to avoid damage from negative effects on human rights, the environment, or responsible corporate governance can be obliged to pay compensation. Several European countries already have national laws in place (France, the UK, Germany) or draft bills published (the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Switzerland).

2. Sustainable corporate governance. The proposed law intends to clarify that company directors should take into account the long-term interest of the company itself as well as the interests of all stakeholders alongside the interest of shareholders as part of their duty of care to act in the interests of the company. It will require directors to integrate sustainability risks, opportunities, and impacts into the business strategy; it will require directors to set targets on how they plan to meet environmental goals; it will provide for more long-term focus in directors' remuneration by potential caps on variable remuneration and by linking them to sustainability goals; it will potentially limit corporate pay-outs and give legal standing to stakeholders (shareholders with at least 1%, trade unions, NGOs) to enforce the new obligations.

3. Corporate sustainability reporting directive (former non-financial reporting directive). EU law requires large companies with more than 500 employees to disclose certain information on how they operate and manage social and environmental challenges. The intention is to help investors, consumers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to evaluate the non-financial performance of large companies and encourage them to develop a responsible approach to business. The revision of the corporate sustainability reporting directive will expand the scope of the companies obliged to disclose information in so-called non-financial information. At present, about 10,000 companies across the EU are covered, and this will expand to around 50,000 companies, which will have to report their standards in detail. Non-financial information includes environmental protection; social responsibility and treatment of employees; respect for human rights; anti-corruption and bribery; and diversity on company boards in terms of age, gender, and educational and professional background.

In this context, what the concrete formulation of the legal text looks like is less important than what role companies are assigned in dealing with European values and human rights.

10.5 Analysis and Conclusion

10.5.1 Challenges for Companies and Politics

In order to generate (added) value for companies and society in a time of transformation and changing values, it is necessary for companies, as part of society, and specifically their owners and leading managers, to deal seriously with their normative values. Values in the corporate context have experienced a boom for years, have been brought to life to a certain extent through approaches such as CSR, corporate citizenship, or social investment, and have found their way into strategy work. At the same time, expectations of companies to address social injustices and environmental degradation are growing steadily. There are certainly paradoxes. On the one hand, companies – representing the prevailing and often contested market economy system – are used as a point of attack as a result of recurring scandals in which they are involved. On the other hand, according to the Edelman Trust Barometer (2021), trust in companies is high and currently exceeds trust in politics (without a corona effect). However, this should be treated with caution – depending on which political aspect you are looking at (parties, government, etc.). At the same time, it is often forgotten that a social practice – and a company is nothing else – is always exposed to the intrinsic pressures of its social position. It must not be forgotten that a company with economic goals that include profit orientation will always act from in economic logic.

This means that when dealing with values, companies are on the one hand exposed to and driven by the values of a society, and thus to the prevailing – and changing – morality, norms, demands, desires, and attitudes. On the other hand, companies, or their owners and managers, determine company values arising from different motivations. From an ethical perspective, which served as the starting point of this contribution, it is in any case necessary that companies subject their discussion of values, their value proposition, and their communication to an ethical reflection, and that they legitimise this – at least in theory – for their stakeholders (including their shareholders). If the examination of values is mainly carried out for strategic reasons – and this can happen unconsciously – and without at least a simple distinction between moral values and strategic values, the company could be exposed to numerous risks. These range from damage to image and reputation to employee turnover and legal sanctions. In this context, value management can also be understood as preventive risk management.

For companies, this means that they are challenged in two ways. A review of their management of values and their ethical reflection on the one hand seems urgently needed. Ultimately, this is an undertaking that can only be addressed as an appeal to company owners (for example, shareholders) and the board of directors. This is a cultural as well as an ethical task. It is further expected that, due to current global developments, the pressure of expectations and demands on companies 'to be a part of the solution' will continue to increase. Companies must therefore also deal strategically with their values.

At the same time, numerous developments are currently emerging at the European level, which are already challenging companies today and will continue to challenge them in the coming years at the value level. This is evident in current legal developments, where regulatory pressure builds up, which is regularly politically justified by human rights and European values. Human rights as an essential value system of a global society are currently at the centre of developments that aim to anchor in law the responsibility of companies to respect human rights, to review human rights, and to prevent human rights violations in their sphere of influence. The European legislature goes far in its proposals to intervene in the company law of the member states and thus in the principle of subsidiarity – which is also a core value of the European community.

Dealing with a responsibility to uphold human rights within the company's sphere of influence and across national borders is not only an administrative or technical challenge, but also a moral one. For policymakers and lawmakers, it will be crucial to balance high aspirations in terms of protecting human rights and credibly upholding European values with designing an actionable regulation that enables companies worldwide to improve the human rights situation without too great an administrative burden. The long-standing discourse on the role of companies in society, their moral responsibilities and duties, and the role of politics as a norm setter, will certainly keep the topic of values and value orientation live.

10.5.2   Future Research Questions

In this context, further research seems necessary to better understand the interaction and influence of the change in values in society and the value orientation, management, and communication of companies. Possible research questions are:

How do societal (or religious) values relate to company values and influence them? While the existing and proclaimed values of companies have been analysed, it is less clear what their intrinsic and moral sources are. One assumption is that company values are primarily determined by external developments and expectations or for strategic reasons. The value orientation and value development in owner-managed companies and, above all, their sustainability over time, is certainly an interesting research approach too.

How and in which areas do changing values influence companies and their values? While companies systematically analyse general trends – including value developments such as environmental awareness – for their strategic marketing, it is less clear whether they also orient their strategies to societal values and attitudes. One interesting research field is employer branding and a 'value fit' of employees to the company culture in the context of diversity.

Where do religious values play a role in economics? Research shows that religion can play an essential role in company values in family-owned businesses. Here, the belief of owners or executives influences decision-making and the

implementation of leadership tasks. However, a research gap seems to exist on the correlation of how religious values influence economics, economic strategies, and policies. Especially interesting would be how religious values translate into the (moral) values that companies proclaim.

Lastly, how can values be developed and operationalised in a company in an ethical way? Existing frameworks of value management focus on categorisation, codification, and communication of a company's corporate values. It seems that they miss an important step from an ethical perspective – the continuous reflection and adaption of all corporate processes and policies in terms of certain values. It would thus be useful to develop a conceptual framework or to complement existing value management frameworks with an ethical procedure.

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Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi (*1971) is Sustainability Consultant at PricewaterhouseCoopers. Before, she was Policy Advisor in the Department of Education and Society in the Federation of Industries (Austria). She is on the board of the Christian Leaders Forum. Her work and research focus are on sustainability, corporate social responsibility, social innovation, business ethics, and societal futures.

Chapter 11
Values and Laws

Christoph Konrath

Abstract Human rights and the rule of law are integral to value debates in Europe. But value debates are rarely connected with discourses about the law and legal practice. So far, we know only little of the role of value concepts in legal discourse and how personal attitudes and value conceptions shape legal practice. This chapter aims to show how legal debates and conflicts provide us with the chance to understand the circumstances and contingencies of value and norm creation.

Keywords Rule of law · Human rights · Constitutional courts · Secularisation · National identity

11.1 Missing Links

Human rights and the rule of law are integral to value debates in Europe. Politics and academia see them as common points of reference or an expression of a (kind of) overlapping consensus. At the same time, human rights and the rule of law are conceived and promoted as core European values in themselves and as the expression of (other) core European values, as Wim Weymans, Chap. 3, this volume, explains. Furthermore, values are regarded as the source and foundation of human rights and legal systems. Still, debates on values and rights remain on a rather abstract level. Even when they are concerned with the mobilisation of values in political campaigns or before courts, they rarely consider the internal workings of legal institutions, the way legal experts handle a case, or how legal institutions and experts come to reach their decision (see McIvor 2020 for a different approach). This is puzzling insofar as all our value discourses occur within the framework of established legal systems and centuries of conceiving and fighting for what we know as the rule of law today.

C. Konrath (✉)

Abt. 3.2 Parlamentswissenschaftliche Grundsatzarbeit, Parlamentsdirektion, Vienna, Austria
e-mail: christoph.konrath@parlament.gv.at

Many who invoke human rights and the rule of law in value debates give the impression that these institutions and concepts are stable and that their meaning is clear. Therefore, they may provide an anchoring point in fuzzy debates. While values are conceived as contested and often as incommensurable, legal norms are understood as a result of clearly delineated procedures and established methods of interpretation and application. Furthermore, the court system at national and international level is under an obligation to decide given conflicts in an impartial and transparent manner. No court is allowed to abstain from decision-making and it must not state that it can't decide a given case.

In politics, we find a growing tendency to use value concepts and value references in legislation. Here again, we can recognise an intention to stabilise certain concepts and bring public debates and conflicts to a close. But this is also done with the intention of altering the dynamics of legal and legislative procedures. Values – and principles, as they will be often called – shall guide the application and creation of laws, for example by emphasising transparency and accountability or equality of human self-conceptions. But they can also be used to undermine such goals by introducing political concepts in legal norms and confusing legal and political approaches to given conflicts.

Those who maintain a given legal system – the judges, lawyers, administrative experts, etc. – are rarely part of such debates. We know only little of how they perceive those debates, what they personally think about values and the law, and of value conflicts that are brought before them. More often than not, I guess, academic and political debates will assume that the practitioners will have a kind of comprehensive background knowledge that allows them to handle such cases in the expected manner. It might be that the virtuous lawyer of ancient Roman texts overshadows such debates. It may be that there is a vague sense of Tocqueville's image of the guiding role of lawyers and judges in an evolving democratic society. It might also be a literary figure like Atticus Finch in Harper Lee's *To kill a mockingbird* – often read as a voice of liberal learning, decency, and civility.

What strikes me is the fact that legal and political discourse has discussed the growing role of law courts – especially of supreme courts and constitutional discourse – for decades. The debates are shaped by those who are wary of a growing judicialisation of politics (Waldron 1999; Albers 2012) and those who promote constitutional courts as safeguards of rational debate, equality, and human rights (Lafont 2020; Stourzh 2021). But both sides of the debate continue to assume an impartial and learned attitude of the courts' members and seem to hold that it will be maintained by the specific institutional setting. Often, it is assumed that courts will weigh the arguments brought before them in the light of current circumstances and social developments. In contrast, it is uncommon in Europe to ask how those assumptions are formed in a court and how the transformations of knowledge and perception of societies, the formation of individual values, and the conceptions of ideology, ethics, and religion influence those who make binding legal decisions.

In general, legal systems and legal institutions are perceived as hierarchical and intrinsically linked with our understanding of a well-ordered state and society in the Western tradition (a point I will return to in Sect. 11.5). We get a very different picture if we try to view legal systems from within. They have multiple layers that are connected or influence each other in horizontal, vertical, and diagonal ways. Courts and scholars of various countries have developed ways of communicating and receiving ideas, legislators emulate foreign approaches within their vernacular legal system, and practitioners seek guidance among peers.

I will try to offer an introduction to this world or realm of law in the context of this volume's discussion of European values. My approach will be guided by what is often called 'law in context' and which discusses law and legal phenomena critically in their cultural, social, political, technological, environmental, and economic contexts. This is a rather broad approach that uses materials and methods from other humanities and social science in order to understand legal phenomena better. In that way, it can have a lot in common with legal and social philosophy and the sociology of law, and it enables other disciplines to engage in an interdisciplinary dialogue.

In my attempt, I will take up some exemplary questions and approaches that have been discussed in legal theory and legal sociology since the 1960s at least, but which have so far barely been linked to the analysis of value debates. I will present each of them from the perspectives of various groups that influence and shape the understanding of the rule of law, human rights, and legal systems. In doing so, I will not add yet another chapter to the long-standing debates on the relation or distinction between law and morality or justice and fairness. Rather, I will look at the social functions of law and the self-conception of legal institutions and people within them. I will start with legal scholars and ask how they conceive the institutional basis of the rule of law in relation to value debates (Sect. 11.2). From the perspective of theory, we will encounter a more or less technical view of rights, laws, and the rule of law, and can conjecture as to why value debates have gained influence over recent decades. In the next section, I will look at politicians and political debates that are led by the desire to enshrine certain values in constitutions and laws. This will lead to a discussion of the narrative on the preconditions of the modern state and how it is used to establish the prevalence of a certain set of values (Sect. 11.3). I will then turn to practice and the perspective of courts and judges. I will ask what, if any, role such discourses play there and what this implies for value conflicts that are brought before courts (Sect. 11.4). Finally, I will look at those who aim to defend or secure their rights and their religious, moral, and cultural views by mobilising the law. I will provide examples through reference to conflicts about migration and religion in the public sphere and the recurrence of intuitions about rights and justice rather than through a reconsideration of legal relations (Sect. 11.5). On that basis, I will draw some conclusions for future research and debate (Sect. 11.6).

11.2   Legal Consciousness, Knowledge, and Practice

In principle, we are all familiar with the basic tenets and functions of laws, legal rights, and legal systems and their definition in law and the humanities. In their most general form, we can describe them as sets of rules that structure the relations between specific groups of people. We usually hold that the core difference between legal rules and other rules of behaviour is that the former need only to be followed externally or outwardly. In other words, law does not – or at least to a certain degree, as we will soon see – need internal conviction in order to function. It is sufficient to act in conformity with it. In this way, modern societies have perceived law as their central means of integration. Legal norms provide us with the chance to live and cooperate freely with each other in a society of strangers. They stabilise expectations in others and enable us to rely on others because we hold legal norms as rules that are binding and legitimate, meaning that they have been created through certain procedures and can be enforced by authorities. When we speak of the rule of law, we usually refer to principles of formal and procedural character that address the way in which a community is governed. The state under the rule of law sets clear limits to state power, and it requires that all acts of the state are performed in compliance with strict procedural rules and that fundamental rights of individuals are guaranteed. This, too, is the point at which most of us will refer to the 'value of law', as it changes the way power is exercised in a political community and ensures that power is less arbitrary, more predictable, more impersonal, and less peremptory (Fuller 1964). The rule of law is valuable, therefore, as it establishes an environment that is conducive to liberty, and it frees us from dependence upon the will of others (Hayek 1960).

   This is only a very rough sketch, but it already shows that a legal system and the rule of law lay a general claim on society without demanding that everyone in this society be familiar with all of the legal rules, instruments, and procedures. Therefore, we speak of expectations, trust, and reliance on each other and on the institutions within which we lead our lives. But the maintenance of institutions cannot rely on expectations for external behaviour alone. Champions and defenders of the rule of law emphasise that it requires constant effort to maintain it so that it can survive in the face of disappointment. Stephen Breyer, a former judge of the US Supreme Court, famously said that:

> Following the law is a matter of custom, of habit, of widely shared understandings as to how those in government and members of the public should (...) act when faced with a court decision they strongly dislike. That habit and widely shared understanding cannot be achieved without a struggle; it is a long, gradual development based on experience. (Breyer 2011: 22–23)

Also, such a broad approach to a legal system and the rule of law can help us to understand that almost all our social relations are influenced and shaped to a considerable degree by law or may conflict with it. In a state under the rule of law, it is necessary to distinguish between moral, political, and legal spheres. But it will more often than not be impossible to consider moral and political matters without

reference to the law or by pretending that a specific problem or conflict is merely moral or political. This is, as we will see in more detail below (Sect. 11.5), of particular importance, as in such a state law is a central means of social mobilisation.

This view can be underscored through the history of constitutionalism, human rights, and the rule of law. In 1776 the Declaration of Independence of the 13 states of the United States (US) began with the famous words:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights (...). That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed (...).

Here, I want to discuss neither the reference to natural rights and natural law nor the initially exclusionary character of the US Constitution. Rather, I want to emphasise the emotional, appellative, and legal character of this statement. The struggle for the establishment of constitutional states and equal rights in the US and then in Europe was strongly influenced by calls to end cruelty and abuse, to show empathy, and to recognise others as persons bearing rights. In so doing, the Civil Rights Movement could overcome the initially restricted view of 'Men'. It could appeal to anyone and make them understand what it means to have rights, why it is important that rights can be enforced, and what it means to say that a society is based on equal rights rather than, for example, ethnic origins or historically given hierarchies of power (Richter 2020). It is crucial to note that the struggle for equal rights has always been connected with the struggle to claim these rights in court and to enforce them. Therefore, it was necessary to take the courts and legal proceedings into account, to explain their role and function, and thus to create the cognitive basis necessary to create and maintain a state and society based on equal rights (Stourzh 2021; Bell 2021).

Such an approach differs significantly from a mere appeal to the value of human rights or the rule of law, as it takes the organisation and practices of a legal system into account. It attempts to explain and connect it to a universal moral and legal outlook and to specific historical experiences and grievances. At the same time, it makes clear what is needed to create and maintain such an order in an institutional and procedural sense. But this connection has come under pressure and may even have been lost, as a growing number of observers from within the legal discipline find (Weiler 2004; Corstens 2017). They not only refer to open attacks on and attempts to undermine the rule of law in some states, but also ask why the rule of law can be at risk in any state. This may sound paradoxical when we look, for example, at the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index, which has mostly European countries in its top ranks. Here, we can also refer to an extremely dense web of legal norms, the status of legal experts and legal erudition, and the power of the courts on national and supranational levels. On the other hand, this dense web of rules is connected to a view of law and legal systems that shall be strictly separated from any moral or ethical considerations. In that way, legal knowledge and legal practice can become the domain of a group of specialists and/or instruments to achieve and maintain power. Such views developed in parallel with the rise of

constitutionalism and were seen as a means to safeguard rationality in the Weberian sense as well as to confine legal practice and the aspirations of legal practitioners within certain boundaries. This can be exemplified, for instance, in post-1848 university reforms in the Habsburg Empire that banished moral philosophy and economics from law curricula in order to create jurists who would see their role only in executing the positive law (Heindl 2013).

Philosopher Judith Shklar, who was interested in a contextualist analysis that situates law within socio-historical and cultural conditions, looked at such developments to formulate her theory of law as an ideology. By that she meant 'a series of personal responses to social experiences which come to color, quite insensibly often, all our categories of thought', and referred to the inevitable perspectives of practitioners of mature legal systems (Shklar 1964: 41). Seen that way, law can become something that can only be properly conceived and used by a special group of experts in possession of legal knowledge (Somek 2021). Then debates risk becoming the domain of a closed circle and thus favour internal views. Here, the Enlightenment-inspired demand that laws need only to be followed externally gets a new meaning. The normative question, 'What ought to be done?', is transformed into the practical question, 'What can be done within a given legal framework?', or more bluntly, 'How far can we go?'. Such a view is legitimate, as our understanding of law and following the law is based on external behaviour. Nobody is obliged to give their own reasons and their own ends when following the law. In this way, it becomes possible to build an autocratic regime that has the appearance of an exemplary model of the rule of law (Scheppele 2018). But when we understand the rule of law as a specific ethos that is meant to safeguard social diversity and hence a diversity of moral outlooks, a merely instrumental understanding and use of laws might in the end undermine the whole system. Law as an ideology will then, in Shklar's words, exhaust itself 'in intoning traditional pieties and principles which are incapable of realization', and the 'creative power' and the 'ethos' of the rule of law will be lost (Shklar 1964: 112).

We may better understand what Shklar meant when we look at two academic reflections on the state of the rule of law in the European Union over the course of 20 years. The EU witnessed significant transformations and debates throughout the 1990s. The realisation of the 'ever-closer-union' and the demands for stricter fiscal policies to prepare for a common currency were met by growing political debates and doubts about the aims of European integration. The catchword was 'democratic deficit', which referred to a variety of debates from the effective powers of national governments and the roles of representative assemblies in the political participation of citizens. In reply, EU institutions and proponents of integration turned to a rhetoric of 'what the EU has achieved for you' and focused on effective regulation, economic success, and consumer rights. In a way, they proposed to make the web of legal norms more tightly knit and promised that anyone 'who knows how to play by the rules' will be guaranteed individual success. The legal scholar Joseph Weiler became one of the most eminent critics of this development (Weiler 1999). By no means a Eurosceptic, he argued that such an approach might well empower legal

consumers but disempower individuals in their status as citizens. He did not deny that the rule of law can be understood as creating the perfect environment for following personal goals in a super-safe context. But he saw the logic of laws and politics undermined by a logic of the market, and rights reduced to mere consumer goods. In that sense, he wondered how the EU would deal with times of significant crisis in which it might not be able to deliver its promises and guarantee success.

Now, 20 years after Weiler, we discuss the rule of law in a different tone. The question of the aims of European integration has become crucial in the course of Brexit and in the conflicts between the EU institutions (and thus a significant number of its member states) and the governments of Hungary and Poland (and to some degree further member states). International expert institutions and scholars have no doubt that Hungary and Poland are gradually deviating from the core principles of the rule of law and especially equality of rights as proclaimed by the EU treaties and the European Convention on Human Rights. Both countries have continuously restricted the scope and interpretation of fundamental rights, undermined the independence of the judiciary, and infringed democratic institutions (Venice Commission 2013). There have, of course, been numerous judicial disputes before the European Court of Justice, and resolutions and statements by the European Council, the European Parliament, and the European Commission. New legal and political instruments and mechanisms have been devised with the noble aim of safeguarding and promoting the rule of law and making governments who deviate from its path comply. But so far, none has reached its aim (Pech et al. 2021). The governments of Hungary and Poland deny that they undermine the rule of law. On the contrary, they insist that they are absolutely true to the rule of law as established by their constitutions, and they list numerous examples of laws and court decisions in other EU member states whose wording corresponds with their own. In so doing, they refer to the 'technical approach' described above (Grabenwarter 2018). The legal scholars Tímea Drinóczi and Agnieszka Bień-Kacała speak of a 'pushing the limits game' played by Hungary and Poland in order to defend and stabilise their system of illiberal constitutionalism (Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała 2020). They go on to ask whether legal and political measures coming from the EU can have even the slightest potential to change this situation. As has been seen before, these are most likely to be communicated as 'attacks from Brussels' on national sovereignty and the constitutional identity. Therefore, both urge EU leaders and fellow academics to conceive the underlying conflicts not merely as matters of rule compliance, but as social and ethical conditions that are necessary to maintain the rule of law and help to build and maintain resilient societies (Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała 2020; Drinóczi 2021).

The examples from legal, philosophical, and historical debates can help us to understand that the rule of law and the maintenance and enforcement of legal rights rely on a complex web of social conditions. The examples make clear that it is necessary to distinguish between the rule of law as a type of legal system and as a specific ethos. Like any other ethos, it relies on the creation of broad social commitments and on particular pedagogic strategies that might or might not be aligned with what we perceive as guiding values in a given society.

11.3 Sources of Law

So far, I have sketched some basic conceptions of the rule of law and its social context. I have emphasised the role of custom and an underlying ethos to build and maintain such an order and asked how this relates to the 'technical' aspects of law. From this perspective, we might conceive parallels with the way we discuss values in general, but we might also note crucial differences, especially regarding a universalistic conception of the rule of law and its intrinsic legal character that focuses on formal proceedings, coercive measures, and external behaviour. When we turn, as Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała (2020) demand, to practical matters, we are faced with the question, what is necessary to implement a universalistic concept in a concrete society with its particular history? This brings us to the role of the rule of law in political debates and in its political contexts.

Interestingly, the answer that is given in political discourse tends to favour particular and vernacular views over universal concepts. By emphasising these, I do not say that specific laws – and constitutions as 'foundational laws' in particular – shall not be influenced by the history and experiences of given states and societies. But there is a difference between history that has influenced the creation of specific institutions; the distribution of powers; and the formulation of rights and legal texts, and the intention to privilege certain views and understandings over others. Wim Weymans, Chap. 3, recalls in this volume how particular values were enshrined in universal language in the European Convention on Human Rights and in the EU treaties. Today, we are increasingly confronted with legislators' intentions to safeguard and implement particular values explicitly in legal texts, for example, in laws that regulate residence permits and citizenship and demand proofs of integration that go beyond the adherence of the constitutional and legal order (Pöschl 2012). We can note at least three aspects of such developments: (1) They deviate from traditional legal discourse as they focus on internal convictions. (2) They limit the scope of legal interpretation by explicit reference to value debates (although often failing to provide definitions, as we will see in Sect. 11.4). (3) They call into question the idea that there can be an ethos supporting the rule of law that is created and maintained through the rule of law and the careful approach to individual and societal sources of normativity that fundamental rights guarantee.

These developments can be exemplified by the debates about constitutional preambles. A preamble is an introductory and expressive statement in a legal text (or any other document) that will usually explain the reasons for and purpose of what is to come. Preambles are a common feature of international treaties and constitutions, but they do not usually attract much attention in legal discourse, as their content is deemed non-normative and non-binding. This means that no individual and/or collective rights or duties of the state can be derived from the text of a preamble. No matter what is stated in the preamble, it is the actual legal text and the systematic interplay between the legal norms that count (Konrath 2004). Still, the text of a preamble is enacted in the same procedure as any other part of a constitution or

treaty, etc., and demands the same qualified majorities, giving it substantial political weight.

The exemplary model of a modern constitutional preamble is that of the German Grundgesetz 1949. It marks the new beginning in the Federal Republic of (West) Germany after the Nazi era and the Second World War by invoking responsibility before God and (hu)mankind and through the resolution to preserve the state's national and political unity and to serve world peace as an equal partner in a united Europe. In its essence, it is a commitment to a secular and pluralistic democracy that acknowledges the plurality of individual moral commitments and rejects former conceptions of national and state sovereignty. It does so by placing West Germany as an equal partner of other states, accepting the international order as a means to limit state power and conceding that the state has only limited scope (Dreier 1996). The reference to God and (hu)mankind has been linked to philosopher Agnes Heller's image of the 'empty chair of power' (Heller 1997). Like the chair on which no one is allowed to sit, this reference makes explicit the intention that there will never again be a totalitarian state. The state is limited and its power is constrained. At the same time, this empty chair can be a reminder of what is lost, and of those who are no longer here, because they fell victim to murderous action and the hubris of power. In such a way, a preamble can have a pedagogical function and provide a way to understand the normative content of a constitution, supporting the creation of an ethos that helps to maintain it (Konrath 2004).

But preambles can mark a different kind of beginning, too, as political scientist Julie Mostov (1994) points out. Their creation and enactment can be a powerful means for the politics of national identity and can secure constitutional legitimacy (which can, in turn, be sold as objective validity) in a particular historical narrative. This became prevalent in the new constitutions of post-Soviet states. The preambles of Croatia, Slovakia, or (then) Macedonia were meant to enshrine a mythical history and the realisation of century-long desires of the nation to retain its political subjectivity and sovereignty. Thus, the chair of power should not remain empty. Even if the ensuing constitutional norms guarantee the rights of members of minority groups, the preamble makes clear that their status is granted to them by the majority and that they are meant to live within a nation whose history and values are not meant to be theirs as well.

Preambles can also be used to mark transformations of existing orders or a reinterpretation of a given constitution. From 2002 to 2004, the EU Convention set out to draft a Constitution of Europe. From a technical point of view, it could be said that the EU already had a constitution in the sense of a supreme body of law that regulated how decision-making should be organised and binding legal norms be created and enacted. From a political point of view, though, speaking of a constitution was understood as creating a new superstate. This distinction is quite difficult to explain, as is the complex institutional architecture of the EU. But the proposal to include 'God' or Europe's religious heritage in a new preamble generated a lot more interest and ideological debate (Konrath 2004). Unlike the creation of the European Charter of Human Rights, where a Christian vision of Europe was framed in

universal language (Duranti 2017), the Christian heritage should now be made explicit or denied completely. Joseph Weiler criticised the lack of historical knowledge and consciousness of both sides and reminded them of the plurality of constitutions in Europe (Weiler 2004). But his attempt to formulate an inclusive approach that would commit believers and non-believers alike (and foresaw a special duty of Christians to help establish a culture of dialogue and toleration) was reduced to a Jewish scholar's wake-up call for Christians of Europe (Konrath 2005). In the end, however, the religious heritage became part of the preamble of the Treaty of Lisbon 2007, which was meant to replace the failed attempt to enact a Constitution of Europe.

While the question of the relation between universalistic and concrete conceptions of justice and solidarity remains unresolved on a European level (and has not been taken up again), the amendment of the Hungarian Fundamental Law in 2011 tells a different story. Here, a new preamble should mark the deviation from the henceforth liberal trajectory of the Hungarian Constitution. The preamble follows the model that Julie Mostov described. It enshrines a mythical conception of the nation, its history, and Christian values. Such formulations stand in remarkable contrast to the catalogue of fundamental rights that follows more or less international models. But the demand to interpret all constitutional norms in light of the preamble makes it explicit that legal interpretation must no longer be done autonomously. Rights are not to be understood in a universal or 'liberal' sense, but in a specific Hungarian one – whatever that might be (Halmai 2018).

Preambles can be a tool to initiate popular discussions and thus facilitate the understanding of a constitution as foundational consensus. In that sense, they can be an invitation to take part in a wider constitutional discourse and avoid mere expert discourses. Here, the reference to 'values' might open debate and make it possible for many people to join the debate. A restrained legal approach to values could ensure that the many voices of a plural democracy can be raised and heard over time and are not confined to one particular world view (Green 2021). On the other hand, the reference to values in legal texts can be used to blur the line between politics and law. It is interesting to observe how the debates remain on the level of narrative and values but fail to connect to rights and the limits of political and state power that are at stake. But these are not just political campaign tools or power games. Such debates go to the core of conceptions of the rule of law and values and the relation between them.

This is the point at which politicians will cease to talk merely about 'our values' but see how they can legitimise their views and strategies by reference to philosophical debates (cf. Khol 2005). Again, the debates about a European Constitution can provide insights. In 2004, the year in which those debates reached their peak, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (who was to become Pope Benedict XVI) and philosopher Jürgen Habermas met in Munich to discuss the pre-political foundations or sources of the secular state (Ratzinger and Habermas 2018). This debate, which received much attention, explicated the central question behind the – admittedly often superficial – preamble debates. What is the source of the law's validity and who should be permitted and capable to judge the legitimacy of the law? We must

note that the notion of pre-political foundations is of particular importance in Germany and interwoven with Carl Schmitt's theory of the primacy of the political over state and law. It has been famously reframed by the legal scholar, committed Catholic thinker, activist, and long-time constitutional judge Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde. In 1964 he formulated the so-called 'Böckenförde-Theorem', according to which '[t]he liberal, secularized state draws its life from preconditions it cannot itself guarantee' (Böckenförde 1991). Böckenförde was guided by an understanding of religious freedom as a strong right and state neutrality as a form of open neutrality that can be used to recognise and accommodate a wide range of groups and convictions. Both approaches combined should make the liberal, secularised state acceptable for religious people and groups and encourage them to understand their values and belief systems as foundations of a liberal social order (Sacksofsky 2019). In political discourse, however, his 'theorem' has since been used without context. The churches and Christian-democratic politicians quote it to emphasise that the state cannot exist without the moral substance that is guaranteed by a Christian culture. In doing so, they transform an invitation to engage with pluralism and religious diversity into a demand for cultural homogeneity (Große Kracht and Große Kracht 2014).

Ratzinger took up this line of interpretation of Böckenförde when he stressed that a sense of natural rights and natural law takes ideal and historical precedence over positive law, and that natural law is best expressed through the Christian faith and tradition. In his view, it can be the encompassing basis of any modern constitutional state and a safeguard for the preservation of human dignity. Like others before him, he argued for the inclusion of religious(ly inspired) arguments in secular affairs. In doing so, he came to similar conclusions as Böckenförde. But unlike him, Ratzinger tried to make clear that natural law comes before secular or positive law. Habermas, in contrast, argued from the perspective of a mature liberal state. In his view, we can no longer speak as though the state and the rule of law were to be created in the future. Instead, we have to argue 'from within' and ask what nourishes and sustains the normative resources necessary to maintain the liberal state. Still, Habermas continued to functionalise religious communities for this purpose, though he insisted on drawing a strict line between faith and reason. In this sense, he defends the exclusion of certain value-based arguments from political and legal discourse in order to preserve a discursive enterprise that meets the standards of a rational discourse that can be used to ground legal arguments and principles within the boundaries of a constitutional system.

We have seen that the rule of law can be understood as an ethos or as an ideology that is built on a complex web of social conditions. In its ideal form, it is conceived as institutionalising openness and uncertainty. Doing so, it enables us to create, reflect on, and question social values and their power (Müller 2021). In this section, we have seen how this open concept can become a guiding motive of politics, but we have also seen how it can be closed. It is especially important to note the difference between framing particular experiences in universal language and just positivising particular views. At the same time, the Habermas–Ratzinger debate shows how such debates are intrinsically linked to our takes on the sources of normativity

in general. They can make us aware of the deep societal implications that such debates and arguments can have. It remains to be seen what influence such debates have on actual legal practice.

11.4   Values Enshrined and Values Contested

In the preceding sections, I have discussed several fundamental issues regarding the relations between legal and value debates. I have done so with reference to political debates and developments that are also considered in other chapters in this volume (Weymans et al., Chap. 3, this volume). We have seen too how particular value conceptions are explicitly laid down in legal texts and what might be intended when this is done. The example of the Habermas–Ratzinger debate has introduced us to the philosophical considerations behind such controversies and raised the question of which arguments should be recognised and why. I have referred to examples that are quite well known, as they are taken from general political history, the development of the European Union, and recent value debates on national and European level. Those examples are discussed in academic literature and in the media. They are accessible to various disciplines and communicate a broad picture of the rule of law, rights, and legal systems. But they do not convey much about the inner workings of the legal system, of administrative bodies, and of courts. In comparison, particular legal norms, court rulings, and legal erudition seem inaccessible, complicated, and prone to misunderstandings and misinterpretation. They are, as has been stated above (Sect. 11.2) the domain of experts.

Recently, political theorist Jan-Werner Müller has drawn attention to intermediary institutions of democracy (Müller 2021). In his discussion of the current crisis of many democratic systems, he warns about convenient but ultimately misleading responses. In his view, it is inappropriate to focus either solely on the people and elites on the one hand or on abstract institutions and rules on the other hand. Instead, Müller argues for a renewed interest in the underlying principles of representative democracies which should be considered by looking at the intermediary institutions and the informal rules that structure the interpretation and application of the formal rules like constitutions, charters of fundamental rights, or procedural rules. In doing so, Müller assesses the role of political parties and the media in particular.

The same could be said about the rule of law and legal systems. Legal philosophy and legal erudition let us see only a small section of law in practice. They cannot tell us much about the ways in which laws are applied in practice, and what if any relevance theoretical and dogmatic debates have for legal practice. At the same time, it is conspicuous that we have a lot of research on how values evolve and change in general society, but little to no knowledge about the conceptions of values in the legal profession in Europe. This is even more striking when we consider the central role that laws are supposed to have in modern societies.

In this section, I will try to present an approach to legal thinking in practice and look at the underlying assumptions and dynamics. Again, I will discuss two

exemplary questions that can illustrate how practitioners create legal meanings and maintain their institutional role.

How do lawyers and judges think about the law? Legal scholar and educationalist Martha Minow once compared legal thinking to children's television shows that depict a group of items and ask young viewers to pick out those that do not belong with the rest of the group. Songs or rhymes that usually accompany such shows are meant to help children sharpen their vocabulary, perception, and analysis of objects in the world (Minow 1991: 1). She continued to explain how much of legal reasoning demands familiarity with legal terms, practice in perceiving problems through categories, and acceptance of the consequences assigned to particular legal categories. In essence, the core of legal analysis is the simplification of a given problem to focus on a few traits rather than the full complexity of the situation, and to use those traits for comparison with the governing rules, court rulings, and legal erudition that could apply. This does not at all deny that legal analysis can be extremely complex and that it requires substantial expertise. But it points out that legal proceedings in particular are concerned with framing a problem in either/or terms and act as though the categories used just exist.

Such an approach should not be dismissed at first sight. In fact, it has many merits, and can be one of the central pillars of an independent and impartial judiciary. The usage of a given set of rules, methods, and concepts and their integration in an institutional context make legal practice comprehensible and professional and public review and debate possible. There are at least two aspects that must be considered when we talk about legal reasoning. A legal norm must always be interpreted and applied in the systematic context of the law and the legal system as such. Those who interpret and apply legal norms must do so solely on the basis of its wording, other legal texts, and legal erudition. They must accept that the state organ that has enacted the legal norm is its author, but they must never approach legislators, other judges, or administrative organs and inquire as to what they meant when they wrote the text of the norm. This characterisation may sound naïve, but it is not. When we think of laws that shall enshrine specific political convictions and intentions, we might conjecture that politicians foster quite opposite views and expect that any court or state body must execute the norm as they expected.

But how does legal interpretation work? How can legal practitioners assign meanings and categories? First, legal interpretation is based on careful reading of a text and comparison with the use of words and concepts in other legal texts or ordinary language. Second, it aims to make out the purpose or *telos* of a specific regulation. Such analysis can be easier when the law or explanatory materials used in the legislative process comprise detailed explanations of the intended meaning or usage of words and concepts. Still, such explanations must be aligned with the normative text. It can become more difficult when there are no such explanations. Then legal analysis will rely on legal erudition or general knowledge. It might also be possible to consult experts in a particular field, but then again their knowledge must be translated in a way that allows it to be processed in legal ways. When it comes to values, such analysis can become extremely difficult, as values are essentially contested concepts and their use cannot be settled by appeal to empirical evidence, linguistic

usage, or the canons of logic alone (Gallie 1956). But a court is obliged to decide any pending case. It cannot discuss various meanings or leave a question open. Some proponents of legal theory have thus claimed that a court decision in value-related questions is a kind of political decision, albeit one that has to meet certain procedural standards and consider the remit of the law and the court (Kelsen 1967). Others claim that it is a matter of principle to find the right answer. In this sense, legal philosopher Ronald Dworkin has devised the figure of the omniscient judge Hercules who is able to consider the whole body of law and moral reasoning in order to reach a decision that fits (Dworkin 1978). Still, in practice law is shaped by judges who are not omniscient and do not have the time for thorough research of every aspect of the law, ethics, and value debates.

In a first step, I will look at these problems from the perspective of constitutional courts and the Court of Justice of the EU. Both are courts that are highly esteemed independent organs; in other words, politicians will be reluctant to interfere, and the courts show a remarkable degree of resilience in the presence of political developments. In the next section, I will discuss them in view of the relations between complainants, courts, and the wider public.

I will start with the debates about end-of-life decisions, which are central to contemporary ethical and value controversies. In Germany, the criminal code did not prohibit any form of assisted suicide until 2015. Then the German Bundestag decided to prohibit assisted suicide services after intense parliamentary debate and expert consultation. This provision was challenged in constitutional complaints proceedings by, among others, associations offering suicide assistance based in Germany and Switzerland, persons with serious illnesses seeking to end their lives with the assistance of such an association, physicians working in outpatient or inpatient care, and lawyers advising on suicide-related matters. In 2020, the German Bundesverfassungsgericht (Federal Constitutional Court) ruled that such a prohibition is unconstitutional, as it infringes the general right of personality in conjunction with the constitutional guarantees of human dignity, which encompass a right to a self-determined death (Bundesverfassungsgericht 2020). Here we are faced with thick moral concepts such as dignity and self-determination and the attempt to achieve reasoned consensus in a democratic debate. But the Bundesverfassungsgericht sees itself as committed to legal reasoning alone. Thus, it based its decision on a reading of precedents and legal erudition. The latter is characterised by long-standing debates about the legal concept of human dignity and the quest to define it without any reference to specific philosophical or theological interpretations, in order to avoid the dominance of any particular conception (Tiedemann 2014). In this way, human dignity is defined as comprehensive freedom and autonomy. Of course, this is a moral position as well, but as it has been derived by means of legal reasoning it shall not count as such. Interestingly, the court had heard psychologists who informed it about the situation of lonely older people, and it studied statistics on suicide and euthanasia in various countries. But it holds the firm view that it may make its cases only on what *it* counts as legal reasoning.

My second example relates to the conflicts about the defining values of the EU which are addressed in various forms throughout this volume. They have an explicit legal basis in the Treaty of Lisbon 2007, which rebranded the former 'fundamental principles' of the Treaty on the European Union as European 'values' (Kochenov 2017). These encompass respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and the protection of human rights, which are now posited as widely shared and deeply rooted normative orientations and thus transcend the sphere of merely legal matters. It remains, however, unclear as to whether the term 'value' is to be understood as vague and open or clearly defined (Itzcovich 2017; von Bogdandy 2019). Thus, it is not clear how values can be operationalised by the courts and if they are justiciable at all. In Sect. 11.2, I discussed the challenges of the EU's fundamental order by the turn of Hungary and Poland to illiberal constitutionalism. While it is possible to assess this turn as a breach of the EU's fundamental values on political and theoretical grounds, it has proved extremely difficult to judge and counter them on procedural grounds. In other words, has there been a breach of law? Again, the standards of legal reasoning must be met, and reference to ethical, moral, or political concepts must be avoided. In this situation, the Court of Justice of the European Union decided to focus on procedural safeguards. This means it did not pronounce on the question of values itself as might be expected from preceding and accompanying political debates, expressions of political will, or reference to a common ethos. Starting in 2018 in the cases Associação Sindical dos Juízes Portugueses (ASJP) and LM (Deficiencies in the system of justice), the Court of Justice has begun to infer standards for the independence of all national judges and the right to an impartial court and a fair trial from an interpretation of various articles of the Treaty of the EU in light of the fundamental values. In doing so, the Court identified legal rights that implement and safeguard those values. By reference to procedural criteria that are either met or not met, it can do so in an objective and reviewable way and avoid vagueness and political instrumentalisation. But such an approach can only serve the cause of safeguarding the fundamentals of the European legal space, as Armin von Bogdandy points out. It cannot indicate a 'right way' or understand values in the theoretical sense of 'optimization requirements' (von Bogdandy 2019).

I am aware that this section stands in remarkable contrast to the preceding ones. While it might be possible for most readers to follow the general introductory remarks on legal practice, they will find it more complicated to grasp the examples from recent court decisions and connect them with the equivalent value debates. In fact, the court decisions may seem far removed from other debates and built on a completely different epistemological basis. Some readers, I expect, will even have doubts about whether or not complex ethical decisions like assisted suicide should be left to the courts at all. On the other hand, we might ask how and under which circumstances legal institutions and legal practice can be engaged in value debates, and how such an engagement could sustain and strengthen both sides.

11.5   Our Laws and Their Values

If we want to understand the relations between law and values more thoroughly, we must consider how law is used as a means of argument in value conflicts. Here again, courts and judges stand in the centre. But it can be misleading to focus solely on their decisions as is common in legal academic debates. Courts can only decide cases that are brought before them. They are under an obligation to consider the arguments of the complainants. This is the point at which we encounter the essentially democratic function of law courts, as they allow anyone to present their arguments in a specific conflict and demand that a state body must duly and rationally come to a decision (Stourzh 2021).

In this last theoretical section, I will expand on the perspective of the courts and include those who claim their rights and mobilise law as a means of communicating and resolving social and value conflicts. Again, we are confronted with complex and highly dynamic constellations. Here, I will discuss cases that relate to religion in the public sphere and growing social pluralism and diversity. In many European countries and on the European level, supreme and/or constitutional courts have become focal points of public debate about rights and justice. Their decisions are met with popular opinions on topical matters, and they risk being criticised for either political appeasement or their 'opposition' to majority decisions (Corstens 2017). In effect, we are confronted with various layers of 'politics with the law' and 'politics with the court' (Konrath 2013). But a state under the rule of law rests on two pillars: democratic majorities that can enact and amend the law and individuals who can individually 'set legal system in motion' by going to court (Stourzh 2021: 62).

The transformation of European societies through immigration, religious and cultural pluralisation, and secularisation have been at the centre of political communication and conflicts since the late 1980s. This has led to ever-stricter immigration laws on the one hand and on the other hand attempts to 'neutralise' social spaces by attempts to enact and the actual enactment of bans of certain expressions of religious and cultural plurality. This leads to tensions with constitutional guarantees to safeguard equality and freedom within a pluralistic and democratic society. When we consider the history and the foundations of modern democratic societies as a struggle of recognition of individuals as bearers of equal rights (Honneth 1992), we should presume that it is the foremost task of politics to debate and resolve those tensions. However, those who are most affected by such conflicts will rarely have a voice or find broader support in democratic politics. In a democratic state under the rule of law, they can, however, bring their case before a court. Since the 1990s, constitutional courts, the European Court of Human Rights, and the Court of the European Union have thus become the main fora to consider matters of religious and cultural conflict and to decide cases in which an infringement of the associated freedoms was claimed (Sacksofsky 2019).

The most notable and controversial cases have been concerned with headscarves, burqas, and crucifixes. Various courts have given highly diverging answers. Bans on headscarves for teachers in Germany were held unconstitutional in general and

admissible under very specific conditions, while the ban on headscarves for clerks in judicial courts was considered admissible. In Austria, the ban on headscarves for minors was considered unconstitutional. On the other hand, the European Court of Human Rights upheld headscarf bans in France and Switzerland, but ruled that crucifixes in public schools in Italy do not interfere with state neutrality.

Claimants and lawyers who pursue such cases are confronted with four challenges: (1) They must explain in legal terms why a state measure infringes their rights. (2) They must provide contextual knowledge, as a headscarf or a cross can be read in multiple ways, and they cannot presume if and in what sense the judges are familiar with those readings (e.g. religious meanings, cultural traditions, expression of self-identity, group affirmation, etc.). (3) They must take into account that many courts, in particular the European Court of Human Rights, decide cases in light of what they regard as the value context of a given legal order (e.g. the French laïcité or the traditional partnership of churches and state in Germany). (4) They must be aware that they are part of a wider political debate that can, at least for the moment, only take place at court. There is a chance that the debate might meet the criteria of rational deliberation and avoid political rhetoric and escalation (Lafont 2020). But there may also be a risk that the judges get caught up in political attitudes and prejudices that they will ultimately mask with legal arguments (Baer 2021).

Given this complex situation, the ideal vision of the rule of law that empowers the individual to become a 'single mover of the legal system' can be distorted when we look at cases like these. In public debates, the 'movers' risk being regarded as persons who either want to create conflict and adversarial relations between minority and majority groups or as people who aim to undermine the legal and social order in order to pursue their political mission and establish an Islamic regime (Marzouki 2017). Even more so, the claimants' religious background or references to religious laws may come to be seen as a threat to a single unitary body of law that is (variously) also understood as an expression or even embodiment of an enlightened Western society.

But even when it is clear that legal language translates but does not initiate legal conflict (Minow 1991: 291), we have to concede that it can transform the conflict in unintended ways. As we have just seen, the Islamic hijab or the Christian cross can be understood in multiple ways, and the same is true about a lot of other conflicts in pluralistic societies – from co-educational schools to cultural dietary rules.

However, when you decide to go to court, you must identify what right has been violated. As most European states and the European Convention on Human Rights do not, for example, acknowledge explicit 'cultural rights' or foresee only a narrow scope for their application, you (or your lawyer) will decide to claim a violation of the right to religious freedom, which has a very broad scope. But a conflict will then immediately become one between state and religion and narrow the ways to confront the actual conflict and any future conflicts in this field (McIvor 2020).

Finally, there is the question of who will claim their rights at all. Every legal proceeding – and as we have seen especially those that concern value questions – must consider the risk of losing. A lawsuit demands financial resources, a committed and talented lawyer, and endurance. It may take years for a matter to come

before a supreme court, a constitutional court, or even the European Court of Justice. Also, any claimant will consider what their claim means for the work and social environment. These are factors that limit the scope of the rule of law and that are part and parcel of 'politics with the law': even if legislators know that a law might be discriminatory, they know also that it will take at least 1 year and often much longer before a court will confirm discrimination. And then politicians can still claim that it was a court that prevented them from pursuing their goals.

There is one more aspect of such conflicts that calls the idea of impartiality of the rule of law into question. Martha Minow discussed this with regard to court cases on equality and difference – in the family, in schools, in the health system, and in the workplace. She argues that legal judgments will more often than not rest on unstated assumptions that hold differences as intrinsic rather than as expressions of comparisons. They will adopt unstated points of reference and will not take the perspectives of those being judged into account. Finally, they assume that the existing social and economic arrangements – including the law itself – are natural and neutral in a sense – and so must be their reasoning and judgments (Minow 1991: 50–78). In such a way, judging and ruling can be imbued with personal value judgements and world views regardless of the strict adherence to legal methodology.

In that way, legal discourse can be conceived as isolated from other social, political, or academic discourses. Legal practitioners can claim that this isolation guarantees independent and neutral decision-making. While this will certainly be true to some extent, it may also be used to mask other interests and avoid epistemological questions regarding what they need to know about the matter at stake before they can reach a well-founded decision. At the same time, legal institutions create or perpetuate social and political reference points that can be perceived as neutral and objective.

In a famous discussion of decisions of the US Supreme Court on religious minorities, legal scholar Robert Cover spoke of 'jurisgenerative' and 'jurispathic' powers (Cover 1984). He argued that the creation of legal meaning is a creative process that takes place in the social sphere, as do the claims of Muslim women presented above. But Cover conceded that there must be institutions that address the problem of the multiplicity of meaning in the interest of social stability. The question is how this is done. Cover's ideal was that of 'commitment' to law as hermeneutic social practice, which he (who was well versed in rabbinic studies) compared to Jewish legal discourse and to the civil rights movement. But his genealogical pursuits and erudite analysis of US jurisprudence led him to different views. Thus, he asked whether courts effectively apply a practice of exclusion. While it may be efficient in standard cases to get to the point at which the court will in effect destroy the legal status of others in complex cases such as those regarding end-of-life decisions (see Sect. 11.4) or religious freedoms, in the end a court or judge alone has to decide whether the economic interests of the employer, the broadly debated 'symbolism' of a piece of cloth, or the individual motives of the person going to court are relevant (or irrelevant) for 'making the case'. Every narrative fixes a course of events or the meaning

of a law and thus obviates everything that failed to become part of the story. In that sense, Robert Cover warns that judges are prone to becoming people of violence who do not create law, but rather kill it.

In this section, we have finally come to a point at which we see disputes and fights over values 'on the ground'. We know from theoretical and empirical value research that it can be comparatively easy to identify conflicts and developments on rather aggregated levels. In contrast, the legal realm provides us with the opportunity to follow concrete cases and developments and perceive the circumstances and contingencies of value and norm creation. They can also provide us with the opportunity to find out how various institutions and actors understand certain values and on what epistemological basis they do so.

11.6 Outlook

This chapter began with the observation that human rights and the rule of law are integral to value debates in Europe. But these debates are rarely connected with discourses about the law and legal practice. I have attempted to introduce various layers of discourse on rights and the rule of law and discussed the roles and conceptions of the intermediaries that shape, communicate, and maintain them. I have done so from a position that aims to perceive, to understand, and to promote the rule of law in its social context. In the end, I could only present small parts of a vast area of law as a social phenomenon. But in doing so, I tried to make accessible a complex field of theory and practice that is full of dilemmas, contradictions, and paradoxes. Legal debates and value debates have a lot in common. They influence each other, and in many ways neither can be held without taking the other into account. Nevertheless, they must be clearly distinguished from each other. Here, I have tried to identify connection points between the two realms that merit further reflection and analysis.

This volume underlines the significance of value debates in shaping a European social order and confronting or reflecting social change. As we can see here and in other chapters of this book, value debates can sideline or trump legal debates that should, if taken seriously, be connected with value debates. Isolating them from each other – be it in politics or academia – may be a risky endeavour. Connecting them will be challenging, especially when we think of the abstract and seemingly neutral conceptions of law that dominate discourse together (and at points paradoxically) with merely instrumental views. Thinking about law, we will always be confronted with the unresolved relation between its facticity and validity that cannot be explained easily (or even at all). But it may be just that tension and the tension between laws and values that provide the ground for the richness and creativity of the rule of law, human rights, and legal discourse as safeguards of human dignity, social diversity, freedom, and justice.

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Christoph Konrath (*1977) is a constitutional expert and political scientist in the Austrian Parliamentary Administration. His research focuses on parliamentarism, democracy, and the rule of law. He teaches regularly at the universities of Vienna, Innsbruck, and Salzburg and is part of citizen education initiatives.

Part IV
Future Prospects

Chapter 12
Perceptions of Social Challenges in Europe. Disentangling the Effects of Context, Social Structure, Religion, Values and Political Attitudes to Identify Potential Drivers of Societal Change

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Wolfgang Aschauer

Abstract In this chapter I address three current social questions that are central for Europe, namely redistribution, ethnocentrism and environmental awareness. By analyzing perceptions of European citizens in a cross-national perspective it becomes clear that these pressing issues will remain major sources of dissent due to notable value cleavages between and within European states. The aims of my empirical approach, using the data of the four recent waves of the European Values Study (1990, 1999, 2008, 2017) are threefold. First, a cluster analysis based on relevant macro-indicators is conducted to distinguish certain groups of countries with a similar political, economic, social, and cultural profile. As a second step, attitudes towards those social challenges based on a well-functioning operationalisation are depicted using the last wave of the EVS. Additionally, single indicators (using mean comparisons) are analysed over the four time points to highlight the evolution of citizen's perceptions to those societal challenges. The last part of the analysis computes separate regressions for each country cluster to derive the main antecedents of those attitudes using sociodemographic and structural characteristic, basic value orientations, religious indicators, political opinions and aspects of social inclusion. In general, the study reveals deep value polarisations between major European areas. These divisions are likely to increase in the current pandemic crisis.

Keywords Preference for redistribution · Cultural diversity · Environmental concerns · European Values Study · Value cleavages · European integration

W. Aschauer (✉)
Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria
e-mail: wolfgang.aschauer@plus.ac.at

12.1   Introduction

Europe has undergone a period of multiple crises (Cotta and Isernia 2020) in recent decades. The global economic crisis in 2008 and the Euro-crisis afterwards, the 'summer of migration' in 2015, and the current COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing side effects of this crisis have increased economic, political, and cultural cleavages between European regions and have deepened value polarisations within the states (Aschauer and Mayerl 2019). Citizens of Europe are today living in an era of insecurity (Bauman 2008) and are witnessing a rise in societal tension. Solidarity is primarily based on a sense of belonging. Those groups that are included in the framing of solidarity are given the status of full citizens and receive recognition. But there is little evidence that notions of the common good are being extended to the European level or beyond (Gosewinkel 2020) and that a cosmopolitan vision (Beck 2006) that encompasses immigrants or peripheral countries and world regions beyond Europe is shared by the majority of the people. In the aftermath of the pandemic, social engagement on pressing global problems such as the climate crisis appears to be paralysed and must be reinvigorated. The framing of solidarity tends to be more and more exclusive (Poferl 2010). Only those who are considered to be integrated in society (mostly through a meritocratic view of individual achievement that neglects notable structural barriers for inclusion) are accordingly included in the cognitive concept of deservingness (van Oorschot 2000). These tendencies towards a renewed authoritarian capitalism (Deppe 2013) at the macro level, together with the ongoing pressure in European societies to achieve, might further increase egocentric attitudes at the micro level. Notable studies of recent years also point to those in the middle class increasingly following the logic of competition (Nachtwey 2016) and subordinating themselves under the norm of efficiency, which potentially leaves less space for altruism (Bröckling 2007).

But in general – recognising the diversity of Europe – we should refrain from conclusions that are too general. It must be stated that European countries clearly differ with regard to economic prosperity or the quality of democracy, as well as the level of perceived embeddedness by citizens. Additionally, solidarity is shaped by religious roots, basic values, and perceptions of political and social functioning in society (Quandt and Lomazzi, Chap. 7, this volume). The focus of this chapter is to assess long-term developments regarding perceptions of central social challenges and to detect the drivers to achieve a broader scope of solidarity (from the national to the transnational to the global level). Because of the comprehensive measurement of all concepts in the European Values Study (EVS), it is possible to present empirical findings concerning all of these dynamics throughout Europe. The empirical part follows mainly an exploratory approach to analyse (1) the cross-national differences in citizens' perceptions of the three identified main challenges, namely preferences for redistribution, the approval of multicultural society, and environmental consciousness (2) the attitudinal dynamics over time and (3) to detect certain drivers explaining a stronger alignment on solidarity. Several research questions guide the empirical approach:

- Are European citizens still in favour of a higher appreciation of the welfare state (potentially as a countermovement to the gradual corrosion of social benefits due to neoliberalism) (Streeck 2013)?
- Do European citizens generally adapt to the reality of cultural diversity or is the influx of culturally and religiously distant groups still seen as a powerful invasion of Europeans' territories?
- Is the increasingly intense climate debate leading many individuals to focus on protecting the environment?

After analysing the main trends in European regions, it is a key aim of the study to detect the main antecedents of those crucial elements of societal change in a diversified Europe:

- Are the attitudinal cleavages that appear around these central challenges due to the social context? Does this mean that embeddedness in certain prosperous or peripheral areas in Europe sets the direction of values?
- Or is social structure mainly responsible for a different interpretation of states of societal crises?
- And how is social structure interwoven with aspects of religion, basic values, and political attitudes to explain these perceptions of social challenges?

The data set of the EVS, which is used in this chapter, refers to the version from October 2020 (European Values Study 2020). Most countries conducted the survey in 2018, and the latest country included in the file is Portugal (where the fieldwork was conducted between January and March 2020).[1] I decided to focus on all European Union (EU) member states and on the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states and to exclude all EU accession candidates and countries of the former Soviet Union. The aims of my empirical approach are threefold and guide the structure of my chapter. First, a cluster analysis based on theoretically derived macro indicators in Europe is conducted to distinguish certain groups of countries with a similar political, economic, social, and cultural profile (see Sect. 12.2). As a second step in the empirical analysis, all social challenges based on a sophisticated and well-functioning operationalisation are depicted using the most recent wave of the EVS. Additionally, single indicators are analysed integrating three earlier waves (1990, 1999, 2008) of the survey to trace the evolution of those perceptions of societal challenges all over Europe (see Sect. 12.3). The last part of the analysis adopts a comprehensive sequential regression design to assess the impact of sociodemographic and structural characteristics, religious indicators, and basic values as well as the impact of indicators of political and social inclusion on those three major challenges separately for each country cluster. Thus, we can assess how the main antecedents can explain preferences for redistribution, the approval of multiculturalism, and environmental consciousness, and how causal relations might be different among European regions.

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[1] All data refers, therefore, to pre-COVID-19 times. At least in the final section, however, I will discuss future challenges witnessing the current pandemic crisis.

12.2 Towards an Empirically Grounded Typology of a Diversified Europe

Despite the central aim of the EU cohesion policy to reduce regional discrepancies (Becker et al. 2018), economic inequalities between European member states have been growing over recent decades. In the first decade of the millennium this was quite a logical consequence of eastern enlargement, but the clear mission of the EU was to move forward to a strong unity in diversity (Haller 2009). In the course of the global financial crisis in 2008, the south of Europe was particularly exposed to the fiscal crisis and was confronted for a long period with a deep economic and social crisis (Bach 2015). After a slight economic recovery could be seen, the refugee crisis shocked Europe and particularly increased the value cleavages between political liberalism in Western Europe and neo-conservatism in Eastern Europe (Bluhm and Varga 2018).

The current state of the EU represents a united territory that can be characterised by a concentration of power in the centre and fragmentation of influence at the peripheries (Kreckel 2004). Different varieties of capitalism (Hall and Soskice 2001) and structures of the welfare state (Esping-Andersen 1990; Esping-Andersen 1999) shape Europe; these are historically grounded and seem to be rather resistant to significant cutbacks. *Liberal welfare states* such as the UK or Ireland emphasise the role of the free market, while *conservative welfare states* (such as Germany, Austria, and France) are based more on the Bismarck model, where social security is linked to social status and employment relationship. The original intention of the British economist and social reformer William Beveridge to guarantee a universal security system for the whole population is more closely fulfilled in the *social democratic welfare regimes* of Scandinavia. A fourth type of welfare regime was later suggested for Southern European states, which were for instance classified as familialistic (Ferrera 1996). Otherwise, it is not easy to incorporate Eastern Europe in these schemes. Kollmorgen (2009) opts for a further distinction of three additional welfare types. The Baltic states demonstrate similarities to liberal welfare regimes, while the Visegrád countries, together with Slovenia, are best classified as minimalistic welfare states in line with the Bismarck style. The last group of countries is represented by the economic latecomers Bulgaria and Romania. The strong role of state actors and institutions is still evident, and social security benefits only exist in a rudimentary sense (Kollmorgen 2009). Schröder (2013) highlights that varieties of capitalism and welfare structures also go hand in hand with certain cultural characteristics of the nation states. The prevailing ethic of Calvinism is – in his view – mainly responsible for the reliance on individual freedom and the implementation of liberal forms of capitalism in the Anglo-Saxon context. Catholicism in continental and Southern Europe has favoured the development of social hierarchies in society and influenced the formation of conservative welfare states together with coordinated market economies. Even in Eastern Europe, where religion lost importance in the era of communism, the different features of the welfare states are based on cultural and religious foundations. In the central Eastern European States Catholicism partly maintained its influence (for example, predominantly in Poland but also in Lithuania), while the other Baltic States (Latvia and Estonia) were more

strongly affected by Protestantism. The peripheral countries in Southeastern Europe form a third region, where the Christian Orthodox Church prevailed and has led to a cultural proximity to the Soviet Union (Kollmorgen 2009). According to Boatcă (2019), even today it is possible to distinguish between a dominant view of a heroic Western Europe (seen as the centre of progress and modernisation) and a decadent Southern Europe (reflected by loss of power) and an epigone East (with a strong ambition to catch up with Western European standards of living).[2]

These theoretical perspectives on a diversified Europe (Aschauer 2016) should be enriched by an empirical typology of major European regions based on economic, political, and cultural discrepancies. In a first step, it is necessary to define crucial societal conditions that can indicate political, economic, social, and cultural characteristics. Table 12.9 (see Appendix) gives an overview of the social indicators (based on the year 2018), which were used in the study.[3]

To classify certain European regions based on 25 European countries, I computed a hierarchical cluster analysis using the quadratic Euclidian distance[4] as the heterogeneity measure, and Ward's linkage method.[5] The decision on the adequate number of clusters is based on a visual interpretation of the dendrogram (Fig. 12.1). Using the threshold of a normed distance of five, four different major European areas appear. The first group of countries consists of all wealthy and prosperous states of Western Europe. Interestingly, the second class of countries is represented by all countries that showed signs of crisis over recent years. Great Britain is included in this cluster, together with all the Mediterranean countries of Southern Europe. Besides this classification of Western Europe, two different clusters of Eastern Europe also appear. It is notable that similarities arise between all countries that form the Visegrád group (together with Slovenia). The Baltic states, together with Bulgaria and Romania, form the fourth and final cluster representing the most easterly countries of the EU.[6]

A simple descriptive table highlighting the means and the standard deviations (Table 12.1) gives some insight into the distribution of the indicators.[7] Concerning

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[2] Boatcă also mentions a forgotten Europe which is best reflected by the colonial regions in the Carribean. These islands have never been included in the conceptions of European modernity.

[3] As already mentioned in footnote 1, 22 countries of the EU took part in the EVS 2017 wave. In addition, three EFTA countries – Switzerland, Iceland, and Norway – have been included in my study.

[4] The nine indicators (see Table 12.1) needed to be standardised (with z-transformation) because of different scaling.

[5] This method is generally interpreted as the most empirically sound method to derive certain clusters (Wiedenbeck and Züll 2010).

[6] It is notable that broader classifications of Europe seem to be plausible too. A threshold of 10 allows the separation of the prosperous West from the South (including Great Britain with signs of crisis) and the East of Europe.

[7] Here you can also evaluate the plausibility of this cluster solution. The standard deviation of the whole sample (last column) should always be higher than the standard deviation within the clusters (the homogeneity principle). This is nearly always the case. There are only two exceptions (the unemployment rate varies between the states with signs of crisis, with Great Britain demonstrating
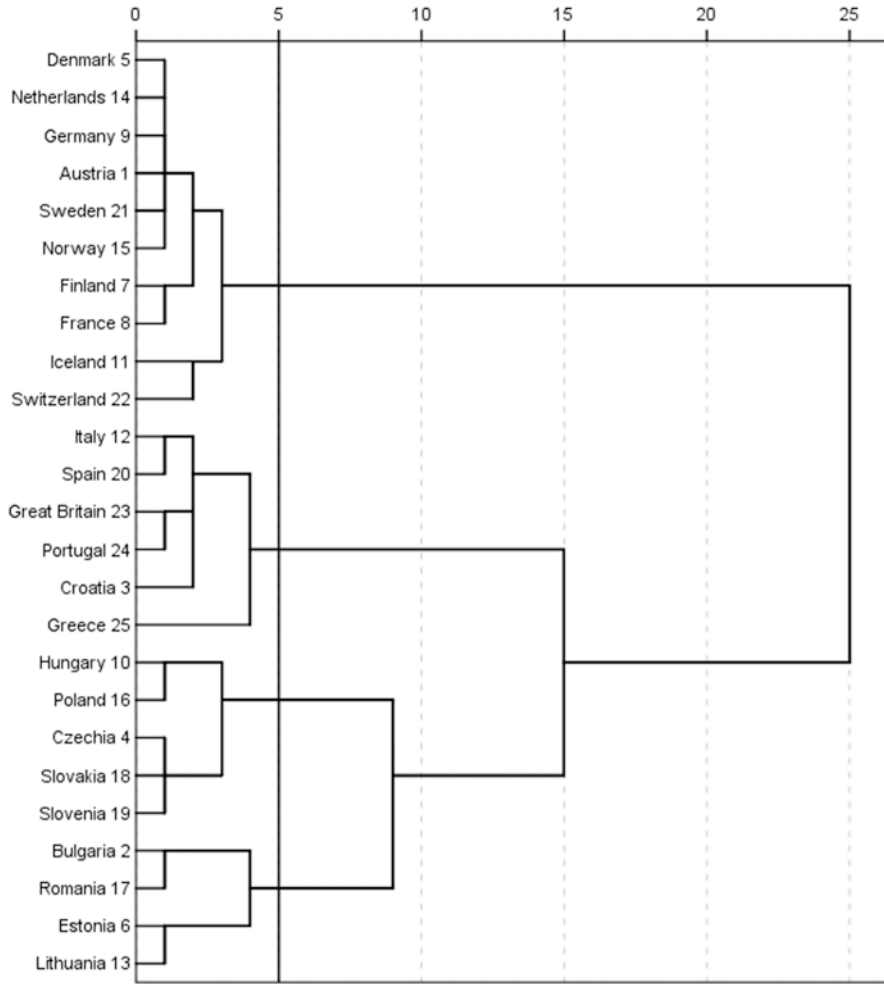
Fig. 12.1 Dendrogram of the cluster analysis (quadratic Euclidean distance with Ward linkage)

economic indicators, the highest gross domestic product (GDP) can be observed in the prosperous countries, although economic progress (based on the indicator GDP growth) is generally higher in Eastern Europe than in Western Europe. Concerning inequality, the Gini index, the unemployment rate, and the proportion of people living in poverty are rising in the crisis states (particularly in Southern Europe), but are permanently at crisis level in the Baltic states and in Southeastern Europe. When

a lower rate, and the quality of democracy varies within the Baltic countries and Southeastern Europe, with Estonia and Lithuania performing better than Romania and Bulgaria). All clusters have significant discrepancies in the mean values, indicating a high heterogeneity between the clusters.

Table 12.1 Mean values of standard deviations of the central indicators in the four clusters

	Prosperous states (mainly EFTA, Western Europe) (n = 10)		States with signs of crisis (GB, Southern Europe) (n = 6)		Visegrád countries and Slovenia (n = 5)		Baltic states, Southeastern Europe (n = 4)		Total (n = 25)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
GDP per capita in PPS (EU mean = 100)	128.5	16.17	83.5	17.2	78.6	9.63	70	14.63	98.36	29.17
GDP growth rate (in %)	2.23	1.03	1.93	0.77	4.44	0.97	3.97	0.64	2.88	1.36
GINI index	27.42	1.96	32.37	1.43	24.96	3.24	35.55	3.78	29.42	4.43
Unemployment rate (in %)	5.12	1.96	10.8	5.62	4.28	1.61	5.25	0.82	6.34	3.9
Poverty and social exclusion (in %)	16.82	1.59	25.78	3.59	16.64	2.91	29.5	3.97	20.96	6
Public debt (% of GDP)	52.3	21.7	116.83	40.68	54.28	16.1	24.8	12.3	63.78	40.18
Expenditure on social protection in PPS per Head (2017)	10,917.7	1,085.5	6,203.4	1,632.1	4,804.8	719.6	3,325.8	589.3	7,349.0	3,287.4
Quality of democracy	0.92	0.03	0.86	0.06	0.77	0.1	0.78	0.14	0.86	0.10
Proportion of people with migration background (in %)	15.8	5.8	11.9	2.0	5.5	3.9	6.1	6.0	11.2	6.3

turning to public debt Great Britain and countries in the South stand out with extraordinarily high levels. Expenditure on social protection is decreasing from the West to the East, as is the quality of democracy. Here, recent developments in the Visegrád countries indicate a trend towards an erosion of democratic achievements, which leads to their occupation of the last position in this indicator (but with roughly the same value as in Southeastern Europe). It is also clearly visible that cultural diversity is a reality mainly in Western Europe, while many countries in Eastern Europe still have rather low proportions of immigrants.

The cluster analysis thus clearly supports the perspective of centre-periphery structures in Europe (Vobruba 2007) and strengthens the view of highly diverse regions, not only with regard to economic discrepancies, but also concerning democratic achievements and cultural diversity. This classification of four major European areas (the prosperous West, states with signs of crisis, the Visegrád countries, and the Baltic states and Southeastern Europe) seems to reflect a theoretically plausible and empirically sound typology, which is a good starting point to take contextual effects all over Europe adequately into account.

12.3 Central Societal Challenges and Temporal Dynamics – A Europe-Wide Perspective

When we turn our focus to societal challenges in Europe, recognition and social inclusion represent key issues to guarantee a high level of societal functioning. Despite certain varieties of capitalism (Hall and Soskice 2001), the evaluation of success in Europe remains hegemonic and hierarchical, whereby ongoing struggles of redistribution take place (Honneth 2003). Nancy Fraser (2003), in her well-known debate with Axel Honneth, reintroduces the economy and states that the 'economic logic of the market interacts in complex ways with the cultural logic of recognition' (Fraser 2003: 245). She therefore argues for a perspectival dualism that unites violations of recognition at the economic and cultural levels. It is evident in the orientation of politics that recognition struggles are not only framed by issues of redistribution, but also increasingly in terms of cultural and religious identity. People embed their fellow countrymen, often artificially, into an imaginary community, and this is supposed to form a protective space against 'foreign powers' from above or infiltration tendencies from below (for example, migrants with deviant cultural practices or those who refuse to 'perform'). This leads to the ultimate conclusion that immigrants are only accepted if they are ready to adapt culturally or at least to make an appropriate contribution to society. It is clear that the diverse minorities in many European societies – permanently assessed by their 'integration success' – are also internally characterised by change, contradictions, and strong socio-economic contrasts. The dilemma of multiculturalism is most likely to be overcome if recognition and redistribution are advocated as equal justice postulates (Fraser 2003) and culture is interpreted not in a static but in a dynamic way (Hauck

2006). In this respect it also seems necessary to view preferences for redistribution and the approval of cultural diversity as two central societal challenges, both of which enable recognition and thus social integration for broader parts of society.

Adding a temporal perspective, we are also confronted with the dilemma of ongoing capitalism and ecological damage (Dörre 2020), because strategies for overcoming the economic crisis tend to contribute to the aggravation of the ecological crisis. With the potential revival of economic growth after the pandemic or with impressive economic growth rates in emerging countries, nothing is gained for global climate. This dilemma is expressed with precision by Sturn and van Treeck (2010):

> The great inequality forces more growth and hinders it at the same time. Only more growth makes it possible to effectively strengthen the lower income groups, and less inequality ultimately reduces the need for growth. Admittedly, it is unclear whether the environment can wait that long. (Sturn and van Treeck 2010: 20).

In addition to the crisis of capitalism and ecology, liberal democracy is also increasingly under threat, as many citizens follow the opinion that politicians cannot provide solutions to these pressing societal issues. Blühdorn et al. (2020), who also appear as key theorists of democracy in the current discourse around sustainability, are even more pessimistic, and assume that politics of unsustainability will prevail in the future. In their view, it is plausible that many democratic and authoritarian regimes all over the world will defend the existing economic order and may widely ignore the ticking time bomb of the climate crisis. In various sociological approaches (Giddens 1984; Crouch 2008) hope is placed on social movements. The more engaged individuals become, the more subversive influences can be exerted on institutions, successively forcing a realignment of global climate policy. In the ideal case, global protests (such as the 'Fridays for future' movement) would lead to a notable societal shift towards increased environmental awareness and pro-environmental behaviour in Europe.

To grasp citizens' perceptions on the three societal challenges, I now present a first overview of descriptive results on those issues, illustrating the mean attitudes in all countries belonging to the sample. Besides these international comparisons, it is crucial to analyse attitudinal trends in a long perspective (over the last four waves of the EVS 1990, 1999, 2008, and 2017) to assess if citizens in the EU and EFTA countries follow a uniform path towards progressive values or if there are signs of a conservative backlash (Norris and Inglehart 2019) towards a legitimisation of inequalities, higher perceptions of ethnic threat, or a turn away from recognising environmental issues.

The EVS provides a unique opportunity to measure these three central challenges in a sophisticated way in the most recent survey wave (2017) as well as in a long-term perspective (with single-item indicators).[8] Table 12.2 gives an overview

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[8] The differentiated scales measuring all dependent variables can be seen in the Appendix, see Table 12.10.

Table 12.2 The perceptions of key social challenges in the countries and in the clusters of the EU and EFTA states – a descriptive overview

Cluster analysis Europe	EU-EFTA States	Preference for redistribution % agree	Ethnocentrism % agree	Environmental awareness % agree	Preference for redistribution		Ethnocentrism vs approval of cultural diversity		Environmental awareness		Reliability (Cronbach's α)		
					Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	PR	CD	EA
Prosperous Western European states	Denmark	52.7	35.6	59.3	6.37	2.01	4.92	2.08	3.50	0.78	0.68	0.76	0.66
	Finland	50.1	48.0	40.5	6.89	1.82	5.32	2.20	3.64	0.73	0.74	0.82	0.68
	Iceland	58.8	29.0	45.6	7.11	1.87	6.55	2.17	3.56	0.70	0.67	0.79	0.65
	Norway	50.4	32.5	52.4	6.92	1.76	5.27	1.89	3.49	0.90	0.63	0.68	0.66
	Sweden	35.0	11.5	72.2	5.83	1.80	5.86	2.18	3.76	0.74	0.54	0.77	0.70
	Austria	62.2	51.6	46.4	7.24	1.94	4.36	2.28	3.58	0.92	0.61	0.82	0.79
	France	57.7	43.2	50.8	6.09	1.96	5.59	2.46	3.36	0.99	0.55	0.81	0.73
	Germany	48.1	29.7	55.8	6.91	1.81	5.31	2.11	3.71	0.76	0.44	0.74	0.69
	The Netherlands	43.8	40.7	34.9	6.28	1.69	4.84	2.15	3.41	0.76	0.52	0.83	0.70
	Switzerland	60.5	58.0	55.2	6.60	1.87	4.99	2.16	3.67	0.78	0.57	0.81	0.70
		51.9	**38.0**	**51.3**	**6.62**	**1.85**	**5.30**	**2.17**	**3.57**	**0.81**			
States with signs of crisis	Great Britain	47.2	38.4	53.7	5.93	1.72	5.80	2.40	3.40	0.78	0.41	0.85	0.74
	Croatia	62.9	70.6	65.5	6.93	2.32	4.98	2.48	3.05	0.85	0.63	0.70	0.71
	Italy	48.4	67.2	49.8	7.27	1.94	4.36	2.34	3.46	0.80	0.68	0.82	0.73
	Spain	52.7	43.5	45.5	7.01	2.00	5.92	2.53	3.52	0.83	0.55	0.86	0.74
	Portugal	55.7	60.1	37.0	6.91	1.85	5.39	2.27	3.39	0.84	0.55	0.82	0.77
	Greece (snowball sample)[a]	45.5	39.8	70.2	6.38	1.92	5.04	2.32	3.47	0.75	0.56	0.86	0.72
		52.1	**53.3**	**53.6**	**6.74**	**1.96**	**5.25**	**2.39**	**3.38**	**0.81**			

Visegrád countries and Slovenia	Czechia	56.9	81.4	37.5	4.96	2.02	3.37	2.10	3.20	0.87	0.49	0.78	0.77
	Hungary	51.0	84.4	41.1	6.23	2.09	3.38	2.36	3.32	0.79	0.51	0.79	0.69
	Poland	23.7	74.0	44.5	5.74	2.23	4.87	2.39	3.18	0.80	0.65	0.77	0.70
	Slovakia	61.4	85.0	28.5	6.12	2.10	3.78	2.01	3.25	0.87	0.67	0.84	0.78
	Slovenia	47.6	72.1	63.1	6.07	2.06	5.08	2.16	3.19	0.71	0.48	0.74	0.65
		48.1	**79.4**	**42.9**	**5.82**	**2.10**	**4.10**	**2.20**	**3.23**	**0.81**			
Baltic states and Southeastern Europe	Bulgaria	44.9	84.5	42.1	6.03	2.05	3.61	2.11	3.00	0.77	0.45	0.69	0.73
	Romania	30.5	78.5	58.1	6.64	2.36	4.89	2.80	3.10	0.91	0.56	0.77	0.67
	Lithuania	66.9	86.8	20.8	7.23	1.86	4.37	2.14	2.87	0.78	0.65	0.85	0.80
	Estonia	42.3	69.8	49.0	6.45	2.16	4.72	2.23	3.46	0.77	0.65	0.73	0.67
		46.2	**79.9**	**42.5**	**6.59**	**2.11**	**4.40**	**2.32**	**3.11**	**0.81**			

[a]The data on Greece are based on a snowball sample and people are disproportionally better educated. Thus the sample cannot be seen as representative and the data should be treated with caution. Here the data on Greece are depicted for illustrative purposes only.

of the descriptive results and of the internal consistency of the scales in all countries.[9]

In general, we can state that preferences for redistribution are rather high in nearly all countries of Europe, which were integrated in the study. In Southern Europe in particular, citizens are recognising sharp inequalities and clearly strive for the equalisation of incomes. In liberal Great Britain, also belonging to the cluster of crisis states, the picture is different, because here a lower mean value (5.9) compared to other states could be observed. Interestingly, in highly prosperous countries with established welfare states, the preferences for redistribution are still higher than in other countries. Austria is a notable example in this respect, with a mean value of 7.2, closely followed by Iceland. In the social democratic welfare states of Scandinavia the mean values are considerably lower, indicating that people are already satisfied with the social security system in the country. Interestingly, the two clusters of Eastern Europe are also quite heterogeneous when it comes to combating income inequalities. While people in the Visegrád countries seem to react rather indifferently to existing levels of inequality, the citizens in the Baltic states as well as in Romania or Bulgaria express higher levels of concern. This may be due to the neoliberal orientation of the Baltic countries and the minimalistic social security measures in Southern Europe (Kollmorgen 2009).

When it comes to ethnocentrism and to environmental concerns, we see a much clearer East–West divide compared to what we see with the challenge of redistribution. It is notable, however, that large proportions of people in Western and Southern Europe have already acquired experience with multiculturalism, and the majority express a rather positive view of multicultural society. Iceland can be presented as an advocate for accepting multiculturalism, but in Sweden, Great Britain, and Spain the impression is widely positive too. Otherwise, the enlarged standard deviations point to major divisions within society, and it becomes clear that cultural diversity is a major source of dissent in Western Europe. The mean value of Denmark, Austria, and Italy is already below the scale mean of 5, indicating that the majority in society perceive an ethnic threat.

When moving to Eastern Europe, we can see that people react far more critically towards migration. They disregard multiculturalism, especially in Czechia, in Hungary, and in Slovakia, as well as in Bulgaria where the mean value already falls below 4. Obviously, the anti-immigrant discourse in Eastern Europe influences citizens, although their societies are still quite ethnically homogeneous (Bluhm and Varga 2018).

Turning to environmental awareness, the ranking of European countries follows a similar direction compared to attitudes towards immigrants. The mean values are

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[9] The reliability coefficient (here Cronbach's α) allows us to assess the quality of the measurement (the last columns at the right end of Table 12.2). The quality of the measurement is extraordinarily high when it comes to cultural diversity (the Cronbach's α coefficient ranging from .68 in Norway to .86 in Spain), it is of similar quality when it comes to environmental consciousness (ranging from .65 in Iceland to .80 in Lithuania), and it is mostly sufficient when it comes to the measurement of preferences for redistribution (ranging from .41 in Great Britain to .74 in Finland).

higher in prosperous Western European states, they lose ground in Great Britain and Southern Europe, and they are considerably lower in the two Eastern European regions.[10] To select some examples from Western Europe, environmental care is highest in Sweden, Germany, and Switzerland and it is decreasing slightly in Portugal and Croatia.

When it comes to the Visegrád countries, all countries roughly represent the European average and the means are quite homogeneous. Turning to far Eastern Europe, environmental care does not really seem to be an issue. The lowest value can be seen in Lithuania, while Estonia is a notable outlier, with people seeming to be more dedicated to the environment.

Unfortunately, these differentiated scales have not been used in earlier waves of the EVS, but the survey gives us the opportunity to compare at least single items over time. To simplify the comparison, all indicators are dichotomised.[11] Concerning redistribution, the participants in the surveys had to judge if they are in favour of individual efforts for progress in society or in favour of equalising incomes. Concerning anti-immigrant sentiments, participants were asked if employers should give priority to the native people (compared to immigrants) when jobs are scarce. Regarding pro-environmental behaviour, people had to indicate if they are willing to contribute part of their income towards the environment.[12] When we start with the four graphs in the first row of Fig. 12.2 summarising the mean values in the European regions we can derive the following trends in the countries (Fig. 12.2):[13]

- In the prosperous Western European states, ethnocentrism decreases over time and the approval of multicultural diversity is growing. But about 40% of the citizens are still in favour of privileging the native population in the labour market when jobs are scarce. A clear downward trend in ethnic prejudice is visible in most of the countries, but there are also some exceptions (for example, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Switzerland), where ethnic prejudice has grown again over recent years. It is also obvious that preferences for redistribution seem to have increased to the year 2010 but have been decreasing slightly in the last wave of the EVS in most countries. This is clearly visible in Austria, where preferences

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[10] This tendency can be seen in the values referring to the whole cluster (marked in bold). It is just a simple computation of the mean based on all countries without taking different population size into account.

[11] Thus, the values represent the proportion of people in a given country agreeing with the statement.

[12] When we correlate the indicators at the national level, the ranking of the 24 nations (excluding Greece because the sample cannot be seen as representative) is quite similar. Spearman's Rho, analysing discrepancies in the ranks, leads to a correlation of .52 concerning redistribution, −.75 concerning ethnocentrism, and .27 concerning the environment. The insignificant correlation of the two measurements of environmental awareness can be due to the gap between environmental consciousness (measured by four items) and pro-environmental behaviour (the single-item measure). This gap is intensively researched in the field of environmental education and sociology (ElHaffar et al. 2020).

[13] Specific time points are missing because not every country has taken part in every survey wave. Greece is not included here because the most recent wave cannot be seen as representative.
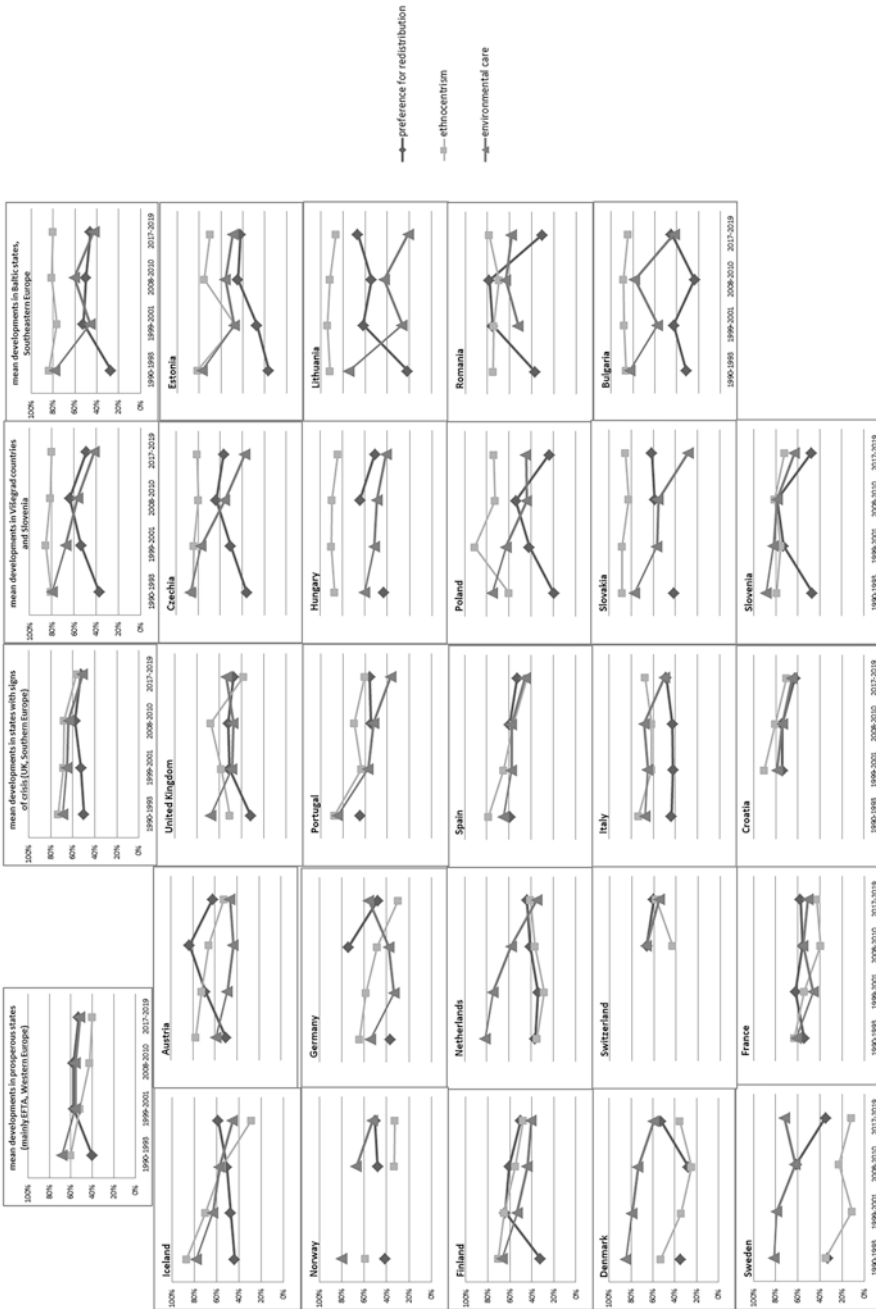
Fig. 12.2 Perceptions of societal challenges in Europe – trends over different survey waves in all participating countries in this study

for redistribution reached an extraordinarily high level in 2008 and then started to decrease again. Similar trends are visible in Germany, Switzerland, and Sweden. It is also highly relevant that pro-environmental behaviour is not increasing over time.[14] It seems that fewer people in the year 2018 are ready to give a small part of their income to save the environment. Here, the picture in the prosperous countries is quite diverse. On the one hand, Iceland, Norway, Finland, and the Netherlands clearly confirm this decreasing trend, while there is an upswing of pro-environmental behaviour in Germany, in Sweden, and to a limited extent in Austria.

- These tendencies of shrinking attitudes towards the environment are even more pronounced in those states that have been deeply exposed to conditions of economic crisis over the last decade. Here too, preferences for redistribution have been rising only to a limited extent, and no clear trend is visible over the last 10 years. The only notable tendency is the erosion of ethnic prejudice in many countries. This is clearly visible in Portugal, Spain, and Croatia across all survey waves, while in Italy this trend is less pronounced. In Great Britain ethnic prejudice was on the rise until 2010, but has clearly decreased over the last 10 years.

- When we look at the temporal dynamics in Eastern Europe, we can observe one notable discrepancy. Anti-immigrant views are widespread in all countries, and this trend is quite stable over time. We can also detect quite a sharp downward trend when it comes to pro-environmental behaviour. While large parts of the population were willing to spend part of their income on the environment in the 1990s, these motivations have changed over recent decades. There are no exceptions to this downward trend in the Visegrád countries, but there is more variation in the Baltic states and in Southeastern Europe. We can see, for instance, that the attitude is rather stable in Estonia and Romania, while there is a large variance over time in Bulgaria and Lithuania. When it comes to preferences for redistribution, these needs seem to be growing in Eastern Europe as well. Large parts of the population demand a fair income distribution. In Czechia, in Slovenia, and Hungary in particular, the proportions of citizens arguing for redistribution rose until the year 2008. Interestingly those needs are now decreasing in many Eastern European countries. Only in Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria, and Slovakia are the people still struggling for a more equal society, while in the other countries the public mood is shifting in the opposite direction.

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[14] This observable tendency might also signal higher income pressures in a time where societal pessimism is growing (Steenvorden 2016; Aschauer 2017).

12.4   Religiosity, Basic Values, and Political and Social Attitudes – Efforts to Untie the Gordian Knot of Potential Drivers of Solidarity

When we review contemporary Europe, it is beyond dispute that we live in highly individualised and pluralised societies (Münch 2010), which are also susceptible to increasing polarisations (Lessenich and Nullmeier 2006). Besides enduring value divisions relating to social class, Western European countries face the ongoing pressure to regulate the relations of different religious groups demanding *cultural* recognition in the public sphere. The field of religion is also becoming more diversified, and is characterised by processes of individualisation, privatisation, and subjectivity (Knoblauch 2018). Processes of secularisation and religious pluralisation (Berger 2014) go hand in hand with ongoing value changes. Empirical research on values has so far shown that value shifts take place quite slowly and that basic values serve as important cultural markers and have their historical foundations as well (Rudnev et al. 2016).

Concerning Inglehart's (1977) famous modernisation approach, the so-called silent revolution from materialist values (for example, security and order) to post-materialist values (for example, self-realisation and universalism) seems to have stagnated and can potentially be proven for Western European countries only.[15] These shifting proportions between materialist and post-materialist value priorities are, of course, closely linked to moral values as well as religious orientations. Early research by Inglehart and Appel (1989) has confirmed that a rise in post-materialism goes hand in hand with liberal values and a potential decline in conventional religious beliefs. It can be generally assumed that a higher relevance of religion in society encourages the preservation of traditional family constellations. On the other hand, the impact of religiosity on values related to women's labour market participation might be weaker because of emancipation effects over recent decades (Voicu 2009). Emancipatory values (Welzel 2013) might not necessarily be connected to secularisation. Post-materialists tend to search for a deeper meaning in life, which may lead to a higher interest in new approaches to religion and spirituality.

Referring to the level of political and social attitudes, recent studies show that indicators of political distrust (Linden and Thaa 2011), future pessimism (Steenvoorden 2016), and societal malaise (Aschauer and Mayerl 2019) are powerful concepts to explain a shift to defensive values. If people have the impression that they are powerless to influence the direction of society, this might contribute to their

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[15] From Inglehart's (1977) point of view, the prevailing value orientations always reflect the state of society (the socio-economic environment) (deficiency hypothesis). In the course of prosperous social development, a change in values consequently occurs with a delay, because individuals primarily retain the values they acquired during socialisation (socialisation hypothesis).

susceptibility to right-wing populism, a renaissance of nativism,[16] and various forms of Euroscepticism. These criticisms of the way democracy works in Europe can go hand in hand with a rising preference for strong leaders who promise to bring order to chaos and restore social stability or ethnic homogeneity, regardless of the fact that such homogeneity is illusory in a globalised world. Of course, those features are often due to a lack of social inclusion in society. As Robert Putnam (1993) has already stated, membership in organisations and voluntary engagement are crucial to create personal and generalised trust and to provoke higher levels of societal integration.

In this respect, religiosity could also be a protective factor that increases social inclusion in society and could compensate for political alienation, because it is often associated with more altruistic behaviour; for example, religious people are more often active in volunteer work (Hoof 2010). Altogether, trying to disentangle all those effects of religiosity, values, and political ideology on key perceptions of societal challenges is really like untying a Gordian knot. It is additionally puzzling to guarantee an empirically sound operationalisation and to analyse the main causal dynamics with regard to different levels of explanation. That is why I strive for rather comprehensive concepts to explore the relations between those levels. The following two tables highlight the descriptive results regarding religiosity and values (Table 12.3) as well as political attitudes and aspects of social inclusion (Table 12.4) in all countries selected for this study.[17]

Besides religious denomination, which is not depicted in the table, I can derive five indicators measuring religiosity. Using the self-declarations of the respondents, it is firstly possible to distinguish between a secular identity, a spiritual orientation, and conventional beliefs in a personal god. Additionally, I computed two scales measuring the extent of religious beliefs as well as the frequency of religious practice. In line with other chapters in this volume (S. Pickel and G. Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume), it turns out that secularisation is highest in the prosperous Western European societies, although there is considerable variance between the countries. Southern Europe (mainly Catholic) and Southeastern Europe (mainly Orthodox Christian) are illustrative examples where beliefs in a personal god, beliefs in a spiritual life force, and religious beliefs and practices are still higher (Table 12.3).

The Visegrád countries are somewhat in between, again with a high variance across countries. Poland is a notable exception, where traditional Catholic beliefs are still the highest all over Europe and the frequency of religious practice is the greatest of all countries. All other countries belonging to the Visegrád group can be positioned in the European average.

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[16] The term nativism can be seen as a combination of nationalism and xenophobia. Nativists follow an ideology 'which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ('the nation") and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the nation-state's homogeneity' (Mudde 2010: 1173).

[17] The operationalisation is depicted in the Appendix (see Tables 12.11 and 12.12 for further information).

Table 12.3 Religiosity and basic values in the countries and in the clusters of the EU and EFTA states

Cluster analysis Europe	EU–EFTA states	'No spirit, God or life force' % yes	'Spirit or life force' % yes	'Personal God' % yes	Index of religious beliefs Mean	Index of religious practice Mean	Gender attitudes: women at home Mean	Gender attitudes: men more suited for career Mean	Moral values: cheating and corruption Mean	Moral values: moral rigorism vs liberal values Mean	Materialists % yes	Post-materialists % yes
Prosperous Western European states	Denmark	27.3	37.2	13.6	1.18	2.39	1.63	1.49	1.68	7.47	8.7	12.6
	Finland	18.0	36.0	30.2	1.42	2.86	1.92	1.64	1.95	6.67	9.9	25.0
	Iceland	16.6	39.4	31.1	1.80	2.66	1.91	1.43	1.96	7.04	19.1	18.2
	Norway	25.0	33.9	17.6	1.36	2.62	1.63	1.28	1.87	6.79	7.1	18.4
	Sweden	27.5	43.0	9.5	1.20	2.20	1.63	1.28	1.97	7.24	2.7	25.3
	Austria	14.6	45.8	28.2	2.01	3.23	2.30	1.60	2.03	6.12	18.9	24.3
	France	22.5	32.3	20.6	1.61	2.36	2.04	1.46	2.52	6.30	19.7	24.1
	Germany	24.0	41.5	21.7	1.53	2.83	2.10	1.59	1.66	6.38	7.6	35.4
	The Netherlands	25.0	34.7	18.3	1.32	2.54	2.00	1.69	2.02	7.05	16.2	18.1
	Switzerland	12.1	58.1	17.5	1.75	2.90	2.23	1.62	2.00	6.28	18.3	20.2
		21.3	**40.2**	**20.8**	**1.52**	**2.66**	**1.94**	**1.51**	**1.97**	**6.73**	**12.8**	**22.2**
States with signs of crisis	Great Britain	20.6	39.8	23.3	1.50	2.54	2.10	1.71	1.85	6.28	9.1	28.7
	Croatia	7.1	39.4	42.5	2.49	4.12	2.42	1.81	2.18	4.21	22.7	18.5
	Italy	9.2	48.2	30.2	2.51	4.01	2.58	1.81	1.85	5.18	21.9	18.2
	Spain	15.4	29.5	36.7	1.74	2.99	1.84	1.48	3.23	6.30	19.8	29.3
	Portugal	7.0	18.9	65.2	1.93	3.44	2.31	1.79	1.84	4.54	37.2	13.2
	Greece (snowball sample)	7.2	29.8	54.0	2.30	4.09	2.06	1.68	3.55	5.61	10.2	28.5
		11.1	**34.3**	**42.0**	**2.08**	**3.53**	**2.22**	**1.71**	**2.41**	**5.35**	**20.1**	**22.7**

Visegrád countries and Slovenia	Czechia	28.6	38.7	6.9	1.18	2.07	2.51	2.16	2.39	6.01	26.1	12.8
	Hungary	18.2	30.4	33.4	1.88	2.97	2.52	2.01	1.97	4.74	26.9	18.3
	Poland	5.6	17.8	64.9	3.04	4.94	2.56	2.01	1.83	4.23	16.0	26.4
	Slovakia	14.3	36.0	33.7	2.16	3.62	2.48	2.31	3.11	5.29	32.0	9.8
	Slovenia	12.4	51.6	20.3	1.56	2.93	2.33	1.87	1.92	5.94	11.6	24.5
		15.8	**34.9**	**31.8**	**1.96**	**3.31**	**2.48**	**2.07**	**2.25**	**5.24**	**22.5**	**18.3**
Baltic states and	Bulgaria	8.7	41.3	41.8	1.74	3.39	2.56	2.17	1.58	4.18	48.1	1.4
	Romania	2.1	51.5	32.9	3.13	5.20	2.50	2.07	2.17	3.28	30.9	9.5
Southeastern Europe	Lithuania	11.6	27.1	43.8	2.74	3.58	2.70	2.20	2.69	4.50	30.4	5.4
	Estonia	16.7	53.4	13.5	1.29	2.21	2.30	1.99	2.05	5.10	16.8	15.0
		9.8	**43.3**	**33.0**	**2.22**	**3.59**	**2.51**	**2.11**	**2.12**	**4.26**	**31.5**	**7.8**

Table 12.4 Political attitudes and indicators of social inclusion in the countries and in the clusters of the EU and EFTA states

Cluster analysis Europe	EU–EFTA states	Left–right scale	Interest in politics	National pride	EU-scepticism	Political distrust	Susceptibility to autocracy	Approval of surveillance	Personal trust	Generalised trust	Voluntary Engagement
		Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	% yes
Prosperous Western European states	Denmark	5.12	2.65	3.42	6.27	2.71	1.03	2.32	3.66	2.95	33.8
	Finland	5.82	2.42	3.62	7.04	2.74	1.15	2.60	3.57	2.80	29.4
	Iceland	5.33	2.65	3.59	6.24	2.85	0.86	2.02	3.47	2.89	28.5
	Norway	5.35	2.79	3.63	6.23	2.42	1.13	1.92	3.60	2.87	45.4
	Sweden	5.49	2.69	3.47	5.95	2.52	0.92	2.39	3.55	3.04	32.4
	Austria	5.10	2.73	3.42	6.56	2.72	1.11	1.93	3.41	2.50	28.8
	France	5.14	2.21	3.40	6.82	3.07	2.35	2.17	3.24	2.55	21.5
	Germany	4.90	3.07	3.02	5.96	2.83	0.86	2.11	3.34	2.51	29.6
	The Netherlands	5.56	2.59	3.18	6.89	2.71	1.52	2.50	3.61	2.90	36.1
	Switzerland	5.31	2.59	3.32	6.69	2.52	1.15	2.13	3.34	2.72	37.5
		5.31	**2.64**	**3.41**	**6.46**	**2.71**	**1.21**	**2.21**	**3.48**	**2.78**	**32.3**
States with signs of crisis	Great Britain	5.20	2.45	3.37	6.60	2.90	1.64	2.51	3.45	2.77	20.2
	Croatia	5.48	2.01	3.19	5.84	3.50	1.73	1.81	3.22	2.52	10.6
	Italy	5.68	2.09	3.24	6.81	3.05	1.48	2.33	3.16	2.36	13.4
	Spain	4.83	2.30	3.22	6.03	3.04	1.72	2.11	3.40	2.61	9.5
	Portugal	5.08	1.96	3.67	5.01	2.96	1.86	1.94	3.11	2.46	7.7
	Greece (snowball sample)	5.23	2.37	3.32	5.68	3.39	1.37	1.86	2.99	2.21	31.2
		5.25	**2.20**	**3.34**	**5.99**	**3.14**	**1.63**	**2.09**	**3.22**	**2.49**	**15.4**

Visegrád countries and Slovenia	Czechia	5.65	2.30	3.14	6.98	3.22	2.15	1.78	3.32	2.34	21.9
	Hungary	6.10	2.27	3.36	5.77	2.94	1.64	2.00	3.39	2.48	16.4
	Poland	6.24	2.28	3.61	4.98	3.17	1.25	1.62	3.13	2.29	14.5
	Slovakia	5.60	2.16	3.22	6.32	2.92	2.54	1.91	3.29	2.30	16.6
	Slovenia	4.88	2.13	3.44	6.14	3.21	1.49	1.67	3.26	2.17	30.2
		5.69	**2.23**	**3.35**	**6.04**	**3.09**	**1.81**	**1.80**	**3.28**	**2.32**	**19.9**
Baltic states and Southeastern Europe	Bulgaria	5.46	2.35	3.34	3.90	3.16	1.26	1.94	3.25	2.23	17.8
	Romania	5.93	2.01	3.41	4.15	3.28	1.77	2.00	3.01	2.00	15.3
	Lithuania	5.88	2.25	3.08	5.87	2.88	1.69	1.83	3.21	2.20	18.0
	Estonia	5.71	2.46	3.39	6.57	2.87	1.36	1.87	3.37	2.48	23.6
		5.75	**2.27**	**3.31**	**5.12**	**3.05**	**1.52**	**1.91**	**3.21**	**2.23**	**18.7**

Turning our focus to basic values, I refer to the classical Inglehart index to derive the proportion of materialists and post-materialists in the country.[18] There is a clear path towards traditionalism from Western Europe to Southern Europe to Eastern Europe. The proportion of materialists is rising from the North to the South and from the West to the East, and reaches a clear peak in Southeastern Europe (especially in Bulgaria, followed by Romania and Lithuania). Besides classical measurement, the EVS provides an extensive item battery to analyse moral pluralism in Europe.[19] The first factor refers to a rigid morality vs liberal attitudes (denying vs accepting homosexuality, abortion, divorce, euthanasia, suicide, having casual sex or artificial insemination). The second scale refers to cheating and corruption and thus to behaviours where people gain personal benefits (at the cost of others). While liberal attitudes evolve in Western Europe, the mean values clearly lag behind in central Eastern Europe (in Poland in particular) and are lowest in Southeastern Europe. Interestingly, the ranking of cheating and corruption is somewhat different. Here, countries in Southern Europe (such as France, Spain, or Greece) reach extraordinarily high levels, while Eastern European countries rank far behind. The high level of corruption at the political level (Kostadinova 2012) could contribute to the population's clear opposition to these kinds of practice.

Additionally, it was possible to derive two main facets of gender attitudes based on seven items. The first item battery refers to attitudes giving women the main responsibility for childcare and housework, while the second scale deals with men being more suitable than women for professional careers. In all European countries the scale mean hints at rather progressive attitudes, but the mean across the Southern and Eastern European clusters stands for more traditional gender roles compared to Western European states.

After assessing these potentially rather stable value orientations in European societies, I now turn to the level of political attitudes and aspects of social inclusion. To grasp political ideology, the left–right scale is often used, although weaknesses have been often reported concerning this measurement (Barberá et al. 2017). Fortunately, it is possible to use three sophisticated indicators in the EVS to measure political distrust, an approval of further surveillance in society, and susceptibility towards autocracy. The latter indicator in particular should serve as a good proxy measurement of authoritarian tendencies. Besides those indicators, political interest,

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[18] The Inglehart index consists of four statements and people have to choose their top two priorities. If both priorities refer to materialist values, the people count as materialists; if they have chosen the other priorities, they count as post-materialists. If they have a mixed ranking, they are considered as mixed type (rather post-materialist or rather materialist according to their preference). From an empirical point of view, there are extensive discussions (Klages 1992) if a ranking of value priorities leads to reliable results. Apart from the question of the reliability of the measurement, it is even more important whether the four socio-political goals can validly capture the people's value horizon. The objective 'fight against rising prices' in particular has been the subject of massive criticism, because this indicator reacts particularly sensitively to economic crises and is demonstrably influenced by the given inflation rate.

[19] The respondents are confronted with 15 divergent behaviours and they have to indicate on a 10-point scale if these behaviours are justified or not.

national pride, and attitudes towards European enlargement are used to further highlight political engagement, patriotism, and national vs European identification.

These comprehensive measurements of political orientations are supplemented by three aspects pointing to social inclusion. All three indicators refer to social capital, where the approach of Putnam (Putnam and Goss 2001) recommends the use of voluntary engagement as well as social trust in given societies. The multiplicity of indicators allows us to distinguish between personal trust towards familiar members and generalised trust towards strangers (see Table 12.12 in the Appendix for further information).

Reviewing the political orientations of the citizens in European countries, we can see that the left–right scale reflects a rather normal distribution, while there is a slight tendency towards the right of the political spectrum in Eastern Europe. This is particularly visible in countries where parties of the political right have been in power since 2018 (for example, Hungary or Poland). Political interest is higher in the prosperous countries of Western Europe, with Germany in the leading position. Interestingly, national pride and EU-scepticism are higher in the West than in the East. Here, the mean in nearly all countries is clearly above the scale mean of 5.5, which indicates that the majority of the citizens in most countries share the opinion that EU integration has gone too far. Only in those EU states that are performing more weakly economically is support for European integration still high (for example, Romania and Bulgaria). The high level of EU-scepticism goes hand in hand with clear signs of political disenchantment. Here, distrust is lowest in Northern Europe, but it already reaches critical levels in France and in Great Britain and points to widespread political alienation in Croatia, Greece, and various Eastern European countries (for example, Czechia, Poland, Slovenia, Romania, and Bulgaria). Susceptibility to autocracy is in general very low in Europe, and the scale mean in most countries is around 2 on a 10-point scale. This means that the clear majority of people are still convinced about Western democracy. On the other hand, there is a rising tendency towards authoritarianism when it comes to Southern Europe and the Visegrád countries in particular. A higher susceptibility to autocracy is seemingly not connected with a higher approval of surveillance. Here, Scandinavian countries in particular seem to have fewer problems with the disclosure of private data compared to other countries.

Turning to aspects of social inclusion, it becomes clear that civic participation is higher in the prosperous Western European countries, while at the same time only a small minority in Southern and Eastern European countries are voluntarily engaged. While interpersonal trust, which refers to social cohesion at the micro level, is high in nearly all of the participating countries, a clear discrepancy in generalised trust is visible between the West and the East. An openness to broader social networks that seems to be given in Western Europe might enable more access through weak ties (Granovetter 1973). The higher relevance of bonding in the South and East of Europe might be connected to ethnocentrism, because people in Italy, Greece, Slovenia, or Romania more often do not trust people they do not know personally or who are of another nationality or religion.

Table 12.5 Pearson's *r* correlations of all concepts measuring religiosity, basic values, political attitudes, and aspects of social inclusion (European level, pair-wise correlations)

Concepts	Variables	No spirit, god, or life force	Spirit or life force	Personal god	Index of religious beliefs	Index of religious practice	Inglehart index	Women at home	Men more suited for career	Cheating and corruption	Moral rigorism vs liberal values	Left–right scale	Interest in politics	National pride	EU-scepticism	Political alienation	Autocracy	Approval of surveillance	Voluntary engagement	Personal trust	General trust
Religion	Believing in no spirit, god, or life force	1																			
	Believing in spirit or life force	-.367**	1																		
	Believing in personal god	-.275**	-.506**	1																	
	Index of religious beliefs	-.501**	.066**	.534**	1																
	Index of religious practice	-.407**	-.007	.530**	.694**	1															
Basic values	Inglehart index	.093**	.071**	-.147**	-.134**	-.137**	1														
	Gender attitudes: women at home	-.160**	-.047**	.207**	.266**	.266**	-.221**	1													
	Gender attitudes: men more suited for career	-.074**	-.076**	.146**	.144**	.148**	-.201**	.550**	1												
	Moral values: cheating and corruption	.017**	-.022**	-.024**	-.004	-.066**	.005	.030**	.098**	1											
	Moral values: moral rigorism vs liberal values	.233**	.107**	-.361**	-.411**	-.466**	.236**	-.471**	-.367**	.100**	1										
Political attitudes	Left–right scale	-.090**	-.026**	.120**	.148**	.153**	-.168**	.153**	.155**	.005	-.172**	1									
	Interest in politics	.057**	.050**	-.061**	-.085**	-.036**	.174**	-.151**	-.086**	-.101**	.188**	-.014**	1								
	National pride	-.090**	-.011*	.102**	.119**	.123**	-.109**	.062**	.028**	-.139**	-.122**	.172**	.017**	1							
	EU-scepticism	.003	.013*	-.029**	-.021**	-.042**	-.050**	.072**	.031**	-.003	.027**	.118**	-.005	.016**	1						
	Alienation	.009	.019**	-.048**	-.018**	-.035**	.016**	.097**	.023**	.083**	-.064**	-.061**	-.276**	-.166**	.074**	1					
	Susceptibility to autocracy	-.037**	-.056**	.059**	.057**	.042**	-.137**	.185**	.209**	.196**	-.234**	.059**	-.158**	.008	.029**	.061**	1				
	Approval of surveillance	-.017**	.010	-.009	-.003	.013*	-.098**	.010	.014*	-.036**	.037**	.122**	.057**	.097**	.072**	-.165**	.036**	1			
Social inclusion	Voluntary engagement	-.014**	.042**	-.016**	.004	.063**	.080**	-.121**	-.100**	-.045**	.100**	-.015**	.162**	.009	-.012*	-.121**	-.071**	.043**	1		
	Index personal trust	.042**	.002	-.038**	-.086**	-.051**	.066**	-.186**	-.126**	-.144**	.162**	-.015**	.167**	.116**	.005	-.250**	-.092**	.073**	.139**	1	
	Index generalised trust	.038**	.042**	-.053**	-.101**	-.069**	.156**	-.272**	-.221**	-.098**	.286**	-.105**	.224**	.014**	-.042**	-.267**	-.126**	.064**	.166**	.535**	1

* *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01

Table 12.5 gives a first overview of how all of these concepts are interrelated at the European level. This correlation matrix allows us to confirm that religiosity is strongly connected with basic values. The three indicators, namely believing in a personal god as well as the index of religious belief and religious practice, are moderately connected with materialist value priorities and traditional gender roles and strongly connected with moral rigorism. The correlations turn out to be weaker when it comes to political attitudes, and they are roughly non-existent when analysing aspects of social inclusion. At the opposite pole are secular individuals, who can be more often classified as post-materialists and clearly favour liberal values. On the other hand, relations to political attitudes or social inclusion turn out to be weak again. Interestingly, citizens believing in a spirit or alternative life forces have more in common with secular individuals than with traditional believers. They are more inclined to follow liberal moral values and they often locate themselves on the post-materialist side of the value spectrum.

When we move to the level of political attitudes and indicators of social inclusion, we find weaker correlations between the concepts. Political interest is negatively correlated with political alienation and leads to a higher level of social inclusion. Besides this, susceptibility to autocracy is connected with traditional gender attitudes and moral rigorism, but the relations turn out to be weak when we refer to correlations with religion.

We can thus really speak of two higher-order levels of potential impact factors. Conventional religiosity is often connected to basic values highlighting conservatism, which might have a stable impact on perceptions of societal challenges. But there is another dynamic of political alienation and social disintegration that fuels critical attitudes towards societal progress too.

12.5   Detecting the Main Individual Dynamics to Perceptions of Social Challenges in the EU – Region-Specific Sequential Regression Models

The main aim of this final empirical approach is to provide an exploratory overview of the main antecedents regarding religion, basic values, political attitudes, and aspects of social inclusion on perceptions of societal challenges. I will shortly refer to the main impact factors that explain preferences for redistribution, attitudes towards cultural diversity, and environmental care at the individual and Europe-wide level.

12.5.1 The Drivers of Individual Needs for Redistribution

When we first review potential drivers of preferences for redistribution, religion might play a role, but it might lose weight when other explanatory levels are added. For example, religious beliefs (Scheve and Stasavage 2006) and altruistic values (Kangas 1997) are reported as notable drivers of group solidarity. When it comes to religious affiliation, preferences for redistribution could be more pronounced among Catholics and Muslims, while these might be reduced among Protestants because of a higher emphasis on the performance ethic (Jordan 2014). Analysing the effects of basic values and political attitudes, the division between right-wing ideology and legitimising social inequalities and preferences for a higher economic balance in the left-wing spectrum of society is one of the most important dividing lines in the European context (Alesina and Giuliano 2011). Thus, it is expected that people following post-material and liberal values as well as locating themselves on the left side of the political spectrum are more in favour of redistribution.

The most consistent results are generally found with regard to socio-economic background. Women generally express a higher preference for redistribution because men are assumed to be more competition-oriented (d'Anjou et al. 1995). While a strong leaning towards the performance principle is evident in the middle age groups, willingness to allow social support measures seems to increase again with older age (Koster 2013). Naturally, an essential factor to explain individual preferences for redistribution is income. Here, research continues to be strongly oriented towards the Rational Choice model of Meltzer and Richard (1981), who attribute the willingness to contribute to social compensation to self-interest. As a rule, the less privileged part of the population tries to achieve a fairer distribution of income. If a certain status is reached, the relation turns in the opposite direction. In addition, the research shows unanimously that with an increasing number of completed years of education (Jæger 2006) there is a decreasing level of support for measures to reduce income disparities. This is also reflected in older comparative studies, which confirm that attitudes towards redistribution are typically found to be less common among higher classes (Svallfors 2004). However, one must be careful to avoid oversimplification. While people belonging to more privileged groups may be less in favour of redistribution, they may follow a more universal logic with a commitment to equal citizenship. Although people at the lower end of society may be more in favour of redistribution in general, they may follow a more selective logic excluding certain outgroups. These outgroups do not belong to the 'moral' deservingness criteria (van Oorschot 2000) because people imply that certain groups lack willingness to perform (for example, the long-term unemployed) or are (culturally) excluded from society.

12.5.2   *The Drivers of Approving Cultural Diversity*

When we turn to attitudes towards cultural diversity, the antecedents of ethnic prejudice are the focus of numerous studies for decades and have thus been extensively empirically documented (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010). Interestingly, results that refer to religion are still discussed controversial and it is still an open question as to whether religion increases or decreases prejudice (Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). Allport and Ross (1967) found that those who have an exclusive understanding of religion (and thus place their own religion above others) are more susceptible to ethnic prejudice, while those with an inclusive understanding of religion show more tolerance. For example, Rebenstorf (2018) found in a study based on the 2008 EVS data that an exclusive understanding of religion ('There is only one true religion') is accompanied by a stronger rejection of Muslims as neighbours, while an inclusive approach ('Every religion contains truths') leads to greater acceptance. In line with this research, it is assumed that conventional religious beliefs and practices are associated with a traditional (more exclusive) understanding of religion and therefore increase ethnic prejudice. It seems plausible that a spiritually oriented lifestyle might cross boundaries between in- and outgroups and could promote values such as universalism and diversity (Saroglou et al. 2009). In a recent study with regard to anti-Muslim sentiments, Aschauer (2020) found that when Austrians see a deeper meaning in a religious life they react with more tolerance towards Muslims.

When we refer to the impact of values and socio-psychological dynamics on ethnocentrism, we can go back to the origins in the research on the authoritarian personality (Adorno et al. 1950). The concept of right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer 1981) in particular is still often used in research, but it is now supplemented by the 'other' authoritarian personality that highlights more strongly aspects of upward mobility and is characterised by a social dominance orientation (Sidanius and Pratto 1999; Duckitt 2001). Other socio-psychological research approaches up to the 1960s and focuses more on the role of norms and values in ethnic prejudice. We can assume that a post-material orientation leads to a stronger approval of multicultural society, while people who are more aligned to materialist values exhibit higher levels of prejudice (Scheepers et al. 2002). We can potentially speak of a rigid spectrum of conservative values such as the reliance on classical gender roles, patriotism, and susceptibility to authoritarianism, which leads to a denial of cultural diversity.

These important subjective dynamics are supplemented by classical socio-structural and sociodemographic characteristics influencing attitudes towards immigrants. Here, research leads to quite consistent results. Educational level is generally identified as one key determinant of ethnic prejudice (Hello et al. 2002; Coenders and Scheepers 2003). Higher age reduces solidarity towards immigrants, while no clear results or mixed results are found regarding gender (Chandler and Tsai 2001). Another consistent result is that people living in urban areas exhibit lower levels of prejudice (Coenders and Scheepers 2008; see also Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). Cross-national research demonstrates that, particularly in Western Europe, the aforementioned conditions considerably influence negative attitudes towards

immigrants, as opposed to in Eastern Europe, where often only weak explanations are found (Zick et al. 2008; Coenders and Scheepers 2003; Hjerm 2001).

12.5.3 The Drivers of Environmental Concerns

Over recent years, research on environmental care and green consumption has increased remarkably as a result of the ongoing salience of the topic in the academic and public sphere. The indicators used to assess environmental concerns belong to the New Environmental Paradigm focusing on general beliefs that recognise the interdependence between human actions and environmental consequences (Weaver 2002).

Concerning religiosity, impressions of valuing God-given nature might lead to higher environmental care and to a higher sensitivity regarding potential destructive consequences of economic functioning on the global climate. On the other hand, older studies show that the link between religion and environmental policy is almost non-existent (Hornsby-Smith and Procter 1995). So, similar to the drivers of preferences for redistribution, no direct effect is expected from religion because other factors (especially values and political attitudes) might play a more important role. The evolution of post-material values has always been connected to 'higher-order' needs (Maslow 1954) provoking environmental preservation and voting preferences for green parties (Inglehart 1990).

When we refer to political ideology, it is obvious that environmental concerns are located more on the left side of the political spectrum than on the right. It can be assumed that a morally rigorous attitude, a preservation of traditional gender arrangements, and a strong tendency towards autocratic systems also causes a decrease in environmental concerns. Also, a recent impressive study (Birch 2020) using World Values Survey data has confirmed that environmental polarisation at the elite level has increased the left–right divide in citizens' views of climate change. It is assumed that this divide is even deeper in the Western regions of Europe, leading to higher effect sizes of those political impact factors.

When it comes to sociodemographic and socio-structural background factors, various studies confirm that women are more sensitive towards the environment than men (Dietz et al. 2002). There is also a clear educational effect, meaning that individuals with a higher level of education turn their focus to global empathy and are thus more willing to perceive an individual responsibility for climate change. Compared to other factors such as income or social status, it also seems that education has the highest impact on awareness of environmental issues (Longhi 2013). Concerning age, it is expected that younger individuals are more open towards the environment in Southern and Eastern Europe, while this effect may lose importance in the Western European context. On the other hand, Southern and Eastern European countries are more entangled in conflicts of distribution and identity, which make environmental protection less salient in the public sphere. In this respect, it can also be assumed that effect sizes regarding environmental concerns (and thus

polarisations) are higher in Western Europe than in Eastern European countries (Franzen and Meyer 2010).

12.5.4 Empirical Results on the Main Drivers Explaining Perception of Societal Challenges

The following sequential regression design should enable a comprehensive overview of the main causal relations and potentially diverse impacts across countries and regions. The religious background and various aspects of religiosity are treated as independent variables (level 1). Religious aspects and basic values (level 2) might be strongly connected to political attitudes and might further influence perceptions of social inclusion (level 3). To account for sociodemographic and socio-structural factors, classical indicators such as gender, age, marital status, children in the household, and domicile, as well as education, status, and income are selected as additional control variables (level 4).

All regressions are computed separately in all four European cluster regions and country dummies are also included to additionally control for country effects (level 5).[20] We start by analysing the explanatory factors on preferences for redistribution in all European regions (Table 12.6).

In the first regression it becomes clear that religion is not an issue in all regions because the explained variance is very small. Just two small effects remain, which are mainly relevant in Western Europe. It seems that belonging to a free church and expressing higher conventional religious beliefs go hand in hand with higher preferences for redistribution in prosperous states. In the European crisis states in particular, religious practice leads to higher preferences for redistribution.

When accounting for values too, the explained effect sizes are growing only slightly. On the other hand, the predictors remain rather stable and exert direct influences on preferences for redistribution. Interestingly, a notable difference appears between Western and Eastern Europe. While post-materialism favours preferences for redistribution in the prosperous countries, materialist values account for higher demands for redistribution in the Eastern European context. This is also visible when we refer to moral rigorism vs liberal values. While there is no effect in Western Europe, moral rigorism leads to a greater need for social security benefits in Eastern

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[20] All indicators that are used in the regression analysis appear empirically sound and reflect an appropriate measurement (see the Appendix for a further review of indicators). Pairwise deletion was used to guarantee a sufficient sample size. This is not the ideal strategy, because it can lead to bias (Urban and Mayerl 2018). However, the sample size is very large in the regions, and this might compensate for outliers influencing the data. Additionally, multicollinearity is only a minor issue in all regressions. Thus, it is assumed that the parameters and the significance levels are estimated correctly. All variables are either dummy coded or fulfil the requirements of metric scales. In all tables the standardised coefficients (first column) as well as the unstandardised coefficients (second column) are illustrated. Only significant effects are depicted with significant levels of $p < 0.05^*$, $p < 0.01^{**}$ and $p < 0.001^{***}$.

Table 12.6 Sequential regression explaining preferences for redistribution in European regions

Levels of analysis	Predictors	Indicators	DV preference for redistribution			
			Prosperous states (AT, DK, FI, FR, DE, IS, NO, SE, CH, NL)	Crisis states (HR, IT, ES, GB, PT)	Visegrád countries and Slovenia (HU, PL, SK, SI, CZ)	Southeastern Europe (EE, LT, BU, RO)
Effect sizes (adj. R^2)	Model 1 (Religion)		0.3	2.8	2.1	3.6
	Model 2 (+ values)		2.5	3.2	3.2	5.9
	Model 3 (+ political and social attitudes)		18.1	31.4	20.4	20.7
	Model 4 (+ demographic and structural factors)		20.1	32.9	22.4	22.4
	Model 5 (+ country effects)		22.8	34.7	25.5	23.3
Religion	Confession (Ref. other)	Roman Catholic				
		Protestant				
		Free church/Non-conformist/ Evangelical	0.03 (0.29*)			
		Muslim				
		Orthodox				
	Self-declaration (Ref. don't know)	no spirit, God, or life force				
		spirit or life force				
		personal God				
	Index of religious beliefs		0.06 (0.08***)			
	Index of religious practice			0.04 (0.04*)		

Values	Inglehart index (ref. post-materialism)	materialist	−0.02	−0.14*			0.05	0.26*	0.10	0.47**
		rather materialist	−0.03	−0.13**						
		rather post-materialist					0.05	0.25*		
	Gender roles: women at home		0.04	0.11**	0.05	0.14**			0.10	0.34***
	Gender roles: men more suited for career		−0.02	−0.07*					0.05	0.15*
	Moral values: justify cheating and corruption		0.02	0.04*	0.03	0.04*	0.04	0.05*	0.06	0.08**
	Moral values: moral rigorism vs liberal values (abortion, euthanasia, suicide, homosexuality)						−0.11	−0.10***	−0.06	−0.07**
Political and social attitudes	Left–right scale		−0.21	−0.19***	−0.07	−0.06***	−0.09	−0.08***		
	Interest in politics								−0.04	−0.09*
	National pride									
	EU-scepticism		−0.02	−0.02*	−0.03	−0.02*			0.07	0.05***
	Political distrust		−0.35	−0.41***	−0.53		−0.10	−0.32***	−0.41	−0.47***
	Preference for autocracy					−0.56***	−0.42	−0.44***		
	Approval of surveillance									
	Voluntary engagement									
	Index personal trust		0.03	0.13*			0.06	0.28**	0.04	0.20*
	Index generalised trust						−0.06	−0.19**	−0.06	−0.19**

(continued)

Table 12.6 (continued)

Levels of analysis	Predictors	Indicators	DV preference for redistribution							
			Prosperous states (AT, DK, FI, FR, DE, IS, NO, SE, CH, NL)		Crisis states (HR, IT, ES, GB, PT)		Visegrád countries and Slovenia (HU, PL, SK, SI, CZ)		Southeastern Europe (EE, LT, BU, RO)	
Sociodemographic and structural factors	Gender (0 = male, 1 = female)		0.05	0.18***	0.04	0.17**	0.06	0.27***		
	Age in years		0.06	0.01***					−0.06	−0.01*
	Marital status (Ref. single)	married/registered partnership								
		widowed	−0.03	−0.23**						
		divorced/separated								
	Children in own household									
	Domicile (Ref. countryside)	5,000–20,000 inhabitants (small cities)								
		20,000–100,000 inhabitants (middle-sized cities)								
		100,000–500,000 inhabitants (large cities)								
		500,000 and more (metropolitan areas)	−0.03	−0.18**			−0.04	−0.31*		
	Education (Ref. tertiary)	lower education (ISCED)	0.03	0.14*			0.06	0.32*		
		medium education (ISCED)	0.03	0.10*	0.04	0.18*	0.05	0.21*		
	ISEI status measure		−0.06	−0.01***	−0.04	0.00*	−0.09	−0.01***	−0.07	−0.01**
	Income (Ref. high income)	low income	0.08	0.34***	0.12	0.48***			0.11	0,47***
		middle income	0.06	0.25***	0.04	0.18*			0.06	0,28**

Country effects	Reference Country	The Netherlands		Portugal		Czechia		Estonia	
	Country 1 (Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania)	0.09	0.63***			0.17	0.87****	−0.15	−0.74***
	Country 2 (Denmark, Italy, Poland, Bulgaria)	−0.03	−0.14*						
	Country 3 (Finland, Spain, Slovakia, Romania)	0.05	0.39***			0.19	1.01***		
	Country 4 (France, GB, Slovenia)			−0.21	−1.04***	0.12	0.70***		
	Country 5 (Germany)								
	Country 6 (Iceland)	0.04	0.31***						
	Country 7 (Norway)	0.04	0.32***						
	Country 8 (Sweden)	−0.12	−0.97***						
	Country 9 (Switzerland)								

standardised and unstandardised coefficients, only significant predictors are shown (* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$)

Europe. Interestingly, moral values justifying cheating and corruption and traditional gender arrangements lead to slightly higher preferences for redistribution.

When it comes to political attitudes and aspects for social inclusion, two indicators, namely the left–right orientation and susceptibility to autocracy, are particularly strong predictors and equally relevant in all European regions. When people position themselves at the political right and show a clear preference for autocracy, they particularly legitimise social inequality. Political distrust also seems to decrease preferences for redistribution, especially in the region of the Visegrád countries. Interestingly, EU-scepticism increases demand for redistribution in southeastern countries and the Baltic states, while in Western Europe criticism of EU enlargement decreases efforts to reduce inequalities.

The effects of sociodemographic and structural aspects are less important and widely confirm the results achieved in former studies (Svallfors 2004; Jæger 2006). Indeed, people with lower educational qualifications who also have lower income levels and belong to a lower social status express higher demands for redistribution. The same is true for the gender effect, where women exhibit higher preferences than men in all regions except the Baltic states and Southeastern Europe. Interestingly, while older people favour redistribution in prosperous Western European states, the effect changes the direction when focusing on states in Southeastern Europe. In general, the model can explain more than one-third of the variance in European crisis states and about one-quarter of the variance of preferences for redistribution in the other European regions.

The second societal challenge refers to perceptions of an ethnic threat vs the approval of a multicultural society (Table 12.7).

Here, religion is more important because, despite the integration of control variables, most of the effects remain stable and exert a direct influence. While Catholics (in all regions except Southeastern Europe) and Protestants (in the prosperous countries) express a higher level of prejudice compared to other confessions, Muslims seem to be far more tolerant towards multiculturalism, especially in the two Western European regions.[21] On the other hand, it seems that people believing in one god or being more involved in religious practice are more tolerant towards a multicultural society (S. Pickel and G. Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume). Interestingly, the effect of religious beliefs clearly turns out to be significant in Eastern Europe. The more Eastern European citizens follow Christian beliefs, the higher are their perceptions of an ethnic threat.

When it comes to values, we observe the classical value divide between conservative and progressive values with regard to the explanation for ethnic prejudice, and these divisions are more pronounced in Western Europe. Materialists are more critical of immigration, while this effect is weaker in Eastern Europe. Traditional gender roles capturing the meaning that women should stay at home contribute to

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[21] These effects have to be treated with caution. 'No denomination' was not included in the model to avoid a high correlation with a secular self-declaration. As a consequence, the sample size is quite low in several countries. Some religious groups are also only represented by a limited number of people in certain countries.

Table 12.7 Sequential regression explaining the approval of multiculturalism in European regions

DV perception of an ethnic threat vs approval of multiculturalism

Levels of Analysis	Predictors	Indicators	Prosperous states (AT, DK, FI, FR, DE, IS, NO, SE, CH, NL)		Crisis states (HR, IT, ES, GB, PT)		Visegrád countries and Slovenia (HU, PL, SK, SI, CZ)		Southeastern Europe (EE, LT, BU, RO)	
Effect sizes (adj. R^2)	Model 1 (Religion)		3.7		4.9		2.5		0.9	
	Model 2 (+ values)		18.0		15.4		15.3		4.8	
	Model 3 (+ political and social attitudes)		30.7		24.9		23.1		9.4	
	Model 4 (+ demographic and structural factors)		31.4		25.9		24.2		10.6	
	Model 5 (+ country effects)		36.7		26.4		29.2		13.7	
Religion	Confession (Ref. other)	Roman Catholic	−0.06	−0.27*	−0.07	−0.43**	−0.10	−0.69*		
		Protestant	−0.08	−0.34**			−0.11	−0.91**		
		Free church/Non-conformist/Evangelical								
		Muslim	0.10	1.29***	0.10	1.85***				
		Orthodox								
	Self-declaration (Ref. don't know)	no spirit, God or life force								
		spirit or life force								
		personal God	0.04	0.22**						
	Index of religious beliefs		−0.06	−0.09*					−0.13	
	Index of religious practice		0.03	0.04*	0.08	0.09**				−0.18***

(continued)

Table 12.7 (continued)

Levels of Analysis	Predictors	Indicators	DV perception of an ethnic threat vs approval of multiculturalism							
			Prosperous states (AT, DK, FI, FR, DE, IS, NO, SE, CH, NL)		Crisis states (HR, IT, ES, GB, PT)		Visegrád countries and Slovenia (HU, PL, SK, SI, CZ)		Southeastern Europe (EE, LT, BU, RO)	
Values	Inglehart index (ref. post-materialism)	materialist	−0.08	−0.53***	−0.08	−0.46***	−0.17	−0.90***	−0.07	−0.38*
		rather materialist	−0.09	−0.43***	−0.07	−0.37***	−0.11	−0.55***		
		rather post-materialist	−0.06	−0.31***	−0.06	−0.31**	−0.08	−0.40***		
		Gender roles: women at home	−0.11	−0.34***	−0.08	−0.29***	−0.07	−0.25***		
		Gender roles: men more suited for career	−0.06	−0.22***						
		Moral values: justify cheating and corruption	0.02	0.04*						
		Moral values: moral rigorism vs liberal values (abortion, euthanasia, suicide, homosexuality)	0.04	0.04**	0.15	0.16***	0.11	0.11***	0.15	0.19***
Political and social attitudes		Left–right scale	−0.17	−0.18***	−0.09	−0.10***	−0.06	−0.06***	0.09	0.09***
		Interest in politics	0.04	0.09***	0.05	0.13**	0.08	0.19***		
		National pride	−0.07	−0.20***			−0.04	−0.12*	0.05	0.17**
		EU-scepticism	−0.15	−0.13***	−0.15	−0.13***	−0.14	−0.12***	−0.07	−0.06***
		Political distrust	−0.10	−0.35***	−0.06	−0.21**			−0.05	−0.18*
		Preference for autocracy	−0.03	−0.05***						
		Approval of surveillance	−0.09	−0.26***	−0.06	−0.17***	0.04	0.12*	−0.06	−0.17***
		Voluntary engagement								
		Index personal trust							−0.06	−0.29**
		Index generalised trust	0.18	0.67***	0.16	0.62***	0.18	0.64***	0.18	0.62***

Sociodemo-graphic and structural factors	Gender (0 = male, 1 = female)		0.03	0.11**			−0.07	−0.01*
	Age in years							
	Marital status (Ref. single)	married/registered partnership						
		widowed						
		divorced/separated						
	Children in own household							
	Domicile (Ref. countryside)	5,000–20,000 inhabitants (small cities)			−0.03	−0.22*		
		20,000–100,000 inhabitants (middle-sized cities)						
		100,000–500,000 inhabitants (large cities)	0.02	0.12*			0.05	0.27*
		500,000 and more (metropolitan areas)	0.03	0.17*	0.04	0.30*		
	Education (Ref. tertiary)	lower education (ISCED)	−0.02	−0.12*	−0.10	−0.53***	−0.07	−0.42**
		medium education (ISCED)	−0.03	−0.14**			−0.07	−0.35**
	ISEI status measure							
	Income (Ref. high income)	low income			−0.05	−0.27*	0.08	0,39**
		middle income			−0.05	−0.28**	0.05	0,24*

(continued)

Table 12.7 (continued)

Levels of Analysis	Predictors	Indicators	DV perception of an ethnic threat vs approval of multiculturalism							
			Prosperous states (AT, DK, FI, FR, DE, IS, NO, SE, CH, NL)		Crisis states (HR, IT, ES, GB, PT)		Visegrád countries and Slovenia (HU, PL, SK, SI, CZ)		Southeastern Europe (EE, LT, BU, RO)	
Country effects		Reference Country	The Netherlands		Portugal		Czechia		Estonia	
		Country 1 (Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania)	−0.06	−0.47***	−0.06	−0.40**				
		Country 2 (Denmark, Italy, Poland, Bulgaria)	−0.04	−0.21**	−0.13	−0.71***	0.25	1.48***	−0.11	−0.62***
		Country 3 (Finland, Spain, Slovakia, Romania)	0.09	0.87***			0.12	0.72***	0.17	0.92***
		Country 4 (France, GB, Slovenia)	0.12	0.89***	−0.09	−0.52*	0.22	1.47***		
		Country 5 (Germany)	0.04	0.25**						
		Country 6 (Iceland)	0.20	1.61***						
		Country 7 (Norway)								
		Country 8 (Sweden)	0.06	0.54***						
		Country 9 (Switzerland)	0.03	0.20**						

standardised and unstandardised coefficients, only significant predictors are shown (* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$)

ethnic prejudice in all countries except in Southeastern Europe and the Baltic states. While moral values allowing cheating and corruption go hand in hand with ethnocentrism, liberal values exert a direct link to the approval of multiculturalism.

The effects of political attitudes seem to be strongly driven by values. That is why most of the predictors turn out to be rather weak, though they all follow the proposed direction. Again, the effects seem to be more relevant in Western Europe than in Eastern Europe. While the left–right divide can serve as an additional explanation for ethnocentrism in prosperous countries, this effect turns out to be insignificant in all other regions. The preference for autocracy in particular is once again a strong predictor of ethnocentrism. While political distrust and EU-scepticism contribute only a little to the explanation for ethnic prejudice, political interest seems to be quite an important driver to increase tolerance towards diverse ethnic groups. Interestingly, all these effects exert a weaker influence in the Visegrád countries; here, only susceptibility to autocracy remains a significant explanatory factor. The index of generalised trust is also a remarkable impact factor in all regions. This is also due to the fact that the items concerning trust towards strangers point in a similar direction to ethnic prejudice.

Turning to the level of social demography and social structure, education emerges as a stable explanatory factor, although the coefficients are somewhat weaker in Eastern Europe. Interestingly, while lower income reduces the approval of a multicultural society in Southern Europe and Great Britain, there is a reverse effect of income in Southeastern Europe and the Baltic states. Here, the negative age effect, meaning that younger people are more tolerant, still persists, while it has disappeared in all other European regions. There is a marginal tendency that people living in urban areas act in a more tolerant way and that women are slightly more tolerant than men, although this effect exists in prosperous Western European states only. Similar to preferences for redistribution, we find quite a lot of country differences signalling that there are still substantial differences in ethnic prejudice between the countries. When we compare the effect sizes between the regions, it becomes clear that the divisions between religion, values, political attitudes, social structure, and country-wide differences are highest in prosperous Western states and are seemingly growing in Southern Europe and in the Visegrád states, and the effect sizes turn out to be significantly weaker in Southeastern Europe.

The last societal challenge refers to environmental consciousness (Table 12.8).

Here, religious aspects again lose importance when other explanatory levels are included. Interestingly, Roman Catholics and Protestants in particular perceive fewer environmental concerns, at least in the region of the Baltic states and in southeastern areas. It can also be confirmed that people following a spirit or life force and who practise religion more frequently are more dedicated to nature in the Western countries, while spirituality also exerts an impact in Southern Europe. Conservative vs progressive values act again as major drivers of pro-environmental attitudes. Here, those individuals who declare themselves as post-materialists in particular turn their focus to the environment. Additionally, being against cheating and corruption, favouring progressive ideologies regarding gender equality, and approving liberal values lead to a higher relevance of the environment. These effects are consistent

Table 12.8 Sequential regression explaining environmental awareness in European regions

Levels of analysis	Predictors	Indicators	DV environmental consciousness							
			Prosperous states (AT, DK, FI, FR, DE, IS, NO, SE, CH, NL)		Crisis states (HR, IT, ES, GB, PT)		Visegrád countries and Slovenia (HU, PL, SK, SI, CZ)		Southeastern Europe (EE, LT, BU, RO)	
Effect sizes (adj. R^2)	Model 1 (Religion)		2.1		2.3		1.8		4.8	
	Model 2 (+ values)		17		17.5		12.3		10.5	
	Model 3 (+ political and social attitudes)		21		20.9		15.5		13.1	
	Model 4 (+ demographic and structural factors)		23.1		21.6		16.5		14.7	
	Model 5 (+ country effects)		25		24.8		17.6		16.9	
Religion	Confession (Ref. other)	Roman Catholic					−0.09	−0.21*	−0.26	−0.47**
		Protestant							−0.08	−0.35*
		Free church/Non-conformist/Evangelical								
		Muslim					−0.04	−0.38*		
		Orthodox								
	Self-declaration (Ref. don't know)	no spirit, God or life force								
		spirit or life force	0.07	0.11***	0.07	0.12**				
		personal God					0.06	0.03*		
	Index of religious beliefs									
	Index of religious practice		0.05	0.02***						

Values	Inglehart index (ref. post-materialism): materialist	−0.07	−0.16***	−0.05	−0.10*	−0.05	−0.10*	−0.08	−0,14*
	rather materialist	−0.07	−0.11***	−0.05	−0.09**			−0.07	−0,12*
	rather post-materialist	−0.04	−0.07***	−0.05	−0.09*				
	Gender roles: women at home	−0.07	−0.09***	−0.09	−0.11***	−0.12	−0.15***	−0.12	−0.14***
	Gender roles: men more suited for career	−0.14	−0.19***	−0.11	−0.15***	−0.09	−0.11***	−0.08	−0.14***
	Moral values: justify cheating and corruption	−0.10	−0.07***	−0.13	−0.07***	−0.11	−0.06***	−0.08	−0.04***
	Moral values: moral rigorism vs liberal values (abortion, euthanasia, suicide, homosexuality)	0.07	0.03***	0.12	0.05***	0.10	0.04***	0.05	0.02*
Political and social attitudes	Left-right scale	−0.11	−0.04***						
	Interest in politics	0.06	0.06***	0.07	0.06***			0.08	0.08***
	National pride								
	EU-scepticism	−0.03	−0.01**					−0.05	−0.01*
	Political distrust	−0.03	−0.04**						
	Preference for autocracy	−0.08	−0.04***	−0.12	−0.05***	−0.16	−0.06***	−0.14	−0.06***
	Approval of surveillance	−0.02	−0.03*	−0.05	−0.05**				
	Voluntary engagement	0.03	0.05***	0.05	0.11**	0.03	0.07*	0.04	0.08*
	Index personal trust					−0.05	−0.09*		
	Index generalised trust	0.09	0.13***	0.08	0.11***	0.09	0.11***		

(continued)

Table 12.8 (continued)

Levels of analysis	Predictors	Indicators	DV environmental consciousness							
			Prosperous states (AT, DK, FI, FR, DE, IS, NO, SE, CH, NL)		Crisis states (HR, IT, ES, GB, PT)		Visegrád countries and Slovenia (HU, PL, SK, SI, CZ)		Southeastern Europe (EE, LT, BU, RO)	
Sociodemographic and structural factors	Gender (0 = male, 1 = female)		0.09	0.15***			0.04	0.06*		0.00*
	Age in years		−0.07	0.00****	−0.06	0.00**	−0.05	0.00*	−0.07	0.00*
	Marital status (Ref. single)	married/registered partnership								
		widowed								
		divorced/separated								
	Children in own household									
	Domicile (Ref. countryside)	5,000–20,000 inhabitants (small cities)								
		20,000–100,000 inhabitants (middle-sized cities)								
		100,000–500,000 inhabitants (large cities)							0.05	0,10*
		500,000 and more (metropolitan areas)							0.07	0,19**
	Education (Ref. tertiary)	lower education (ISCED)	−0.07	−0.15***	−0.07	−0.12**	−0.08	−0.18**	−0.08	−0,16**
		medium education (ISCED)	−0.02	−0.04*			−0.06	−0.10*	−0.06	−0,11*
	ISEI status measure				0.06	0.00**				
	Income (Ref. high income)	low income	−0.03	−0.05*					−0.06	−0,10*
		middle income							−0.04	−0,08*

Country effects	Reference Country	The Netherlands		Portugal		Czechia		Estonia	
	Country 1 (Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania)	0.08	0.23***	−0.19	−0.4***			−0.13	−0.26**
	Country 2 (Denmark, Italy, Poland, Bulgaria)	−0.05	−0.12***			−0.06	−0.12*	−0.25	−0.48***
	Country 3 (Finland, Spain, Slovakia, Romania)	0.06	0.21***			0.07	0.15**	−0.18	−0.34***
	Country 4 (France, GB, Slovenia)	0.05	0.15***	−0.16	−0.32***	−0.07	−0.16**		
	Country 5 (Germany)	0.08	0.21***						
	Country 6 (Iceland)								
	Country 7 (Norway)	−0.03	−0.10**						
	Country 8 (Sweden)	0.03	0.10**						
	Country 9 (Switzerland)	0.12	0.27***						

Standardised and unstandardised coefficients, only significant predictors are shown (* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$)

across all regions, but they are somewhat weaker in Southeastern Europe and the Baltic states.

It is interesting that when it comes to political ideology, this level of explanation is not as important as are basic values. The left–right orientation has an influence on pro-environmental attitudes solely in prosperous Western countries. The index measuring susceptibility to autocracy seems to be far more important to explain a lack of sensitivity towards the environment, because here a significant effect is found in all regions. Besides values, it is primarily civic engagement that seems to be able to set a pro-environmental agenda. The study reveals that political interest and voluntary engagement are equally relevant for environmental concern in all regions. Notably, generalised trust also strengthens global empathy and leads to a higher environmental awareness.

Regarding sociodemographic impact factors, it is interesting that the well-confirmed gender effect holds for prosperous Western countries and for the Visegrád states only. Age still exerts a significant negative influence in all European regions, meaning that the younger generation in particular expresses a higher level of environmental concern. While the educational effect points to a higher level of environmental consciousness among highly qualified individuals, the income effect leads in a similar direction too. Here, rich people in Southeastern Europe in particular recognise the issue of climate change as one of the main societal challenges of the future.

It is obvious that value divides are also rising with regard to climate change in European societies. It is possible to explain a quarter of the variance in Western Europe, but the effects are weaker again when it comes to certain dynamics in the Visegrád countries, in states in Southeastern Europe, or in the Baltic countries.

12.6   Summarising the Results: Future Challenges in the EU and Drivers of Societal Change

Although all results of this study refer to pre-pandemic times, this extensive study has clearly revealed existing polarisations in values and perceptions within European countries and between major European areas. These divisions are likely to deepen rather than diminish in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Concerning the health situation, at the time of writing there is hope for Europe that there is an end at sight. But regarding economic effects and further political disagreement about future European developments, it is quite obvious that Europe remains under pressure and that European integration may face a longer period of political stagnation. The exposure to economic and fiscal states of crisis (in the aftermath of the pandemic), the challenge of heightened political tensions between major European areas, and the social challenges due to identity and redistribution conflicts will prevail, and will potentially leave less space for combating the climate crisis. But it must be noted that country differences are still strong and play a major role in mitigating the effects of crises and driving the public mood in certain directions. The empirical cluster analysis (see Sect. 12.2), which was conducted to confirm the

image of highly diverse European regions, even extends those views. It was clearly visible that welfare state regimes (Esping-Andersen 1999) and historical conditions (Boatcă 2019) influence the formation of basic cultural values and indicate a high level of cultural diversity within Europe that cannot be easily brushed away by political efforts for European integration (Bach, 2015).

But at least the temporal analysis of evolving European trends over time enables us to expect potentially higher levels of social cohesion and inclusion. Although inequalities have been growing between and within European member states (Fredriksen 2012), demands to guarantee a higher social balance between classes are quite strong in Europe. Reviewing the history of capitalism during recent decades, Streeck (2013) proposes that the capitalist class itself has triggered off the renaissance of market dominance. It succeeded in re-establishing neoliberalism since the 1980s, which leads to a gradual corrosion of the modern comforts of the welfare state. But when we focus on public perceptions and aim for monitoring public opinion, the temporal analysis clearly shows that preferences for redistribution have grown over the last decade, being highest at the time of the economic crisis in 2008 (Fig. 12.2). It can be assumed that in these current pandemic times, voices for an appropriate distribution of wealth will become louder again and the issue of redistribution will receive greater attention. But one central argument – especially witnessing the consequences of the pandemic – refers to the future scope of solidarity. Besides a general trend towards redistribution, it is highly plausible that social groups who are not fulfilling the deservingness criteria (van Oorschot 2000) – such as migrants – might be further excluded from society. But interestingly, the empirical data indicates a reverse trend. At least in Western European countries, the population seems to be getting used to cultural diversity and is becoming increasingly open to immigrants. Otherwise, in countries where political discourses of cultural anxiety (Grillo 2003) prevail, and especially in the Eastern European context, perceptions of an ethnic threat remain extraordinarily high. This discrepancy between embracing cultural diversity in the West and strictly avoiding immigration in the East seems to be one of the major causes of dissent in a future unified conception of Europe.

The dividing lines between European regions and within European countries also become visible when we focus on environmental awareness. Here, I assume that concerns about climate change are more likely to cross the threshold of heightened attention in flourishing economic times. This sober view of the environmental crisis may seem to be a cause for disillusionment, but it corresponds with the empirical findings in this study. The time comparison over several survey waves shows that the willingness to spend a part of income on the environment has decreased significantly in almost all Western European countries. This might be due to strong fears of social decline, increasingly affecting the squeezed middle classes in European societies. Environmental protection thus remains an issue for the elites in society, who are generally able to live out their freedoms and adopt a cosmopolitan ethic (Beck and Grande 2004). It remains open as to whether this higher level of environmental awareness is connected with a clear pro-environmental behaviour, because the results of the attitudinal dynamics in this chapter cannot be translated to concrete actions (ElHaffar et al. 2020). In this vein, it should be rather easy for national

political actors to continue to promote a policy of non-sustainability (Blühdorn et al. 2020). Many citizens, especially in Eastern Europe, still follow a materialistic value orientation combined with a rejection of liberal Western views. These gaps between political liberalism in Western Europe and neo-conservatism in Eastern Europe (Bluhm and Varga 2018) probably further inhibit the defining of a common strategy of sustainability within the EU.

In general, it makes sense to speak of *enduring and emerging cleavages* in Europe. When we refer to dynamics of religious affiliation, beliefs, and practices as well as to basic values, these elements seem to be deeply culturally and historically grounded (Eisenstadt 2001). While conventional religious beliefs strongly correlate with traditional world views, we can see that secularism (with Protestant countries in the North taking up the leading role) increases progressive world views. The existing cleavage between conservative values and liberal world views (partly) influenced by religion still has a lot of power to explain current perceptions of an ethnic threat vs. an approval of multicultural society or environmental concerns. It is additionally important to refer to impact factors that are working in different directions to explain ethnic prejudice in Western and Eastern Europe. In Western Europe a higher education level and a higher status seem crucial to cope with social complexity and for people to feel more secure in different interaction settings (Meeusen et al. 2013). In Eastern Europe the education effect turns out to be weaker, the age effect is still more relevant, and higher income groups seem to promote conservative values contrary to Western Europe.

Besides these enduring factors, I would like to define political attitudes and aspects of social inclusion as *emerging* driving forces of current perceptions of societal challenges. Here, the susceptibility to autocracy is seemingly a strong force in reducing preferences for redistribution, perceiving an ethnic threat, and neglecting the issue of climate change. This explanatory factor is a strong predictor in all European geographical areas. Paradoxically, in Western Europe people in precarious positions in particular seem prone to favour values such as achievement and competition, they tend to follow the right-wing logic due to widespread insecurities (Jost et al. 2003), and they diminish their scope of solidarity (Bréchon, Chap. 8, this volume). But the middle classes also become more susceptible to the turn to authoritarian dominance combined with animosities towards outgroups. These dynamics are also visible within higher classes of society when it comes to preferences for redistribution. Those parts of society who are the winners of the current performance logic evince more strongly an egocentric logic and argue for clear class distinctions (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Additionally, we witness a rise in *ethnocentrism* at the bottom of society as disadvantaged groups try to defend their precarious wealth and status by excluding outgroups. In Eastern Europe, the material inequalities between the winners and losers of the system transition might be even larger, whereby the privileged parts of society are still more inclined to favour conservative values and to secure their wealth. While those struggles for recognition (Honneth 1992) become especially visible in conflicts of distribution, we witness an intensified logic of irreconcilability (Dubiel 1997) when it comes to cultural diversity. The debates about a sustainable economy have not affected the general public mood in the same way, even though lines of division in society point in a similar direction.

These preliminary conclusions to disentangle the complex relations between religion, values, and politics and to adequately take social structure and regional contexts into account are, of course, just a starting point for further and more specific research. The pandemic and the resulting social turbulence reflect a good time frame to step in, because it acts like a spotlight (Polak 2020). It makes visible those actors who are urgently needed to maintain society's ability to function. It shines a light on heroes in the care sector who are saving lives through their tireless work. It identifies clearly those groups who are more exposed to health and economic dangers through precarious employment, and it sheds light on the various dimensions of inequality.

In this respect, the empirical findings in this chapter resemble the finding of a needle in the haystack that is a complex European reality. The gaps between generations, social classes, and major European regions also clearly reveal that reactions to the pandemic are highly diverse. They range from forms of radical engagement (by means of protest) to cynical pessimism over a pragmatic acceptance of political measures to heightened future concerns or even a sustained optimism. Depending on how political actors shape perceptions of reality and on which way the pendulum swings, widespread perceptions of the crisis naturally have a subversive influence on institutional dynamics. It seems crucial that the middle class of European societies remain stable and keep its future optimism. This will ultimately determine whether cleavages in Europe grow further or new paths towards social cohesion and a larger scope for solidarity are taken in the future.

Appendix

Table 12.9 Operationalisation of macro indicators for cluster analysis

Levels of Analysis	Indicators	Data Source
Economic sphere	GDP per capita in PPS 2018 (100 = EU-mean)	Eurostat: Code tec00114
	GDP growth rate 2018 (compared to previous year)	Eurostat: Code tec00115
Political sphere	Public debt 2018 (% of GDP)	Eurostat: Code SDG_17_40
	Expenditure on social protection 2017 (PPS/inhabitant)	Eurostat: Code tps00100
	Quality of democracy[a]	University of Würzburg
Social sphere	GINI index 2018 (0–100)	Eurostat: Code ilc_di12
	Unemployment rate 2018 (15–74 years, % of population)	Eurostat: Code une_rt_a
	Poverty and social exclusion 2018 (% of population)	Eurostat: Code t2020_50
Cultural sphere	Proportion of people with migration background	Eurostat: Code migr_pop3ctb

[a]Concerning the measurement of quality of democracy see https://www.demokratiematrix.de/ranking

Table 12.10 The long-term measurements and the scales to measure the three central social challenges based on indicators of the EVS

	Social challenges	Indicators
Timely comparisons of dependent variables (EVS 1990–2018)	*Preference for redistribution*	Preferences for individual efforts or for equalising incomes (original scale from 1 to 10, dichotomised variable measures the proportion of agreement (≥6) (EVS v106))
	Perception of an ethnic threat	When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to (nation) people rather than immigrants (original scale from 1 = agree to 5 = disagree, dichotomised variable measures the proportion of agreement (< 3) (EVS v80))
	Environmental awareness	Giving part of income for the environment (original scale from 1 = agree to 5 = disagree, dichotomised variable measures the proportion of agreement (< 3) (EVS v199))
Operationalisation of dependent variables for regression designs (EVS 2018)	*Preference for redistribution*	• Governments tax the rich and subsidise the poor (EVS v133) • People receive state aid for unemployment (EVS v136) • The state makes people's income equal (EVS v139) (11-point scale from 0 = against democracy to 10 = essential characteristic of democracy)
	Perception of an ethnic threat vs approval of multicultural society	• Immigrants take jobs away vs do not take jobs away (EVS v185) • Immigrants make crime problems worse vs do not make crime problems worse (EVS v186) • Immigrants are a strain on the welfare system vs are not a strain on the welfare system (EVS v187) (10-point scale from 1 = left pole to 10 = right pole)
	Environmental awareness	• It is just too difficult for someone like me to do much about the environment (EVS v200) • There are more important things to do in life than protect the environment (EVS v201) • There is no point in doing what I can for the environment unless others do the same (EVS v202) • Many of the claims about environmental threats are exaggerated (EVS v203) (5-point scale from 1 = agree strongly to 5 = disagree strongly)

Table 12.11 The operationalisation of religiosity and basic values in the EVS 2017

Attitudes	Indicators	Scale characteristics
Religiosity	*Confession (v52)*	• Six categories (1 = Roman Catholic, 2 = Protestant, 3 = Free Church, Nonconformist, Evangelical, 4 = Muslim, 5 = Orthodox, 6 = Other)
	Self-declaration (v62)	• Which statement is closest to your beliefs? (1 = no spirit, god or life force, 2 = spirit or life force, 3 = personal god, 4 = I do not know what to think)
	Index of religious beliefs	• Do you believe in: God? (v57) (0 = no, 1 = yes) • Do you believe in: life after death? (v58) (0 = no, 1 = yes) • Do you believe in: hell? (v59) (0 = no, 1 = yes) • Do you believe in: heaven? (v60) (0 = no, 1 = yes) (summative index from 0 = believe in nothing to 4 = believe in everything)
	Index of religious practice	• How often do you attend religious services? (v54) • How often do you pray outside religious services? (v64) (7-point scale from 1 = daily, more than once a week to 7 = never)
Basic values	*Inglehart index (v111_4)*	• four categories (from 1 = materialist to 4 = post-materialist)
	Gender roles: women at home	• Child suffers with working mother (v72) • Women really want home and children (v73) • Family life suffers when woman has full-time job (v74) • Man's job is to earn money; woman's job is to look after home and family (v75) (4-point scale from 1 = do not agree to 4 = fully agree)
	Gender roles: men more suited for career	• Men make better political leaders than women (v76) • University education more important for a boy than for a girl (v77) • Men make better business executives than women (v78) (4-point scale from 1 = do not agree to 4 = fully agree)
	Moral values: justify cheating and corruption	• Do you justify: claiming state benefits? (v149) • Do you justify: cheating on tax? (v150) • Do you justify: accepting a bribe? (v152) • Do you justify: avoiding a fare on public transport? (v159) (10-point scale from 1 = never justified to 10 = always justified)
	Moral values: moral rigorism vs liberal values (abortion, euthanasia, suicide, homosexuality)	• Do you justify: homosexuality? (v153) • Do you justify: abortion? (v154) • Do you justify: divorce? (v155) • Do you justify: euthanasia? (v156) • Do you justify: suicide? (v157) • Do you justify: having casual sex? (v158) • Do you justify: artificial insemination or in-vitro fertilization? (v161) (10-point scale from 1 = never justified to 10 = always justified)

Table 12.12 The operationalisation of political and social attitudes in the EVS 2017

Attitudes	Indicators	Scale characteristics
Political Attitudes	**Left–right scale (v102)**	• 10-point scale from 1 = left to 10 = right
	Interest in politics (v97)	• 4-point scale from 1 = not at all interested to 4 = very interested
	National pride (v170)	• 4-point scale from 1 = not at all proud to 4 = very proud
	EU-scepticism (v198)	• 10-point scale from 1 = EU enlargement should go further to 10 = gone too far
	Political distrust	• Trust in parliament (v121) • Trust in political parties (v130) • Trust in the government (v131) (4-point scale, 1 = a great deal to 4 = none at all)
	Susceptibility to autocracy	• People choose their leaders in free elections (v135_rec) • Civil rights protect people from state oppression (v138_rec) • Women have the same rights as men (v141_rec) (11-point scale from 0 = essential for democracy to 10 = against democracy)
	Approval of surveillance	• Government: public area under video surveillance (v205) • Government: monitor all information exchanged on the internet (v206) • Government: collect information about anyone without their knowledge (v207) (4-point scale from 1 = should have the right to 4 = should not have the right)
Social attitudes	**Voluntary engagement (v21)**	• Did you do voluntary work in the last 6 months? (0 = no, 1 = yes)
	Personal Trust	• How much you trust: your family? (v32_rec) • How much you trust: people in your neighbourhood? (v33_rec) • How much you trust: people you know personally? (v34_rec) (4-point scale from 1 = do not trust at all to 4 = trust completely)
	Generalised Trust	• How much you trust: people you meet for the first time? (v35_rec) • How much you trust: people of another religion? (v36_rec) • How much you trust: people of another nationality? (v37_rec) (4-point scale from 1 = do not trust at all to 4 = trust completely)

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Dr Wolfgang Aschauer (*1979) is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology and Human Geography at the University of Salzburg (Austria). His main research fields are quantitative methods (particularly cross-national survey research) and challenges of social integration and societal change (particularly social cohesion, societal wellbeing in Europe). In 2015, he completed his habilitation project 'The Societal Malaise of EU Citizens. Causes, Characteristics, Consequences'. The book was published by Springer VS in German in 2017. In 2020, he was awarded as Fulbright-Botstiber Professor for Austrian–American Studies and completed a research stay at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs (Harvard University).

Chapter 13
Values Education, Politics and Religion

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Bernhard Grümme

Abstract Values are controversial and the discourse on values is a discourse on crisis. Simultaneously, it becomes clear that values must also be learned. This connection between values and education becomes even more dynamic when one enters the field of religion and politics. How can religious or even Christian values be conveyed in the heterogeneity of late-modern societies in such a way that they have an orienting and meaningful effect without demoting the goals of autonomy? The reflections here aim to develop a profile of values education, which will then be defined with examples from the EVS research. The following considerations attempt to clarify the concept of values, develop a profile of religious values education, and provide a real-life illustration of this by using the example of compassion education. In doing so, the following thesis is validated: Religious education is by no means identical to values education. But it can make a critical and productive contribution to the current discourse on values precisely because of its specificity regarding the idea of God and its integrative, politically dimensioned concept of education. This concept of education is self-reflexive, since it includes consideration of the unreflective assumptions of the EVS and its context.

Keywords Religion · Formation · Education · Values · Autonomy

Whenever young people party cheerfully in city centres and destroy glass bottles, when people do not pay their cleaner adequately, underground trains are polluted, or managers defraud millions, we hear proclaimed a decay of morals and a loss of values such as solidarity, public spirit, and responsibility. It seems that values are always invoked when a deficit of cultural, individual, or societal resources for shaping the common good and individual life is identified. Obviously, the discourse on values is a discourse on crisis. People attempt to counter the diagnosed phenomena of social disintegration, cultural distortion, or even individual deficits in orientation and meaning with an increased commitment to questions of values. This certainly

B. Grümme (✉)
Faculty of Catholic Theology, Ruhr-University Bochum, Bochum, Germany

includes this volume, which researches values concepts in Europe and meticulously differentiates between the processes of secularisation and religious and values-related individualisation in the respective regions. Demands are made for an increased effort to impart values, with the perception that previous attempts to impart values ('Wertevermittlung') have failed (Ziebertz 2010). This call for the teaching of values is made to institutions such as the family and school. Not coincidentally, it is also made to those involved in religious pedagogy, because religion is believed to have a value-generating, meaning-creating, and orientating power, with religious education in schools in particular supposed to impart values. But is that really the task of religious education? What enables it to carry out this task? The connection between values, politics, religion, and education that can be discerned here generates an urgent need to think more closely from the perspective of religious pedagogy – which academically reflects the instances of religious education such as religious teaching – with a precise question: What contribution can religious pedagogy make to the current discourse on values in a late-modern society and the question of the imparting of values? What are the possibilities, what are the limits, and what are the normative and hermeneutic implications?

The following considerations attempt to justify the thesis: Religious education is by no means identical to values education ('Wertebildung'). But it can make a critical and productive contribution to the current discourse on values precisely because of its specificity regarding the idea of God and its integrative, politically dimensioned concept of education.

This requires a comprehensive introduction with several stages. First, the problem needs to be further honed in order to specify the initial question (1) and to clarify basic concepts (2). In this context, it is vital to work out the specifics of religious values (3). Only then can the profile of religious values education (4) and its politically dimensioned and communication-theoretical structure (5) be uncovered. A real-life example will then illustrate this (6). The understanding of religious education taken as a basis here stands within the framework of a self-reflexive and politically dimensioned public religious pedagogy (7). Its meaning must be justified in the field of empiricism. This will be done here on the basis of two selected European Values Study (EVS) fields (8), before an evaluation of the critical-constructive contribution of religious pedagogy and a view to the future conclude the considerations (9). However, one must bear in mind that there is no such thing as *the* religious pedagogy; religious pedagogy is contextually, religiously, and politically differentiated. For example, religious pedagogy in Germany (which is itself heterogeneous) differs in its relative autonomy in relation to church and state from religious pedagogy in Poland, where religious pedagogy is significantly ecclesiocentric and catechetically oriented and where even the term itself is disputed (Milerski 2013; Rothgangel et al. 2020). The contextuality of my remarks must be taken into account, therefore, if only when it comes to specifying the question.

13.1 Specification of the Question

The relationship between the identification of a crisis and the intensity of the discourse on values, as the above has indicated, has a peculiar albeit paradoxical similarity to the relationship between diagnosis and treatment. The deeper the identified deficit, the more energetic the insistence on values. This paradox lies in the fact that the relationship invokes something as a precondition that is itself in need of legitimation. The assumption that values should be effective in the background of subjective existence and social coexistence is already based on a presupposition that is itself based on certain values. The empirical research question about the connection between political systems and values or religion and politics, as it is also presented in the EVS, is based on preconditions that must first be legitimised discursively. Weymans, (Chap. 3, this volume) shows impressively the political instrumentalisation of values. And the investigation that is particularly important at present – to identify what values are supposed to be and to argue if they need to be taught – is itself dependent on value-related preconditions. The basic assumption that society and politics in late-modern transformation processes should be value-guided and value-bearing at all is quite controversial. The dispute over value judgements, which is still simmering in the philosophy of science today, problematises the value guidance of research (Lindner 2017a). While for some science consists precisely in abstaining from basic value-guided assumptions, for others science is situated in the value-guided circle of knowledge and interest, based on the insights of a hermeneutic circle in the philosophy of science. This dispute is currently reflected in the assessment of the climate crisis. Some, for example the Fridays for Future movement, focus on sustainability, climate justice, and a radical departure from previous patterns of capitalist economic structures, cultural processes of self-understanding, and consumer behaviour. Others bring into play the complexity of social differentiation processes in the transformations of late modernity, suggesting that decisions in modern heterogeneous societies cannot be organised and justified on the basis of certain values and that translations between different social systems and their diverse value systems alone are capable of structuring society and justifying political decisions. The condemnation of 'moralisation' arises easily in this context. This was the case especially during the refugee crisis of 2015, when the term was used pejoratively and with politically charged force in debates. It is still a burning topic in disputes within the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD, Protestant Church of Germany) about a refugee ship.

However, it should come as no surprise that the intensification of phenomena and semantics resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic is also reflected in the field of values. Where problems of social segregation become magnified/more intense during a crisis, the debate on values also becomes more dynamic. Against the background of the functional differentiation of politics, law, morality, and religion, this is not without piquancy. While debates on values have always been appealing, in

Germany the approach pursued by government in dealing with the pandemic is based on the two-pronged strategy of regulatory and criminal law on the one hand and an appeal to a sense of responsibility for the common good on the other. Admittedly, this means that the government is also taking a firm stand on controversial values issues. In the debates conducted in empirical social research (especially by Ronald Inglehart and Helmut Klages) about a change in values in the twentieth century from materialistic to post-materialistic values, from 'collective obligation values to individual self-fulfilment values' (Wagensommer 2020: 118; Schambeck and Pemsel-Maier 2017), the executive takes a one-sided stand against personal self-fulfilment values, which are often even morally discredited in the media. In view of the assessment of the threat posed by the pandemic, it is not the dominance of the executive that is problematic, insofar as it is legally secured. What needs to be clarified in the context of a plural society is rather its value-based positioning. When certain values are insisted upon, the old debate on basic values and the almost forgotten question of a guiding culture are reactivated under pandemic conditions (Schambeck 2017).

This intensifies the challenge for religious pedagogy to give a precise account of how it wants to be involved in these socially and politically charged discourses on values. Religious pedagogy must be able to demonstrate its critical-constructive connectivity to the diverse discourses, and this requires an embedding *in* these discourses, which itself requires conceptual clarification.

13.2   Conceptual Clarifications

The discourse on values is an ethical discourse. There is a 'growing need for ethics' (Englert 2008: 816; Wagensommer 2020) in order for people to be able to cope with the complex and dynamic field of ethically relevant decisions and changing values that is becoming increasingly visible and intense. What is meant by 'ethics'? Ethics is the form of reflection on good and evil, right and wrong, which is ordered towards morality lived in the real world in the form of chosen actions, action preferences and rules of action. Philosophical and theological ethics both reflect on the 'morality of morality' from their own particular horizon 'and examine, seek and develop reasons for its confirmation or criticism, practical recognition or change' (Lutz-Bachmann 2013: 19). Ethics and morality are therefore related to each other like grammar and living language (Ernst 2009; Habermas 1991). Values, norms, and virtues must be distinguished terminologically. Virtues are understood to be certain moral attitudes of the subject that are habitualised to a certain degree. Norms are prescriptive, 'ought' regulations that guide the moral action, thinking, and willing of the subject from the outside, but which are dynamic. Norms are thus 'to be understood as *positively marked possibilities*' (Möllers 2018: 14) that are to be realised. Values, on the other hand, are subject-directed goals of morality that are not actually developed by the subject themselves, but which nevertheless guide the subject's own desires. In this respect, evaluations are to be understood 'as an elementary form of the

normative' (Möllers 2018: 403). Norms are oriented towards values and are obliga-tory and prescriptive. Values, however, in their teleological orientation towards the good, arise from the fact that subjects allow themselves to be taken in by them and freely bind themselves to them (Lindner 2017a, b). Admittedly, the central philo-sophical and legal-theoretical discussions revolve around the precise identification of the relationship between values and norms; the objectivity or subjectivity of val-ues and their cognitive, knowledge-accessible or non-cognitive character, attainable via intuitions and affect; and the universalisability of values.

Their respective shapes are, of course, themselves the result of positional judge-ments, as can be seen in the fundamental tension in discourse on values. For some, values provide orientation and create meaning because they can be derived from an already existing arsenal of values arising from natural law and, ontologically, from a supreme good or an intuitive view of values. Such a materialism of values, in which values can only be retrieved and applied situationally, is disputed in post-metaphysical thought patterns. There, values owe their existence to highly complex processes of value generalisation, which must then be discursively identified and justified in order to gain validity (Wagensommer 2020; Lindner 2017b). Values thus emerge in a processual way through discourse and experience.

Both contrasting positions, however, assume that values must be learned. It is only the design and orientation of the learning process that are questioned. The concept of values education therefore acquires a semantic ambiguity that leads us to the specifics of religious pedagogy. According to Roland Verwiebe (2019), the term 'values education' means, on the one hand, value formation processes in which values are determined in terms of content, in which catalogues of values are shaped. In addition to this shaping of values, it is also about the genesis of values, about knowledge, learning, communication, and an educational confrontation with them (Polak and Klaiber 2019). For such a processual, experiential, and pragmatic phi-losophy of values, as elaborated by Hans Joas, values are formed in experiential, intersubjective processes of self-transcendence and self-formation, where subjects feel touched by something and understand themselves as being brought beyond themselves and from there oriented towards the good. Values thus take on a dynamic, creative, subject-oriented, and contextual character, since they must prove them-selves anew and be changed in the face of changing challenges precisely because of their binding power, allowing people to explore and discover what the orienting and meaningful good in each case is (Joas 1999; Lindner 2017a; Lindner 2017b). Overall, a movement from 'essentialist' to 'relationist' values can be observed in the discourse on values (Ebertz 2017). This is reinforced by migration and globali-sation. As a result of their cultural foundation, values are often understood by migrants as a 'portable home' (Freise 2017), which leads to self-constructions that are identity relevant but at the same time can promote processes of exclusion because they are often not the same as those of the majority society. Against this complex background, the current discourse on values does not speak of a 'loss of values', but rather, with a view to the contextuality of thinking with good reasons, of a 'change in values', because it is actually not the values that change, but the 'subjective value rankings' (Wagensommer 2020). Subjects are fundamentally

involved in the intersubjective process of values education, which has significant consequences for religious pedagogy. Values are not, then, an object that can simply be transferred like a package. Values education has to be communicative.

13.3 The Specificity of Christian Discourses on Values

Theological ethics meanwhile emphasises the autonomous nature of ethics and values. Accordingly, there are no specifically Christian values, but rather dynamisations of values in the light of basic theological statements such as the image of God, gifted freedom, and the unconditional dignity of the human being coming from God. Christian faith motivates, initiates, and can also inspire specific attitudes and actions (Hilpert 2009). Christian faith focuses on the idea of God. It *is* not ethics; rather it *has* ethics. Christian faith in the ever greater God protects, dynamises, orients, but also frames ethics (Grümme 2018a). Faith in God is more than ethics. This is why the remarkable admonition by a leading politician that the imparting of values is the task of all school subjects, but that religious teaching finds its indispensable specificity in bringing up the idea of God in an experiential and critically productive way, should give us pause for thought (Thierse 2001).

It is relevant for the discourse on values that from a secular and democratic perspective this feature of the discourse is considered highly significant for the common good. Jürgen Habermas has marked the difference between a Kant-inspired communicative freedom and a Christian ethic of love. This has essentially to do with the supererogatory character of this freedom, which knows itself to be endowed and taken into service as liberated freedom:

> A supererogatory action that goes beyond what can be expected of *anyone* on the basis of reciprocity means the active sacrifice of one's own legitimate interests for the good or the reduction of the suffering of the other in need of help. The discipleship of Christ requires of the believer the sacrificium, on the premise, of course, that we freely accept this active sacrifice, sanctified in the light of a just and good God, of an absolute judge. (Mendieta 1999: 206)

For Habermas, the increasingly 'derailing modernization' that can 'wear down' the democratic bond and 'wear out' solidarity points to such traditions outside formal, procedural rationality (Habermas 2005: 109, 111). Practical rationality already misses its 'own destiny when it no longer has the power to awaken and keep awake in profane minds an awareness of solidarity that has been violated worldwide, an awareness of what is missing, of what cries out to heaven' (Habermas 2008: 30; Habermas 2001). In the face of increasing crises, the democratic state in particular needs an internally guided, conviction-based legitimation of its citizens that goes beyond mere pragmatic acceptance. In this respect, it is based on pre-political sources so that it does not cut itself off from 'dwindling resources of meaning, solidarity and justice' (Habermas 2008: 99) that are also capable of motivating supererogatory actions.

Admittedly, this raises the controversial question of universalisable standards. Such standards of judgement – purely immanent, without horizons beyond the concrete contexts and visions of the good – would be impossible. 'Who wants to tell the critic of the Indian caste system, who completely rejects it, to please proceed "immanently"? Or remind the critic of patriarchy in a society where it has hardly ever been challenged not to speak a "foreign language"?' (Forst 2015: 15). For Hans Joas, systems that create meaning, such as Christianity, provide an overarching standard because they 'motivate a break with egocentric perspectives' and do not have the 'happiness of the members of one's own culture or faith community in mind alone' (Joas 1999: 287). Religions in particular can 'provide strong universalistic values that are capable of overcoming cultural boundaries, indeed that reckon with and presuppose such differences' (Ebertz 2017: 33). Nevertheless, this standard remains too weak in view of the limited possibility of the universalisation of religions. With communication-theoretical approaches, I emphasise the interest in universal identifiability, but frame this with a certain action-theoretical rationality. Accordingly, in the current heterogeneity of life environments, only those values are capable of universalisation that can be justified freely and equally by all at least potentially involved in a mutual, thus reciprocal, and general manner (Forst 2007). In the light of this normative criterion, those values and value structures that 'do not fulfil the standard of reciprocal and general justification and are characterised by forms of exclusion, privileges and domination' (Forst 2011: 20) appear to be illegitimate. Thus, value thinking must be substantiated post-metaphysically in modernity and identified critically and contextually.

However, the contextuality of discourse on values draws attention to another important point to which religious pedagogy must orient itself – that the discourse on values has to do with power. This discourse, which initially emerged from a metric-economic field that considered values predominantly in categories concerning the accumulation of goods and finances, is ultimately the counterdesign to far-reaching social and individual experiences of crisis. After the disruption of the systems of idealism, with the impossibility of an overall systematic interpretation of reality and the resulting loss of orientation in thought and action, the philosophy of values attempted in the nineteenth century 'to remedy the situation by proving the objective validity of values' and to take this as the occasion for 'a fundamental reflection on the value and the value-determinacy of human performance (thinking, willing, acting, etc.)' (Krijnen 2011: 548). Even in the social experiences of insecurity in the 1980s, the conservative call for a virtue-oriented 'courage to educate' was passionately discussed in educational sciences in order to counter the loss of values identified at the time (Benner 1978). Here, however, the indeterminacy of the concept of values increases its 'attractiveness when it comes to bringing up the widespread concern about custom and morality [… which] is usually a conservative rhetoric of "everything used to be better"' (Schnädelbach 2012: 166). Quite obviously, the concept of value is used to 'designate what is socially desirable' (Lindner 2017a: 101). Against this background, critical attention should certainly be aroused if value discourses are now increasingly gaining momentum in various researches. This applies to religious pedagogy as well as to values research, including the EVS,

and should be seen as an indication of the experience of social crisis, but also of theoretical power interests that may be at play. Such affirmative tendencies make it necessary to question the connection between 'normativity and power' and to critically examine the discourse on values and thus the discourse on values education within the framework of a critical theory with regard to its hegemonic structures (Forst 2015; Brown 2015). Only in this way can values and normative orientations be appropriately justified in relation to religious pedagogy. But what does this mean more precisely for the education processes around religious values? We must now consider these in more detail.

13.4   Values in Education and Upbringing. Setting the Course

Highly relevant for the discourse on values is first the difference and mutual relationship between education and upbringing (Domsgen 2019; Englert 2007). The process of upbringing starts from the object, from society, and from culture. Upbringing aims to place people in given contexts, in society, in groups, in culture and political systems, in world views, in religions and the church, and thus in certain value systems. The subject is predominantly thought of as passive – the object of educational processes. Teachers and parents are instigators of this process of upbringing. Accordingly, values education means the diachronic and synchronic transmission of values for the continuity of institutions, identities, and structures. Value formation instructs in existing structures.

Education, on the other hand, starts from the subject and ultimately aims at the subject. Education arises from the self-activity of the subjects, who set their own goals. The subject is the agent of an educational process. In that process, a subject actively, critically, and constructively engages with its object world with the goal of maturity and autonomy. In the traditions of Rousseau, Kant, Herder, Schiller, and Humboldt, the goal of education is not to be knowledgeable, mobile, functioning, adapted, and fitted into political contexts, culture, society, and economy. It is to be self-responsible, free, mature, and capable of judgement. Education aims at emancipation and enlightenment – at the realisation of human destiny. The theology of the image of God embedded into the concept of education in Judeo-Christian traditions signifies the internal historical incompleteness and utopian overspill of education. Such educational processes find their measure in the potential self-determination of human beings. The 'pedagogical paradox' (Peukert 1987a), the aporia of how freedom and maturity can be initiated in a relationship of coercion and inequality, in which the pupil should always be able to turn critically against the content, norms, and methods chosen, remains unresolvable. Religious education can therefore be characterised as a 'language school for freedom' (Lange 1980; Peukert 1987b; Platzbecker 2013), as a process in which people become capable of perception, action, speech, and judgement in their socio-cultural and political context under the liberating yet challenging claim of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Out of the spirit of eschatological hope, it brings a comparative, permanent opening to otherness – to

something greater – to educational processes. In this way it is transformational (Grümme 2019).

For the discourse on values as it is also dealt with in the EVS, a considerable connectivity becomes apparent here. The orientation towards free subjectivity in the linguistically mediated contextual processes of history and society marks the value-generating, freely binding power of the subjects in an axiomatic way, as well as the categorical contradiction of a values education that narrows itself as a purely inner formation of the heart and attitude of the individual subject. Of course, upbringing and education are intrinsically interrelated in many dimensions. In terms of values pedagogy, this points to the great importance of given value structures and traditions, though these are always to be understood within the framework of autonomy. In this sense, values education functions as a normative as well as a critical standard for upbringing in values.

13.5   Practical Communication. Contours of Religious Values Education

Values discourses in philosophy and in theology are in agreement with the fundamental statement that values have to be learned. Whether values education is shaped as value grading or value generalisation, it is not self-evident; it does not always make sense intuitively (Lindner 2017b). In contrast to values upbringing, religious values education emphasises the importance of internally guided understanding, experience-based reflection, and critical self-reflection. If one overlooks the discourse of ethical education in general and values education in particular, a dynamic emerges in two fields that is highly significant for the discussion of the EVS. On the one hand, there is a differentiation arising from the specificity of school form/class/grade and place of learning. Values formation takes place in parishes, in institutions of religious adult education, and in education for the elderly. It has established itself in different types of schools and at different age levels with different didactic focuses (Domsgen 2019; Wagensommer 2020; Lindner 2017b). On the other hand, values education is becoming increasingly sensitive to interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Religions are being addressed in the context of integration, but with a highly significant dialectic. On the one hand, they are supposed to be a ferment of integration in civil society, while on the other hand, they are seen as obstacles to integration. Distorted images of Islam – especially its alleged incompatibility with democracy and affinity with violence, which are constructed through its identification with Islamism, along with anti-Semitic stereotypes – are gaining momentum in societies that are disintegrating economically and politically. As a result, comparative research and the internationalisation of the discourse on values are becoming more important, as can be seen not least in EVS. Intercultural theology and interreligious education are thus becoming relevant in the field of values education (Meyer 2019).

According to Hans-Georg Ziebertz, this kind of values education, within the horizon of the Christian biblical tradition, aims at the ability to 'conduct practical discourses on values and to develop a capacity for judgement that enables one to make responsible decisions with regard to the questions: What do I have to do? What should we do? What should be valid? What is desirable and sustainable – for me and for others?' (Ziebertz 2010: 434). But how is this religious values education to take place in a subject-oriented and autonomy-oriented form in such a way that values can be brought to bear at the same time (Sajak 2015)? Research in the sociology of religion as well as the EVS point out that because of secularisation, individualisation, pluralisation, and deconfessionalisation in large parts of Western Europe, an uninterrupted and unbowed transmission of religious values can no longer be assumed (Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). This requires an enormous dynamisation of values education (Grümme 2017). This heterogeneous complexity and the interdependence of political, societal, and religious aspects needs to be identified and proven in the values education of religious pedagogy. On the one hand, it is necessary to instil values for the sake of the formation of the subject's judgement and autonomy and the common good. On the other hand, these values must be instilled in such a way that they do not undermine the goals of autonomy in form and content.

Hans-Georg Ziebertz (2010) has worked out four procedures of values education, which he discovers diachronically as well as synchronically in religious pedagogy (Grümme 2018a). These have always been prevalent in the history of Christian moral education:

1. The *transmission of values*, which aims to convey given values in an orienting way. Whether in patristic pedagogy with Augustine or in medieval monastic and urban middle schools, or even in the modern schools of the Reformation, this form of moral learning is focused on the transmission of the Church's moral teachings to the next generation. The focus is not on the subjects but on the message (Ziebertz and Roebben 2017). It is a material ethics in the context of a largely closed, particular universe of values into which the children and young people are introduced by moral pedagogical impulses. Its yield lies in the rootedness of this morality in the lifeworld ('Lebenswelt'), which receives consolidation and motivation from there. It offers the consistency of a catalogue of values that provides orientation and meaning, as it corresponds to the logic of material ethics of values elaborated above. Its limitation, however, lies in its inability to adequately cope with the pluralism of values. It remains heteronomous (Meyer-Ahlen 2010).

2. The *elucidation of values*, which is intended to reflectively illuminate the internalised values of the students. While the first model is deductively oriented and promotes fitting into what already exists, the inductively structured second model leads to a reduction to individually significant values. Here, only those values that are present in the subject are revealed, but they are hardly learned ethically.

3. In contrast, the third model of *values development* aims to initiate a gradual increase of competence in moral judgement. In Lawrence Kohlberg's approach, the discussion of moral conflicts through dilemma stories is intended to enable principled ethical judgement. This structural-genetic model pervades the inner teleology from an egoistic to a universalistic and increasingly internalised justification of moral judgements (Schmid 2015). As convincing as this model is with regard to the genesis of ethical judgement, there remain reservations with regard to a cognitive narrowing or even an 'apolitical' moralising (Sutor 1980; Grümme 2009).

4. It is therefore not surprising that this is joined by a more interactional model: the model of *values communication*. Based on the concept of communicative rationality of Jürgen Habermas and Helmut Peukert, the focus here is on participation in argumentative discussion processes. It aims to make the ability to communicate and argue possible through a change of perspective from the situation of all others. Maturity is thereby increasingly presupposed in the process, in accordance with the pedagogical paradox. It is about the argumentative examination of validity claims and the clarification of which values and values orientations can claim validity (Ziebertz 2010). If there are no more values, no more sets of norms and virtues that can be validly unquestioned as material and formal horizons of justification and goals, then the formation of ethical value orientations and their critical reflection have to be placed in the foreground. The focus is on critical judgement with regard to contextually pressing moral problems. Helmut Peukert (1987a) exemplarily shows how this approach is rooted in concepts of communication theory on the one hand and a correlatively connected anthropologically directed theology on the other hand. An 'ethics of intersubjective creativity' should, with recourse to the well-rehearsed impulses of the Judeo-Christian tradition, enable subjects to master the challenges of the present in the service of their autonomy and, to this end, to be able to critically and transformatively deal with traditional and currently propagated value structures in the search for 'jointly supported orientations' (Knauth 2017: 155).

In contrast to privatisation and immunity from politics, the integration of religious values education into social processes should be considered (Grümme 2009; Gärtner and Herbst 2020). Drawing on research from critical political education, which seeks to counteract the 'individualisation of social problems' (Lösch 2020: 400), I vote for the concept of a political dimension to religious pedagogy, which configures religious education 'against any individualization and privatization' (Könemann 2020: 197) in its social, political, and structural aspects, without disregarding the importance of aesthetics, critical judgement, and emotionality. It is precisely the idea of the subject that ensures that the political dimension of religious teaching does not absorb the subjects into structural contexts. Rather, it is a matter of mediating reference to self and to the world with each other and of transferring them into critical contexts of evaluation, which not only questions prevailing ideologies and

hegemonic tendencies in an ideology-critical way, but at the same time self-critically reflects on its own place in them (Grümme 2009; Grümme 2017; Grümme 2019).

This political dimension of religious values education results in an important distinction between two forms of learning in religious values education. *Social learning* attempts to guide the subject towards solidarity and reasonable self-determination and co-determination. It aims for the willingness and ability to communicate, to cooperate, to show solidarity and responsible conflict-solving behaviour, to develop a stable ego identity, social sensitivity, perspective-taking, tolerance, critical faculties, and the appropriate handling of rules. Social learning is ethically and inter-communicatively oriented. The focus is on personal social competences in relation to the self, the peer group, the family, and the community. *Political learning*, on the other hand, aims at political maturity. It is about power, legal order, ideology and manipulation, domination and interest, the meaning and function of political institutions, and the normative orientation of the political. It is about loyalty and criticism, and about support and transformation. In contrast to face-to-face interaction, political learning is thus systemic and structurally oriented and relates to the context of society as a whole (Wohnig 2017; Herdegen 1999; Massing 2007).

This points to concrete forms of learning in religious values education. Since values education aims to shape judgement and motivation as well as action, it goes without saying that such learning in religious education integrates cognitive, affective, and volitive moments in order to transcend a cognitivist narrowing and instead shape a 'prosocial sensitisation as holistic moral education' (Hilger 2006: 239). This is articulated in forms of learning 'that go beyond purely cognitive activation and also touch on feelings and imaginations, basic attitudes and life goals, lifestyles and role models respectively models' (Englert 2017: 93). Based on the experience that before all morality to be created, a good life is based on an obligatory justification and from there gains strength, impulses, and reserves of resistance, religious values education aims for the ability to empathise, and at social cognition as learning through insight and prosocial action. Cognitive methods are thus to be complemented by learning from the model, by learning through instruction, and by learning through social affirmation. Performative experiences of morally relevant practice must be made possible (Mette 1994). It is always important to initiate such attitudes of perspective-taking, commitment to the community, participation, and sociomoral responsibility in an action-oriented way and with recourse to experiential and formative pedagogical foundations. Constructivist, strictly subject-oriented approaches prove their particular relevance here (Rekus 2000; Schlag 2011). Teaching and places of learning outside of school must be distinguished not least by their learning setting and – especially under the specific challenges of the all-day structure of the school – to be productively related to each other. Accordingly, subject-oriented, experience-oriented, and action-oriented approaches such as the dilemma method, narrative ethics, biographical learning, learning from local heroes and local victims, learning from injustice, diaconal learning, or social internships form important elements of ethical judgement formation (Meyer-Ahlen 2010; Kropač 2012; Mendl 2015). Nevertheless, where religious values education

disregards the embedding in political-economic contexts – where one thinks that a change of heart or a transformation of the communitarian relations of interpersonal togetherness would correspond to the complexity of reality, the formative imprints of society, culture, and history as well as the dynamics of the Kingdom of God – the political framing of religious education draws attention to structural-systemic effects and transfers them into educational contexts that assert themselves without the person knowing. This, however, presupposes a concept of religious education that can constructively and critically confront the challenges and ideological tendencies of the discourse on values outlined above and already points to what such a concept of religious values education could introduce into the diverse public spheres of late-modern societies with their thoroughly heterogeneous value concepts, as the EVS shows with its comparative analysis of value concepts in Europe. Let us illustrate what has been said with an impressive example.

13.6 Compassion: A Role Model for Values Education in Late Modern Society

Compassion, a difficult term that can best be translated as pity, sympathy, involvement, solidarity, and 'being human for others' (Kuld 2008: 13; Kuld 2003), is the key concept, principle, and guiding word of a large-scale social project in schools in Germany. As part of a social internship, pupils usually spend 2 weeks in social institutions such as care homes for elderly people, kindergartens, institutions for those with disabilities, or hospitals. They are prepared for this in class and accompanied by (religion) teachers during the internship. After the internship, they reflect on their experiences and the internship portfolios they have created (Kuld and Gönnheimer 2000).

Theologically, the Compassion Project is shaped by a mysticism of compassion, as elaborated in particular by Johann Baptist Metz as the key word of Christianity:

> The mysticism of the Bible – in monotheistic traditions – is at its core a political mysticism. More closely, a mysticism of political, of social compassion. Its categorical imperative is: wake up, open your eyes! Jesus does not teach a mysticism of closed eyes, but a mysticism of open eyes and thus of the unconditional duty to perceive other people's suffering. (Metz et al. 2000: 8)

The main leaders emphasise that this religious meaning does not necessarily have to be connected with the Compassion Project, because it is not about normative pedagogy and imparting a religious world view but about practising an ethical attitude of social responsibility and solidarity. Nevertheless, this is certainly where the difficulty of the transferability of this project – initially developed for Roman Catholic schools – lies, because of the undeniable connection between the project and religious motivation. In a combination of experiential, reflexive, and pragmatic moments, it aims to 'develop socially committed attitudes such as solidarity, cooperation and communication with people who, for whatever reason, are dependent on

the help of others' (Kuld 2008: 13). The project aims to develop dispositions towards altruism, willingness to cooperate, prosociality, affection, benevolence, and empathy and solidarity with those who are suffering. The Compassion Project can be distinguished from other forms of prosocial learning or practical social activities in education in that action-oriented experience, information, reflection, and evaluation are linked together. Only under these conditions can behavioural motivations and attitudes be initiated. Feelings alone oscillate and do not lead to the establishment of ethical attitudes. Therefore, the Compassion Project, which is accompanied broadly by religious pedagogy, pedagogy and learning psychology, and which has also just been evaluated on its success (Kuld 2004), belongs in the context of school learning, though it is, strictly speaking, a form of opening up school.

This values education project has been discussed quite critically. Is it not reduced to social learning? Does it reach the political level? First, one must consider its limited claim. It does not claim to create a better person. Nor does it intend to be a 'repair shop for society'. The limits of school learning prevent immediate social transformation. Because the school reaches all adolescents like no other social institution or like no other social or civil society or church milieu, the school 'cannot solve the problems of society, but it can show how to reflect on these problems and what approaches there are to solving them and what the consequences of these solutions are' (Kuld 2004: 13). That is why targeted care for the neighbour cannot solve the phenomena of social crisis. 'Nevertheless, the Compassion Project sees itself as a measure against the social death of cold. In this respect, the Compassion project is political' (Kuld and Gönnheimer 2000: 10). The Compassion Project thus concentrates recognisably on social learning and opens up to the political in the broad and best sense of politics. Of course, learning at school is always subject to reservations concerning reality. Being able to bring socio-political reality into the classroom in a selective way only is an institutional limitation but at the same time an advantage of school. The question is to what extent those involved in this project aim to protect the concept from the danger, which they recognise, of it being a vade mecum (handbook or guide) and 'repair workshop' for social conflicts or merely a cure for the symptoms of crises. This danger could be minimised if the categories of thought within the concept were to go beyond the interpersonal into structural categories that would also consider structural interests, conditions of domination, power contexts, or economic contexts through social and civil society togetherness. These categories of thought would have to become effective above all in the preparatory and follow-up phases of the social internship. Furthermore, these structural and self-imposed limits would have to be made self-reflexive. Then the Compassion Project would be a model for how religious values education could work in the school public.

13.7 Religious Values Education in Public Religious Education

In late modernity, the public sphere has become a forum for the articulation of diverse traditions and values, where traditions have to prove their truth in a constructive-critical confrontation with others. Without being able to show it here, it can be stated that this also applies to a religious pedagogy that understands its approach in the light of the 'signs of the times' as the Second Vatican Council emphasised in one of its most famous documents. It must make audible in public its claim to truth and its prophetic-critical impulse, as well as its consoling, liberating spaces of experience, but without coming to undue self-absolution and thus undermining the achievement of the modernisation processes of functional differentiation (Grümme 2018b; Dreier 2018).

But what can this look like in practical, real-world terms? What needs to be considered? First, I will discuss formal, then content-related aspects. In the discourse on religious pedagogy, a multi-dimensional model of public spheres has been developed that can help here. According to this model, religious values education would instil its values into the public spheres of schools and civil society and into national and transnational public spheres in the same way as a public religion does: in a communicative-discursive manner. It would do so without a claim to primacy, prepared rather to learn and to be dialogue-oriented (Grümme 2018b; regarding the imparting of values Europäisches Parlament 2017). A central problem here is the question of how to deal with the normativity of religious values and their specific options without undermining the freedom of the subjects and the plurality of the public spheres. This is where the Beutelsbach Consensus (1976) – developed by researchers in the field of political didactics – comes into play (Grümme 2021). This consensus is the result of intensive discussions about the status of normativity in the field. In contrast to concepts of legitimation, in which the status quo was justified in terms of political didactics, but also in contrast to those of mission, where political education is instrumentalised for the implementation of democratic thinking, the Beutelsbach Consensus of 1976 has gained axiomatic significance with its three maxims within the framework of a concept of political education oriented towards maturity:

(a) The prohibition of overpowering. According to this, the boundary between indoctrination and political education exists where learners are prevented from gaining an independent judgement. Political learning takes place in the sense of a desired, predetermined opinion.
(b) The controversiality of teaching, which reflects the controversial nature and pluralism of the political in science and politics.
(c) To enable students to analyse a political situation and their own interests and to look for means and ways to influence the situation in terms of their own interests. What is presupposed here, in an emphatic sense, is an understanding of education 'in the tradition of the elucidation as an engagement with politics

shaped by the guiding mode of rationality', which seeks to promote human maturity 'in the sense of independent judgement and action' and refers 'to democracy as a desirable political order' (Sander 2005: 28; Herbst 2019). According to the hard-won consensus, the prohibition of overpowering marks a boundary that cannot be crossed. Even if it were a matter of a judgement that affirmed the basic democratic order, this judgement cannot be forced. The form and content must be recognisably in agreement and oriented towards the postulate of maturity. The teaching methodology cannot be designed in such a way that it contradicts the goal of political education. An education oriented towards maturity and freedom is counteracted by a non-participatory, authoritarian teaching style. Conversely, participatory, student-oriented teaching practises what such a pattern of education is all about. Emancipation as a learning goal would be turned into its contrast if it were imposed doctrinally.[1]

But this should shape the question of normativity in religious values education (Grümme 2021). Religious values education, which qualifies as a language school of freedom, must on its own terms make it possible for its values education to remain discursively oriented. In its performative execution, it must therefore itself be oriented towards the norms of autonomy and freedom. In doing so, it must not only critically reflect its hegemonic instrumentalisations within the framework of a socially demanded transmission of values, but must be sensitive – as has only recently happened in religious education – to processes in its practice that threaten to thwart its own goals. If values are generated and communicated in experiential practices – if God's liberating message is communicated – then it would thwart precisely this normative values process if obscure exclusions were associated with it. Inclusion pedagogy or interreligious learning has shown depressing examples of this (Grümme 2021). In the desire to support people, they are earmarked in advance as worthy of support in the learning group and thus singled out in a negative way. The concept of values education as a basic foil of ethical education obviously needs an ideology-critical praxeological reflection.

It is a basic tenet of such self-reflective values education that the participants can also position themselves against other well-rehearsed values. Only in this way can religious education become a place of learning for strong tolerance (Forst 2014). The performativity of the educational process itself becomes a space in which this normativity is played out, controlled, and specified. Moralisation – which essentially consists in the fact that morality 'means being able to leap over' (Nothelle-Wildfeuer 2019: 453) factual knowledge – is avoided by discussing factual questions multidimensionally and deliberating procedural questions in discourse.

At the same time, this has consequences for the content profile of values education. A common distinction in political science could help to make the contribution in terms of content more precise and at the same time clarify the political

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[1] Therefore, a sensitive distinction and precise clarification is needed if political education has to 'lead to democratisation and emancipation' (Rickers 2001: 1531). Therefore, an emancipatory programme would have to be critically examined.

implications. If one adopts the subdivision of the foundations (polity), processes (politics), and contents (policy) of politics (Meyer 2006), then the specific contribution of religious pedagogy to values education becomes apparent in school and in national and transnational terms. Within the *polity dimension*, aspects of the political system, the constitution, but above all the genesis of value attitudes, of willingness to act, of civil society and political commitment, and thus of political culture, make religious values education highly compatible. Crucially, it is the inalienable dignity of the other and the challenge of not being allowed to lose anyone in which this becomes real. Ulrich Riegel (2017) shows in empirical studies that it was precisely in the refugee crisis of 2015 that church congregations were involved in emergency accommodation, care, and accompaniment.

In the *politics dimension*, religious education, with its tradition of the image of God is important, which it introduces into educational processes with a claim to truth, bringing this claim into dialogue with other claims to truth and assessing these claims critically. In this way, the values education of religious pedagogy is challenged in its formal, processual design. Whether religious teaching or adult education is structured authoritatively or dialogically as a 'language school of freedom' (Lange 1980) is politically highly relevant; where they are designed authoritatively, they are likely to performatively counteract their claim to truth. This shows how religion can be introduced into a plural and heterogeneous society. On the one hand, religious moral positions are introduced critically and in a conflictual way by institutions such as the church, mosque community, or synagogue. This is especially the case in the field of sexual morality, abortion, and the evaluation of homosexuality. The evaluations of the EVS show impressively how much influence this situation can have on the respective European regions (Halman and Sieben this volume). On the other hand, the possible dissent also proves that 'any moral resource in a democratically constituted society can only ever be an offer against which the individual must position himself' (Riegel 2017: 51).

And finally, the *policy dimension* challenges the concrete content values that are brought in as a contribution to values education in religious pedagogy – the material core of religious traditions with their specific interests, perspectives, horizons of meaning, and liberating as well as critical-transformative promises of salvation. This can sharpen the depth of problems and contribute to the problematisation of the self-evident, to the politicisation of the apolitical, to the interruption of unquestioned mentalities and ideologies, and to the orientation of the content. Here, religious pedagogy must introduce its tradition of God's hope as a tradition of freedom and justice, of hope for a life in abundance for all, and as a liberating as well as a critical message, whereby the only adequate form under the conditions of late-modern transformation and secularisation processes is a discursive-dialogical one (Grümme 2018b).

In summary, this commentary has outlined, through its passage through various aspects of religious values education, the contribution in terms of content and form that religious values education can make in a critical and productive way to the current values debates, to which the EVS wants to provide an essential impulse. Certainly, religious education in its axiomatic reference to the question of God is

more than ethics and the imparting of values (Grümme 2018a). And yet, because of the historical-social relevance of hope in God, religious education cannot be practiced without ethics and values education. It is first about researching and taking into account the value-related learning preconditions of the subjects, and second about making values 'represented and accessible' in many dimensions in the midst of a heterogeneous society, offering value-based learning occasions 'appropriate to the subject matter' (Lindner 2017b: 7). It is critical and self-reflexive, especially against its political and social forms of value transmission, as it addresses the question of power and reveals the instrumentalisation contexts, attempting to overcome them in a critical-constructive way. In doing so, it also critically examines hermeneutics and methodologies with which questions of values are thematised and investigated. But what could this mean in concrete terms? This will be at least sketchily indicated in relation to three contributions to this EVS volume.

13.8 Concretisation

It is impossible to deal here with the multifaceted richness of the EVS as a reference point for religious values education. As an example, I will concentrate on three approaches in order to outline their potential in the values debate:

1. *Correlation of religious practice and end-of-life-morality (abortion, euthanasia, suicide)*

Inge Sieben and Loek Halman evaluate the EVS in the light of their research question as to whether there is a correlation between the transformation of the religious and moral landscape in the processes of modernity. They aim to investigate the relationship between religious practice and moral attitudes regarding the justification of abortion, suicide, and euthanasia. In doing so, they cluster the European countries examined in the EVS into five groups (Halman and Sieben this volume): (1) Northern Europe (most secular and mainly Protestant); (2) Western Europe (like Germany most secular, Catholic, or mixed); (3) Southern Europe (like Spain least secular, mainly Catholic); (4) ex-communist Eastern Europe (like Slovenia or Poland); and (5) ex-Soviet Union (like Armenia). They define the degree of religious practice by the frequency of attendance at religious services, whereas religious belief is defined by the answer in the binary logic of yes–no to the question as to whether someone is a religious person. They conclude that:

> The associations at the country level between secularisation and end-of-life morality (measured by correlation coefficients) are clearly positive in all five regions in Europe, indicating that higher levels of secularisation go hand in hand with more permissiveness towards abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. This is in line with the ideas of modernisation theories. In addition, the assumption of the integration perspective that religious practice as an indicator of this secularisation is more salient for a population's end-of-life morality than religious beliefs is confirmed for three out of five regions: in Western Europe, Southern Europe and ex-Soviet countries, the macro-level correlation coefficients between levels of church atten-

dance and end-of-life morality are higher than the correlation coefficients between levels of religiousness and end-of-life morality. In the Northern region, the two correlation coefficients are about equal and rather modest, while in the ex-communist countries the correlation between the levels of religiousness and end-of-life morality […] is higher than the correlation between the levels of religious attendance and end-of-life morality. (Halman and Sieben, Chap. 4, this volume: 145)

2. *Political values and religion: a comparison between Western and Eastern Europe*

Susanne Pickel and Gert Pickel (Chap. 5, this volume) want to investigate to what extent democracy, values relevant to democracy, and religion are interrelated. They use the EVS data base to gain comparative insight into the complex interrelationships between Eastern Europe and Western Europe. The concepts of secularisation, individualisation, and a free-market rational-choice model of religion are the criteria for evaluating the data. The results are disillusioning. On the one hand, they show a growing tension between an increasingly secularised West and an East that is turning more towards religion and religious values. On the other hand, they show that religious values have an influence on democratic attitudes and practices and that they motivate and strengthen voluntary engagement, but that religious values vary according to the degree of secularisation and the form of religious ties and, especially in the East, stand in contrast to an open, democratic society:

> While socially committed believers oppose prejudices and anti-democratic attitudes, dogmatic, orthodox, and fundamentalist believers more often come into electoral affinity with anti-democrats […]. Against the background of a still widespread revitalisation in Eastern Europe, this relationship – viewed with some caution – appears to be a cause for concern if one looks at it from the perspective of a supporter of liberal democracy. (S. Pickel and G. Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume: 195)

Religious values education can follow these two different studies both critically and constructively. It would critically question the indicators. Can religion really be measured by the binary logic of yes–no or even by the frequency of religious practices? This does not do justice to the multidimensionality of subjective references to religion as developed in religious education. Empirical research on the religiosity of Islamic youth in Germany has shown that they see their ethical attitudes as being conditioned by Allah's commandments. However, the fact that this confession gives them a foothold and a home in an alien environment from which they feel rejected plays a role (Riegel 2015). Here, religion serves as a distinguishing feature that creates identity.

These studies also fail to take into account the specific logic of the construction of religion (Kropač 2019). A contextual education of values would examine, for example, whether the politically induced fuelling of national narratives by the PiS government in Poland has not led to a specific re-Catholicisation, which at the same time has motivated certain development regarding abortion. But is not the research question already too simple, insofar as it excludes autonomous, non-religious justifications of morality? Does it not play into the hands of those traditionalist currents (such as in Poland) which, by establishing such a correlation, pursue an unreflected transfer of values?

In both Halman and Sieben and S. Pickel and G. Pickel, a major problem lies in the simplistic concept of religion. To avoid this, Riegel and Schneiker (2017) instead prefer a more open approach that brings together individualised and institutionalised religion and religiosity in order to investigate the possible influence of religiosity on voluntary social engagement. Moreover, they call for the supplementation of purely quantitative studies with qualitative methods, because this is the only way to do justice to the complexity of the field. In other words, a purely quantitative study would need a triangular supplementation in which qualitative approaches are included. A hermeneutic and self-reflexive framing of one's own methodology and a differentiated awareness of contextuality would be necessary. At this point, religious values education could constructively highlight the value-generating power of the subjects in their respective contexts, which are analysed in an ideology-critical way. It could draw attention to the fact that this is not necessarily connected with a moral permissiveness or with prejudices against minorities, homosexuals, Muslims, and gender, as Halman and Sieben or S. Pickel and G. Pickel assume in this volume, but rather marks the unquestionable theonomous autonomy of human beings in front of God. Religious values education would, under the specific conditions of the respective European regions, discursively introduce God's message in a contextual, discursive way as a contribution to values education concerning these highly complex issues, insisting on the complexity of such issues in a multiperspective way in the sense of values communication.

3. *Religious and political values among different classes*

Pierre Bréchon (Chap. 8, this volume) examines the available EVS data using a sociological approach to education. He is not primarily concerned with the problem of social stratification. In a European comparison, he examines the barely researched sociological question of the extent to which the underprivileged and those living in the precariat show specific values orientations in the political and religious fields. In doing so, he forms four groups from the selected 21 European states according to regional order: Western Europe (like Austria, France, Germany), Eastern Europe (like Bulgaria, Poland), Southern Europe (Italy, Spain) and Nordic countries (like Denmark or Sweden). His results, obtained through a differentiated methodology, are also highly relevant for religious values education. Irrespective of finely worked-out regional differentiations, for example between quite Catholic states such as Austria or Spain and multi-confessional states such as Germany, he shows that people in the precariat do have specific value orientations in political and religious respects.

> At the religious level, the precarious are slightly more religious and practise more than the more privileged categories. […]. This does not prevent them from being more dissatisfied with those in power, but they mobilise less strongly in public action, whether through voting or social and political protest. They do not easily trust in others and in institutions. They are less inclined to left-wing values, they also show greater xenophobia and nationalism, and they are less attached to democratic values. (Bréchon, Chap. 8, this volume: 308)

This is enormously revealing for religious values education, because the results coincide with its axiomatically anchored postulates of subject orientation and

contextuality, not least that newer religious pedagogy develops a great sensitivity towards the marginalised and aims to constitutively bring the values and narratives of the marginalised to bear as the basis of correlative educational processes (Grümme 2013; Hermann 2002). It also critically analyses the middle-class orientation prevailing in current religious pedagogy and reflects praxeologically on her own practice for accomplished disadvantages and exclusions (Grümme 2021). Of course, this is not a side issue for her. From the heritage of the biblical idea of the image of God, which grants equal dignity to every human being, religious pedagogy actively demands educational justice for all, which constitutively takes into account the hegemonic structures in politics, economy, and education (Grümme 2014).

13.9   Conclusion and Perspectives

The connection between values, religion, politics, and education thus turns out to be a highly complex one. If one takes the comparative values research of the EVS as a testing ground, then it becomes apparent that a purely instrumental conception of the imparting of values is problematic. The attempts at instrumentalisation by society, the church, the economy, and politics are too strong, each in their own way pushing unabatedly to convey values. The subliminal revitalisation of a guiding culture and the tendencies towards a predominantly affirmative orientation avoid a preceding discourse about which values should be incorporated into the heterogeneity of late-modern societies. One might, for example, ask why the initiatives of both Catholic and Protestant churches in Germany in the field of democracy, ethics, and economics (and thus also values) are not articulated more strongly in the practice of values education. Actually, the German churches, with their statements on economic policy, democracy, and migration and refugee policy, should translate these directly and immediately into value-forming initiatives in religious education. This would also be of great interest in the field of religious education, as it could demonstrate the relevance of such education for society and the church, which it otherwise risks losing in the processes of secularisation and the crisis of legitimacy of the Catholic Church in particular. While religious education is not an agency for communicating values and is centred on the question of God, this question is certainly not to be dealt with without values, since Christianity sees itself as a religion of discipleship, which reveals its practical truth through discipleship. Here there are undeniable overlaps between ethics and hope in God. But the hope in God deconstructs in the end all conceptual and ethical practices towards the ever-greater God, who orients ethics exactly by this.

The considerations discussed here aimed to make it clear that a pure imparting of values does not do justice to this highly complex and dynamic relationship between values, religion, and politics. They counter this with a vote for a critical-constructive values education that is decidedly contextually oriented. This education should be formulated along the lines of a critical theory that critically reflects on the discourse of values itself regarding its hidden assumptions, its instrumentalisations, and its

distortions. This applies to the processes of values education as well as to values research, including that of the EVS (Weymans, Chap. 3, this volume), which can probably only be protected from positivistic and contextually insufficiently differentiated undertones by this means. An increased interdisciplinary cooperation between empirical and hermeneutical research is necessary. Late modern societies need values. But an appropriate values education can only come from the value-forming power of subjects, who themselves stand in contexts of hegemonic subjectification. Such a critical-constructive religious values education, which is subject-oriented as well as capable of heterogeneity, admittedly still awaits its concrete shaping.

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Bernhard Grümme (*1962) is the holder of the Chair for Religious Pedagogics and Catechetics and currently Dean of the Faculty for Catholic Theology at Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany). His main research interests are heterogeneity research, praxeology, and basic research in religious education, especially on the didactics of alterity.

Chapter 14
Conclusions, Consequences, Challenges

Regina Polak

Abstract Based on the empirical results of the European Values Study 2017 and on discussion with our authors and experts, the article highlights four thematical areas that raise critical questions and require practical consequences in society, politics, education, and research as well as within religious communities. The selected topics aim at stimulating values debates and focus on a broader audience of disseminators who are concerned about promoting a qualified values discourse in Europe in the context of contemporary multifold global crises. First, the results document a severe crisis of liberal democracy, which is fuelled by the ambivalent power of values and requires, for example, more attention being paid to subsidiarity in values communication, the struggle between universal and particular values, and the values division between Western and Eastern Europe. Second, the role of religion as a problem or a component for solving the crises of liberal democracy is discussed. The extent to which religion can be a resource for promoting universal and normative values is shown, with consideration of the challenges that religious communities and actors face in this regard. Third, the need for values education is highlighted, including the strengthening of the role of religion and religious values, which is considered to be of social, and political concern. Fourth, challenges for inter- and transdisciplinary research are identified. These include revising the concepts of the European Values Study, the need to think beyond the 'secularisation box', and the necessity for increased communication between values research, society, and politics.

Keywords Liberal democracy · Religious education · Values education · Interdisciplinarity · Values research

R. Polak (✉)
Department of Practical Theology, Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
e-mail: regina.polak@univie.ac.at

14.1   Introduction

While our authors were struggling over terminology, theories, and interpretations of the European Values Study (EVS) 2017 data, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. Countless disputes and conflicts over appropriate legal regulations and measures to combat the pandemic have accompanied social, media, and political discourse ever since. Like a burning glass, the pandemic crisis has revealed social and political cleavages that had been fermenting for years. This also applies to the values conflicts that became apparent during the pandemic crisis. Freedom, solidarity, justice, and the common good were some of the values referred to by opponents in these debates. While in some countries the state refrained from restrictive COVID-19 measures in the name of freedom and appealed to the individual responsibility of citizens, others saw this as a severe lack of solidarity towards those vulnerable groups who were exposed to a higher risk of infection due to their age, occupation, income, housing, or health conditions compared with those who could protect themselves better, for example, in their home offices. While some refused vaccination in recourse to individual freedom, others saw their freedom restricted precisely by those who refused vaccination and thus burdened the health systems and the common good.

It seemed that in the context of the pandemic conflicts, many people were 'reclaiming' their values and fighting for political recognition, admittedly not always based on an exchange of arguments and in the struggle for consensus, but in the use of values to assert their interests and in the context of pseudo-scientific argumentation or crude conspiracy myths. Interpreted with Hannah Arendt (2021: 55), the fronts that emerged within these conflicts gave the impression that the recourse to a commonly shared reality based on factual truth, which is the fundamental basis of human coexistence and every reasonable political debate, is no longer possible. This erosion of common ground also affects the reference to and the use of values.

What was remarkable was the return and politicisation of the discourse on values on a broad social level. However, values were not argued; rather they were used as a means to assert political interests. The struggle for an explicitly ethically responsible translation of abstract values into legal norms and concrete political practice was thus rendered extremely difficult. In turn, the extent of values pluralisation in European societies became apparent, closely connected to the worrying impression that there seems to be virtually no generally binding consensus on the theoretical and practical interpretation of values and on a common recognition of normative or universal values. Values have turned into opinions and identity markers. Qualified debates over ethical argumentation on pandemic policy measures seemed to remain reserved for select expert circles, such as European and international ethics councils (cf. WHO 2022: Statements by National Ethics Committees) or social ethicists and theologians (e.g. Kröll et al. 2020).

Observing these developments against the background of the results of our empirical results, one will not be surprised by the current break-up in seemingly irreconcilable conflicts of values. The contributions to our volume clearly demonstrate that the map of European values is not only highly pluralised, but also shaped

by significant values cleavages, especially regarding political attitudes and the ambiguous but significant effects of religion on these. Concrete and drastic events – such as the COVID-19 pandemic – have turned these cleavages into dramatic lines of active conflict. Whether and how these values cleavages will affect populations' reactions to the political measures taken by the European governments to stop Russia's war against Ukraine must remain open for the time being. At the time of final editing of this book, this catastrophe has been ongoing for 1 year. As our empirical results suggest, it is not surprising that the initial solidarity has become fragile and conflicting values orientations again shape public discourses the longer this war and its economic consequences last.

Against this background, we select four thematic areas based on our volume's results that we consider relevant and deserving of increased attention in debate by society, political actors at local, national and EU level, religious communities, and interdisciplinary values research. Recourse to values alone will not solve the expected multifold crises; but both the pandemic conflicts and the war prove the importance of values. While the pandemic reveals a massive fragmentation of values and a lack of a shared normative and universal understanding of values, Russia's war against Ukraine puts the values of the European Union to a hard test of probation (Pollack 2022) and is in turn 'legitimised' by Vladimir Putin with a cynical appeal to values such as nationalism, Christian values, and the right to fight for 'the good' by means of violence (Assheuer 2022). Moreover, Putin's war against the so-called 'Western values' values is supported by relevant leaders of the Orthodox Church in Russia.

The four selected areas do not claim to represent either the wealth of values challenges in Europe's values discourses or the results from our volume. The chosen topics also do not result from a theological interpretation of the empirical results. But value developments in society or the impact of religious on political attitudes are also of eminent practical-theological relevance, since they span the space of church action and have an enormous influence on pastoral ministry and tasks. However, a comprehensive practical-theological analysis of the results of the EVS – comparable to Paul Zulehner's practical theology of Europe 'Europa beseelen (Animating Europe)' (2019) – is reserved to subsequent studies.

So, the following sections reflect primarily the results of the discussions with our team of authors and the expert group on the possibilities, limits, and results of the EVS 2017 as I have summarised, structured, and interpreted them. Furthermore, the following reflections focus on the level of values and the role of religion among the European people with the aim of encouraging societal, political, and religious stakeholders and disseminators to take them more seriously. They do not claim to represent results of academic political science or politics of religion, which are beyond the scope of this volume. Rather, the following reflections are intended as a stimulus for further inter- and transdisciplinary debates and are aimed at a broader audience of disseminators who are concerned with promoting a qualified values discourse in Europe. The urgency of such discourse is proven by the contemporary multifold crises. Both the results of our volume and the years of crises since we started reveal enormous risks for social cohesion, democracy, and a peaceful coexistence based on European values and

human rights. In turn, these very crises could also open a window of opportunity to understand afresh the necessity of normative and universal values and their ethical argumentation (Polak, Chap. 2, this volume). Facing war in Europe might raise a new awareness for those values that Europe has developed in the course of its history and which have found expression in the documents of the European Union. These require practical and political reinterpretation in the context of current catastrophes. As practical theologians, we, the editors of this volume, interpret these developments as 'signs of the times' to which the Christian churches also have a duty to respond. Some options for action for the churches are therefore also identified in the following chapters. Although the starting position of the churches in Europe is currently extremely difficult, we hope that in the future they can act as critical-loyal 'drivers' of those values for which the European Union stands as well as the biblical tradition and many Christian organisations and communities in Europe engaging for universal solidarity, justice for the poor and peace among the nations.

14.2 The Ambivalent Power of Values in Politics: The Crisis of Liberal Democracy

Values will not only, but must, play a central role in society and politics in the years to come. However, the success story of the concept of values will continue to unfold under new and challenging circumstances. In particular, living together in intercultural diversity, the distribution of economic resources, climate change, liberal democracy, solidarity, and poverty – identified as central issues of values conflict in Europe (see S. Pickel and G. Pickel, Chap. 5; Quandt and Lomazzi, Chap. 7; Aschauer, Chap. 12; Bréchon, Chap. 8, this volume) – demand ethically qualified public debate and discussion on how the values of the European Union can be communicated and better argued in these contexts. The observable gap between these values and the political attitudes researched in the EVS indicate a massive call for action. For the governance of the EU, a societal and political confrontation with the values of Europeans, therefore, represents an enormous challenge, which goes far beyond legal values or regulation, implementation, or administration. What is at stake is the securing and further development of the future of European values in the context of a globalised world and humanity (Bauman 2015) – values, which represent an appreciation of and a self-critical reflection on Europe's history (Polak, Chap. 2, this volume).

Admittedly, concern and scepticism are more than justified given this ambitious goal. The list of problems and obstacles to qualified values discourses discussed in our volume is long:

- the widespread historical amnesia towards the origin, genesis, and meaning of European values (see Weymans, Chap. 3; Mandry, Chap. 9; Polak Chap. 2 in this volume), which results in their being turned into abstract appeals and contested interpretations;

- the lack of context sensitivity to the contemporary plurality of values in the diverse regions of Europe while communicating and implementing them without paying enough attention to historically heterogeneous value traditions and semantics;
- the paradox of the political instrumentalisation of values for interests other than ethical or legal ones while simultaneously depoliticising them by reducing European citizens to consumers of efficient EU policies and thereby withdrawing values discourses from the public debates of citizens (Heschl 2016; Polak, Chap. 2, this volume);
- the criticism of historians, philosophers, ethicists or lawyers who consider the concept of values to be insufficient in solving ethical, political, and legal problems and challenges (Polak, Chap. 2, this volume);
- the contradictoriness between political recourse to values and experienced practice – be it concerning human rights vis-à-vis, for example, refugees and migrants, the experience of democracy within the EU and nation states, or the lack of solidarity between and within European states;
- and last but not least, the heterogeneous landscape of values in Europe, permeated by numerous cleavages and (potential) polarisations.

In this troubled context, it will be difficult or even impossible, not least for the EU, to postulate or implement the normativity and universality of European values. Without the participation of social actors and institutions in the fields of education, economy, and civil society, etc. that promote values, a purely political communication of European values will fail, given the distrust towards political actors revealed during the pandemic crisis. The mobilising power inherent in values (see Weymans, Chap. 3, this volume; Foret and Calligaro 2018 quoting Smith 2016: 8), then, is in danger of exacerbating rather than resolving conflicts. The strength of their vagueness, which can stimulate discourse (Weymans, Chap. 3, this volume), can become a weakness, which threatens to tear societies apart internally and can trigger massive political conflicts between and within states. Values not only unite; they can also divide, especially in times of crisis.

This thesis is based on a finding that many contributions to our volume document: the crisis of liberal democracy. In particular, S. Pickel and G. Pickel (see Chap. 5, this volume) express clear concern about the weakened sustainability of liberal democracy on which EU policies are based. They observe dynamics in the former communist countries of Eastern Europe especially that undermine the values of liberal democracy. These developments can be recognised above all in attitudes that support right-wing policy, which is a massive threat not only to the liberal understanding of democracy but also to the cohesion of the EU as a whole. In this, they share an assessment expressed by Claus Leggewie and Ireneusz Paweł Karolewski (2021), who describe Victor Orban's understanding of the Hungarian system of government as an 'illiberal democracy' and a 'democrature'. While the Hungarian government is still legitimised through elections, civil society and the free media are restricted, and state institutions are eroded from within. Similar processes of democratic deconstruction can also be observed in the Visegrád states of

Poland, Slovakia, and Czechia. Although the Russian war against Ukraine has led to a certain dissolution of this Visegrád alliance – as Viktor Orbán, for example, tends to pursue a pro-Russian policy, while Poland is clearly on the side of Ukraine and the West – the values landscape in this region still reveals a precarious liberal democratic situation.

However, the crisis of democracy seems to be not only an Eastern European problem, but a transnational trend that is deeply embedded in contemporary economic, social, and cultural conditions (Przeworski 2019) and rooted in historical traditions and institutional realities (Schmidt and Kleinfeld 2020). It is thus not only a political problem, but intrinsically connected with values of citizens, as our volume documents. If values are taken into account more, these anti-democratic developments could be analysed in depth. Some aspects that we discussed with our experts are listed here, and require further values research.

14.2.1   *The EU Liberal Project: A Real Experience?*

The EU is a liberal project based on liberal democracy representing the normative ideal. But in the course of economic globalisation, liberalism is currently experienced by many citizens primarily as the liberalisation of markets and the deregulation of social welfare systems, which since the financial crisis of 2008 have exacerbated social inequality and placed significant sections of European societies in precarious living situations (Bréchon, Chap. 8, this volume; Mak 2019). The globalisation shaped by a neoliberal economic paradigm has divided the European middle classes and threatened them with social relegation since the start of this millennium (Bude 2014). The current Europe-wide inflation will accelerate this process. Trust in meritocracy, that is, the promise of social advancement resulting from performance, is shaken deeply by these developments, in particular in Eastern European states, some of whom still suffer from kleptocratic and oligarchic political systems and experience the hardness of a neoliberal market, which leaves the individual to fend for themselves (Krastev 2017). Financial crises, bank bailouts, and corruption scandals among the political and economic elite have not only shattered confidence in the national and international elite, but have led to a pre-revolutionary mood or even revolt in parts of the global and European population (Eyal 2021). Right-wing and extremist groups have exploited the anxiety and fears resulting from these dynamics and appeal to those who no longer feel represented politically by the classical liberal parties. The demonstrations against COVID-19 pandemic regulations with their conspiracy myths and occasional violent excesses can probably also be seen as a political eruption of this pattern. But this critical perception of concretely experienced neoliberal market liberty does not affect only those who become losers or who feel as such; it must be assumed that mistrust and resistance can already be found throughout the different strata of the population. This fragile pattern must be seen as one of the main roots of the crisis of liberal democracy. For many people, the practice of liberal democracy is not a real-life experience, as it is

restricted and given lie to by the laws of the global liberal market. It must remain to be seen if and how the socio-economic and political consequences in the wake of the Russian war against Ukraine will intensify this fragile situation and strengthen or weaken attitudes towards liberal democracy. The announced military rearmament of the EU may strengthen authoritarian attitudes. But the experience of war in Europe may also result in a new politicisation of a democratic way of life and strengthen the willingness to fight for liberal democracy – after an epoch of a 'democracy without enemies' (Beck 1995) that has degraded democracy to a service to be consumed for too many people (Nassehi 2022).

The EU seems to be aware of the crisis of democracy and values, as in 2022 the 'Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme' was started, which 'aims to protect and promote Union rights and values as enshrined in the EU treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights' and thereby 'contributes to sustain and further develop open, rights-based, democratic, equal, and inclusive societies based on the rule of law' (CERV 2022). But despite this ambitious aim, the question might arise as to whether and to what extent citizens *experience* EU policy as being based on the principles of liberal democracy. Do European citizens experience the freedom to participate and co-create political space and coexistence that is guided by their *own* values? It might be assumed that from the point of view of many citizens, their *own* cultural, ethnic, or religious values remain invisible or are not adequately recognised in the EU's discourse framework. This assumption can be argued, for example, by the fact that attitudes directed against the values of liberal democracies are clearly connected to religious attitudes and thus to questions of values and identity (see S. Pickel and G. Pickel, Chap. 5; Halman and Sieben, Chap. 4, this volume). It is probably not the concrete religious beliefs alone that have anti-democratic effects, but the ways of life of religious communities, which are usually oriented towards more relational, local, and communally embedded coexistence. Liberality and liberalisation could thus be experienced as a political project forced 'top-down', and could consequently be rejected, as they appear to be destroying traditional cultures and ways of life. If we, for example, interpret the crisis of liberal democracy in the theoretical framework of Axel Honneth's (1994) ethical reflection on the contemporary 'struggle for recognition', one could observe a paradoxical pattern: the EU prescribing liberal democratic values is resisted in the name of these values in the struggle for the recognition of one's own cultural, religious, and national identities and values. Since, so far, only right-wing parties have reacted politically to this understandable concern, they can use these fears and worries for their own political interests.

Would alternatives be conceivable here? Could concepts of liberal democracy be strengthened that also take better account of the cultural and national memory of European regions and can be developed more autonomously, admittedly with subsidiary support from the EU? Could society support dialogue platforms where people can reflect on and discuss whether and how liberal values can be combined with traditional cultural and religious values?

A blanket moral disqualification of those parts of the population that evade the democratic policy guidelines of the EU – as can be observed in both European intellectual circles and public media elites – seems to be counterproductive. Of course,

the crisis of liberal democracy must not be glossed over, and anti-democratic attitudes such as intolerance against minorities or illiberal, authoritarian government policies must not be played down or even legitimised. But precisely to cut off the value-based sources that support the success of right-wing and authoritarian parties and politicians, alternatives must be developed. People with anti-democratic attitudes probably do not need moral sermons or to be treated like victims of right-wing parties. If their wishes for more direct and embedded democracy are taken seriously, easily accessible places are needed where values debates and conflicts can be discussed in equal footing and people can experience the value of a liberal democracy, with parties in the discussion willing to discuss values other than their own, including, of course, arguments and conflicts.

In addition to such values discourses taking place with parties on an equal footing, it will also be most important to work on the causes of the loss of confidence among significant parts of the population in the political and economic system. This requires public debate on the structural reasons for the moral failure of politicians and entrepreneurs observed during the financial crises (Mak 2019) and corresponding policies that prevent such situations. Moreover, politicians and entrepreneurs need values education, which is of public and democratic interest and must be established structurally. Furthermore, policies of redistribution, including combating structural reasons of poverty, must be put on the agenda of public and political discourse. It is remarkable that the preferences for redistribution are quite high in nearly all countries of Europe (Aschauer, Chap. 12, this volume), while this topic is not reflected adequately in political discourse at either national or EU level. Increasing social inequality and a growing gap between those two-thirds who benefit from the previous economic system and the one-third who are economically excluded (Piketty 2020) pose an enormous danger for liberal democracies. As long as only the richer classes benefit from the current political and economic system, the promotion of democracy will remain untrustworthy.

14.2.2   The European Union as a Subsidiary Institution: A Real Experience?

Although the EU was not conceived as a 'super state' superior to the nation states, but as an association of states guided by the structural value of subsidiarity, it could be assumed that a significant proportion of European citizens do not experience subsidiarity in their political life. They may not have experienced the way in which diversity policies, the promotion of the rights of minorities, or the policies of gender equality have been implemented at a national level as a support for the necessary further development of values, but rather as an attack on their own, unreflective values and as a non-discussable stipulation from above.

As Linda Woodhead and Greg Smith's (2018) studies on Brexit document, Brexit can, for example, be seen as an expression of resistance against excessive

interference on the part of the EU in a culture in which individual freedom traditionally plays a high role. Regardless of the content of European values, this resistance could therefore promote the success of nationalist parties. Similarly, the support of right-wing, illiberal, and autocratic parties by large parts of the population in the Visegrád states, which have a deeply rooted cultural suspicion of supranational institutions as a result of their history with the Soviet empire, can possibly be understood as one of the root causes of the rejection of European values. As values decisions are rarely based on rational arguments but on emotions and 'mental infrastructures' (Welzer 2021: 110), the lack of participation in public values debates then results in regression to autocratic values and policies. Social media becomes not a space of democratic discourse but of democratic withdrawal, self-assurance, and identity affirmation, including combating the values of others.

These developments can also be exacerbated in those regions of Europe where populations have reservations about state and political interventions for historical reasons. But the impression that the EU is trying to regulate more and more areas of life, such as culture, identity and language, politics of history, or values may be shared not only by parts of the populations of the former communist states, but also by Great Britain and the conservative milieus in Europe. Even if it can be assumed that such resistance to EU values policy is more likely to be related to the protection of hegemonic privileges (for example, with regard to gender policy, minority rights, or asylum policy), to the maintenance of national political power, or to the refusal of national self-criticism than to the protection of values, these concerns must be taken seriously and need more and diversified efforts on the part of all societal institutions. Otherwise, there is a danger that European values will be rejected simply because of how they are communicated and argued and because of who is communicating and arguing them. Even if the values of the European Union correspond to a universal and human rights-based ethos: without the possibility of broad and voluntary appropriation by the population in democratic discourses, they will be perceived as a discourse of domination and therefore will not find acceptance in significant parts of the population.

14.2.3 Globalism Versus Tribalism: Struggle Between Universal and Particular Values?

As discussed, (Sect. 14.2.1), the crisis of liberal democracy must be seen in the context of neoliberal globalisation. By the turn of the millennium, globalisation had not only significantly reduced global poverty, increased education levels – not least those of many women – and given rise to a new global middle class (Bude 2014; Eyal 2021), but it had also produced a new class of global super-rich and multinational corporations with imperial power. These processes have also had destructive effects, however: the exploitation of labour and natural resources, the emergence of

a global class of 'superfluous' human beings useless for economic aims (Bauman 2015), and the emergence of 'exploitation hubs' (Eyal 2021: 70), where cheap and polluting goods are produced and workers have no rights and suffer as a result of air or other pollution.

This neoliberal economic dynamic has a universalist tendency which threatens and sweeps away historically developed cultures and thus local and particular cultural and religious values. Traditional ways of life are disembedded and uprooted. Furthermore, nation states lose their political power, as they must operate in the context of neoliberally organised markets. Nation states are no longer capable of fully keeping their promise to protect their citizens from economic strokes of fate, which was at the heart of the idea of social welfare states. To the victims of these globalising dynamics of leveling cultural and religious values and individualising the risk of poverty, the new cosmopolitan elite, with their universal values, may appear not only detached from the reality of daily life but also as attacking traditional values. Even if the recognition of individual and diverse values is part of this universal cosmopolitism, many people can get the impression that universal values are a privilege for the rich. For example, certain values such as an eco-conscious lifestyle must be affordable, and consequently they are rejected. Globalisation dominated by neoliberal logic has a democracy-threatening effect and weakens the willingness to recognise an equally globalised ethos which is urgently needed given global threats.

But the moral tribalistic protest resulting from this rejection, claiming the recognition of particular values based on group interests, is equally dangerous to democracy. The emergence of radical political groups that want to assert nationalist or regional interests, regional secessionist movements (as in Spain or Great Britain), or the recourse of governments to nationally formatted values and identity policies may therefore be seen as a reaction of resistance to the experience of globalisation. Both people and national governments try to regain political power by referring to traditional values. Particular values such as nation, culture, religion, or the assertion of group interests are then seen as superior to universal values that are constitutive of liberal democracies, such as recognition of diversity, the protection of minorities, or procedural values such as participation.

The central problem does not seem to be the constitutive tension between particular and universal values, therefore, but the fact that values mutate into a political means in the struggle to assert recognition and interests. The lack of discourse spaces and processes in which arguments are used to mediate between universal ethical claims and legitimate particular interests and values then has the effect of endangering democracy. Additionally, the framing and embedding of value conflicts in a globalised world view that perceives rivalry, competition, and the agonising struggle for hegemony as immutable laws of nature and history and as the essential nature of human beings, exacerbates this danger. In this ideological context, rational negotiations, or transformations of values for ethical reasons, can easily be perceived as capitulation or defeat. From this perspective, the anti-democratic value developments documented in our volume can be seen as a kind of 'backfiring', reacting to global political and economic developments.

14.2.4   Division Between Western and Eastern Europe?

The polarisations associated with these conflictual dynamics are most clearly visible in the value cleavages between Western and Eastern Europe, especially between the pre-and post-2004 EU member states. The political developments in the aftermath of the migration crisis in 2015 have confronted the EU with long-fermenting, deep-rooted values conflicts that were quite foreseeable with regard to earlier EVS studies – that is, widespread nationalist attitudes, pronounced intolerance towards foreigners and homosexuals in Eastern European countries, or the rejection of 'gender policies' in the Visegrád states. Since then, the recourse to international human rights on the one hand and national values on the other is almost irreconcilable; Christian values and Islamic values, European values and values of Arab culture, secularist and religious values face each other on frontlines. Conflicts about the extent of solidarity, about the understanding of gender justice, and about the recognition of diverse sexual identities or lifestyles other than the heterosexual seem to polarise Europe between West and East.

But the more one looks at the values landscape in a differentiated way, the more inadequate a simple interpretation of the situation as an East–West conflict appears. In our volume, value cleavages can also be seen between Southern and Northern Europe as well as within individual countries and regions. Depending on the topic, the above-mentioned attitudes are significantly related, for example, to demographic variables such as age, gender, income, and place of residence. It is, therefore, more than reductive to interpret these values conflicts in Europe primarily along the East–West axis. The causes lie deeper and affect the whole of Europe.

Without playing down the value patterns that endanger liberal democracy and the cohesion of the EU in Eastern European countries, these developments must be analysed in a more differentiated way. For example, the sharp dividing line that is often drawn between West and East in these values debates should be questioned. More than 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, such a comparison does as little justice to Eastern Europe as does an assessment of the values landscape of this region using Western criteria. In several studies on religion and values in Central and Eastern Europe, András Máté-Tóth and his colleagues (Máté-Tóth and Rughiniş 2011; Máté-Tóth and Rosta 2016) have shown that attitudes and values in this region must be interpreted according to theoretical paradigms other than those of Western Europe, because of the specific political history and culture of this region. There is no doubt that the long communist era has left massive traces; Máté-Tóth (2019) speaks about 'wounded identities'. These traces of history also affect values and attitudes. For example, they result in a specific susceptibility to authoritarianism and (ethno)nationalism in times of crises. Moreover, the process of nation-building after 1989 took place during a rapid political and economic transition to neoliberal capitalism with its consequent growing social inequality and poverty. Religion as a means of identity-building has played a central role in this process (Máté-Tóth 2006; Pickel and Sammet 2012) and led to an increasing political power of the

Catholic and the Orthodox Church in some countries, including new alliances between states and churches.

But the impact of history on values goes back much further. It must therefore be taken into account that, in addition to the centuries-old division between the Latin West and the Byzantine East, the permanent change of power between empires, which repeatedly (and often violently) drew new dividing lines in an ethnically and religiously plural society and put these societies in a state of permanent transition, makes it impossible to speak of a culturally uniform or politically homogeneous region. The attempt to define Central and Eastern Europe as a 'self-evident geographical, topographical, historical or even political unit' thus proves impossible; this region is 'a created space', 'a constructed area' (Máté-Tóth 2016: vii). Politically, these 'societies belonged to one or another empire and tried to gain sovereignty and autonomy in forms of separate nation-states' (Máté-Tóth 2016: vii). Today, this struggle takes place within the European Union – or, as Máté-Tóth puts it, 'concentrating on the recent identity-building factors, the *nolens volens* belonging to the European Union plays the central role' (Máté-Tóth 2016: vii). Behind this background, scepticism towards the European Union can be understood better: despite the legal constitution and reality of the EU, it can be experienced as a new empire.

Without going into the complex history here, this historical self-perception must be taken into consideration when interpreting and judging the empirical results. This recognition could be a first important step in enabling the common struggle for the recognition of EU values to be more successful. Empirical research on the values in this region (Máté-Tóth and Rosta 2016; Pickel and Sammet 2012) documents that there are indeed 'typical' Eastern European value sets in terms of political attitudes, but it also becomes clear that there are different value clusters within the region, which in turn overlap with developments in Western European regions. If the value cleavages between West and East are to be dealt with, it is therefore necessary to put an end to the rhetoric of a sharp dividing line between West and East. It is necessary to search for the tendencies and causes that affect the whole of Europe and result in the increase of anti-democratic values throughout Europe.

Additionally, the history of Central and Eastern Europe must be recognised explicitly in public values discourses. Historical amnesia has an extremely negative effect. If we want European values to be accepted better in this region, they must also be interpreted in memory of, for example, the mass murders or the Gulags of the Soviet empire or with the willingness to discuss the capitalist turbo-revolution after 1989. Even if some self-perceptions, such as the dominant 'victim narrative', can be critically questioned, they must be listened to. It will be possible only based on the public recognition of Eastern European history to discuss critically the self-inflicted causes of anti-democratic attitudes, such as unwillingness to reflect self-critically regarding, for example, co-responsibility for the Shoa (Judt 2012), the authoritarian and corrupt ruling structures, or the anti-democratic dimensions of nationalist narratives and traditional values – including religious ones.

A self-critical approach to historical narratives and self-perceptions is, of course, also required from Western countries. Western success stories, such as the permanent progress of modernity, or the proud discourse on European and liberal

democratic values or human rights, must also be questioned. The history of modernity is deeply connected with violence and mass murder (Bauman 2002; Imbusch 2005); democratic values and human rights values are neither respected by the whole European population nor fully recognised by all Western politicians and governmental policies, particularly regarding the legal and political rights of migrants, discrimination against marginalised groups, poverty alleviation, gender equality, or asylum policy.

Only guided by the readiness to listen to the historical narratives of the other, the effort to understand the values of the other, and the willingness to be self-critical and to learn from the other will dialogue about shared and common European values be possible, including those involving conflict based on ethical arguments.

The indispensability of such a struggle for mutual understanding of the regionally heterogeneous genesis and meaning of values is exemplified in three areas that are central to the heart of liberal democracy and to the continued existence of the EU: the neo-authoritarian temptation, the rejection of cultural and religious diversity, and the lack of universal solidarity (S. Pickel and G. Pickel, Chap. 5; Quandt and Lomazzi, Chap. 7; Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). These tendencies threaten democracy at its core. It must be assumed that the legacies of nineteenth century ethno-nationalism and twentieth century fascism and totalitarianism still have an impact on the values of significant parts of the European population and thus are central roots for anti-democratic attitudes. Though this impact differs between European regions, these legacies can be reactivated in the context of global crisis anxiety – be it in the desire for a strong, sovereign nation state that protects the population from the effects of globalisation or the desire for a strong and powerful Europe that protects its citizens from non-European migrants and refugees or enemies. In times of crisis, the desire for security can strengthen authoritarian and anti-democratic values. But it is also possible that the experiences during the pandemic and the war in Ukraine will lead to a revival of liberal democratic values, the return of a united EU, and the intensification of international cooperation. As we observed in our study, political promotion and institutional and legal support of values such as tolerance can change people's attitudes and allow the recognition of diversity to increase, as has happened in selected Western European states and cities (Aschauer, Chap. 12, this volume). So why should such a practical political commitment not work for other values of liberal democracies too? It is therefore necessary to gain the trust of those governments that oppose these values and to *jointly* develop good practice models.

14.3   The Role of Religion: Problem or Component?

The ambivalent impact of religious attitudes on political attitudes documented in our volume (S. Pickel and G. Pickel, Chap. 5; Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume) became clear also in the context of the pandemic: priests, imams and rabbis who declared vaccination a religious duty while being criticised by their colleagues

and followers who referred to the integrity of the human body; churches opening vaccination stations to support the common good while believers demonstrated in the streets against pandemic measures in the name of freedom; disputes over the right to freedom of religion or belief and government requirements and regulations to restrict or prohibit physical attendance at religious services in churches, synagogues, or mosques. Again, values played a significant role.

From both a theological and a sociological perspective, these ambivalent consequences of religious attitudes are not surprising. With its claims to the truth, the sacred, and their plural and contradictory interpretations, religion has always had the potential to both cause conflict and violence and foster peace and reconciliation (Scott Appleby 2000; Krech 2011). Also, from a historical perspective, the politicisation of religion is not a new phenomenon given the centuries of alliances between churches and governments in Europe. It is not surprising, therefore, that our volume documents that religiosity is a politically relevant factor of influence. It is a heritage deeply inscribed in the cultural matrix and collective memory of Europe, even in times of churches losing their influence over the life and values of people. In particular, Christian denominational values, as propagated by the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches for centuries, continue to shape the attitudes of the population even when people no longer participate actively in church life and have a significant impact on other than religious values (Polak and Schachinger 2011).

The progressive disembedding of religion from everyday cultural life (Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume) makes religion susceptible to identity, sociopolitical, and state-political interests and framings. Religion is a resource in the struggle for values – and, depending on the interpretation of values, it can be both a 'problem or a component for public policy' (Foret 2022: 329) and thus a challenge for liberal democratic societies. Religious attitudes can therefore strengthen or weaken the acceptance of the values of the EU, as we can see, for example, in resistance against the recognition of same-sex partnerships on the one hand or, on the other hand, in the support of human rights by religious actors and communities.

As this ambivalence can be observed not only in the relationship between religions and secular society but also within religious communities, an interpretation of these developments as secularisation falls short. Rather, it makes sense to interpret these contradictory phenomena as a rival struggle over the role of religion in value conflicts referring to politics. Given the growing recourse to religious values on the part of religious communities in politics, which are becoming involved in sociopolitical debates to get more recognition, and a tendency on the part of the EU to diminish the influence of religion in public and political discourses and decisions (see, for instance, the debates on the right to abortion or assisted suicide), it is more accurate to speak of a *liberal-secular matrix* (Amir-Moazami 2018), that shapes the European Union's policy. This matrix is opposed by a growing fundamentalist tendency in some religious communities, in particular with an international neo-authoritarian, fundamentalist Christian network (Wäckerlig 2019), in which the focus is the pushing back of liberal democracy, pluralism, and Islamic influence in Europe. Parts of the Orthodox churches can be found in this field, as well as (neo-) right-wing Free Churches, Catholic and Protestant movements. A secularist

understanding of values, in which religion should only be a private matter and have no social or political influence, and a fundamentalist understanding of religious values, which recognises a threat in secular values and fights them, stand opposed.[1]

But there are also other developments, such as the growing EU interest in the contribution of religions and the establishment of structures of dialogue with religious actors (for example, European Commission 2022; Leustan 2022; Foret 2022). Secular governments or international organisations such as the OSCE also strengthen dialogue and cooperation with religions (Schreiner 2016: 273) or support interreligious dialogue (IJRT 2020). Religious leaders and communities are increasingly seen as partners to implement European values and human rights such as the support of democracy, tolerance, environmental protection, or migration and anti-racist policies. The relationship between religion and politics is currently undergoing a massive upheaval. What contribution to this upheaval do our results reveal? And what questions do they raise?

14.3.1 Religion Matters – But Which One?

The EVS concept of religion focuses on a few selected attitudes, beliefs, explicit religious practices, and affiliations and is, moreover, an abstracted form of a Christian understanding of religiosity. Religiosity defined in this way has different effects on pro-democratic values: in combination with social practice and active involvement in religious communities, it supports pro-democratic attitudes – but more so in Western countries. In Eastern Europe and among people without religious practice, religiosity often combines with anti-democratic attitudes such as xenophobia, homophobia, and the desire for a homogeneous culture (S. Pickel and G. Pickel, Chap. 5; Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). But the more deeply one analyses them, the more complex and contradictory these connections become. In some countries, the influence of religiosity on political attitudes seems stronger or weaker than in others, sociodemographic factors seem to be more powerful, and religiosity exerts its influence only in combination with these. Regarding attitudes towards same-sex relations and other life values, the influence of religiosity seems to be decoupled simultaneously (Halman and Sieben, Chap. 4, this volume). Local, regional, historical, and religious-political contexts have a significant influence. It is a fact that religiosity plays a role, but formulating general meta-theories for the whole European region based on these findings is becoming increasingly difficult and calls for more interdisciplinary research.

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[1] In this context, the developments in the Muslim communities in Europe should also be addressed. Despite different socio-cultural causes and constellations, similar internal dynamics can be observed among them. While a major part tries to combine Muslim values with European values, fundamentalist and politically motivated extremist Muslims reject and combat secular values. But since we do not have representative data on the religiosity of Muslims in the EVS, we do not address this issue here.

Also, the question of which practices religiosity is associated with is not considered and thus remains mostly invisible in our volume. In many Christian Orthodox dominated countries in Eastern Europe, religiosity is (still) much less a matter of individual decisions of faith than it is in Protestant countries of Northern and Western Europe. In Christian Orthodoxy, religiosity is still embedded in everyday culture and is thus less self-reflexive (Polak 2017), while for Western Christians it is sometimes just part of a world view that has little impact on daily life and cultural habits. Furthermore, religiosity can be theologically educated, intellectually formatted, or spiritually deepened, but can also be just part of cultural socialisation. It can promote the commitment to altruistic values, but can also foster nationalist or tribal values. It can strengthen or weaken positive attitudes towards members of other religions. For example, in countries that have had a historical tradition of living together in religious diversity, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina before the Yugoslavian war, or in countries where the culture is shaped by the public presence of religious symbols of different religious traditions, the attitude towards religiously plural coexistence is more positive than in countries where a publicly present religiosity is historically less pronounced, like in France. In addition, European countries have different historical or religious-political narratives about minority religions that shape the perception of religious diversity and thus can strengthen or weaken tolerance and solidarity (Quandt and Lomazzi, Chap. 7, this volume). Finally, discourses within religious communities also shape the social functions and semantics of religion – through their interpretations of holy scriptures or through public statements by religious leaders. To integrate all of these nuances around how religiosity is shaped culturally and historically and then influences political values while reflecting on the EVS data would not only go beyond the scope of our volume but is also impossible because of the design of the EVS. This calls for further research.

In practical terms, the proven fact of religiosity influencing political attitudes requires more self-reflection on and sensitivity to cooperation between political and religious actors. Religious communities should critically reflect on how their values are used in the service of political interests, irrespective of whether these interests are nationalistic or secular. Religious communities should take care not to abuse their cooperation with political actors and parties to assert their own power interests and values and unquestioningly place themselves in the service of political interests. Of course, there are differences between religious communities regarding this self-positioning – because, for example, Jewish communities need cooperation with the state for security reasons – but every denomination should reflect on its cooperation with governmental authorities and policies according to their fundamental religious beliefs and the needs of society.

Conversely, politicians should also keep their distance and take care not to become captive to religious communities. They should also refrain from trying to discipline the latter for their political interests, even if they are pro-democratic. Empirical studies on interreligious dialogue in European countries (IJRT 2020), for example, document that governments primarily cooperate with those parts of religious communities that serve their interests, which sometimes results in conflicts within and division between religious communities. In turn, from the perspective of

religious communities, cooperation that is too close to governments creates dependency on state resources and weakens the critical and resistant potential of religion. Positively formulated, mutual respect and a carefully protected distance between the religious and political realm can enrich both religious communities and political actors and governments if guided by a mutually appreciative dialogue. Religious communities can support the normative values of the EU, but criticise their ideological interpretation, that is, if the latter, for example, endanger the common good or threaten the lives of vulnerable groups (the unborn, children and youth, the elderly and sick, the poor, migrants, etc.). Conversely, if political actors criticise human rights violations in religious communities, such as discrimination against women or people with other than heterosexual identities, they can spur religious communities to question their own religious traditions self-critically and to develop them further. The conflicts that necessarily arise in this process of mutual critical dialogue would be beneficial for religious and political actors as well as society – so long as they are not conducted in an atmosphere of mutual enforcement and the will to defeat each other but aim instead to protect the dignity and rights of every human being and strengthen freedom, justice, and the common good.

Hence, the understanding of religion in Europe should not be the subject of debates among experts such as academics, religious leaders, or politicians alone. Debating the relationship between religion and politics and their values is an issue of social relevance and requires public discourse and the improvement of religious literacy among all participants. Translating the meanings that religious values hold for modern societies and, in turn, translating secular values into religious language, can have positive effects on the development of democratic societies, both in terms of processes and content. Values that endanger human life and coexistence, democracy, and human rights can be detected and subjected to rational critique. As our volume documents, religion will remain a relevant factor in the political space in the near future, in particular when traditional forms of religion erode and new political functions arise. Therefore, those understandings of religion that threaten the essence of European values must be discussed and, in turn, religious arguments must be taken into account more seriously when interpreting European values.

14.3.2 Religion: A Resource for Promoting Values

The results of our volume might give the dominant impression that religion is primarily a problem, especially for liberal democracies. In contrast, a look at the history of Europe shows that Christian values have also had numerous positive effects, not least with regard to the emergence of democracy in Europe (Mitterauer 2010), the theological appreciation of democracy (Norwood 2019), the emergence of human rights and their complex relationship to Judaism and Christianity (Nelson 2011; Wittreck 2013), or the constitution of the EU (Altermatt 2008).

Why are these positive effects seldom reflected in the results of quantitative religious sociological studies? Is there a bias in the approach of research on religion?

Or is it impossible to measure these positive effects when they cannot be defined precisely with traditional concepts of religion which focus on the commitment and religious practice of individuals only?

Long before the founding of the EU, international religious movements were already engaged with universal values. For example, since 1928, the Christian-Jewish Dialogue movement, which held conferences in Oxford in 1946, Seelisberg in 1947, and Fribourg in 1948, advocated for common universal ethical norms that should hold societies together, such as freedom, responsibility, and justice as pillars of the common good (Simpson and Weyl 2009). International Christian-Jewish organisations also played an essential role in the human rights discourses of the 1940s (Simpson and Weyl 2009).

Moreover, numerous religiously motivated movements, organisations, and projects are currently advocating values that overlap with the secular self-understanding of modern societies and shared interests. Mention should be made here, for example, of the commitment to human rights-based migration and refugee policy on the part of the Christian churches (for example, the Working Group of Migration and Asylum of the COMECE (2021) and the Churches Commission for Migrants CCME (2018)), international organisations to combat poverty and injustice (for example, Caritas Europa), or, most recently, the call for (global) solidarity in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (Goshen-Gottstein 2020).

Why are these positive contributions of religious communities often overlooked in empirical research, in public discourses on values, or in the media? Why does this pro-democratic engagement of religious communities not have a significant visible effect on the political values of religious people? Of course, there is research on the contributions of religious communities to civil society (Nagel 2015; Strachwitz 2020); but on the whole one can get the impression that – compared with the problematic dimensions of religious communities – the positive contribution of religiosity on pro-democratic values is a blind spot in values discourses and values research. This situation might point to a blatant lack of historical and religious knowledge, especially among many secularist protagonists, including intellectuals and researchers, who do not consider religion to be a relevant political interlocutor.

Conversely, religious communities must also critically reflect on whether and how they promote pro-democratic values. Christian churches and their leaders in particular have tended to support those political parties that seek to preserve and strengthen traditional, sometimes even authoritarian, and fascist social orders, religious homogeneity, and values such as authority and obedience. Fear of and resistance to atheistic communism and scepticism towards the traditionally religion-critical leftist parties play a central role in this aversion to new and alternative political ideas. This stabilising interest of church leaders leads to the fact that social innovation ideas promoted by religious people or communities tend to emerge yet remain invisible in public discourse and mainstream media. Also, theological studies on political topics are discussed primarily in expert circles. Pro-democratic research and projects provided by religious communities and theological intellectuals therefore remain among elites and do not reach most believers. Political and media discourses referring to Christian values that are abused to delegitimise

democratic values and devalue minorities such as Muslims have a visibly stronger effect on the population and get much more attention. But this gap between academic and popular knowledge does not affect religious issues alone. It also raises the fundamental question of the dissemination and reception of intellectual discourses in the population and politics and requires a self-critical assessment and increased development of Third Mission projects on the side of political and religious actors and institutions on how to strengthen the participation of the majority of religious people in academic and intellectual debates.

Moreover, religious communities and their leaders should ask themselves self-critically whether and how they support the democratic education of their believers. They should reflect on their conscious and unconscious contribution to the political education of believers. How do the religious values that are promoted in communities willingly or unwillingly support an educated and active participation in a democratic society? Religious communities need not be afraid of being politicised while responding to this responsibility if they engage in the task in dialogue with their own religious traditions. Nor must they give up the critical potential of religious values if they accept responsibility for both the political and religious education of their believers. Political actors, on the other hand, should be aware of the inner diversity of religious communities and enter into dialogue with all strands of religious communities, but in particular with those religious intellectual groups, international religious organisations, or academics who want to play a constructive role in promoting the values of the EU.

14.3.3 Religion as a Powerful Amplifier of Value Cleavages

Traditional religiosities have a negative effect on pro-democratic values and can thus reinforce value cleavages in Europe. Religious fundamentalism in particular demonstrates great proximity to (neo)authoritarian political concepts. But according to our volume, religiosity does not prove to be the central source and cause of anti-democratic attitudes, but rather unfolds its influence only in the context of other factors (Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). These multi-causal connections would need to be researched more closely. Moreover, in the context of a Europe-wide erosion of individual religiosity, religiosity generally seems to lose its central function as a source of values and attitudes, in particular among the younger generations. Neo-authoritarian and xenophobic tendencies can also be identified as independent of religious developments in some states. This raises several questions.

First, the reasons for the rejection of European values by religious people should be explored in depth. What are they directed against in concrete terms? It can be assumed that religious people have the impression that European values policy restricts their right to freedom of religion and belief and that their identity is thus devalued, threatened, and pushed back into the private sphere. This lack of public recognition is a powerful source for the rejection of European values. Particularly in those states where attachment to religious communities has provided protection,

comfort, or political resistance in times of communist repression, or where religiosity plays a key role in the context of ethno-geographical or ethno-national values, a liberal values policy can be experienced as the humiliation of a religious way of life. The so-called 'moral panic' theory (Cohen 2011) could also explain this rejection: 'moral panic' arises when 'a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests and authoritarian parties or even religious leaders stylise themselves as fighters against this threat and present themselves as "moral entrepreneurs"' (Cohen 2011: 1). This dynamic can currently be observed in an extremist version in the ideological legitimisation of the Russian war in Ukraine, which is framed as a 'metaphysical' war against the decadent values of the secularised West, which is accused of putting itself in the place of the sacred (Assheuer 2022) – supported by Patriarch Kirill, who even speaks of a fight against 'evil forces' that threaten the Christian Church (Sooy 2022).

Also, the classical 'social network theory' (Liu et al. 2017) allows us to better understand this reaction. Religious communities, which in many (especially Eastern European) countries still have central social functions – transmitting information, channelling personal or media influence, or enabling attitudinal and behavioural change – can feel their power and cohesion threatened by liberal-democratic value politics. They then resist to protect their grouping and power, which can again be taken up by political parties in the promise to protect and maintain this power in exchange for the support of religious people for their own political interests. Religion then becomes collective residuum and a medium of political protest and maintenance of power. In conjunction with political narratives that then refer to the 'Christian heritage' and 'Christian values' (mostly emptied of content or referring primarily to family values and nation), religion can then be linked to right-wing and authoritarian attitudes. We can observe dynamics like this in Poland, Hungary, or Austria, but also in secularised states such as Czechia or Eastern Germany. This abuse of Christian values is supported by the fact that traditionally only right-wing parties consider religion to be a socially relevant factor, while liberal and left-wing parties usually have nothing to offer religious people and their concerns and needs. Conversely, traditional religious communities have a long historical heritage of patriarchy and authoritarianism, both in their theologies and structures (for example, the hierarchical understanding of the priest in Catholicism and Orthodoxy; traditional women and family values; considering homosexuality as a sin, etc.), which favours affinity with such parties.

Furthermore, the historical amnesia concerning the role of Christianity in the emergence of the EU and a one-sided, primarily negative perception of religion by secular protagonists make it easy for right-wing authoritarian parties and governments to refer to this forgotten and ignored heritage. Correspondingly, many Christians in Europe lack theological education and are religiously illiterate. They identify Christian faith with the Christian culture they were raised in. Without education, this ignorance can then easily be used politically with reference to the protection of the 'Christian cultural heritage'. Conversely, Christians for whom their churches provide theological education, such as in Austria, Germany, or Switzerland, participate in socio-political discourses in a committed way and on the basis of democratic values.

For religious disseminators and political actors, numerous tasks arise from this diagnosis. The need for religious education is central; it must be of interest for both the religious communities and public and political actors and institutions. Historical knowledge as a reflected examination of the political dimensions and implications of faith could also provide important protection against the political instrumentalisation of religion. Religious communities must reflect on questions of power and structure within their institutions and on the extent to which they support or prevent the development of democratic conduct. Privatisation of religiosity can become highly counterproductive in terms of the implications for democratic values – be it promoted by secular policies or religious actors who want to depoliticise faith. In any case, the influence of religion on political values cannot be erased or prevented; it must be reflected upon.

In conclusion, religious citizens must be able and supported to feel part of the European project. They must be able to find their values reflected in it. This necessarily includes conflicts which should not be avoided, but it needs structures, spaces, and platforms for dialogue. Such conflicts do not aim at assimilation from either side, but at listening to each other, understanding each other, and together developing overlapping values and commonly shared universal values and norms while identifying and recognising differences that do not harm human rights and the common good. If the rule of law, fundamental rights and obligations, and democracy, etc. are to be recognised, there is no way around such public debates on values on an equal footing. Such values debates could even build bridges to better resolve the political conflicts with the Visegrád states in particular. For the values of the EU are not Western values, but were formulated jointly by Western and Eastern Europe and therefore claim to be valid for all.

14.3.4   The Role of Religious Institutions and Leaders

In secular societies, the idea that religion is a private matter is widespread. Also, in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam the decision to believe in God is considered a deeply personal and free choice. This personal freedom is not interpreted in private terms, however, but is intrinsically connected with social relationships and public responsibility. Therefore, religious institutions and leaders play a key role in shaping the content and practice of individual religiosities and should not be underestimated in their influence. They interpret and transmit the content of sacred texts; they teach religious doctrines and commandments; they lead rituals and introduce people into other religious practices. Religious leaders thereby also influence the political attitudes, norms, and values of their believers – be this through explicitly political appeals or the indirect impact of religious values. In this respect, religious leaders can promote or weaken democratic self-understanding and positive attitudes towards political parties or the state. They can encourage political engagement and positive relationships towards society or other religious communities, and they can promote values such as freedom, solidarity, tolerance, forgiveness, reconciliation, etc. (Nagel 2015; KAIICID and ECRL 2021).

The EVS does not provide information on whether and how religious institutions and leaders influence the values of their believers. However, the results suggest that this direct influence is waning (Halman and Sieben, Chap. 4, this volume). In contrast, in some European countries the recourse of political actors to religious norms and values seems to have a stronger impact than does the influence of religious leaders (Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume). But despite their shrinking impact on individuals, religious institutions and leaders continue to be relevant yet contested political actors who shape public discourse. Particularly in social and climate policy issues, they are sought-after interlocutors at state and EU level. But in other fields, such as migration policies, gender policies, and policies on same-sex relationships, abortion, etc., their influence is highly contested. For example, it is decreasing in migration issues throughout Europe (Rosenberger 2022) and in policy fields on sexuality in Western Europe, yet increasing in some Eastern European states.

This new and complex situation is forcing religious institutions, in particular Christian churches, to reposition themselves in society and politics. Traditional coalitions, such as the alliance between Christian Democratic parties and churches in Western Europe (van Kersbergen 2022) are diminishing in importance; new coalitions are forming, such as in Eastern European countries in the course of nation-building; new conflicts between religious communities and the state are breaking out, for example, conflict over denominational religious education provided by the state in Austria, the wearing of headscarves in public institutions, or legislation on religious slaughter and circumcision concerning Jews and Muslims in Northern European States.

The progressive collapse of individual religiosity throughout Europe poses a further challenge and, above all, a threat to liberal democracy. Detlef Pollack's and Gergely Rosta's (2022) worldwide study of the sociology of religion confirms the developments we observed in the EVS: A dramatic secularisation is taking place in Europe – even in its religious strongholds. The authors provide empirical evidence that religion and churches gain in importance when religious identities are combined with political, economic and national interests. In particular, however, the combination of religious and political interests contributes to dechurching and weakens religious integration. As in Poland, for example, the liberal sections in particular then turn away from the churches. At the same time, there is a danger that the churches in particular will turn into traditionalist, right-wing authoritarian and anti-democratic communities that are socially isolated and become meaningless as a religion.

Religious institutions and their leaders must therefore reflect on what role they can, or want, to play politically in the future. Which political concerns and parties may be supported in a theologically responsible way, but where must Churches also resist? What organisational structures and strategies need to be developed in order to introduce religious values and interests into the political discourse? Based on which argumentation are these values and interests to be communicated? How can genuinely religious values be translated into secular terms and made comprehensible? Who are possible cooperation partners and from whom religions must

distinguish? And what relationship should they want and do they want to share with the state and government? Listening to the debates and conflicts within religious communities, in episcopal declarations, synodal processes, conferences, and religious educational programmes and curricula, these debates have already started, and new coalitions – for example, between different religious communities or with civil society organisations – are emerging. But the churches still have intensive internal debates and disputes ahead of them.

Looking at the value developments among young people, a substantial transformation becomes also highly necessary. In all religious communities, many young people distance themselves from religious institutions, in particular from those religious communities that they perceive as patriarchal and homophobic (Inglehart 2021). If one looks at the sociodemographic composition of international civil society or human rights organisations and movements (for example, 'Amnesty International', 'Greenpeace', 'Black Lives Matter', 'Fridays for Future', etc.), one will notice that these are the places where young people – particularly young educated women – engage for justice, solidarity, peace, or human rights. In contrast, Christian churches are dominated by elderly people – a process that according to the EVS has also commenced in highly religious countries such as Poland or Romania. Politically interested young people are increasingly not choosing religious institutions as a space of engagement, but instead are contributing to those institutions in which they can find their values represented.

As a result, but also because of demography and religious pluralisation in European societies, religious communities are gradually losing their function as important locations of value formation for young people. Thus, research is needed into which contemporary institutions take over this function of value formation today, and into which sources in particular young people look at to acquire their values. In this regard, the reference to human rights seems to play an important role as a source of values, particularly for well-educated young people. For many, human rights provide a modern system of values – even though human rights themselves do not claim any '"transreligious" overarching authority' or provide an 'international humanitarian "civil religion"' (Bielefeldt 2011: 237). They do not form a comprehensive belief system, but have a practical purpose, as they should enable ideologically different groups to join with their respective specific motivations and world views. Value formation is, of course, rooted in many other sources besides human rights, such as family relations and friendships, educational institutions, work and leisure, a culture dominated by economy and consumerism, and specific life experiences, etc., which have been identified as relevant factors of value formation (Verwiebe 2019a), but cannot be elaborated on here.

From the internal perspective of religious communities (in particular Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), social and political engagement, for instance, for justice and solidarity, is an elementary component of religious self-understanding and therefore a central source of value formation (Bucher and Krockauer 2006; Körner 2020). Even if the practical responsibilities, tasks, and duties resulting from this conviction lead to highly controversial discussion within and between religious

communities, religious institutions and authorities must recognise their role as value educators in political terms too. Whether it is conscious or not, even if they encourage their believers to withdraw from active political engagement, they shape people's political values. Consequently, they must reflect on their influence and include political education on their religious education agenda and curricula. But political education based on both democratic and religious and theological principles is also an essential factor in contributing to society politically in a competent and responsible way and in strengthening understanding and recognition of religious values.

Admittedly, these ideas sound very idealistic and will be difficult to realise in practice given the different situations of churches and religious communities in European countries. Christian churches and Jewish and Islamic communities and institutions have highly heterogeneous political self-understandings, values, and interests, for theological reasons but also as a result of majority and minority relations. So, for example, Jewish and Muslim communities in Northern European countries will strive for the religious freedom to practise their religious traditions (regarding headscarves, religious slaughter, or circumcision, for example), while Christian churches in Germany and Austria need to further develop the legally guaranteed cooperative model which is criticised by a growing number of non-religious citizens. State churches in the Nordic countries and in Great Britain face greater challenges with their non-believing members than does the Catholic Church in Poland or the Orthodox Church in Romania, where the latter have enormous importance for national self-image and will probably reject the urgency of these questions. Also, for the Christian churches in Hungary, such fundamental theo-political discussions will be a threat, as the churches are privileged both financially and symbolically, while at the same time being put under pressure to support Hungarian policies. Even within a state, discourses on the political role of the church will be conflictive, as for example in Germany, where the churches in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) are generally more sceptical about cooperation with the state than are the churches in Western Germany. But despite these different starting points and conflicts, these debates on the future role of religious institutions in society and politics must be held for theological reasons and because of the ambivalent impact they have on political values. If churches do not want to lose the credibility of their values and norms in the long run, there is no alternative to wide-ranging fundamental reflections with their members at all levels.

Yet religious communities face another challenge, too. Religious beliefs, norms, and values clearly have an implicit political dimension and effect. But in their theological self-understanding they are not political actors in the sense of political science. First and foremost, they define themselves as institutionalised representations of the theologically constitutive relationship between the human being and the sacred, a transcendent or divine reality, or God. With their narratives of meaning, symbols, religious practices, and ethics they offer ways of giving this relationship a defined content and a structured and organised form. Religious life is therefore at the very centre of religious institutions and communities; political life is only an

indirect – but inevitable – consequence. These theological arguments cannot be elaborated on here, since they vary according to religion. But religious institutions and actors who ignore or forget their primary responsibility are in danger of becoming political activists who legitimise their political actions with religion. Moreover, by giving political activism priority over their genuine religious duties, they risk destroying the impulse that a religious reference to transcendence holds for all political action: religions can remind human beings and society that human life cannot be reduced to political action. There are also areas of life that can and must be free from politics: for example, responsibility, friendship, and love for each other, and love for, gratitude towards, and praise of God. From the perspective of almost all religions, human beings cannot be reduced to being determined exclusively by society and politics. Human beings are 'more' than the results of their social and political circumstances; they are able to transcend their reality and are free to create different realities. In societies that are primarily orientated towards the immanence of reality based on the laws of nature, such a belief in a transcendent vocation is eroding, including the will to accept its existence and the ability to communicate about it in a rational way. So, as belief in the revelation of a God as testified in the holy scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is diminishing, dialogue and academic discourse about the human relation to transcendence becomes more difficult. For religious traditions, this is a massive challenge.

Therefore, religious communities must reflect on the question of how a transcendent reality can be explained and translated into the language of secular societies[2] – not only on a philosophical or theological level for academic insiders, but on a broad and public level too. To put it in Christian theological terms, how is it possible to speak about God in a rational way, so that faith in a transcendent reality can be neither instrumentalised politically nor used as a stopgap for unsolved human problems or as a tranquiliser? What can a public discourse on God look like if not reduced to a practical, individual function, but one that offers ways for society to discuss forgotten truths such as the vulnerability and finiteness of all life and creation, the meaning of suffering, or the realities of evil and guilt? And which political impacts do such discourses have?

These difficult questions have long been discussed within theology; meter-long bookshelves can be filled with academic literature about these topics (one of the best-known theologians in this regard is, for example, Johann Baptist Metz). Discussing them lies beyond the scope of this contribution. Currently, a revival of the question of God can be observed in German theology (Bucher 2022; Röser 2018). If religious communities do not want to reduce themselves to value promoters alone to legitimise their existence, however, but want societies to understand the sources and reasons for their values, these genuine religious and theological questions belong centrally in their internal debates.

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[2] Giorgio Agamben and Slavoj Žižek, for example, have presented excellent publications discussing theological questions from a secular, atheist perspective.

14.4 Values, Education, and Religion

As ethical debates are currently conducted within the framework of values, values education needs much more attention: it is an issue of public and political interest. Social transformation processes such as digitalisation, the climate crisis, the rapid change in science, technology, and the economy, urbanisation, and the influence of social media on values need values education to enable all citizens to handle these challenges in ethical terms. Additionally, the enormous mental and psychological problems that have increased during the pandemic, the war, and the ongoing economic crisis are a call for values education, as problems and burdens can be better endured and for longer if moral orientation and ethical standards are available. The magnitude of the multiple crises also threatens moral substance and is at risk of leading to indifference, resignation, or cynicism. Young people are faced with challenges for which many of their ancestors' values no longer seem sufficient. Older people often see their traditional values no longer represented in contemporary values discourses. We can therefore assume that the intergenerational transfer of values is no longer guaranteed – a problem which also puts intergenerational solidarity and social cohesion at risk. Our volume also documents such intergenerational cleavages and thus potential conflicts, not least in relation to religion. While, for example, values already take on the status of a religion in many schools in Great Britain, heterogeneous concepts of religious education are being developed in other European countries in order to react to the transformation of religion in Europe (Jäggle and Rothgangel 2011–2020).

Therefore, values education will require central attention in the future – on the part of educational institutions and political actors, but also on the part of academia and other societal institutions such as companies, recreational facilities, the media, etc. As values are always embedded in (more or less conscious) societal contexts, the lack of values education for all could exacerbate value conflicts. Without the educational struggle for reflective and well-argued values, societies are threatened with disintegration. Values education therefore includes fostering competence in ethical judgement through comprehensive educational measures that support the ability of people to formulate and argue well-founded value judgements both independently and in communication with others. But values education also refers to a complex process that affects all people throughout their lives, not just young people. Values education is a 'lifelong process of the emergence and change of individual value attitudes' (Verwiebe 2019b: 4), which takes place not only in the primary socialisation of the family but also in other areas of life and society. However, empirical research on such comprehensive processes of value formation is still relatively new and should be intensified. In a narrower sense, value formation is a well-researched topic, especially in the field of pedagogy and educational sciences with a view to young people.

14.4.1 Values Education as a Public, Social, and Political Concern

The European Union is already aware of these challenges and has developed recommendations and programmes that promote values education in school education: the 'Council Recommendation on Common Values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of Teaching' (2018) 'aims to promote a sense of belonging – conveying common values, practising inclusive education, and teaching about Europe and its Member States to help increase a sense of belonging to one's school locality, country as well as the European family'. According to this recommendation, which was adopted in 2018, common values should be promoted at all stages of education. The Council Recommendation claims that members States should:

1. Increase the sharing of the common values set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union from an early age and at all levels and types of education and training in a lifelong perspective to strengthen social cohesion and a positive and inclusive common sense of belonging to local, regional, national and Union level;
2. continue to implement the commitments of the Paris Declaration, notably through

   (a) promoting active citizenship and ethics education as well as an open classroom climate to foster tolerant and democratic attitudes and social, citizenship and intercultural competences.
   (b) enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particularly in the use of the internet and social media, so as to raise awareness of risks related to the reliability of information sources and to help exercise sound judgement;
   (c) using existing or, where necessary, developing new structures that promote the active participation of teachers, parents, students, and the wider community in schools; and
   (d) supporting opportunities for young people's democratic participation and an active, critically aware and responsible community engagement;

3. make effective use of existing tools to promote citizenship education, such as the Council of Europe's Competences for Democratic Culture framework.

For the EU, values education is considered as a constitutive dimension of democratic education in schools and is embedded in a comprehensive didactic concept, where theoretical knowledge is intrinsically connected with practical concepts, such as exemplary learning, cooperation, and participation. Values education is therefore a social and political concern, though the implementation in the various countries is still very heterogeneous (Polak, Chap. 2, this volume). It is currently focused primarily on the area of schools and the education of young people. Theoretical ethical education is an essential part of values education. In Germany and Austria, 'ethics' is a school subject; in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, values issues play an important role in citizenship education.

However, for people and groups who have a more traditional understanding of values and see values education as the primary responsibility of sub-state institutions, especially as a right of the family or of ethnic or religious groups, this kind of 'political pedagogy' can generate resistance. Despite the professional and science-based initiatives and didactical tools provided, some groups may perceive political values education as expropriation. Therefore, subsidiarity and cooperation between societal institutions should be strengthened regarding values education too. Which institutions and actors are responsible for values education and in what way? What do the state and society need from educational institutions to support those overlapping values, which are necessary for social cohesion? In addition, what are the limits of state or political interference in values issues? Furthermore, intergenerational dialogue and exchange on values issues should be strengthened.

Simultaneously, values education stakeholders should also be aware of the problematic dimensions of value formation. As we see in Great Britain, for example, values such as democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of difference are declared 'British values' and form a kind of umbrella to tame plurality. They take on a universal function, but without corresponding concepts of reflection and education they can mutate into a kind of religious substitute (Polak, Chap. 2, this volume). This is highly ambivalent, as values then serve, as for example in British schools, as commitments to which all teachers and pupils must orient themselves, legal penalties included. Values take on the function of social control and no longer serve the common understanding of ethical orientation, but rather the control of behaviour. To avoid such problematic ways of dealing with values, the reception of educational research would be necessary, which would also provide didactics on how values can be taught and learned in a pedagogically responsible way. To avoid the reduction of values to a kind of pseudo-religious declaration, ethical and philosophical education, historical education, but also religious, literary, and artistic education would need to be promoted in addition to embedding values education. There is a need for an interdisciplinary, comprehensive concept of values education that takes seriously the deep anchoring of values in human existence and life culture, which cannot be reduced to moral and political convictions and creeds alone. Values education always aims at an attitude towards life, the meaning of life, and the understanding of reality, the human being, and the world. For this reason, values education never takes place only in subjects specifically designed for this purpose, but is a cross-cutting issue for which all subjects as well as social institutions, in particular the labour, economic, and media sectors, share responsibility.

A politically explosive problem that arises in the context of politically and state-propagated values formation is the question of how to deal with those minorities that represent contradictory or different value attitudes than the majority, such as conservative Christian minorities in the area of 'life ethics' (divorce, abortion, assisted suicide, etc.) or Muslim minorities. Conflicts arise, for example, with denominational schools that claim to want to teach their own values, or in the area of healthcare when denominational hospitals reject any form of euthanasia for religious reasons. From the perspective of European values and governmental values education based on them, there is the sometimes justified fear that 'value minorities'

violate human rights and the rule of law and are prone to radicalisation and extremism. However, based on the principles of pluralism and tolerance and the freedom of religion or belief, attitudes that deviate from the societal norm must also get the possibility to be discussed in public – within the framework of European values, liberal democracy, and human rights, of course. In many European states, we can currently observe conflicts around the question of what the criteria are from which the limits of tolerance and the freedom of religion and belief should be drawn; most prominent are the conflicts about the wearing of headscarves in public or state institutions (Berghahn et al. 2009). These conflicts are extremely politicised and fought out primarily on a legal level (see for example, the judgment of the European Court of Justice (Grand Chamber) on 15 July 2021 on the wearing of any visible political, philosophical, or religious sign or the wearing of conspicuous, large-sized political, philosophical, or religious signs in the workplace, which requires the legitimacy of the policy of neutrality adopted by the employer and the need to establish economic loss suffered by the employer, see InfoCuria 2021). But for the understanding and recognition of the values that such conflicts and judgments are based upon, legal solutions should be accompanied by public and democratic value debates (Konrath, Chap. 11, this volume), which can foster but also need values education.

14.4.2   Religion in Value Formation

With the erosion of everyday religious life and its value-shaping power as well as the weakened position of churches as value-shaping institutions, religious communities come under pressure to legitimise themselves. They need to ask themselves, what role may, can, and should religion play in values education when value debates are increasingly secularised? Our empirical findings prove that religious communities bear great responsibility for value formation. At the same time, their influence in values education discourses is discussed quite controversially or even decidedly rejected, especially in the field of religious education for young people (Schweitzer 2008). Moreover, most young people will probably prefer to choose their values themselves and not have them prescribed by a religious community.

In six volumes, the project 'Religious Education at Schools in Europe' (Jäggle and Rothgangel 2011–2020) documents the different models of religious education and heterogeneous forms of organisation of religious education in Europe. The results not only document the immense diversity of religious education and how it consists of more than values education, but also show that religious education continues to be important in Europe. But this importance is not only a result of the empirical results. It can also be argued with Art. 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where in paragraph 2 it reads: 'Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace' (Universal Declaration of

Human Rights: United Nations 1948). Because religion is an essential dimension of the personality of religious people, and substantial understanding among religious groups requires knowledge and education, religious education can and must be considered an essential part of human rights education. In a world of cultural and religious pluralism, it is an essential contribution to sustainable and peaceful coexistence.

But religious communities are and will continue to face fierce debates. Which institutions are responsible for religious education? Which content should state curricula contain? How shall religious education be organised by states in the context of religious pluralism and secular societies? Is religious education a matter of state education policy or a private matter? Should religious education be offered by religious scholars or by religious communities? Different states in Europe already have different institutional answers (Jäggle and Rothgangel 2011–2020). But in the context of secular societies, the ideologies, policies, pedagogies, and practices for religious education at secular schools need far more critical research, such as that provided by Byrne (2014) for Australia in comparison with other developed nations. In the face of secularist and fundamentalist developments, the need for religious literacy calls for a public and political debate on the contemporary practices of religious education in the context of socioreligious transformation. Religious communities and institutions should be regarded as partners in this regard. In turn, religious communities need to reflect and find their new position and thus should become more actively involved in these debates – not only to protect their own interests, but also to contribute to the need for religious and values education in a globalised world of multiple crises.

Scholars of religious pedagogy have been aware of this precarious situation for decades and therefore can provide theoretical and empirical research on religious education, in particular on the connection between education, values, and religion (Grümme, Chap. 13, this volume; Elsenbast et al. 2008; Naurath et al. 2013), which can also contribute to public and political debates. From the perspective of religious education, values education based on religious beliefs has a secondary character (Schweitzer 2008). In recourse to religious traditions, people are given the opportunity to (self-)critically reflect on the values and value practices they have acquired in their primary value socialisation and to further develop them in dialogue with the ethical conceptions of the religious traditions. That means that religious education does not aim at convincing people of religious values as beliefs. Rather, it wants to strengthen their competence to critically develop personal values in dialogue with religious beliefs and values. As values are formed in the interplay between concrete everyday experiences and institutional mediation (through family, school, society, media, religious communities, etc.), they require ethical reflection and learning, which are at the centre of religious values education. Personal freedom and reason-based arguments thus play a central role in religious education when personal values are brought into dialogue with religious convictions and their ethical implications.

As an academic matter of course, there are different approaches to the question of how religion is thematised in values education processes (Schweitzer 2008: 33–34), which cannot be discussed here. For a plural society with its diverging

values, an approach that leads to dialogue sensitive to differences and practical cooperation seems most suitable (Schweitzer 2008: 34). This approach assumes that there are lasting differences between different religions and world views, which should neither be abolished nor even resolved through religious education. Rather, such a concept aims at a 'continued reconciliation' and a 'difference-sensitive understanding' in the medium of dialogue and cooperation. With this practical approach, religious communities and their institutions consequently play an important role in religious education. They are considered as concrete localities, that is, spaces where values are lived and can be experienced in concrete terms. Unlike secular-universalist approaches, which aim at an abstract consensus or at conclusively identifying guiding values to whom everyone must submit, values education is interpreted as an inconclusive practice, which requires permanent communication and reflection and enables people to formulate overlapping consensuses of values themselves while at the same time recognising differences and distinctions.

Such an approach to the role of religion in values formation can avoid religious indoctrination and any kind of enforcement of an abstract unity. Therefore, religious education can contribute significantly to values education and to a democratic practice in the context of pluralism. At the same time, people with a religious self-image learn to actively participate in the discourse on values in secular societies, as they are trained in dealing with the diversity of world views. It is evident that such an understanding of religion in value formation also has an effect on political attitudes. The participants can experience that value pluralism is constitutive for secular societies, that conflicts based on arguments are necessary and possible, and that the permanent struggle for the recognition of universal values is indispensable for peaceful societies.

Denominational schools have a special responsibility in this regard. If they open spaces where the tension between the values of a specifically religious tradition and the plural-secular values of democratic societies are discussed, reflected upon, and worked upon, they can present themselves as role models for society. They can initiate educational processes in which the universal values of the EU are concretised in a particular, ideologically bound context and at the same time offer critical impulses for the further development of values against the background of the respective religious tradition.

14.4.3 Strengthening Universal Solidarity in Values Education

Our volume documents that there are various values that need to be given more attention in value formation. But in view of the global crisis phenomena, the promotion and strengthening of universal solidarity is of particular relevance. The results presented by Quandt and Lomazzi (Chap. 7, this volume) are a call for action in this regard, but they also give reason for hope. Despite the successive economic and migration crises before 2017, levels of attitudinal solidarity have not been generally decreasing in the European countries. The stability of solidarity in European

countries – and in some countries even a modest increase in solidarity – documents that Europeans are ready to offer solidarity to others, at least to people of their own society. The crises have had no effect on universal solidarity and it seems that as a normative, moral attitude, universal solidarity seems to become even more important (Quandt and Lomazzi, Chap. 7, this volume).

However, looking at the detailed results, concerns must be expressed. Compared with close solidarity, universal solidarity is relatively low throughout Europe, in particular in ex-communist and ex-Soviet European countries. This lack of universal solidarity is connected with low income, education, and economic reasons. Additionally, our empirical in-depth analyses document other precarious areas regarding values (see Part II, this volume): the understanding and acceptance of European values as universal values and norms, and the widespread challenge of xenophobic attitudes, in particular prejudices against migrants and Muslims. Tackling these value crises at all levels of society will require increased attention in values education.

The non-recognition of liberal democratic values, the extent of xenophobia, the value cleavages in the areas of intercultural coexistence, and the lack of universal solidarity indicate that significant parts of the European population do not recognise the normative and universal character of the values of the EU or that they draw their normative understanding of values from other sources, such as group-related, national, or religious values. The solidarity of a majority of respondents applies to particular groups and makes a clear distinction between in-groups and out-groups, which are then granted solidarity in a graduated manner (Quandt and Lomazzi, Chap. 7, this volume). This lack of solidarity is not only a problem among people with low incomes or less education, but can be observed throughout society. As recent studies on solidarity discuss, the lack of solidarity is also a result of the erosion of social welfare systems in Europe, which have turned from systems of redistribution to systems of individual insurance, in which tax systems and wealth taxation increasingly serve the interests of the upper two-thirds of society or international companies (Süß and Trop 2021). So, while solidarity is a highly accepted value, it is highly contested when it comes to concrete practice, and different interpretations split societies (Altreiter et al. 2019).

In view of global developments, this crisis in values orientation not only threatens national and European democracies and coexistence, but also sustainable peace. The recognition of human rights and value plurality presupposes the recognition of universal norms and also requires the willingness to practise solidarity that transcends one's own reference group and supports welfare systems based on the principle of structural solidarity. However, Martha Nussbaum (2013) pointed out that the ability and willingness to accept universal values and norms and practise universal solidarity are not innate, but require comprehensive individual and collective education.

This includes, on the one hand, a well-founded ethical education, which, in addition to cognitive knowledge of philosophical concepts and ethics, must also encompass the emotional dimension, that is, the promotion of mindfulness, compassion, and love. Martha Nussbaum emphasises that the recognition of normative values such as justice or solidarity requires not only a rational debate but also a positive,

emotional attachment to these values. Emotions must not only not be excluded, but must be an explicit component of value formation. Emotions must be taken seriously in their significance for political attitudes.

On the other hand, the social and political dynamics that hinder the development of the ability to feel, understand, and practise the normativity and universality of values such as solidarity must be identified. The experience of stable social bonds and trustworthy institutions is an essential structural fundament to enable a person and make them willing to practise, for example, solidarity. But globalisation and the dynamics of a neoliberal economic system have weakened social bonds and released individuals from their traditional social contexts into the global market (Bauman 2006: 11). Radical individualisation undermines social cohesion and solidarity. In such a context, values then relate less to ethical action and turn instead into an identity-stabilising factor (Polak, Chap. 2, this volume). Values are then used more as a medium for making statements about identity and belonging and less as an ethical starting point for social action. In recourse to values, values serve as identity markers and as boundaries between different groups. Values as identity markers can consequently strengthen prejudices and xenophobia and limit the scope of solidarity, which can be observed, for instance, in the negative effect of diversity on solidarity, which was mainly present for close solidarity and clearly weaker or even absent for universal solidarity (Quandt and Lomazzi, Chap. 7, this volume). Though our results demonstrate that religiosity – that is, the dominant denominational and confessional identities – is not the dominant driver for differences in close solidarity levels (Quandt and Lomazzi, Chap. 7, this volume), it is particularly linked to identity and belonging, and can reinforce dynamics of exclusion and marginalisation when combined with demographic indicators. Facing this empirical reality, religious leaders and theologians must consequently remind their believers that the monotheistic religions in their teachings and convictions aim at a universal understanding of solidarity and formulate normative ideas of values. As denominational belongings to a certain extent shape universal solidarity attitudes among believers (Quandt and Lomazzi, Chap. 7, this volume), it can be assumed that this religious resource does already have certain effects.

There may be further reasons for the difficulties in accepting universal norms such as solidarity that lie in a paradox: the historical amnesia of the origins of European values and the simultaneous increasing awareness that values and norms have been changing throughout history may lead many people to lose confidence in generally binding values and norms. It can be assumed that postmodern discourses, with deconstructive and genealogical approaches in their socially truncated reception, may have led to the conclusion among parts of society that truth no longer exists, that generally valid norms can no longer be stated, and that values and norms are therefore only a matter of individual and subjective decision. Because the philosophical discourses on the necessity of justifying norms, the ethical claim to the universalisability of ethical norms, and the nature and rules of so-called truths of reason (Polak, Chap. 2, this volume) are unknown to most people as a result of a lack of appropriate ethical education, the capacity for moral judgement is largely undeveloped – a deficiency that marks the crisis in ethical thinking.

This crisis of the capacity for ethically reflective moral judgement is also connected to political and media developments, as Hannah Arendt presciently described in her essay 'Lying in Politics' (Arendt 2021/1971). The reduction of politics to management and performance, the loss of trust in political actors as a result of scandals and lies, the transformation of factual truths into opinions, and the atomisation of society lead to people losing their sense of moral direction. What Hannah Arendt described at the time in relation to the transformation of evil into good by totalitarian systems and in the analysis of her era appears to be highly relevant today, for the social and political conditions that support enlightened ethical judgement have deteriorated considerably since then. The shaking of confidence in political actors in the face of banking and financial crises; pandemic policy; the weakness of national states and governments in protecting their populations from the dynamics of a globalised, extraterritorial market and the shifting of risk to individuals (Bauman 2006: 11); the refusal to solve the migration and climate crisis in a spirit of solidarity; and the economic power of multinational companies, etc., all leave the individual with feelings of 'liquid fear' (Bauman 2011) and powerlessness. They can result in cynicism and resignation concerning the validity of values and norms. They can destroy the moral substance of a society and lead to moral confusion. In such a situation, values no longer serve as stimuli for ethical and political action, but as anchors of belonging, instruments of protest, and sometimes weapons in the struggle against others.

Differentiated discourses on values will be difficult in such a context, because the interstices in argumentative discourse become narrower. Instead, the focus of value debates is on asserting, maintaining, or gaining power. The everyday experience of a working world characterised by a conflictual, competition-based understanding of the economy, in which profit and gain dominate, reinforces these developments. If one wants to deal with the crisis of ethical thinking, the social, political, and economic conditions must therefore be transformed. First and foremost is the struggle to restore the credibility of political actors, democratic institutions, and other social elites. Any attempt on the part of politicians to promote the recognition of the universality and normativity of (European) values will only be fruitful if this is also reflected in their own actions. In addition, remedying the value cleavages of the European population requires that the underlying socio-economic divisions that have emerged in the course of a neoliberal globalised economy and austerity policies are politically addressed. The economic crisis in the wake of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine – inflation, rising energy and cost of living prices, debt reduction – makes this task even urgent. It can be assumed that the readiness for solidarity and the recognition of universal norms and values will only increase if there is also a structural change in society, politics, and the economy that can be experienced in the lives of people.

Moreover, ethical behaviour must also be practically possible and requires corresponding structures in society and its institutions. It needs spaces of freedom, reliable belonging structures, existential security, and a stable societal order. Values inherent in institutions and structures have a stronger impact on human behaviour and frequently counteract ethically based insights and judgements. It has always

been minorities alone who, on the basis of their idealistic ethical judgements, have acted counterfactually to those values that are rewarded by social institutions and experienced as normative in everyday life (Welzer 2021). The (passive) approval of the National Socialist policy by the German population towards Jews is just as much a historical memorial to this empirical fact as today's dominant social and economic recognition of competitive or climate-damaging behaviour which shapes human action more strongly than individual ethical convictions or appeals to solidarity and other universal values.

But our results show that there are also other dynamics in parts of the population. The increasing tolerance of cultural plurality in cities and among young people, the growing recognition of lifestyles other than heterosexual, the desire for a fair distribution of economic resources, the willingness to change lifestyles in the face of the climate crisis, and the stability of solidarity – these are also part of Europe's reality (see Halman and Sieben, Chap. 4; Aschauer, Chap. 12, this volume). Similarly, the issue of values is already addressed in the field of economics or education in the context of global and solidary values and human rights (see Grümme Chap. 13; Coudenhove-Kalergi, Chap. 10, this volume).

Invisible in our volume, but definitely worth mentioning, are all the civil society movements and projects that operate on the basis of universal solidarity, values, and norms and which engage to represent marginalised groups, the poor, or human rights. Research has also documented that there are certain social, political, economic, and cultural conditions which favour the practical commitment to universal values (for example, International Panel on Social Progress 2018). International organisations such as the OSCE have also developed numerous tools that can contribute significantly to the recognition of human rights and solidarity values (ODIHR 2022). The promotion of cooperation between states, governments, and civil society organisations and academia; the financial and mental support for national and international civil society commitment to solidarity projects; and educational measures and training for social and political disseminators, which also include religious communities, can support people in committing to universal values and norms such as solidarity and lead to a decrease in xenophobic attitudes. Moreover, national, and international platforms and coalitions of different ethnic, cultural, and religious communities or human rights activists open up spaces for encounters in which people can practise solidarity and experience the power of developing commonly shared universal values. The promotion of a universal and normative value orientation also requires teaching materials in schools that reflect the history and reality of a global world that can only survive based on universal solidarity. Discourses on identity should be opened up and promote the formation of dynamic, learning, changing, and multiple identities that can only develop in dialogue with others. In such dialogues it is possible to connect particular and universal values and experience, so that one can be a member of a city and a citizen of a nation, of Europe, and of the world, and at the same time practise solidarity beyond social, ethnic, cultural, religious, and ideological borders. Political actors, the media, and religious communities play a central role in this process, as they can provide such projects and further establish societal structures and institutions to

enable the learning and practising of universal solidarity. Christian churches and Jewish and Islamic communities with their international networks and structures could also make a significant contribution in this regard and open spaces for experiencing and reflecting on the necessity and power of universal and normative values and the practice of solidarity.

14.5   Challenges of Interdisciplinary Values Research

In the course of our project, we also identified some scientific challenges for the European Values Study and, in general, for interdisciplinary values research.

14.5.1   Concepts

In the interdisciplinary interpretation of the results of our explorative study, the terminology and guiding paradigms of the EVS proved to be a challenge time and again. The differences between the participating disciplines with their guiding conceptual traditions and (often taken for granted) theories opened numerous innovative insights, but also raised critical questions about the understanding and theoretical premises of the concepts of values, politics, and religion as they underlie the EVS. Criticisms included the vagueness of the concept of values, the narrowness and traditionality of the concept of religion, and the focus of the concept of politics on attitudes towards liberal democracy. Positively stated, future research desiderata can be identified in the debates on the guiding concepts.

The discussions about the contested concept of values concerned the tensions between an empirically based, a hermeneutic and an ethical or a legal understanding of values, the necessity of distinguishing between different categories of values, the question of the function as well as the normativity and universality of values, and the understanding of 'European values'. The lack of an ethical reflection on the empirically surveyed values and of possibilities to state what influence values have on behaviour in the concrete life of interviewees was also criticised (for details see Polak, Chap. 2, this volume). The need for increased interdisciplinarity in values research became just as clear as the topics to which values research could devote more attention in the future. These include, among other things, empirical studies that are more strongly oriented towards the differentiated understandings of values provided by other disciplines – especially ethics and philosophy – in order to be able to describe and distinguish more precisely which genuine ethical and normative convictions people orient themselves towards, how values and ethical norms are justified, and with which ideas of meaning they are connected or which practical implications values and norms have. Studies that explore in more depth the approval or rejection of normative European values and underlying motivations would also

be of interest. Cultural and historical studies on the results of the EVS, in turn, could fertilise theories that explain the heterogeneity of the European values landscape more precisely, not least the value cleavages between Western and Eastern Europe. Last but not least, (social) ethical studies that critically analyse the results of the EVS (or are already involved in the conception of the questions) would be helpful in drawing ethically and politically responsible practical consequences from the results.

The findings on the crisis of liberal democracy and the role religion plays in it, in turn, suggest that cooperation with political science should be considered both in the conception and evaluation of values studies. Given that the EVS is not a political science study, it could benefit from such cooperation, as, for example, solid statements could then be provided regarding the impact of political processes, institutions, discourses, and actors on political and religious attitudes and values, which we can assume but cannot argue with our data. Cooperation with political science, for example, would be helpful in providing empirical evidence for the theses of the 'politicised religion' (Ivanescu 2010: 309) and the 'religionisation of politics' (Bauman 2006: 161). Our results (S. Pickel and G. Pickel, Chap. 5; Polak and Schuster, Chap. 6, this volume) do suggest that right-wing and populist discourses, which instrumentalise the topic of religion for their interests and means, have an influence on the formatting of subjective religiosities – but we cannot prove this unequivocally. Similarly, parts of the population with a religious self-image seem to bring genuine political interests (such as social justice, the right to cultural and national identity, protection of life, etc.) into the social discourse by referring to religious values, but in this respect, too, the EVS data allow only speculation and no representative statements.

Multilevel social science models (Muth et al. 2021) and (neo)institutional theory approaches (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; DiMaggio and Powell 1983), as applied in research on the influence of external conditions on religion, could also be applied to values research and help in interpreting the European values landscape in more depth. Additionally, reflections on the empirical results through political ethics would support the development of research-based practical consequences. Transdisciplinary research approaches that also cooperate with political institutions and actors and take their knowledge and experience into account could contribute to making the findings of the European Values Study more fruitful for political practice. Moreover, inter- and transdisciplinary projects around the EVS could stimulate a broad discourse on the normative and universal values of the European Union – a concern that is also legitimate from a social science perspective, since these can also generate empirical research on normative values. A broader, scientifically and practically well-founded understanding of politics could offer political actors essential foundations for a values policy that is evidence-based *and* ethically reflected. Moreover, values research could also contribute to the self-critical reflection and further development of the values guiding the actions of political actors and institutions, organisations, or parties, with the help of experts. A transdisciplinary approach to researching political values would also offer opportunities to involve the population.

Finally, the very narrowly defined concept of religion in the EVS requires a comprehensive revision – especially as a result of the transformation in the socioreligious field and the growing and ambivalent significance of religion in the political sphere. The focus on religion as personal religiosity and a traditional, Christian-formatted understanding of religion are simply no longer sufficient to adequately describe developments in the light of comprehensive changes. The pluralisation of religious self-understandings, including the field of institutionally unbound spirituality, which is largely invisible in the study; the complex interplay of religious identities with social, political, and economic processes; and local, regional contexts and their historical patterns must be taken much more into account. The same applies to the perception of religion as 'public religion' (Casanova 1994), which remain unclear because of the narrowness of the concept of religion. International quantitative studies on religious sociology, such as those published by Pollack and Rosta (2017), Inglehart (2021), or the 'Religionsmonitor' (2007; 2012), set quality standards that the EVS should also strive for, even if it is not focusing exclusively on religion.

14.5.2   The Paradigm of Secularisation

The paradoxical developments in the field of religion as well as the contradictory influence on political attitudes make it necessary to critically question or differentiate the paradigm of secularisation on which the European Values Study is traditionally based upon. In our study, this primarily describes the loss of meaning at the individual level, which does not exclude social and political relevance (S. Pickel and G. Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume). Nevertheless, because of the understanding of religion in the EVS, there are certain limits to such attempts, since, for example, no questions are asked in the questionnaire that would allow us to explore a deeper understanding of what exactly the respondents mean by defining themselves as 'religious' or 'non-religious'. For example, what does the 'non' refer to when someone rejects a religious self-concept? Does it imply the rejection of religion as such or the dissociation from a certain understanding of religion, or is it an expression of an agnostic attitude? In view of the fact that the 'Nones' represent a growing group in Europe, a differentiation here would be urgently necessary.

In everyday language as well as in the EVS, the term 'secular' is usually interpreted as a proxy for the clear rejection of traditionally religious ideas and values as well as for a post-religious and sometimes also for an anti-religious self-image. In sociology of religion there are hard and controversial theoretical debates on the concept of secularisation. While Detlef Pollack and Gergely Rosta still insist on the validity of this theoretical concept (see Pollack and Rosta 2017: 10–12, criticising Casanova 1994; Berger 1999; Stark and Finke 2000 and many others), José Casanova (1994) and Hans Joas (2009) argued that secularisation processes affect several levels of society in a highly heterogeneous way: they can affect the level of individual lifestyles, the relationship between the state and religious communities, and social

transformation processes when these result in negotiation around common and binding values or cultural forms of expression and thereby escape control by religious communities. In addition to the structural level, secularisation can also affect the level of content. The anthropologist Talal Asad (2014), for example, describes secularisation as the 'independence of individuals, the state and other social spheres from religion and the detachment of social values and norms from religious beliefs'. Given these debates, one can assume that the proxy function might not correspond to the transformations in the socioreligious landscape. The classical secularisation thesis, that is, the idea that modernity inevitably leads to the complete disappearance of religion, is, of course, hardly represented in the sociology of religion anymore. While sociologists of religion such as our author Gert Pickel develop the secularisation thesis further and integrate regional as well as national cultural and confessional development paths and thus still attribute great importance to it (like Pollack and Rosta 2017), other researchers have long since developed alternatives such as the pluralisation thesis (Berger 2014) or prove from a global perspective that modernisation processes in other world regions do not necessarily have to entail secularisation processes (Joas and Wiegandt 2009). Based on the observation that an increasing number of respondents in empirical studies define themselves as 'spiritual, but not religious, but not secular' (Boaz 2018), the sociologist of religion and theologian Tomáš Halík (2022: 133) also formulates the thesis that secularisation does not make religion disappear, but rather transformed its hermeneutic form and social and political function. He distinguishes three transformations in this regard: the transformation of religion into a 'politically identarian ideology', 'into spirituality' and the emergence of a growing number of people who commit themselves neither to an 'organized religion' nor to atheism. A team of authors led by Hubert Knoblauch (2020) argues in a similar direction, speaking of a 'refiguration' of religion. According to this theory, religion is neither experiencing a renaissance nor is it dissolving into a postmodern form. Rather, it stands in a dynamic, process-related relationship to 'civilization-wide sociogenesis' (Knoblauch 2020: 11), that is, to ongoing transformations in the relationship between the individual and society. In contrast, Charles Taylor (2007) speaks of a 'secular immanent frame' that has expanded globally and thus describes, from an anthropological perspective, a modern, cosmic, and moral concept of order that follows a rationality without any reference to a transcendent, divine reality. The cosmic order is interpreted as a reality that must be demythologised, explored, and influenced technically. Consequently, the social order is understood as a rational, humanly constructed balance of interests between individuals. The moral order revolves around a disciplined and rational self, which is guided by immanent maxims. These 'closed world structures' do not describe a sociological dynamic but a fundamental change in human consciousness, in which belief in a transcendence becomes implausible and therefore accountable. This fundamentally changes the status of religion. Religious people are now challenged to explain the meaningfulness of faith and justify it in secular terms. Religion loses its self-evidence and is sometimes questioned as irrational and pre-modern. However, representatives of such a radical secular position do not always advocate for the disappearance of religion in society, but rather claim its withdrawal from

public and political spaces. Moreover, it can be assumed that alongside such secularist tendencies there are also atheists who accept a public role for religion or religions as political actors within the framework of liberal democracy and because of the social activities of churches and religious communities. Conversely, religious actors too might have quite heterogeneous understandings of secularity, given our volume's observance that in Western countries the influence of church attendance has a positive effect on pro-democratic attitudes, while in Eastern Europe a religious self-image has negative consequences (Halman and Sieben, Chap. 4; S. Pickel and G. Pickel, Chap. 5, this volume). It might be assumed that secularity is perceived as a threat to religion in Eastern Europe and also among conservative religious people in the West. This negative perception requires further research and its understanding will be crucial to preserving liberal democracy.

From a Catholic and Protestant theological perspective, a secular self-understanding is not necessarily in exclusive opposition to a religious one, since a secular legal and social order understands secularity as a theological necessity for religious freedom and thus is recognised by numerous religious people. Moreover, secularity can be interpreted as the common ground of human communication and an essential dimension of a world created by God (Wenzel 2013). A secular and a religious self-understanding therefore do not have to be mutually exclusive (Berger 2014): there are religious people who live within a secular world view and recognise its values in political questions, and there are atheists who recognise religious people. A theological approach can therefore contribute to overcoming classic sociological dichotomies and granting a secular society its own dignity and justification from a religious perspective.

Even secular jurisprudence or human rights law are by no means anti- or post-religious, but recognise religious communities as social actors and religion as a source of motivation for the recognition of human rights within the framework of religious freedom. At the same time, given the decline of individual religiosity, it can be assumed that the number of people who reject not only a religious self-image but also the political commitment of religious communities in an atheistic manner will be increasing. The ambivalent role that religion plays in the politics of the theocratic Islamic states of the Middle East or in the war against Ukraine, which is ideologically backed by the Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill (Sooy 2022), will probably fuel this development and give rise to the rejection of organized religion and atheism.

Unfortunately, the EVS data do not allow for in-depth analyses in this regard. For example, it remains unclear how far Europe's societies are drifting apart in religious terms and whether there are cleavages that could lead to a split between religious and atheist contemporaries. Also, the question must remain open as to the extent to which religious communities are fragmented within themselves. For the sake of social cohesion among countries, for European integration, and for peace, it is necessary to understand more deeply if the plurality in secular and religious world views is developing towards conflictual, irreconcilable opposition or if there are overlaps which allow for coexistence on a commonly shared ground and within a framework in which religious people and atheists can come to a common

understanding about their shared world. Classical theories of secularisation reach the limits of their explanatory power when it comes to questions like these.

Thus, we need more theories and studies (such as, for example, Fox 2019) that not only relate to the number of religious and non-religious people but also explore how religious people and religious communities interact with society and the state, and how conflicts – between religious individuals and religious communities and between religious communities and states – are tackled. In particular, the increasing conflicts between a secularist and a religious self-understanding (especially in questions of life values) require expanded interpretative paradigms, as these are to be interpreted less in the course of progressive secularisation, but rather suggest more of a politically formatted rivalry and competition between political secularism and the conservative and fundamentalist parts of the religious communities, both of which want to assert their respective values.

The question of whether Europe is more or less religious is therefore less important than the question of the interaction between religion and society and the understanding and discussion of the guiding conceptions and arguments of the world views the antagonists refer to. To answer such questions, it is necessary to think outside the 'secularisation box' and develop alternative paradigms.

14.5.3   Practice of Values Research: Science Communication

The claim for increased inter- and transdisciplinarity and the promotion of public values discourses is as old as the EVS itself. However, the high degree of differentiation and specialisation of science and the rapid dynamisation of social and political institutions seem to make it increasingly difficult to open spaces for in-depth discussion and cooperation. While politicians usually have too little time to receive and debate the results of values research and are more interested in results than in complex conceptual understandings or value formation processes, values researchers within their respective disciplines are exposed to the pressure of increasing competition in the development of ever more complex theories. Politicians and other social actors then use the results or discuss them on the basis of theories and concepts that are scientifically outdated or problematic, while scientists sometimes lack structured and continuous communication with societies, citizens, and politicians. These systemic deficiencies impede a broad and well-founded discourse on values and thus processes of substantial social and political value formation. Increased dialogue and cooperation within the framework of (financed) Third Mission projects, which would also have to be rewarded more in academic evaluations, could be helpful. Moreover, there is a need for corresponding processes of language learning and translation between public, political, and scientific values discourses, which require more time and space. If scientific values research wants to contribute its findings and narratives, the logic and language of political values discourses in particular must be understood. Conversely, through dialogue and cooperation with scientific values research in the medium of values discourses, political actors can raise

fundamental questions in public discourse for public debate: the identity, history, and memory of Europe, questions of meaning, goals, and ideas of the good life, including peaceful and just societies, or ethical questions of good and evil. It is essential to involve other actors in such discourses – educational institutions, civil society organisations, and not least the media and business enterprises, etc. – as they play a key role in communicating values.

The crises that Europe is facing at the time of the completion of this study – the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economic crisis, the climate crisis, the war in Ukraine, including a refugee crisis – cannot be explained or resolved by values discourses exclusively. But values have and will continue to have an enormous impact on how the European Union and its citizens will be able to face these crises. Whether we are conscious of it or not, they will shape the debates on how to resolve social, cultural, political, and economic conflicts. Our volume offers an insight into the values landscape before the pandemic. We can assume that these numerous crises will also reshape the values landscape, even though we do not yet know in which direction. If these value changes are not accompanied by appropriate societal and political discourses and educational measures, we must fear that the problems and cleavages that were identified pre-pandemic will tend to intensify. Conversely, insight into the situation before the pandemic and the war offers opportunities to face the expected value debates based on a solid research base. Times of crisis always transform entrenched systems of order and thus shatter and liquify value systems. This can open windows of opportunity to reinterpret, reshape, and understand European values more deeply as a normative framework on a broad societal level, which now has to prove itself. May our volume be a contribution to this.

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Dr Regina Polak (*1967) is Associate Professor and head of the Department of Practical Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna (Austria). She is a member of the research network 'Interdisciplinary Values Research' and the research centre 'Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society', both at the University of Vienna. Her research focuses on socio-religious transformation processes in Europe, values research, religion and migration, and interreligious dialogue in a migration society. She is also Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions.

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