

Value conflicts and the EU in crisis – an introduction

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Calls on safeguarding “European values” have multiplied over the past decade in EU politics. Values are mobilised as a discursive repertoire to justify European public action across policy sectors, to face external threats and competition, to secure the loyalty of citizens, but also to wage conflicts. Brexit, breaches of the rule of law in some member states and the challenges to EU solidarity provoked by the economic and financial crises in 2008 and the health and security crisis since 2020 have been, at least in part, framed as questioning the values of the EU. The long-lived debate on the “democratic deficit” of the EU has thus been reframed as a debate on a value deficit and political conflicts framed as related to values have appeared at the centre of the EU’s power games. The creation of two European commissioner portfolios on “Values and Transparency” and “Promoting Our European Way of Life” in 2019 further highlights an increasing salience of the argument of values.

This multiplication of references to values by a range of political and social actors across policy areas is considered here as an object of inquiry rather than at face value as a demonstration of objectively existing “European values”. It represents an opportunity to investigate how the categorisation of issues as technical, market-related, cultural or ethical (all these categories being not mutually exclusive) is in itself an essential part of EU politics, driving the evolution in each policy area, as well as the relations between different policy areas.

This book addresses this fresh salience of values by setting it into the context of the role they have played in EU politics since the 1950s. Its aim is twofold: differentiating values as discursive resources and social representations; highlighting that values shape policy across sectors and issues. First, our collective reflection proposes to disentangle different types of references to values. A distinction is drawn between normative discourses mobilised for purposes of a legitimisation or a contestation of power and the role of deep-seated value conflicts in shaping political and social actors’ identities, preferences and political strategies. Second, the purpose is to bridge common distinctions between more and less “value-laden” policy areas. This book shows how value conflicts have framed EU policies far beyond the so-called morality and cultural issues, such as abortion, historical memory and religion, and have had much more impact than usually assumed on market-related policies.

This opus completes a first volume presenting the work realised in a four-year collective research project that focused on what we distinguished as two types of occurrence of values in EU politics: as tools of legitimisation (governing *through* values) and as issues calling for normative policy choices (governing values). This volume focuses on a third type of occurrence of values in EU politics, value conflicts at policy, political and polity levels, and investigates to what extent the EU is “governed by values”.

What are “European values”?

Even though human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights are defined as the values “the Union is founded on” in the Lisbon Treaty (art. 2 TUE), the understanding of values in this book does not follow a particular list of values to be studied. We start from a constructivist non-normative postulate that European values are neither given once and for all by history, philosophy, religion or even culture nor taken for granted by Europeans. They exist as social representations producing effects but are the object of a constant competition to define their meaning, agency and hierarchy. This is by no means to suggest that the legal ground for the defence of common values as it appears in the treaties has no incidence on how value conflicts are expressed and on how they affect the authority of the political and social actors involved. While bringing value conflicts to light, this volume therefore also analyses the effect of the codification of values on value disputes across policy sectors.

Relying on the conceptual work presented in the first volume, we understand values as cultural representations and points of reference about what is good or bad. The “meanings, modes of enunciation and normative authority of values vary according to the cultural, social and historical context. Because of this mutability, values per se are difficult to measure and quantify and more prone to be observed in their various formulations and effects. Values differ from identity, which is a more complex multilayered system of representations characterising an individual or a social group. Rather, values constitute one type of the representations which, combined, establish an identity” (Foret and Calligaro 2018a: 4).

From European values to “value politics”

The multiplication of references to values represents a specific trend in the use of values in the EU’s multilevel governance. We propose to investigate this tendency as that of “value politics”, a transversal repertoire (or style) used to frame policy goals and preferences, to (de)legitimise and (de)politicise issues, to mobilise public support, to conquer or conserve power. Value politics therefore represents the strategic use of a certain type of rhetoric in a variety of areas at the EU level that is to be distinguished from the role that values play in the foundations of politics as an ingredient of the “normative frameworks of public policy” (Jobert 1989; Jobert and Muller 1987; Muller 2006), as related to “deep core ideas” (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999), or to “background ideas” (Schmidt 2016).

In addition, value politics is to be situated in the history of different attempts at anchoring the European project in a transcending commonality. Among the various repertoires used for the purpose, we find the politics of common cultural heritage, of European citizenship, of a European identity, and more recently, the institutionalisation of a notion of a European way of life. To put it bluntly, our hypothesis is that “European values” have replaced “European identity” as the cornerstone of EU legitimisation. Value politics is thus becoming dominant as a replacement of the 1990s–2000s “identity politics” that failed to create great narratives and symbolism duplicating the nation-state model. European values appeared as a more flexible, polysemic and market-friendly repertoire and were fully compatible with the legal and technocratic repertoires of action favoured by European institutions. In short, value politics seems to represent a lighter version of “identity politics” adapted to a market-oriented Europe. However, the justification by the ritualised reference to European values has shown its own limits and its propensity to create conflicts of interpretation and backlash.

The emerging “European way of life” motto, reflected in the naming of a commissioner portfolio in 2019, may thus be interpreted in the context of this evolution as a new buzzword of EU legitimisation, with three advantages: first, to be both more abstract in political capacity (a way of life does not imply any obligation) and more down-to-earth and meaningful for the average European; second, to delineate a territorial and human closure that European values claiming universality were not achieving (Americans or Chinese may claim to share or even own the values of Europeans, but not their way of life); and third, to be less likely to overlap with law (human dignity has a legal force, the way of life has none) and to create unwilling counter-effects. Its defensive stance has been illustrated by the controversy leading to the reformulation of the “protection of the European way of life” to its “promotion”.

Value politics may create rivalry over the “ownership” of values as a symbolic resource that opposes elites and political entrepreneurs in a top-down logic. But tensions also emerge in a bottom-up logic between elites, institutions and masses when the implementation of policies on behalf of European values creates cultural and social backlash or clashes with counter-values. Opposition to the EU’s public policy may refer to the very same values as those designated as European, as illustrated by the invocation of human dignity to protest austerity. Compared to normative debates in national arenas, European values remain most frequently a low-profile bone of contention at the symbolic and media level but may still provoke feuds that have significant policy impacts through other repertoires of action (especially law).

Also, value politics has been used as enabling both the politicisation and the depoliticisation of policies. By politicisation, we mean the framing of an object of regulation as a matter of opposing interests and normative views rather than of technical expertise and decision-making aiming at a rational consensus and usually involves mobilising a wide range of actors of EU politics as well as addressing public opinion. Such issues may then be recognised to request more radical solutions than consensus-seeking negotiation, such as majority decisions or the

implication of the judicial power in the interpretation of particular cases. By depoliticisation, we mean the usual EU techniques of conflict containment such as deference to member states, civil society and experts and the prevalence of the scientific, bureaucratic and legal repertoires of action. Politicisation and depoliticisation are, of course, two “poles” on a continuum, where most policies oscillate between the two (Foret and Calligaro 2018a: 16). When references to values are intended to prevent the “socialisation of conflict” (Schattschneider 1960), policy-making may still involve moral choices, such as in the case of bioethical issues (Littoz-Monnet 2015) or of military policy (Zehfuss 2018) that are not framed and publicly endorsed as such. In this sense, depoliticisation is not “value-free”.

In the following sections of this introduction, we provide an overview of how the question of values has been reflected upon in recent scholarship on EU politics and specify how we contribute to it. This is divided into two parts together exposing the multifold effects of values in EU politics: the first part stresses how the fresh salience of values has participated in a reappraisal of politics and of the conflictual aspect of policymaking at the EU level. The second part then shows how “value politics” is not limited to specific moral issues but looms large across policy sectors, including areas traditionally portrayed as a matter of economic and legal expertise. The final part presents the chapters of this volume.

Values as a comeback to politics

Recent crises, and, first of all, Brexit, bring to light to what extent different value systems can coexist for decades within European institutions without harmonising and suddenly be reactivated as factors of rupture. It also reminds us of the pervasiveness of values that frame all kinds of policy issues, including neoliberal approaches defined as a technocratic and realist “one best way”. Looking at the broader picture, this salience of values reveals a general politics turn at all stages of European multilevel governance.

Brexit: economic choices as a consequence of value divergence?

Since the 2016 referendum on Brexit, Europeans have regularly been reminded of the mobilising and legitimising potential of values, the latter being often referred to by proponents as well as opponents of Brexit. While Nigel Farage spoke of “post-Brexit values”,¹ opponents called on the UK’s attachment to multiculturalism and human rights, and the citizens of the remaining member states were suddenly urged to reflect on the normative core of what held them together. The normative dimension is, of course, only one aspect of the divorce between the UK and the EU but has progressively taken the fore as a trigger, a showcase or a symbol of the increasing gap between the two sides of the Channel. Historical differences such as the tradition of a weak state, a strong Parliament and civil society, and common law have fostered dissensus with European institutions and Euroscepticism, while British actors have fared very well in the defence of national interests in EU power games (Allen 2013).

The jury is still out to make full sense of the meaning of the vote and its aftermaths – the victory of the “Leave” is attributed by some scholars to a coalition of economic and media interests advocating a neoliberal agenda (Dorling and Tomlinson 2019), while others emphasise the rebellion of a white and elderly electorate rejecting the liberal values of the establishment on behalf of a nationalist and conservative manifesto, mirroring the clash in other democracies between nationalists and cosmopolitans, traditionalists and multiculturalists (Ford and Goodwin 2017).

Overall, Brexit teaches us an important lesson about values in European politics at large. It sounds first as a brutal denial of the neo-functionalism assumption that interests and institutions have been creating a spillover effect, shifting identities and values towards the supranational level. Instead, it dramatises the reawakening of ethnic nationalism searching for a congruence between culture and politics at all levels of governance (infra-national, national, but also European) (Foster 2019: 67–87). Brexit marks both the failure of European elites to promote an integrative “grand narrative” and the resilience of various versions of European identity against the “Leave” (Leith et al. 2019: 559–564). Finally, Brexit highlights the resilient influence of cultural values in shaping European politics and their intertwinement with the ethos of the market and with regulatory politics. The policy outputs of the departure of the UK are still highly uncertain. Still, many scholars have argued that the withdrawal of the UK will have different effects in each sector, contributing further to differentiated (dis)integration (Leruth et al. 2019). In particular, it is far from certain that the British defection as the traditional defender of neoliberal Europe will make possible important progress in social policies in the EU (Copeland 2019).

The salience of values as a part of the “politics turn”

Brexit is an example of what has been labelled in the literature as a “politics turn”. This reappraisal of politics at the EU level is confirmed in a wave of publications pointing to the necessity to document more precisely political behaviour of individual and collective actors – voters, parties, interest groups, executive agencies, and mass and social media in the EU (Braun et al. 2020). This comforts previous calls for the recognition of the shift from EU governance to EU politics (Laffan 2016: 922). The acknowledgement of values as part and parcel of this political dimension is a further step in this scientific agenda. A pending, still largely under-researched question is whether the EU is able to socialise citizens to support the democratic values it claims to promote (Oshri et al. 2016) and hence build a solid bedrock for a community of values, belonging and fate; if it cannot (Houwelingen et al. 2019), it will face an increasing politicisation likely to threaten its fragile policy machine. There is no Manichaean opposition between the “socialisation thesis” and the “politicisation thesis”. Some scholars understand socialisation as a possible way to learn how to disagree, and some proponents of politicisation see it as imposing the EU as the arena where conflicts are dramatised and hopefully solved, in a kind of “empowering dissensus” (Bouza and Oleart 2018).

The debate is also still raging to determine whether a common set of values is even necessary, with an almost infinite range of choices regarding the necessity, intensity and desirability of a European ethos to justify a demos. To cut sharply into a very rich debate, some divergent – but also overlapping – stances point to both the moderating effect of the EU on values and its lack of proper normative foundations (Weiler 2001; Weiler and Wind 2003); its post-national drive in search of a constitutional patriotism tending towards rationality and abstraction but longing for firmer grounds (Habermas 2000, 2006); a combination of multiple and flexible normative systems in a *demoi-cracy* (Cheneval et al. 2015); or to its assimilation to a consociation of states that both takes for granted, relies on and circumscribes the diversity of values (Papadopoulos and Magnette 2010).

The relative failure of attempts by European institutions to create a great narrative and symbolism duplicating the nation-state model in the 1990s had led to a shift to a more functionalist legitimisation of the EU as a policy machine justified by its outputs. The aporia of this second strategy led to a “third way” mixing the search for a common cultural and memory discourse in a more modest way with advocacy for Europe as the “one best way” towards competitiveness and efficient public action (Foret 2008). This new identity turn and its empirical limits have been documented (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009; Risse 2010; Fligstein 2008). Its modalities have been discussed in terms of biopolitical governance, a Foucauldian pattern of domination and government at a distance (Walters and Haahr 2005; Hardt and Negri 2000).

While the consensus prevails that no congruence between culture and politics is possible at the European level (McNamara 2015) but that identity politics is now impossible to ignore (Börzel and Risse 2018), views are more diverging regarding the extent to which the block is relying on and updating traditional symbolic resources. An example is the mutation of centuries-old devices of governance like prizes. Prizes were used by political powers to glorify “great men” as value role models for the community in a top-down logic and are now increasingly used by European institutions to encourage civil society and citizens into self-compliance through rewarding replicable role models of innovation and competitiveness, thus diffusing underlying values (Foret and Calligaro 2018b; Foret and Vargovčíková 2021).

Our approach dialogues with recent scholarship placed under a similar aegis of strategic constructivism and socialisation approaches (Checkel 2005) and explicitly bridges debates on European identity and values to analyse the means and ends of European public policy. Saurugger and Thatcher link values, identity and public policy by defining the EU’s “political identity” through its policies as

the articulation of political values that are claimed to be:

- fundamental – ie unalterable and take precedence over others
- shared across the EU – ie an internal dimension
- distinct, differing from other polities – ie an external dimension (such differentiation can be from EU member states or other European polities or organisations or non-European polities).

(Saurugger and Thatcher 2019: 468)

Saurugger and Thatcher emphasise the conflictual dimension inherent in such a value-based multiple identity that does not imply a convergence of positions on key issues of integration (social policies at the EU level, budgetary policy, asylum policy, enlargement and so on). This volume shares this approach of the political use of values but highlights that such use may pursue a plurality of goals other than identity building and that the outputs of such use of values are far from being decided only by what happens in institutional policymaking. The same values can play out contrastingly with different segments of the European public. Matthijs and Merler show for instance how the identification of young citizens with the EU differs in the South and the North of the continent. They observe that the young citizens from the South identify more strongly as European in hard times and those from the North in better times, implying divergent positions of young EU citizens on solidarity policies and divergent perceptions of EU monitoring over national sovereignty (Matthijs and Merler 2020). On the “supply side” of politics, political preferences of citizens regarding EU politics are influenced by divergent political offers according to how national elites use the EU and its values in their rhetoric and actions (Grande and Kriesi 2015: 190–223; Kriesi et al. 2012).

Whether the use of values fosters divergence or convergence can also be seen to depend on the inclusionary or exclusionary character of the values referred to, as Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse point out in relation to two recent crises. Börzel and Risse argue that the inclusionary or exclusionary framing of issues by rulers explains the difference between the effects that the euro crisis and the Schengen crisis have had on the dynamics of European integration (Börzel and Risse 2018). While the first led to a deepening of integration through the creation of new monetary and financial institutions (e.g. the European Stability Mechanism), the latter weakened the Schengen system and the EU’s common asylum policy. Börzel and Risse argue that this is because in the euro crisis, EU political elites largely mobilised inclusionary values such as solidarity and budgetary discipline, and even opposition from left-wing parties only addressed the interpretation of values (such as solidarity), without contesting the EU as such. In contrast, in the Schengen crisis, political elites mobilised exclusionary values such as borders and identity, which paved the way for the entrepreneurship of right and extreme-right parties and made upgrading solutions to the supranational level more difficult. Also, resistance to further integration in the first case was minimal, since for Börzel and Risse, “a majority of EU citizens continues to hold Europe as a secondary identity supporting economic governance with redistributive consequences” (Börzel and Risse 2018: 97). To put it bluntly, one of the triggers (among many) of politicisation was the anchorage of values in collective identities as more or less accepted by the majority, and thus their capacity to create backlash.

At the same time as bringing policy issues to the realm of political conflict, the use of values by EU actors has also, in other cases, had the opposite effect of taking issues out of the realm of public dispute and deliberation, and has thus been a part of strategies of depoliticisation. The backlash from nationalist and far-right parties against European integration, often appealing to a particular cultural heritage and national identities, has transformed the debate on a European

identity into a “mine field”. Simultaneously, the advocacy for a “social-liberal” integration aiming both at social justice and at economic growth was abandoned starting from the second half of the 2000s, in favour of a “neoliberal” integration (Kinderman 2013) focused on the pursuit of economic competitiveness (Jullien and Smith 2014). A legitimisation of EU integration through common values fit both of these evolutions.

Values as a governance repertoire of a market-oriented Europe

A key point of our reflection is our counter-intuitive assertion that *neoliberal Europe and value-based Europe are two sides of the same coin*. The salience of values in the regulation and legitimisation of the EU is no stranger to its market-friendly orientation. Values are a more flexible and less demanding resource for governance and justification than is culture or identity. Their central role reflects the structural mutation of politics in post-WW2 Europe.

A first dimension of this mutation is a shift in the purpose and justification of public policy from the inside to the outside and from a bottom-up to a top-down dynamic. The main mandate of national executives is no more to accomplish popular will but to exercise a political authority defined by externality, turning national states into member states as their first characteristic (Bickerton 2013). The outcome is a constrained democracy keeping the universal suffrage deliberately under control, empowering bureaucratic and technocratic bodies (Müller 2011) and favouring indirect governmental tools. The EU is a recent polity less anchored in tradition and culture than are nation states (Dyson 2009) and is best described as a regulatory power (Majone 1996) governing through policy instruments (Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007). Against this background, values appear as the carriers of European soft law, incentives to foster mobilisation and compliance from civil society and citizens, as well as to encourage competitiveness and innovation. They can be customised to fit with the requirements of each policy sector while carrying the EU transversal market-friendly ethos. They are anchored in the present and in the future as much as in the past. As such, they are fully congruent with the future-looking “European project” (Shore 2000: 50).

“(Neo)liberal Europe”: another way to do politics

This does not mean that Europe’s taking the market as means and end, while using values to govern, is not political. It simply refers to one element among others in the repertoire of EU governance. The EU is much more than a mere vector of liberalisation of production and trade carrying strictly materialistic purposes. As “the last great world-historical achievement of the bourgeoisie” (Anderson 2009), it embodies both political and economic liberalism and the potentiality to contest and subvert it. To be kept in motion and in balance, European integration relies on major founding compromises that have been constantly updated throughout decades. These compromises are between sovereignty and supranationality; between political and technocratic integration; and between market and public

intervention (Magnette 2003: 25–40). From the start, the necessity to reconcile different national traditions, those giving the state a major role in the transition to and the management of capitalism and those leaving market forces self-organized, had led to a combination of both philosophies at the EU level. This logic of compromises has proven resistant and efficient until the 1970s–1980s, when the emphasis put on supranational, technocratic and negative integration started missing a sovereign, political and positive counterpart and opened a divorce between public opinions and a so-perceived neoliberal Europe.

The extent and effects of this “neoliberal Europe” are still under discussion, as they were from the beginning. Indeed, this relation between public policy and market is a political choice dictated by historical conditions, available resources and political purposes. As such, it is anchored in specific values and contributes to moving these values up on the agenda. Western European leaders responded to the challenge of globalisation generated by the economic crises between 1973 and 1986 by opting, between available options of socially oriented, neo-mercantilist and market-oriented policies, for a rather radical version of the market-oriented category labelled as neoliberal policies (Warlouzet 2018: 14). However, it has been neither a black-and-white story (some promoters of market regulation have social aims and others don’t, some champions of a balanced budget want to retrench the welfare state and others don’t) nor a univocal pattern (the radical orientation to the market is more or less affirmed according to policy sectors) (Warlouzet 2018: 226).

Similarly, at the national level, the same intertwining of political, cultural and market ethos is at work in the reshaping of states. The conversion to neoliberal purposes and methods is most frequently a way to recycle and preserve established practices and hierarchies. Management techniques coming from the private sector strive to improve the efficiency and the control of the state over its own preservation (Bezes 2009; Jobert and Théret 1994). The strong and interventionist French state is a showcase of this combination rather than an opposition of repertoires and ends, a combination that remains shaped by culture and confirms the specificity of the policy mix realised by each society (Birnbäum 2018).

Economic, social, political and cultural values are intertwined rather than opposed in the action of EU institutions. For instance, the institutions promoting economic competition and free trade are also advocating for a greater political union like the European Central Bank (Jones 2019); or social and human rights like the European Court (Saurugger and Terpan 2019). Political values may be instrumental to achieve economic goals like in the management of trade (Duina and Smith 2019) or offer alternative roads as in the case of asylum and immigration (Lavenex 2019).

Furthermore, market-related and economic policies are permeated with value conflicts just as any other policy area. Andy Smith demonstrates to what extent the “politics of economic activity” (2016) consists in the mobilisation of values to change or reproduce the institutions that make economic activity possible. This politics revolves around a fundamental tension between the values of freedom and security, and the way in which other subordinate values like equality and tradition

intervene in a secondary capacity to frame contemporary capitalism (Smith 2016). These pervasive value conflicts play out differently according to a series of factors, such as the institutionalisation of some of the values more than others at the EU level, the power and authority of actors mobilised around particular values or their ability to create coalitions around their goals. The chapters in this volume address precisely this variety of roles and impacts of value conflicts throughout policy areas.

Presentation of the book

The chapters of this volume show that value conflicts have played a less important role than one may expect in the regulation of morality issues, typically connected to moral dilemmas and incommensurable value conflicts (chapters by François Foret, Fabio Bolzonar and Lucrecia Rubio Grundell; Annabelle Littoz-Monnet; Eva-Maria Euchner and Barnabás Fábíán Bakay), and at the same time, have played an important role in economic policies (chapters by Andy Smith, Céleste Bonnamy, Alvaro Oleart).

The contributors develop different understandings and approaches of values, focusing on their relevance as social representations (Gonthier and Guerra, Euchner and Bakay); on their hierarchy (Smith, Bonnamy) or on the agency of those that are institutionalised in treaties and enshrined in policies (Calligaro; Foret, Bolzonar and Grundell; Oleart Perez-Seoane). Based on qualitative case studies and statistical analyses of data (mostly from European Values Study), the chapters shed light on the role of values both as drivers of change and as vehicles of continuity in EU politics. They tackle values both as resources that are mobilised strategically and as representations shaping individual and collective perceptions, and beliefs. Overall, our collective study embraces values as culturally defined ends, culturally defined means of action and outputs of culturally defined action and highlights that the fresh salience of European values in EU rhetoric is a recent manifestation of a long-lived story, as value politics is as old as politics (Swidler 1986: 273–286).²

Frédéric Gonthier and Tristan Guerra provide a starting point to the collective reflection by specifying what the evolution of attitudes on values has been across Europe over the past decades. Based on the data from the European Values Study spanning over 30 years, the chapter focuses on the societal background of normative conflicts in European multilevel governance. Gonthier and Guerra map value cleavages between and within European societies and the structuring effects of the complex recombinations between economic and cultural belief systems. They thus show that attitudes on economic issues are intrinsically value-based, as much as attitudes on cultural issues, and that both continue to play a key role in the structuring of mass attitudes. Moreover, Gonthier and Guerra qualify the narratives of a deepening cleavage around universalist attitudes in Europe and of a surge in support for nationalism. On the contrary, they show a reduction of the ideological gaps over time between those Europeans who support the left and those who support the moderate right as regards universalist values, pitting these two large ideological groups against the radical right.

Andy Smith frames politics as a confrontation of values around the structuration of socio-economic activity. Values are central, firstly, because they determine what social actors consider fair and right. Secondly, values matter because their hierarchy determines how individual, collective or public actors work to change or reproduce the institutions that sustain durable socio-economic relations. Value hierarchies provide the basis for the ideological identities that in turn fuel and legitimate collective and public action. This perspective is illustrated by empirical examples from the agri-food industry in general, and its milk sector and local food chain components in particular.

Céleste Bonnamy analyses the conflicts of values related to the circulation of cultural goods on the European market. The chapter shows how the arrival of new global private players, the GAFAN (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Netflix), disrupted the fragile balance between market- and culture-centred values in the EU's public policy on copyright. A market-oriented vision that claims for more exceptions to copyright opposes a culture-oriented vision that demands for a stronger respect of copyright. This example is a striking illustration of both the standardisation of normative frameworks at work on all policy issues and the ability of actors in each sector to adapt these general normative frameworks to their specific interests and worldviews. Professionals of culture managed to reinject strategically their claims in the directive and to assert copyright, but at the price of contributing to the commodification of the cultural public policies and to the adaptation to requirements set by the digitalisation of the economy. This is a fresh confirmation that European regulation encapsulates diverse and sometimes contradictory values. Rather than clashes of values, the findings suggest their entanglement.

Alvaro Oleart investigates how "value politics" in the EU's internal and external affairs are interrelated through a case study on trade policy. A discourse analysis of the European Commission's strategic documents highlights how the mobilisation of values has gained importance in the EU trade policy from the 2006 "Global Europe" strategy to the 2015 "Trade for All" strategy. This shift shows an attempt by the European Commission to respond to the politicisation of trade-related issues by societal actors resisting its policy by politicising, in turn, its repertoire of legitimisation to discard those who would not support EU values and interests, both being intertwined. This example illustrates that politicisation through values is a double-way path that may serve opposite views.

The second part reverts the analysis to observe the circulation and reinterpretation of values from society and culture to the market. François Foret, Fabio Bolzonar and Lucrecia Rubio Grundell study the Europeanisation of two morality issues, prostitution and surrogacy. The two issues display an economic and legal dimension that turns them into EU policy objects on behalf of freedom of work and circulation and fundamental rights. Compared to usual national morality politics, debates at the European level are much more shaped by European values enshrined in the treaties than religiously related ones are. The deference to experts as a way to depoliticise the subsequent controversies is stronger. And the propensity to "regulatory inertia" is significant due to the limited competences of EU institutions and their tendency to avoid taking risky decisions that could

harm their role as compromise-makers between member states. Overall, this case of “European morality politics” suggests that it is sometimes the market dimension that transforms moral issues into European ones and that values are accommodated in a more subdued way at the supranational than at the European level.

Eva-Maria Euchner and Barnabás Fábián Bakay test further the morality policies model to investigate the link between the economic well-being of individuals and their individual preferences on morality issues, such as same-sex marriage and parenthood, and to question the implication for policy regulation. They combine statistical religious and economic data at the individual and the country level to explore how it relates to moral attitudes towards homosexuality in member states from 1980 to 2018. They conclude that economic and value-based European integration are not two competing goals or processes but instead can be expected to reinforce each other. In other words, when aiming to solve divergence on values in the EU, reducing economic insecurity and economic inequalities can prove helpful.

Oriane Calligaro questions the impact of the framing in terms of “European values” of policies in the field of culture. She documents the shift from “identity politics” to “value politics” and the relations between the two. Calligaro offers a historical contextualisation of recent policy developments such as the European Year of Cultural Heritage or the naming of a commissioner’s portfolio as one aiming first at “Protecting”, then at “Promoting Our European Way of Life” in the 2019–2024 European Commission. The political and civil society protest against this recent relabelling suggest that value politics is not less – and maybe even is more – controversial than was old-style identity politics.

Finally, Annabelle Littoz-Monnet elucidates the tension between the depoliticising and repoliticising effect of values through their underlying action under the clothes of expertise, and more especially in the field of ethics. Recourse to ethics expertise on sensitive issues is a showcase of bureaucratic attempts to keep values at bay by circumscribing them to a scientific and technocratic argumentation. Consulting ethics experts allows pre-empting and taming normative conflicts on scientific and technological developments and avoids opening public deliberations that may become explosive. Still, the selection of experts and their working practices prompt questions on how moral dilemmas related to technology and innovation are being decided upon at the EU level.

Notes

- 1 Steven Erlanger, “For the U.S., ‘Brexit’ Was a Sign of Things to Come”, *The New York Times*, 10 November 2016, p. 19.
- 2 We thank our two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and stimulating suggestions.

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