

3 Young and Ambivalent

A New Look at the Recent Rise of European Values, Their History, Precursors and Critics

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3.1 Introduction

In today's European political discourse, "European values" are often invoked by both defenders of the European project and its detractors. The various institutions that represent the European Union (EU) refer to values to defend and legitimise their policies while their opponents likewise invoke these values (albeit often interpreted differently) to criticise these very same policies. Liberal defenders of the European project today often portray it as the embodiment of secular (European) values such as dignity, human rights and democracy and suggest that this project finds its roots in the defence of these values. Yet a quick look at the actual origins of the EU allows us to see that these values were not prevalent in the early days and that their explicit use is thus more recent than what some EU officials would have us believe. Moreover, if they were used at all in the post-war years, it was in a conservative Christian meaning that differs from both its current liberal and illiberal uses. Liberal European values as we know and use them today are, it turns out, not age old but quite young.

This chapter is structured as follows. After a few methodological remarks, I will look at the Cold War use of values by a particular group of conservative politicians and the Council of Europe. 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, references to 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 current populist critique of liberal European values differs from its conservative predecessor. Sixth, I will focus on the tension between liberal values and the neoliberal policies they are often said to legitimise.

Seventh, I will examine how defenders of liberal European values and their populist critics have more in common than one would expect, since they both use values in a defensive sense to exclude people (migrants) or ideas (political debate). I will conclude this chapter by suggesting possible ways out of that predicament by calling for more debate.

3.2 A Critical Perspective on Values and Their History

Where social scientists try to examine values as objectively as possible (in the European Values Study, for example), politicians and institutions instead use values as normative tools that are meant to legitimise political projects (and delegitimise others), which implies 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, solidarity or equality, explicit references to “values” as such are somewhat less common. While British politicians, for example, increasingly speak about “British values”, Irish politicians rarely refer to “Irish values”. Yet in what follows, I will mainly 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?

Traditionally, this question has been addressed by institutions and scholars¹ who often assume that values are mostly a good thing and that their allegedly long history represents progress (thus concealing their potential ideological side effects or costs). Instead I will 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”.² Rather than seeing values as naturally “good” and their seemingly long 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.³ Unlike a traditional history of values, such a critical approach emphasises change (rather than continuity), historical contingency (instead of necessity) and a focus on the wider context and on the impact that values (fail to) have (rather than on just values themselves).

Such an approach requires a conceptual analysis to help differentiate between different definitions of the concept of “European values”. But it also necessitates a historical awareness of the context and impact of values and the different functions they serve. After all, a term such as “European values” did not always have the same scope, salience or impact it has today. Moreover, there are different definitions of what “European values” mean – definitions that sometimes clash and are at times incompatible. When critically examining the political use of “European values”, I will

thus not just investigate 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 while assessing the price one must pay for using one concept rather than another.

3.3 The Conservative and Christian Cold War Origins of European Values

Unlike what is often suggested by European institutions today, until the 1990s, these institutions hardly invoked values and instead kept their technocratic focus on the single market they were meant to create. 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”.⁴ If values were mentioned at all back then, they were mostly peace (think, for example, of Schuman’s famous declaration of May 9, 1950)⁵ or reconciliation rather than values invoked nowadays such as democracy and human rights, which were conspicuously absent in those early days.

All this is not to say that values such as 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.⁶ It was here that the language of 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”.⁷ 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 circles today – is characterised by the following features. First, it sees values as being embedded in a common civilisational or “spiritual” foundation that is Europe’s Christian heritage. 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 secularised back then as it is today.⁸

Another key feature of this discourse is that values were regarded as Europe's legacy to the world, in part through a process of colonisation and imperialism, with Churchill as their 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.⁹ 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". 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".¹⁰ It was in that same sense that "spiritual" values, associated with talk about Europe's humanism and civilisation, were denounced by anticolonial thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, who 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".¹¹ 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".¹²

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 Free 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".¹³ 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 Western values (which were therefore sometimes called European). But, thanks to the successful propagation of these values, Europe's values had now become American or Western values too.

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. 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".¹⁴ 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".¹⁵ The anti-communist invocation of values and human rights was more than just about words as they were intended 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 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".¹⁶

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 implicitly 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".¹⁷ 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, had been suspicious of modern democracy and individual rights and "mostly stood for values inimical to those we now associate with human rights".¹⁸ 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",¹⁹ and his successor, Pope Pius XII, started invoking the language of human rights founded on human dignity during the war.²⁰ Around the same time, the Catholic intellectual Maritain redefined rights and democracy as a Christian legacy, albeit in a neothomist and conservative sense.²¹

After experiencing first hand the evils a totalitarian state could inflict, Christian politicians arguably also became keen on limiting state power both at a national level (Germany's new federal structure, for example) 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,

[N]ational 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).²²

Centrist Christians were indeed suspicious not just of a state dominated by the totalitarian right but also of a state that furthered the interests of the left.

So 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 or the nation state. For them, "European integration . . . was part and parcel of [a] comprehensive attempt to constrain popular will: it added supranational constraints to national ones".²³

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.²⁴ But the Vatican had little to no influence on the European Community.²⁵ 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).²⁶ Moreover, many of Europe's so-called founding fathers were not particularly Catholic (e.g. 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,²⁷ which can be considered an illustration of the predominance of Christianity in the post-war years. Lastly, Maritain's personalist ideas in reality hardly found their way into post-war Christian democratic party programmes.²⁸

Interestingly, this civilisational anti-communist defence of values was also popular in Central and Eastern Europe, where it resonated with Church leaders (e.g. 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, "[I]n the eyes of its beloved Europe, Central Europe is just a part of the Soviet empire and nothing more".²⁹ 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".³⁰ In a more secular vein, Kundera reminded the West that people from Central Europe too were part of European civilisation rather than of Russia.³¹

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 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.

3.4 A “European Identity” and a “Social Europe” as New Legitimations of the European Project (Early 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: “[B]y 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”.³² 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 legitimization, 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.³³ 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”.³⁴ 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,³⁵ 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.³⁶ 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".³⁷ Moreover, after a long period of highly successful economic expansion, hitherto prosperous Western nation states were hit by a deep economic crisis in the mid-1970s, 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 and to refer to concepts such as European identity, culture or civilisation.³⁸ If values were mentioned in this context, they were part of these larger, more substantial concepts.

Apart from reviving the original ideal of a "single market" and the more cultural 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", which 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.³⁹ In 1988 Delors, for example, called for "a concrete and productive social dialogue at the European level"⁴⁰ as one initiative that clearly shows "the social dimension of the European construction".⁴¹

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 due to the 1992 target for launching the single market.⁴² 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 the 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. The concept of a substantive cultural or civilisational European identity that had still been considered useful until then now appeared less appropriate. It was arguably harder to talk about a

shared substantive identity when it involved preparing for the inclusion of more than 20 member states (from the 1990s onwards) instead of just 9 (as in 1973). For example, Europe increasingly faced the “problem of finding memory frames that could appeal to all European societies”.⁴³

Yet the relationship between the European Union (as it was now called) and the wider public also changed. A brief period of “euro-enthusiasm” and a “permissive consensus” 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 share the more ambitious European projects and the references to a European identity that accompanied them. Even inside European institutions, bureaucrats had often been wary of talk about a substantive European identity or civilisation since that was seen as potentially divisive, which was why they preferred abstractions instead. But it was especially outside Brussels that the idea of a concrete European identity was frowned upon, particularly in the relationship with an increasingly suspicious public. As a result, “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”.⁴⁴

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” despite repeated efforts to create such an identity.⁴⁵ 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?⁴⁶ Or was it because a “European identity” 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,⁴⁷ 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”.⁴⁸ It is true that attempts to construct a more substantial European identity did, in part, continue beyond the 1990s, in the form of, for example, the constitutional treaty in 2004 intended to make the EU more like a state, including its own symbols, laws and constitution.⁴⁹ 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 substantive European identity, at least within the European institutions.

Given that for various reasons the idea of a cultural or substantial European identity was no longer seen as a suitable prospect for keeping Europe

together, politicians had to turn to alternatives, such as the aforementioned ideal held by Delors of a social Europe. 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 in part 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 lacking⁵⁰ and because in reality there are multiple social models in Europe, not just one.⁵¹ Moreover, in the 1990s, European countries reformed their welfare states, often in the name of policies that resulted from their membership in the European Union, which arguably became gradually more neoliberal, especially as a result of the constraints imposed by the creation of the monetary union in the 1990s. The references 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 associated with globalisation and “third way” or “new labour” welfare state reforms represented 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,⁵² albeit not to the same extent as in the US. As a result, references to a social Europe now increasingly risked being perceived by many voters as hollow slogans that social democratic leaders used to embellish the *de facto* predominance of neoliberal policies instead of credible promises (as they still did in the second part of the 1980s). In addition, the newly arrived “Central and Eastern Europeans . . . after long years under communism, were dead opposed to excessive market regulation”.⁵³ Probably 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.

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

If Europeans cannot agree on a substantive European identity (let alone a common history or social model), at the very least, they can all try to share an allegiance to some minimal abstract principles such as “European values”. 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.⁵⁴

Apart from being minimalist and abstract, values also had the advantage that, unlike a European identity or a “European social model”, which were used in the singular, values were seen as many, as a list of values, from which everyone could choose the value they liked the most.

These pluralist and abstract characteristics made these values flexible and non-demanding and thus suitable to accompany, legitimise and distract from neoliberal policies that proved in themselves insufficient to justify the European project (probably because they lacked the will and capability of delivering prosperity to everyone or simply did not live up to its promises, such as the failed “Lisbon agenda” that was launched in 2000).

Before they could become a useful tool to represent the European Union as a whole rather than just one of its more conservative ideological currents, the language of “European values” first had to be extracted from its prior “embodied” or concrete civilisational and religious-conservative Cold War use and recycled in a less particular and ideological sense. After all, in an increasingly secularised Europe, “a self-definition of Europe as actively embodying the values of western Christendom is . . . now untenable”.⁵⁵ As the discourse of values thus became more universal and inclusive – and the left now also started adopting it – it became more abstract and less associated with a conservative Christian ideology. It was their pluralist, minimalistic and abstract characteristics – what remained once one stripped them of their conservative ideological civilisational legacy – that made these values so appealing.

The idea of a substantial single and common history, civilisation, culture, identity or a social Europe was thus gradually replaced by a rather vague list of democratic “values” (which proved hard to enforce). Once one looks at abstract “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 and demanding idea of a substantive European identity or of a social Europe.

The slow rise of European values 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 ten 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 other notions. 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. 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”⁵⁶ now replaced the ideal of “European identity” that was still prevalent 20 years earlier when talking about the first enlargement (also in Copenhagen). Values were explicitly 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”.⁵⁷ They also appeared in the preamble of the 2000 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,⁵⁸ which would later be incorporated into the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007. Values were also included in the aforementioned European convention that led to the constitutional treaty. In the debates on that treaty,

[R]eaching 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. . . . In the end, the preamble merely included a reference to Europe’s religious “inheritance”.⁵⁹

Although the constitutional treaty was rejected in 2005, it was mostly preserved in a less ambitious version in the Treaty of Lisbon of 2007, excluding the references to European symbols but finally enshrining European values in the famous Article 2 that starts as follows: “The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights”.⁶⁰ Unlike the post-war years, when European values were still closely linked with Christianity, “Christianity” is not named in the Lisbon Treaty and served “purely as a source of inspiration for democratic political values”.⁶¹

Apart from appearing in legal documents, European values have also been invoked since the 1990s by philosophers such as Habermas, who was 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”.⁶² Moreover the politician and intellectual Václav Havel 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 . . . these values which give direction to everything else?”⁶³

Since the 2000s, the term “European values”, which had until then mostly been used by a small group of legal scholars, Europhiles, and

intellectuals, was increasingly used in public debate about Europe. As a result, “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”.⁶⁴ This reflected a broader trend in European societies in which politicians started invoking values more widely, also at a nation state level.⁶⁵

Values in a minimal and secular sense now appear to have become the leading legitimisation 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”.⁶⁶ 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”.⁶⁷ When the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012, it described itself as “a community of values”.⁶⁸ And in his project for a European renaissance, French President Emmanuel Macron emphasised that “a market is useful, but it should not detract from the need for borders that protect and values that unite”.⁶⁹ Although this abstractness and plurality of values allowed Europe to unite itself in new ways, it also created new divisions.

3.6 A Populist Critique of Liberal Values (And How It Differs From Earlier Conservative Versions)

In more recent years, we can witness tensions between the new, more abstract version of European values and a populist conservative critique of these values. As European values became more abstract and more universal and were also embraced by the left, they were now challenged by opposing views on values by populist forces on the right and by governments in Central and Eastern Europe in particular. Of course, 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).⁷⁰ Moreover, when conservative groups lobby in Brussels by arguing that “policymaking ought to reflect the fact that European values have historically been Christian values”,⁷¹ they do so on behalf of the religious right in general and not just from Eastern Europe.

But at the same time, it is hard to deny that countries in Central and Eastern Europe “had some specific features common to post-communist societies”.⁷² The specific communist past in Central and Eastern Europe which accounts for the use of European values in the Cold War years in the West also partly explains why these values are currently used in a civilisational sense (which echoes earlier conservative versions in the West) by

some politicians in countries that had actually suffered from communist rule and Soviet imperialism. For Rupnik,

[W]e 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.⁷³

Over the past years, Polish and Hungarian leaders in particular 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,⁷⁴ 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 true conservative and Christian sense. In Poland, for example,

[T]here 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.⁷⁵

And in Hungary, 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”.⁷⁶ 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”.⁷⁷ Elsewhere, “Orbán defends his hardline positions as not merely consistent with the EU’s fundamental values, but as their true embodiment”.⁷⁸ 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.⁷⁹

In particular, the actions of Angela Merkel, who was accused of “the admission of migrants without limit in the name of ‘European values’”,⁸⁰

were perceived by some Eastern European leaders as a betrayal of what they see as Europe's true Christian values and roots. 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".⁸¹

Although it would be tempting to stress the continuity between the post-war conservative Christian discourse on values and contemporary conservative populists,⁸² I believe that on closer inspection, these discourses differ in important ways. Firstly, it is important to emphasise that many actions by Orbán – e.g. actively undermining the rule of law – contradict the original conservative definition of values. Christian democrats had indeed historically defended the very rights and the rule of law that Orbán violates, just as they defended 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 while values in the post-war years were embedded in a culture in which faith still mattered, today's

populist movements and the conservative right . . . champion Europe's "Christian identity" mainly 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.⁸³

(Perhaps with the exception of Poland). For these populists, "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".⁸⁴ 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".⁸⁵

All this explains why the Christian democratic European People's Party has recently been divided over the issue of European values, especially when it was pressed 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, keeping him on board for too long for electoral motives), it also lays bare a fundamental conflict between three very different meanings of European values: the original pro-European conservative Christian version (which the European People's Party still in part defends), its post-Cold War secularised version that Western European countries in particular now use to condemn Orbán and lastly, Orbán's own populist anti-European version of values that is at odds with both.

3.7 The Liberal (Political) Rhetoric of European Values Versus Its Neoliberal (Economic) Reality

European values are often perceived 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”.⁸⁶ 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’”.⁸⁷

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. Unlike their Western counterparts, especially 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 liberal (political) values. 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”.⁸⁸ 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”.⁸⁹ 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 cut-throat market competition but as powerful (Western European) interests getting their way”.⁹⁰ 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.⁹¹

When anti-communists in Central and Eastern Europe criticize Western liberals for using seemingly universal and abstract values to conceal, further and legitimise their own particularly “liberal” or “cosmopolitan” way of life (or, even worse, their own Western economic interests), these anti-communists unwittingly use Marx’s critique of values against Western liberals. 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”.⁹²

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. The more institutions identify themselves with moral values, the easier it becomes to accuse these institutions of hypocrisy. One could indeed contend that abstract European 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.

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 ultimately 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”.⁹³ Critics who see values as a mere ideological embellishment (or concealment) of neoliberal policies could contend that this is perhaps no coincidence. Indeed, if governments in Poland or Hungary violated the rule of law, at least up until 2022, hardly any effective sanctions were taken, yet when the Greek government challenged 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.⁹⁴

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, such as “the EU’s defense of human dignity worldwide”) while violating these same values (typically at home, for example through “neoliberal and austerity policies that violate the human dignity of low-income workers or the unemployed”).⁹⁵ Likewise, the way Europe chooses to deal with the migration crisis (e.g. through its coast guard agency Frontex, accused of illegal pushbacks that violate human rights) obviously

presents a huge challenge for an institution that claims to defend human dignity. 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).

3.8 Europe's Exclusivist Values Under Siege

As long as the Cold War lasted, values were used (by the Council of Europe and by conservatives) to differentiate between Christian Western Europe and its communist enemy. Once that Cold War ended, a secularised version of these values was now used to unify an enlarged Europe and to define its identity, place and mission in the world. In their new minimalist 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”.⁹⁶ While Brussels still promotes values worldwide, in the past years, it has done so with less self-confidence than during the aftermath of 1989 when many in the West truly believed that the entire world would subscribe to its values at a time of ideological optimism and self-confidence exemplified by Fukuyama's end of history thesis (which used Europe as an illustration).

One reason for Europe's diminished self-confidence and optimism was that its colonial past finally started to haunt its present.⁹⁷ This 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 self-assured colonial past and are shown to have a more universal self-critical future (and Europe still has a long way to go in terms of dealing with its darker past). So, as with their conservative predecessors, values are still meant to be promoted around the world, but this time in a more modest way, without the concrete civilisational or cultural content associated with their post-war colonial predecessors.

But it is especially today's increasingly illiberal world that explains why the self-confident, outward-looking perspective that characterised both the conservative Cold War language of values and its optimistic liberal successor at the end of the Cold War has recently come under pressure. 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, Bolsonaro and Erdoğan, these values at times indeed appear to find a safe harbour only in the Europe from which they came. As mentioned before, in the post-war years, values were seen as European mainly because they had originated in Europe and would go on to conquer the world rather than in the sense that they were applicable only to Europe.

If these values are now seen as European, it is not so much in reference to the Europe from which they came in the past (their origins) but because of the Europe in which they may still have a future (their preservation). In other words,

[W]here 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.⁹⁸

Since the increased use of European values corresponds to a diminished importance for Western or transatlantic values, it may thus signal an overall decline of the appeal of liberal values.

Just as illiberal forces who now claim to be the true defenders of European values in their conservative illiberal sense are governed by the fear of losing their traditional way of life (associated by some with conservative Christian values) and just want to preserve what is left, European liberal elites are likewise fearful of losing their values in an increasingly illiberal world with the rise of populism (especially since the Trump election).⁹⁹

This overall defensive position thus lays bare an uncanny resemblance between the European liberal discourse of values and its illiberal populist critique.¹⁰⁰ Although the new abstract definition of European values was supposed to be more inclusive and universal than both its conservative predecessor and its illiberal detractors, in all cases values ultimately still served the same goal: namely, to define, limit and thus exclude. In the Copenhagen criteria of 1993 and the Laeken Declaration of 2001, these were still liberal limitations since 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”.¹⁰¹ Yet values could also become conservative exclusivist 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’”.¹⁰² All this highlights that values, just as 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”.¹⁰³ In that exclusivist tradition, European values are currently often used to differentiate the EU from other parts of the world such as China or Russia and even the US.

Moreover, the migration crisis that has haunted Europe since 2015 showed that European values, despite their alleged universalism, 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”,¹⁰⁴ 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 both its original conservative meaning in the post-war years and the current illiberal populist critique of liberal European values. The “refugee crisis” thus makes painfully clear that despite the differences between the EU’s universalist liberal defence of values and its populist illiberal conservative critics, in reality, both often use values in an exclusive sense.

3.9 Democracy and the Need for Political Contestation of European Values

The critical historical approach adopted in this chapter has revealed that the current liberal use of European values by European institutions was preceded by a rather different use in conservative Cold War Christian circles. By secularising these values after the end of the Cold War, European policymakers attempted to transcend and forget these Cold War precursors. The fact that populist forces invoke values that, at first sight, come close to their original sense (albeit this time to undermine rather than to strengthen Europe or the rule of law) shows that it may perhaps be wise to acknowledge the many political meanings that such a contested term can have.

Given this tension between European liberal secular values, their more substantial conservative predecessors and their current populist critique, 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”.¹⁰⁵ Also, Mos suggests that the fact that “the EU does not offer any definitions of its core principles” is a problem that is cunningly exploited by the religious conservative right.¹⁰⁶ 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, in part, 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 interpret them differently. Indeed, when used in the domain of politics, perhaps values need to

be considered not as things 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 and ultimately 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”.¹⁰⁷ Following a thinker such as Claude Lefort, one could say that it is precisely this indeterminacy of these goals or values that enables democracies to be “united in diversity” while acknowledging conflict, debate and opposition as fundamental and legitimate as their indeterminacy and transcendence ensure an ongoing debate in the name of these goals or values.¹⁰⁸

Seen from this perspective, the problem in today’s Europe may not be that values are too vague and subject to too much debate but rather that they are still too shielded from a proper political debate at a European level. If one sees values as principles that resist any final determination and appropriation, it becomes easy to see why both European technocrats and their populist opponents misinterpret them, as both limit the options for political debate by appropriating values. 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”.¹⁰⁹ 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 and press, civil society and free debate impossible.

All this implies that a proper stage and culture for political debate should be created at a European level.¹¹⁰ Indeed, in order to function properly, a democracy at a European level arguably does need a stage where the peoples of Europe can represent and debate their values, norms and principles¹¹¹ and one can debate what the most suitable European forum for debate could be – the European Parliament or the European Council.¹¹² Initiatives to stimulate political debate at a European level may also be an antidote to a moralising use of these values whereby believers in the European project in particular tend to cast aside opponents as not respecting

European values.¹¹³ 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, thus guaranteeing a healthy political debate.

Notes

1. E.g. Labayle 2012, 42, 44.
2. Nietzsche 2007, 7.
3. See also Moyn 2010, 1–10.
4. Duranti 2017, 209.
5. Schuman 1950.
6. Duranti 2017, 1–2.
7. Moyn 2015, 94.
8. Duranti 2017, 403.
9. Pasture 2018.
10. Thatcher 2016, 217.
11. Fanon 2004, 237.
12. Sartre 2004, lix.
13. Thatcher 2016, 217.
14. Moyn 2015, 159.
15. Duranti 2017, 212.
16. Duranti 2017, 7.
17. Müller 2013, 141.
18. Moyn 2015, 6.
19. Moyn 2015, 15.
20. Moyn 2015, 1–3.
21. See Moyn 2015, 16, 82–83.
22. Müller 2013, 141.
23. Müller 2017, 95; see also 142.
24. Chenaux 2007, 8–9.
25. Dujardin 2016, 219.
26. Chenaux 2007, 87–88.
27. See Dujardin 2016, 214–215.
28. Chenaux 2007, 90.
29. Kundera 1984, 37.
30. John Paul II 2017, 35.
31. Kundera 1984, 33.
32. Moyn 2010, 80.
33. Council 1973.
34. Council 1973, 119.
35. Schrag-Sternberg 2013, 83.
36. Chenaux 2007, 95.
37. Vauchez 2016, 13.
38. E.g. Shore 2000 and van Middelaar 2013, 230–238.
39. Dinan 2014, 215–216.
40. Delors 1988, 5.
41. Delors 1988, 9.
42. Schrag-Sternberg 2013, 83–84; Dinan 2014, 207.
43. Littoz-Monnet 2012, 1197.
44. Foret 2020, 24.

45. Kershaw 2018, 482.
46. Van Middelaar 2013, 228.
47. Van Middelaar 2013, 289.
48. Van Middelaar 2013, 249.
49. Van Middelaar 2013, 289–290.
50. Bourdieu 2010, 136.
51. Garton Ash 2009, 79.
52. E.g. Denord/Schwartz 2009, 120.
53. Mak 2008, 821.
54. Kershaw 2018, 546.
55. Garton Ash 2009, 76.
56. Council 1993, 13.
57. Dinan 2014, 298.
58. Schrag-Sternberg 2013, 149.
59. Dinan 2014, 273.
60. European Union 2016, 17.
61. Van Middelaar 2013, 249.
62. Garton Ash 2009, 79.
63. Havel 2009.
64. Foret 2020, 24.
65. Charlemagne 2006.
66. Littoz-Monnet 2012, 1191.
67. Barroso 2009, 4.
68. Barroso 2012.
69. Macron 2019.
70. E.g. Charlemagne 2019 or Garton Ash 2019, 171.
71. Mos 2018, 331.
72. Garton Ash 2019, 172.
73. Rupnik 2018, 33.
74. Rupnik 2018.
75. Góra/Mach 2010, 240.
76. Orbán 2016.
77. *Daily Telegraph* 2018.
78. Mos 2020, 10.
79. Krastev 2017, 47.
80. Rupnik 2018, 33.
81. *Daily Telegraph* 2018.
82. In a longer essay on this topic, I partly stressed this continuity myself; see Weymans 2023.
83. Roy 2019, 4.
84. Roy 2019, 125.
85. Roy 2019, 105–106.
86. Bourdieu 2010, 125.
87. Bourdieu 2010, 200.
88. Garton Ash 2019, 178.
89. Krastev 2017, 58.
90. Müller 2017, 59.
91. Garton Ash 2019, 175.
92. Kopeček 2019, 75.
93. Mos 2020, 7.
94. Van Middelaar 2019, 233–234.

95. Foret 2020, 29.
96. Barroso 2009, 5.
97. Müller 2013, 238; Pasture 2018.
98. Charlemagne 2020a, 24.
99. Krastev 2017, 27, 33–39.
100. Charlemagne 2020b, 26.
101. Council 2001, 20.
102. Schrag-Sternberg 2013, 165.
103. Moyn 2015, 24; see also Duranti 2017, 359.
104. Macron 2019.
105. Duranti 2017, 409.
106. Mos 2018, 326.
107. Garton Ash 2009, 127.
108. Weymans 2012.
109. Müller 2017, 97.
110. Van Middelaar 2019, 266–267.
111. Mak 2008, 829, 834; Weymans 2020.
112. Van Middelaar 2019, 250–254.
113. Van Middelaar 2019.

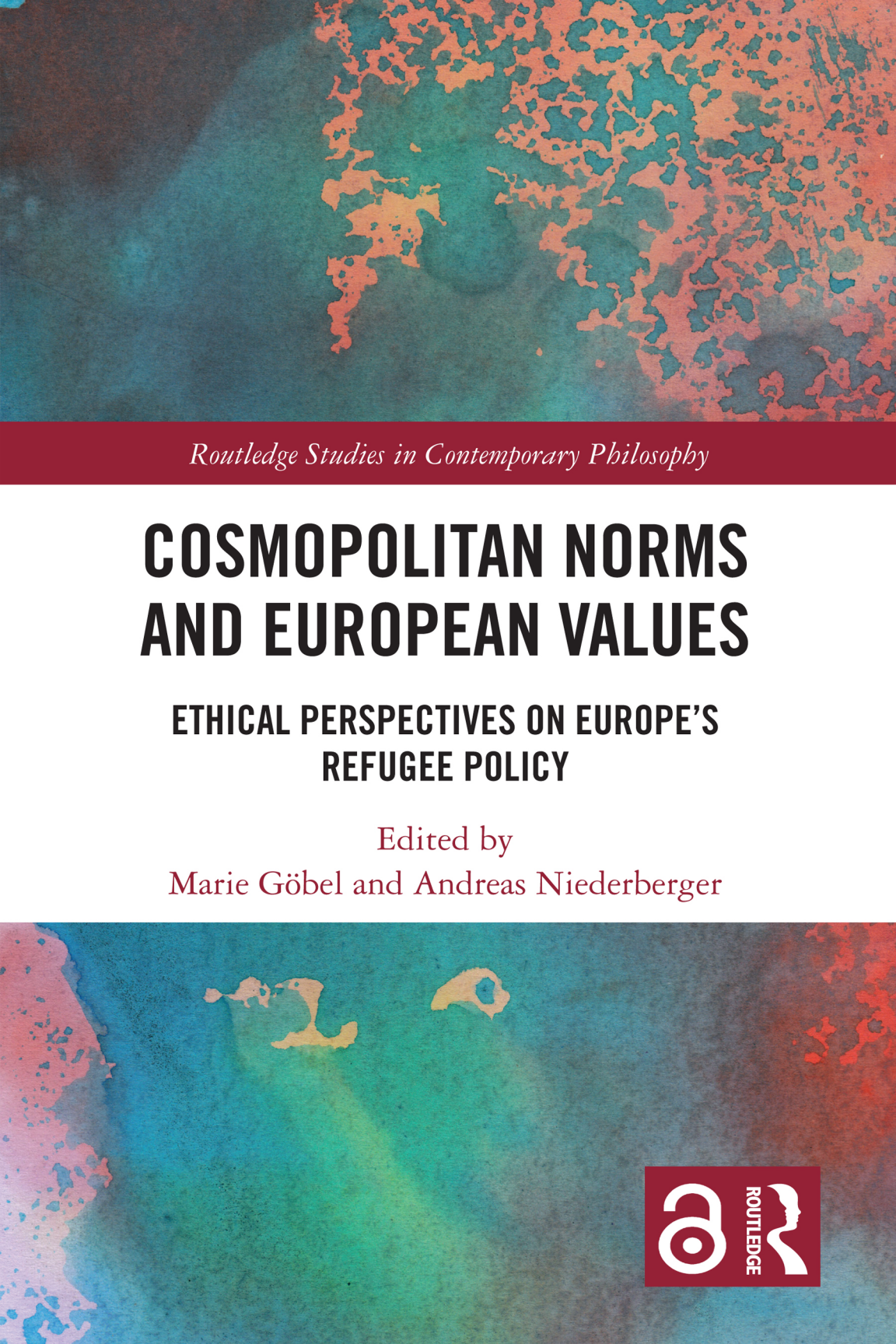
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COSMOPOLITAN NORMS AND EUROPEAN VALUES

**ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EUROPE'S
REFUGEE POLICY**

Edited by
Marie Göbel and Andreas Niederberger



Cosmopolitan Norms and European Values

This volume offers a systematic philosophical analysis of the normative challenges facing European refugee policy, focusing on whether the response to it can be based on European values. By considering the refugee policy through the lens of European values, cosmopolitan norms and universal human rights, the contributions expose the weaknesses and limitations of existing regulations and make proposals on how to improve them.

The EU is often seen as a cosmopolitan project. Europe is supposed to be a community of states that aspires to be guided by cosmopolitan norms. However, the idea of a cosmopolitan Europe has never been unanimously shared, and in recent years, it has come under increasing scrutiny, particularly with regard to the EU's refugee policy. The guiding idea of this book is that a deeper philosophical understanding of the normative issues at stake can foster greater conceptual clarity and enrich political debates on the future of European refugee policy. The first part of the book revolves around the question of whether the rise in refugee numbers over the past decade has led to a crisis in the EU and, if so, how this crisis relates to or impacts European values. The second part traces the history of the discourse on "European values" and examines from a philosophical perspective how we can plausibly understand these values in terms of their moral grammar, their normative content and their implications for the behaviour of the EU and its member states. Finally, the third part puts forth recommendations for a feasible and normatively more compelling European refugee policy based on human rights, human dignity, justice and democratic self-determination as the decisive normative requirements.

Cosmopolitan Norms and European Values: Ethical Perspectives on Europe's Refugee Policy will be of interest to researchers and advanced students working in ethics, political philosophy, political science, social sciences and law.

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Ethical Perspectives on Europe's
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Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>ix</i>
 Introduction	 1
MARIE GÖBEL AND ANDREAS NIEDERBERGER	
 PART 1	
The European “Refugee Crisis” – A Crisis of What?	13
 1 The European Refugee Crisis: What Is It a Crisis Of?	15
MATTHIAS HOESCH	
 2 Europe’s Migration Policy Between a Global and Local Legitimation Crisis	34
ANDREAS NIEDERBERGER	
 PART 2	
Making Sense of “European Values”	59
 3 Young and Ambivalent: A New Look at the Recent Rise of European Values, Their History, Precursors and Critics	61
WIM WEYMANS	
 4 What Are “European Values”? Philosophical Reflections on an Opaque Political Concept	88
MARIE GÖBEL	

5	“Wo Sind EUre Werte?”: Remarks on the Practical Response to Values	115
	PHILIPP SCHINK	
PART 3		
	Normative Consequences of European Values	137
6	Refugee and Migration Policy on the Basis of Human Dignity	139
	MARCUS DÜWELL	
7	Human Rights and the EU’s Responsibilities Towards Refugees	154
	JOS PHILIPS	
8	Cosmopolitanism, Global Justice and Refugees: Minimal Moral Conditions for EU Refugee Policy	172
	THERESE HERRMANN	
9	The European Union’s Refugee Policies: Cosmopolitan and/or Democratic?	200
	MARTIN DELEIXHE	
	<i>Index</i>	224

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