



VAL-YOU

European values made tangible

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What are European values?

Chapter 1





Summary

Values are deeply rooted motivations, principles or orientations guiding, steering, channeling or explaining certain attitudes, norms, opinions, convictions, and desires, which, in turn, direct human action or at least part of it.

Values are crucial for keeping communities like the European Union together.

The six core European values covered in this report are democracy, pluralism, freedom, equality, solidarity, and justice.

These European values are very difficult to measure, because they are abstract concepts. To make them more tangible, we study values indirectly by looking at how people judge events, behaviors, or outcomes around them.

1.1 Introduction

Even though the word **values** is relatively new, the ideas behind it go back a long time. In ancient Greek philosophy, thinkers like Plato and Aristotle talked about **virtues** – qualities like wisdom or courage – that were seen as important for living a good and meaningful life.



These virtues became part of Christian teachings and were used for centuries to decide what was right or wrong (Halman & Sieben, 2020). Back then, values were mostly about personal character and moral guidance.

Over time, the focus began to shift. In the 19th and 20th centuries, philosophers like Nietzsche and sociologists like Weber began to question traditional moral beliefs. They introduced the idea that values are not always fixed or universal,

and that they can vary from person to person or culture to culture. Unlike virtues, which suggest what is ‘good,’ values were seen as more neutral: they do not always point to the right path, but they do shape our behavior (Halman & Sieben, 2020).

Sociologists such as Durkheim and later also Parsons (1960) showed how important shared values are for society: without agreement on some fundamental beliefs, society can fall apart. Therefore, researchers tried to study values scientifically, but this turned out to be difficult. It is hard to prove exactly how values form, or how much they truly influence what people do (e.g., Spates, 1983; Kohn, 1969; Rokeach, 1973). Therefore, scientists became less interested in values for some time (Hechter, 1993; Spates, 1983).

In recent years, however, the interest in values has grown again. Questions about economic inequality, artificial intelligence, cultural change and the future of democracies have made it clear that values still matter (e.g., Craglia et al., 2018; Etzioni, 2008; Hechter, 1992; Kriesi, 1998; Miles, 2015; Putnam, 1993). They help us decide what kind of society we want to live in, and what kind of people we want to be.

This is exactly why the European Union has laid down their core values in the Treaty on European Union (European



Union, 2007a). Before we turn to these fundamental values on which the EU is built and which should thus be an integral part of democratic and civic education in Europe, we first need to ask the difficult question scholars have been struggling with for ages: what *are* values?

1.2 Defining values

Up until today, there is still no clear-cut answer to the question of what defines values. One reason for this is that values are not directly visible: they are mental constructs that can only be inferred from what people say or do (Hechter,

1993). Many researchers have tried to define values more precisely and to separate them from related ideas like norms, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions (e.g., Kluckhohn, 1959; Rokeach, 1973; Van Deth & Scarbrough, 1995). A common view is that values are more fundamental than these other concepts: they lie deeper, at the core of our being, and have a more guiding role; they can help us decide what is good or bad, right or wrong, important or unimportant (Ester et al., 2006; Haidt, 2012; Halman, 1991; Miles, 2015; Rokeach, 1968). In this way, they influence how people behave without always being clearly visible.

Taking all these elements together, values can be defined in the following way:

"Values are deeply rooted motivations, principles or orientations guiding, steering, channeling or explaining certain attitudes, norms, opinions, convictions, and desires, which, in turn, direct human action or at least part of it."

(Halman & Sieben, 2020: 3)

Although scientists largely agree on the core elements of this general definition, different scientific fields study values in different ways. For example, psychologists often see them as personal motivations, while economists focus on value as the usefulness of products or services. Sociologists, on the other hand, look at values as shared cultural standards that guide social behavior and shape societies. In fact, common values are deemed crucial for the survival of communities (Almond & Verba, 1965; Etzioni, 2008; Parsons, 1960; Tocqueville, [1848] 1998).

This essential role of shared values is acknowledged by the European Union, as shown in the opening statement of the Charter of Fundamental Rights: "The peoples of Europe, in creating an even closer union among them, are resolved to share a peaceful future based

on common values" (European Union, 2000: 8). We will now discuss what these common values are exactly.

1.3 Fundamental European values

In determining the fundamental values of the European community, we immediately encounter the difficulty of defining values again: in different EU documents, slightly different core values are mentioned. The most elaborate description can be found in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (European Union, 2007a: 5):

"The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the

Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.”

In this definition, foundational values are listed together with fundamental principles, such as pluralism and solidarity. However, in explaining the aims and values of the EU, these principles are not explicitly mentioned, only implicitly described. For example, the aim “respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity” refers to pluralism (European Union, n.d.). In yet other documents, such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights, principles like solidarity are again described as values (European Union, 2000: 8).

Staying close to the definition of values provided above, the following six European values are eventually included in this report: **democracy, pluralism, freedom, equality, solidarity, and justice**. These are all core principles that should guide Europeans into a peaceful future.

The decision to not include human dignity and human rights as values is based on two considerations: first, human dignity is described by the EU as “(...) not only a fundamental right in itself but (...) the real basis of fundamental rights” (European Union, 2007b), and by the UN as “(...) the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” (United Nations, 1948: 1). Because human dignity is believed to form the basis of the values of the EU, we do not consider it a value in itself, but the foundation from which all European values have arisen. Second, human rights are defined as “universally applicable legal norms,” used to uphold our common values (Council of the European Union, 2012:

1). Therefore, they can be considered a tool, rather than a value. (Similar to ‘rule of law’, which is strongly related to the value of justice.)

Now that we have established the core values of the European Union, the goal of this report is to make these abstract European values more tangible, so they can be used for democratic citizenship in secondary school education. How can we do that?



1.4 Measuring European values

Even though it is hard to measure values directly, researchers have tried various methods – from asking people about their values, to analyzing speeches or media content, to using surveys (Rokeach, 1973; Kluckhohn, 1959; Lowenthal, 1944; Inglehart, 1997; Schwartz, 1992). In doing so, a functional approach to values is needed, which assumes that holding a certain value means being inclined to act in a particular way; it shapes how people respond to situations and make choices (Halman, 1991; Ester et al., 2006; Van Deth & Scarbrough, 1995). This understanding focuses less on what values *are* and more on what they *do*, making it possible to study values indirectly by **looking at how people judge events, behaviors, or outcomes around them** (Halman & Sieben, 2020: 3).

Projects like the European Values Study and the World Values Survey take such an approach to values and have helped us understand how values differ between countries and how they change over time (Hagenaars et al., 2003; Inglehart, 2018). These studies show that values are shaped by both personal experiences and wider social forces like globalization, modernization, and political conflict (Halman & Gelissen, 2019; Norris & Inglehart, 2019).



1.5 Conclusion

In this first chapter, we have learned that values are guiding principles that steer our norms, attitudes and behaviors. They are essential in forming communities like the European Union. The EU is founded on multiple principles which we have summarized into six core values: democracy, pluralism, freedom, equality, solidarity, and justice. Because values are so abstract, scientists have difficulty measuring them directly. Therefore, they ask people's evaluations of events, behaviors, and outcomes that represent these values. This research approach has helped us gain insight into value differences across people, countries and times.

In the next chapter, we will elaborate on these value trends in Europe. This will give insight into why it is important to learn about European values in school. The remainder of the report will provide practical tools for secondary education on how to make these values more tangible.

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This chapter is largely based on the chapter 'Values' by Loek Halman and Inge Sieben (2020) from the *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society*. We added some new elements and updated literature. ChatGPT was used with the prompt: "could you please improve this text to make it more accessible for democracy and civic education in secondary schools."

Trends in European values

Chapter 2





Summary

Modernization Theory states that long-term value patterns in societies are shaped by the material conditions experienced during our formative years.

Older generations generally prioritize order, stability, and economic growth, while younger generations tend to prioritize self-expression, autonomy, and democratic values. Through generational replacement, European societies have developed more post-materialist, emancipative values.

Many micro- and macro factors besides the economy contribute to what values we hold dear, such as individual life experiences, cultural traditions, institutional contexts, regional environments.

Because of their complex make-up, values are not easily changed. The worries about rapidly growing value divides and extreme polarization are therefore often overstated.

Affective polarization, however, seems to be on the rise and may be affecting our tolerance towards those we (think we) disagree with. This can make us adhere less to democratic principles.

A cultural backlash seems present among both older and younger cohorts. While older cohorts seem insecure about already established values and identities, younger people struggle with 'four D's': distrust, dealignment, deprivation and destruction.

Learning to critically reflect on their own values and engage with others in respectful dialogue will help pupils develop the skills to defend, improve, or reform their European community.

We provide 12 teaching strategies that could help in teaching the skill of critically reflecting on values, namely: 5W1H, Chess Board, Circle Chat, Four Corners, Head Heard Hands, INSERT, Opinion Line, Snowball, SPIDER Web, Think Pair Share, Values Compass, and Values Quadrant.

2.1 Introduction

In recent years, European values have received growing attention, not only in science, but also in public discourse and political debates. Questions of European identity, integration, and unity are increasingly framed in terms of values: what do we share? What divides us? And how are our collective values changing over time? The core European values of democracy, pluralism, freedom, equality, solidarity, and justice may be laid down in the Treaty on European Union (European Union, 2007), but many people worry that these values are in decline.

Processes like modernization, globalization, and individualization have disrupted traditional social structures and ways of life, raising concerns about the

erosion of civic responsibility and social cohesion (Joas, 2000; Fukuyama, 2000). As we are navigating a world marked by rapid change and growing complexity, some people fear we are drifting towards selfishness, political apathy, and moral ambiguity. Amidst these worries, understanding how values are formed and how they evolve over time becomes even more important.



2.2 Where do values come from?

One of the most influential theories of value formation is Inglehart's **Modernization Theory** (1977; 1997). Central to this theory are two mechanisms: the scarcity hypothesis and the socialization hypothesis. The **scarcity hypothesis** posits that people prioritize those values that help them cope with the most pressing threats in their (socio-economic) environment. In times of scarcity, "materialist" values that emphasize order, authority, and survival are most important. In more affluent and secure contexts, people shift towards "post-materialist" values such as autonomy, self-expression, and participation. Complementing this is the **socialization hypothesis**, which entails that the values people acquire during their formative years remain rather stable throughout their lifespan. Combined, these hypotheses emphasize intergenerational value change: as older generations die out and are replaced by younger cohorts raised in different socio-economic conditions, the dominant values in society gradually shift. This process is called the "Silent Revolution" and has resulted in the rise of emancipative, post-modern values across much of Europe (1977; 1997).

Modernization, however, is not a singular process. It entails several interrelated trends, such as rising incomes, increasing educational levels, urbanization, and social complexity. All these changes tend to support values such as freedom and pluralism (Welzel et al., 2003). Yet, critics have pointed out that modernization alone cannot fully account for the diversity of value systems across and within countries (e.g., Gundelach, 1994; Eisenstadt, 2000). A growing body

of literature now emphasizes the interaction between **micro- and macro-level factors**: individual life experiences, cultural traditions, institutional contexts, and regional environments all play a role in shaping people's values (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Arts, 2011; Halman & Gellissen, 2019). So, values are not solely the product of economic development or generational change. They are also embedded in institutions and affected by political, social, and cultural factors. Recognizing this complexity is essential when assessing how European values have developed over time.

2.3 Continuity or polarization?

Contrary to the popular narrative of deepening value polarization in Europe, empirical research paints a more nuanced picture (e.g., Mau et al., 2023; Muis, 2024). While there are certainly differences between countries and demographic groups, large-scale survey data, such as from the European Values Study, suggest that **no value polarization** is taking place; core emancipative values remain widely supported. The fear that society is increasingly divided into extreme, homogenous and opposing blocs is often overstated.

This does not mean there are no challenges. Despite rather stable value differences, many people in Europe seem to feel increasingly positive about their ingroup and increasingly negative about outgroups: this is called "**affective polarization**" (Harteveld, 2019; Reiljan, 2020; Wagner, 2020). This type of polarization decreases the ability to engage in constructive political disagreement. Political debates are increasingly marked

by mutual suspicion and hostility (Sommer & McCoy, 2018; 2019; Stavrakakis, 2018; Svolik, 2019). Rather than healthy democratic conflict, we see forms of polarization that undermine trust and co-operation. In such an environment, even modest differences in values can become sources of intense division, and the “other” can become the enemy instead of a legitimate opponent (Mouffe, 2014).

This “us vs. them” thinking could affect democratic values. As Körösenyi (2013, p. 21) states: “violating basic norms is acceptable on ‘our’ side, while being unforgivable on the ‘other’”. The disappearance of a common standard leads to **moral relativism** and gives rise to political irresponsibility and corruption.” There are indications that some groups in society are indeed becoming less favorable towards democracy.



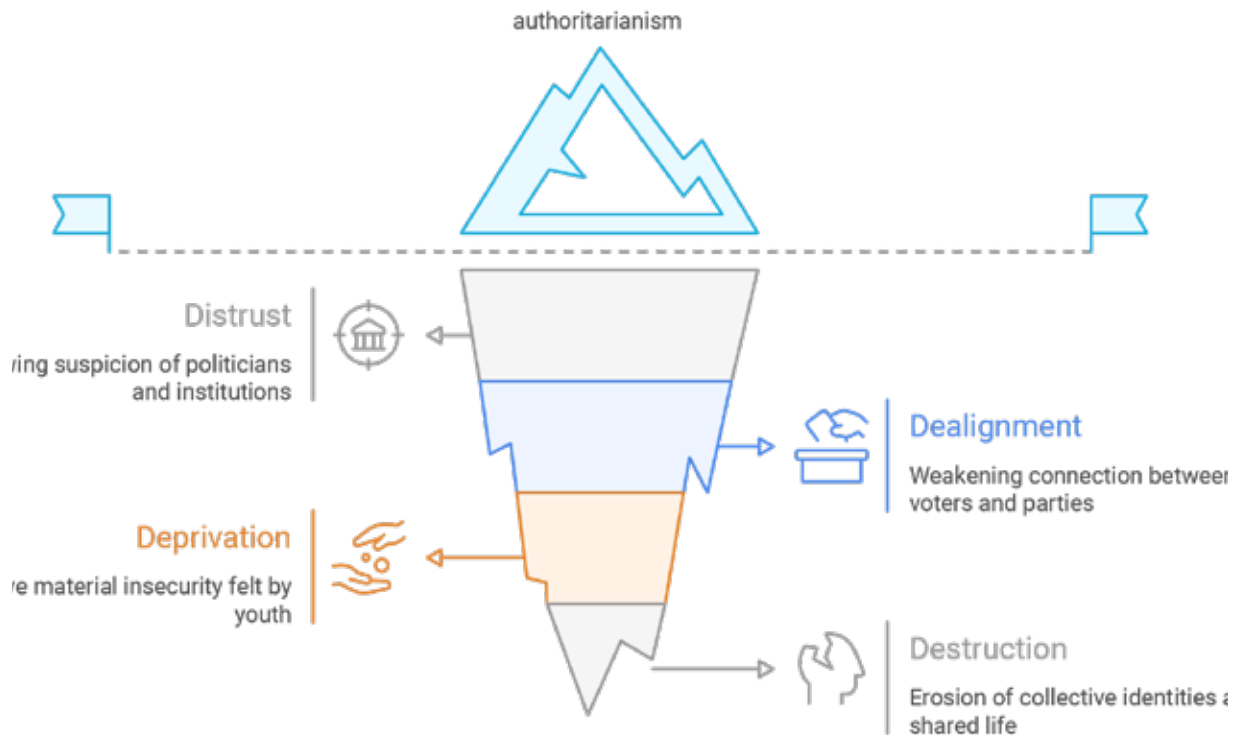
2.4 An anti-democratic turn?

The gradual dominance of liberal democratic values in most parts of Europe has provoked an “**authoritarian reflex**” among groups who perceive these cultural changes as a threat to their identity, traditions, and social position (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). These individuals increasingly support strong leaders and emphasize values such as conformity and obedience to protect their in-group culture against perceived out-groups. According to this **Cultural Backlash Theory**, particularly older cohorts are showing a decline in democratic values (Norris & Inglehart, 2019).

However, other scholars believe that the reaction to modernization is not limited to older generations alone (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018; Foa & Mounk, 2016; 2017; Schäfer, 2021). They have pointed to evidence that suggests that **younger cohorts** may also be affected in their democratic values, particularly when they experience economic and socio-cultural insecurity (Muis, 2024).

Besides economic and socio-cultural forces, Eatwell and Goodwin (2018) identify two political mechanisms that can help explain the rise of authoritarian sympathies among youth. They summarized these into “**four D’s**”:

- **Distrust** refers to a growing suspicion of politicians and traditional political institutions. This goes beyond a lack of confidence in their abilities: it reflects a belief that elites are corrupt and driven by hidden agendas. Younger people may also feel a mismatch between the slow democracy and their fast-paced life (Wuttke et al., 2022).



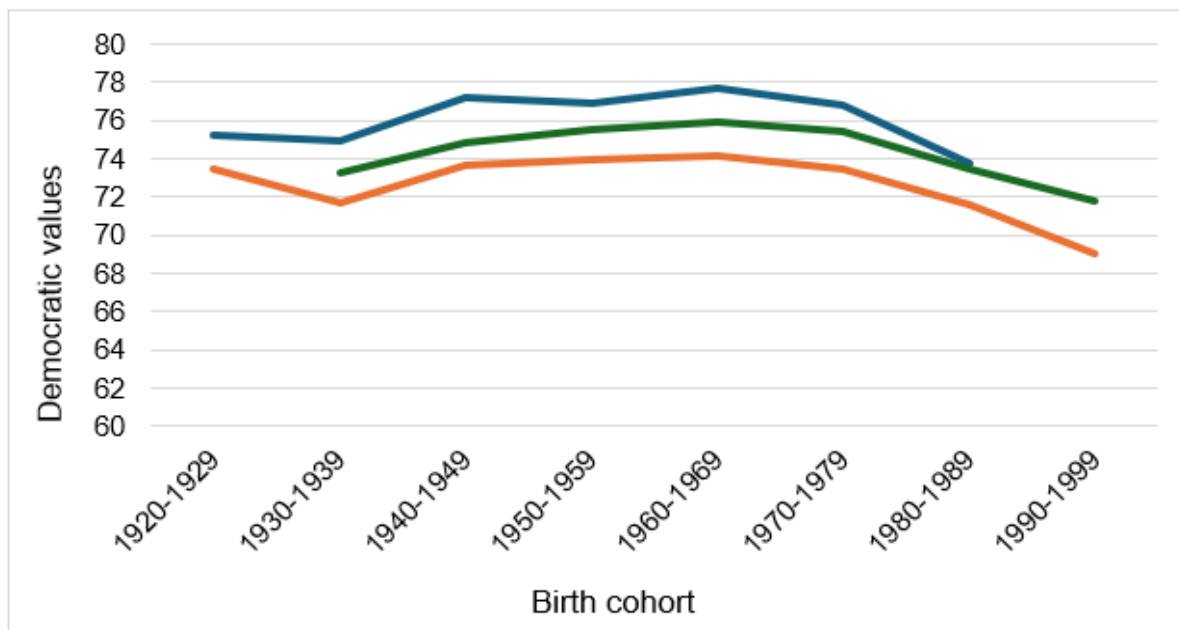
- Dealignment** stands for the weakening connection between voters and traditional political parties. In the past, people often voted loyally based on religion, class, or family background. Today, such loyalty is much less common. Voters – especially younger ones – are more flexible and more likely to support new parties that speak to their specific issues. This change has led to increasing fragmentation of the political landscape and has created more room for authoritarian populist parties. Furthermore, the idea of voting as a civic duty has weakened, especially among practically educated youth.
- Deprivation** describes the relative material insecurity felt by younger generations. While the general standard of living has risen over the past century, many young people today perceive a decline in opportunity compared to previous generations. Despite being the most highly educated generation ever, many young people face insecurities on the labor market and have difficulties buying a house (Green, 2017); Moreover, the pressure of meritocracy – where success is framed as entirely self-earned – intensifies feelings of failure and insecurity among those who struggle (Sandel, 2020). In this context, younger people may be drawn to authoritarian values as a way to restore a sense of control, order, and security amid growing economic unpredictability.
- Destruction** refers to the erosion of collective identities and shared ways of life. As traditional sources of belonging, such as religion, class, and national identity, have weakened due

to modernization, globalization, and rising individualism, many people have lost the sense of security and meaning these collective frameworks once provided. Young people are facing a difficult challenge: growing up without clear, stable sources of identity. This lack of cultural grounding can create uncertainty about how to behave, what to believe, and where

one belongs, making values like conformity, obedience, and social order more appealing (Hornsey, 2008).

So, authoritarian reflexes may arise among different cohorts for different reasons. Research combining these two perspectives indeed shows that both the very oldest and very youngest cohorts hold somewhat less democratic values, but that the weakest support for democracy can be found among the latter (Muis, 2024). However, as shown in figure 2.1, democracy is still highly valued by all generations.

Figure 2.1 Mean democratic values among birth cohorts per EVS-wave.



Source: Muis (2024), based on the European Values Study (EVS), weighted data Source: Muis (2024), based on the European Values Study (EVS), weighted data

2.5 Teaching strategies

The values of democracy, pluralism, freedom, equality, solidarity, and justice shape how societies function and how individuals relate to one another. In an era of global unrest, **understanding values** – how they change, why they matter, and how they differ – is essential for democratic citizenship. This makes education about European values more urgent than ever.

At the following pages, we briefly describe 12 **teaching strategies** that teachers could use in their classrooms to help pupils learn about European values. Later in this report, we will apply these strategies to the values discussed by giving practical classroom examples. The 12 teaching strategies are: 5W1H, Chess Board, Circle Chat, Four Corners, Head Heard Hands, INSERT, Opinion Line, Snowball, SPIDER Web, Think Pair Share, Values Compass, Values Quadrant.

For more detailed information on these strategies, see: <https://atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/materials.html>



Teaching strategy 1: 5W1H

5W1H Encourages students to explore complex societal issues through structured questioning. Using the six guiding prompts – *What, Where, When, Why, Who, and How* – students examine a topic from multiple angles, promoting deeper understanding and critical thinking. Working in small groups, they discuss controversial statements, collaborate on structuring their responses, and present their findings to the class. The teacher facilitates by linking student insights to relevant value theories and data (see next chapters). This strategy fosters skills in argumentation, perspective-taking, and evidence-based reasoning, while also encouraging students to reflect on their own values in relation to those of their peers.





Teaching strategy 2: Chess Board

Chess Board Offers a dynamic and visual way for students to engage with value-laden statements by physically positioning pawns on a board to indicate agreement or disagreement. Working in small groups, students reflect on controversial issues, express their initial views, and engage in discussion. They are then given the opportunity to reconsider and, if desired, revise their stance by moving their pawn. This process not only stimulates open dialogue but also fosters reflection and perspective-taking. The teacher concludes by connecting students' responses to value clarification frameworks and visual data (see next chapters). Through this method, students develop a deeper understanding of how values shape opinions and how dialogue can influence one's views.

Teaching strategy 3: Circle chat

Circle Chat encourages active participation and thoughtful dialogue by engaging all students in a series of rotating paired discussions. Standing in two concentric circles, students face a partner to discuss a question or statement before rotating to a new partner for the next round. This dynamic format enables them to express and exchange views on a topic from multiple angles. The progression of linked questions promotes deeper exploration and understanding of diverse perspectives. A concluding class discussion allows the teacher to relate students' insights to theoretical concepts and data (see next chapters). This method helps students recognize the roots of differing opinions while building their communication and reasoning skills.





Teaching strategy 4: Four corners

Four Corners creates an engaging setting for students to reflect on a controversial statement or complex question by physically positioning themselves in a classroom corner that aligns with their level of agreement or chosen answer. Each corner group discusses their shared viewpoint and presents arguments to the rest of the class. Students may revise their stance and move to a different corner during the discussion. This movement-based approach encourages open dialogue, perspective-taking, and critical reflection. The teacher concludes by linking the arguments to relevant theories and data (see next chapters), helping students understand how values shape differing attitudes and opinions.

Teaching strategy 5: Head, Heart, Hands

Head, Heart, Hands encourages students to engage with a topic on three levels: cognitively, emotionally, and practically. Prompted by a meaningful stimulus, such as a video, image, or podcast, students respond by noting their thoughts (**Head**), feelings (**Heart**), and possible actions (**Hand**) on sticky notes. These reflections are discussed in rotating groups, allowing students to explore all three dimensions. The activity ends with a class-wide discussion where the teacher connects student input to relevant theories and (see next chapters). This method fosters multidimensional reflection, empathy, and perspective-taking on values-related issues.





Teaching strategy 6: INSERT

INSERT (Interactive Noting System for Effective Reading and Thinking) promotes critical engagement with texts by encouraging students to annotate or “code” information using symbols, sticky notes, or other visual aids. While reading selected material, students identify key insights, express uncertainty, and reflect on connections with prior knowledge. This method cultivates skills such as discrimination, comparison, and evaluation, while also prompting students to articulate and refine their values through discussion. The teacher closes the activity by relating the reading outcomes to relevant theories and data (see next chapters), deepening understanding of how values shape opinions, decisions, and behavior.

Teaching strategy 7: Opinion line

Opinion Line enables students to physically position themselves along a line (real or imagined) to indicate their stance on a dichotomous statement. This visual and embodied approach facilitates expression of personal opinions, encourages reflective dialogue, and allows for shifts in perspective based on peer arguments. By linking each discussion to maps and explanatory frameworks (see next chapters), students gain deeper insight into the diversity of viewpoints within and across societies. Though simple in design, the method requires skilled facilitation to guide meaningful debate and connect students' positions to underlying values.





Teaching strategy 8: Snowball

Snowball promotes critical reflection and collaborative decision-making by guiding students through a staged narrowing of options related to a values-based question. Starting individually, students select key statements from a set selected by the teacher, for example linked to the maps presented in the next chapters. Through successive rounds of pair and group discussions, students refine their choices, ultimately agreeing on the most relevant responses and justifying them with arguments. This layered approach fosters deeper understanding, enhances dialogue and reasoning skills, and helps students connect individual opinions to broader societal patterns and theoretical insights.

Teaching strategy 9: Spider web

SPIDER Web (Synergetic Practiced Independent Developed Exploration Rubric WEB) encourages collaborative learning through a visual and interactive brainstorming process. Using tools like string or wool, students create a physical web to represent connections between ideas, values, and perspectives related to a central topic. Working in small groups, they share insights, build on each other's contributions, and explore interrelated concepts. The method fosters respectful dialogue, empathy, and critical thinking by placing students at the center of the learning process while the teacher observes and facilitates reflection. By visually mapping the complexity of values and linking the discussion to relevant theories (see next chapters), students deepen their awareness of how individual beliefs are interwoven within broader societal frameworks.





Teaching strategy 10: Think Pair Share

Think Pair Share is a flexible and engaging method that fosters reflection, collaboration, and critical dialogue. Students first reflect individually on a question or statement (**Think**), then exchange perspectives with a peer (**Pair**), and finally share their insights in a broader classroom discussion (**Share**). This structured process encourages students to articulate their values, consider alternative viewpoints, and engage in respectful dialogue. Whether used to introduce, deepen, or consolidate learning, the activity supports the development of communication and reasoning skills.

By connecting the shared reflections to data and theories (see next chapters), the strategy promotes meaningful engagement with real-world value dilemmas.

Teaching strategy 11: Values compass

Values Compass enables students to reflect on a series of value-related questions by positioning their opinions on a 0-10 scale, resulting in a visual representation of their attitudes. This graphical output serves as a starting point for comparison and discussion, first among classmates and then with broader societal groups. By engaging with diverse perspectives and visualizing value patterns, students gain deeper insight into the complexity of individual and cultural differences. The strategy fosters awareness of one's own position, encourages respectful dialogue, and facilitates connections between personal opinions, peer perspectives, and international data.





Teaching strategy 12: Values Quadrant

Values Quadrant invites students to explore their own values in relation to a specific topic by positioning themselves on a two-axis quadrant, where each axis represents a dimension of the chosen value. Students may also place fictional or real-life personages onto the quadrant based on short character profiles. Through pair and group discussions, they explain and justify their placements, consider alternative perspectives, and reflect on the diversity of motivations behind value-based decisions. The teacher guides the process and connects the outcomes to data and explanatory frameworks (see next chapters). This visual and interactive method helps students critically examine their own positions, understand the reasoning of others, and deepen their awareness of complex value dilemmas.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have elaborated how long-term value patterns in societies are shaped by the material and social conditions experienced during one's formative years. Through generational replacement of older cohorts prioritizing order, stability, and economic growth by younger cohorts valuing self-expression, autonomy, and democracy, Europe as a whole has become more focused on post-materialist values such as freedom and pluralism. However, not only the economy is shaping our values: the interplay between individual life experiences, cultural traditions, institutional contexts, regional environments and many other micro- and macro factors determines what values are guiding us in life.

Because of this complex way in which values are formed, they are not easily changed. Worries about rapidly growing value divides and extreme polarization are therefore often overstated. Although such value polarization is not taking place, affective polarization seems to be on the rise in Europe. This form of polarization may be threatening our democratic values as soon as we no longer see 'the other' as a legitimate political opponent, but as an enemy that needs to be excluded.

Among whom these democratic values are decreasing exactly remains up for scientific debate, but both the oldest and youngest cohorts seem to have their own cultural and economic insecurities affecting their values. At the same time, democratic and emancipative values are still highly valued by all groups in society, emphasizing the strong foundation

on which the European community is built.

Pupils are growing up in a world where old certainties are dissolving and pluralism is the norm. They need the tools to critically reflect on their own values, engage with others in respectful dialogue, and navigate moral complexity without falling into cynicism or dogmatism. Teaching European values is not about imposing a single worldview. It is about fostering the civic competence to participate in a shared project, even amidst disagreement; it is about making visible the value foundations of European institutions, and equipping the next generation to defend, improve, or reform them. The remainder of this report will provide practical tools for secondary education to make European values more tangible. At the end of each value chapter, an example of a teaching strategy – applied to that value – will be provided.

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This chapter is largely based on the chapter ‘Values’ by Loek Halman and Inge Sieben (2020) and chapters from the dissertation ‘Who are those people?’ by Quita Muis (2024). We added some new elements and updated literature. ChatGPT was used with the prompt: “could you please improve this text to make it more accessible for democracy and civic education in secondary schools.” The descriptions of the teaching strategies are a summary of the information available at <https://atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/materials.html>, created with the prompt: “could you please summarize this information in a few sentences, fitting for democracy and civic education in secondary schools.”

Democracy

Chapter 3





Summary

The EU is founded on the value of democracy. Democratic values can be linked to two ways of political support: diffuse political support (general beliefs about political system; deeply rooted and rather stable) and specific political support (evaluation of government and parliament; can change more quickly).

Democracy is valued more in countries with longer democratic traditions, more economic affluence, and/or less perceived corruption.

Democracy is valued more by individuals with more income, higher educational levels, and/or who are younger – although the youngest cohorts adhere democratic values somewhat less than previous cohorts.

Implementation in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education can be achieved by focusing on tangible measurements such as:

- Importance of being governed democratically (*diffuse political support*)
- Evaluation of ways of governing (*diffuse political support*):
 - Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections
 - Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country
 - Having the army rule the country
 - Having a democratic political system
- Confidence in parliament, political parties, government (*specific political support*)

>> Example teaching strategy: “INSERT”

3.1 Introduction

Democracy comes from the Greek words ‘demos’ (people) and ‘kratos’ (rule) and thus means ‘rule of the people’. But what does a democracy look like? Although there seems to be a common understanding of the meaning of democracy (Dalton et al., 2007), the answer to this question is not so easy as democracy is a multifaceted concept. First, democracy is a form of government: in a democracy, the citizens have the power to make decisions. How this is done differs between countries and over time: decision-making can be directly or through elected representatives. Democracy thus refers to a certain type of institutional arrangement of arriving at political decisions (*procedural definition*). Second, democracy is linked to the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, including basic rights like freedom of speech, the right to vote, and the right to express opinions (*value definition*). And third, democracy ties into the idea of citizenship. The abovementioned rights are what make a society democratic, as they allow people to take an active role in their country’s decisions and (future) development (*civic definition*).

The EU is founded on the value of democracy, or to be more precise: representative democracy. European citizens have political rights, such as the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in elections.

https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/aims-and-values_en

Although democracy may look differently in different countries and can take different forms, it has certainly become a

universal value (Ferrin & Kriesi, 2016). Many countries around the world are becoming more democratic (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Norris, 2011), even though some face challenges, particularly during times of crisis (think of economic downturns or the recent COVID-19 pandemic). Some countries, especially those that began democratic transitions, may struggle to fully consolidate democratic values, and in some cases, countries might even return to less democratic or more autocratic systems of government (Ferrin & Kriesi, 2016). Scholars have mentioned specific challenges or even threats to democracy, such as the rise of populism (e.g., Akkerman, 2003; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012; 2017), conspiracy theories (e.g., Cassam, 2019; Moore, 2018; Rosenblum & Muirhead, 2019), and polarization (McCoy, Rahman & Sommer, 2018; Reiljan, 2020; Svobik, 2019).



Despite these challenges, support for democracy is strong in many European countries, although this support can vary between countries and across different groups in society (Norris, 2012), as we will also show below.

3.2. Democratic values: the difference between diffuse and specific political support

In the scientific literature, democratic values are most often linked¹ to the concept of political support: how much people believe in the political system and its ability to serve them. There are two main types of political support (Easton, 1965):

- **Diffuse political support** is about general beliefs and values that people hold about the political system as a whole. It means believing that a specific political system (like democracy) is good and important. Individuals who show diffuse political support adhere to values supporting the separation of powers, freedom, self-determination, and moral autonomy – the ability to make choices independently (Reeskens et al., 2020). These values are deeply rooted and don't usually change quickly.
- **Specific political support**, on the other hand, is about how people feel about the government at a particular moment in time. This kind of support can change more easily as it is tied to evaluations of government (and

its leaders). Positive evaluations lead to higher levels of confidence in state institutions and trust in elected officeholders (Norris, 2011: 7-8).

3.2.1. Application of diffuse political support: importance of being governed democratically and democratic-autocratic preference



Diffuse political support thus is about general ideas and values that people have about democracy; it is about how much individuals value democracy as a way of governing. This type of political support is thought to be shaped during childhood and early life experiences (the so-called formative years) and to remain stable across someone's life course (Inglehart, 1977; 1997). For example, as we argued in Chapter 2, individuals growing up in difficult times, like during a war or an economic crisis, are more likely to develop values that focus on survival and security: more material values lin-

¹ Democratic values can however be measured in various ways, for a list of examples see: Haerpfer, 2008.

ked to authority. Individuals who grow up in more peaceful and secure times are more likely to embrace democratic values, like freedom and participation in society. However, it's important to note that even though these democratic values are generally stable, big events or crises (like economic downturns or wars) can sometimes shift people's views in the short term (Inglehart (1997). During times of crisis, people might start to think that strong, decisive leadership is more important than the usual processes of democracy. This can lead them to question the effectiveness of democratic governance (Boin & 't Hart, 2003).

Diffuse political support can be captured in two ways. These applications come with tangible measurements that

are also suitable for implementation in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education. First, we can measure the **importance of being governed democratically** with a question such as (EVS, 2017):

How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically? On this scale where 1 means it is "not at all important" and 10 means "absolutely important" what position would you choose?

A second way of measuring diffuse political support is by asking people about their **democratic-autocracy preference**. This is the support individuals give for democracy in comparison to

Figure 3.1 shows differences in this democratic value across countries in Europe. Please note that the idea of democracy, in this case, is not specifically defined. Interestingly, research has shown that when people talk about democracy, they usually think of it in a simple way, a "minimalist understanding of democracy" (Ferrín & Kriesi, 2016: 150) such as having free and fair elections.

Figure 3.1 Importance to live in a country that is governed democratically²



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

² Opinions on original scale (1-10) are transformed into a scale from 0-100.

other forms of government (Inglehart & Wetzel, 2005), such autocratic governments (where power is controlled by one person or a small group) or technocratic governments (decision-making is done by experts). Based on a typology of Diamond and Linz (1990, for an elaboration see: Reich, 2002), democratic governance is often compared to three specific forms of autocratic governance: military rule, a strong leader with unchecked power, and a government run by experts. This comparison is labelled 'democratic-autocracy preference' in the literature and can be tangibly measured as follows (EVS, 2017):

about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a (1) very good, (2) fairly good, (3) fairly bad or (4) very bad way of governing this country?

- *Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections*
- *Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country*
- *Having the army rule the country*
- *Having a democratic political system*

3.2.2. Specific political support: political trust

I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think

Specific political support is related to **political trust**. This refers to confidence in

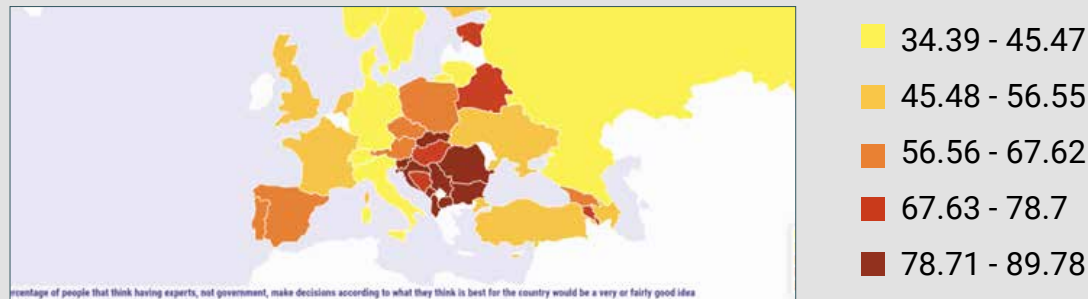
Figures 3.2 to 3.5 show the percentage of people who think it is a (very or fairly) good idea for each of the four forms of political systems of the democratic-autocratic preference across countries in Europe.

Figure 3.2 Percentage of people who think having a strong leader who doesn't have to bother with parliament or elections is a (very or fairly) good idea



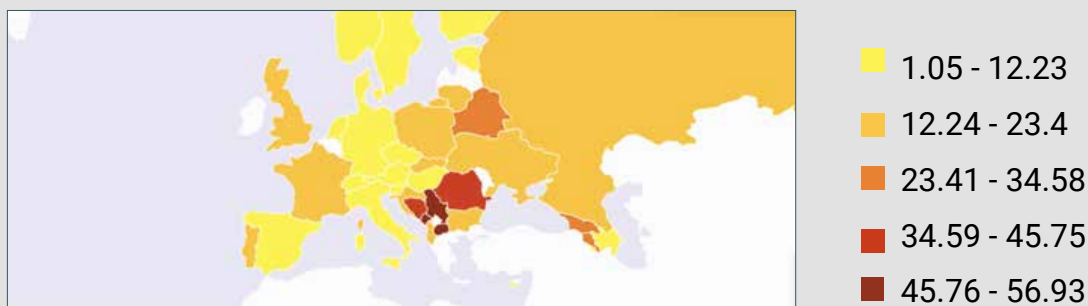
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 3.3 Percentage of people who think having experts, not government, making decisions according to what they think is best for the country is a (very of fairly) good idea



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 3.4 Percentage of people who think having the army rule the country is a (very of fairly) good idea



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 3.5 Percentage of people who think having a democratic political system is a (very of fairly) good idea



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

institutions on the representational side of the political system such as parliament, political parties, and the government. Please note that this concept is theoretically distinct from confidence in institutions on the implementation side of the political system that carry out the everyday tasks of society, such as civil services, the police, and the legal system (Rothstein & Stolle, 2008; see also chapter 8 on justice).

Political trust can be tangibly measured as follows (EVS, 2017):

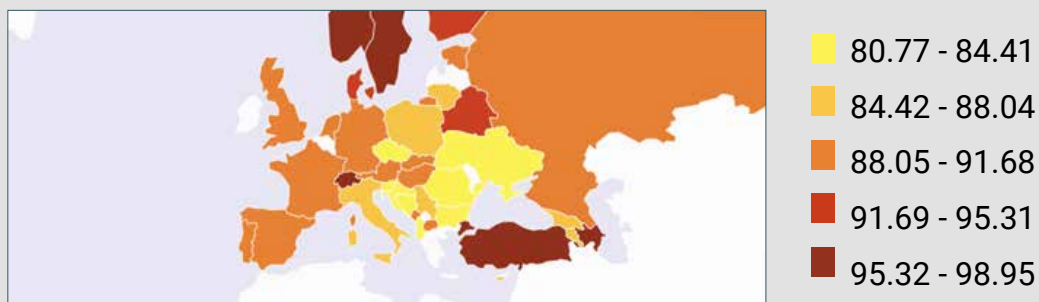
How much confidence you do have in:

- ***Parliament***
- ***Political Parties***
- ***Government***

Is it (1) a great deal, (2) quite a lot, (3) not very much or (4) none at all?

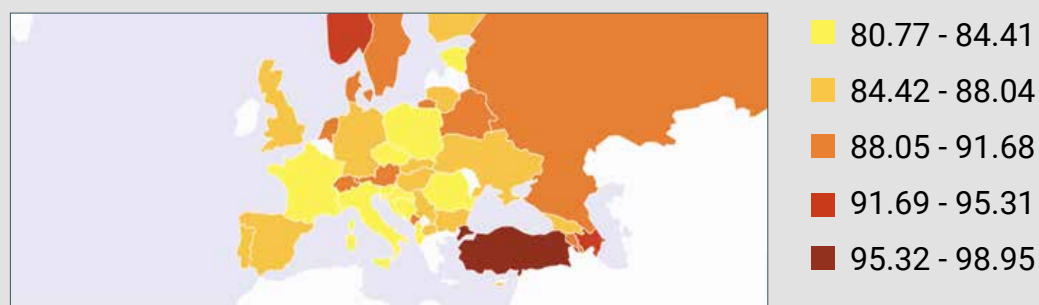
Figure 3.6 to 3.8 shows differences in the level of political trust (for each element separately) across countries in Europe.

Figure 3.6 Percentage of people that have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in parliament



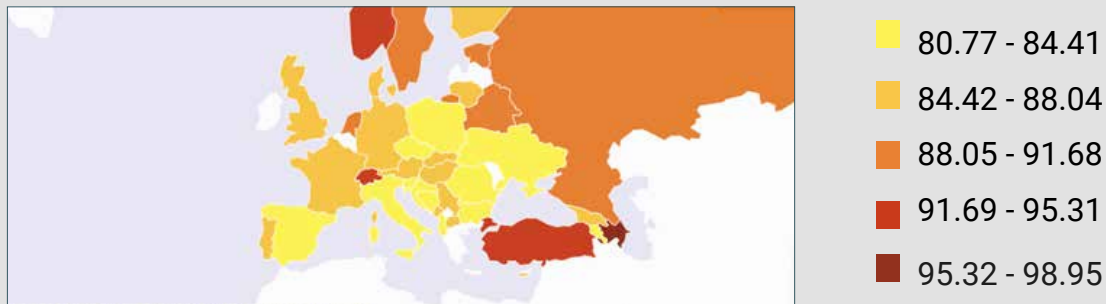
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 3.7 Percentage of people that have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in political parties



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 3.8 Percentage of people that have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in government



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

It is good to note again that specific political support is quite volatile, which means that it can change quickly and more easily (Reeskens et al, 2020). This type of support is content-dependent as it relies on institutional performance (Hetherington, 1998; Norris, 2011), economic performance (van Erkel & van der Meer, 2016), as well as individual well-being (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006). Specific political support thus depends on rather short-term satisfaction with specific outputs; it is about how well people think the government is doing at a particular moment in time (Easton, 1965).

In many democratic countries, relatively high and stable levels of diffuse political support are combined with fluctuating (or even declining) levels of specific political support (Van der Meer, 2019). For example, even though democracy may be highly valued in general, trust in the government or political parties might drop during a crisis or when people feel the government is not doing a good job. This combination of stable support for democracy and fluctuating trust in political institutions has been seen as a potential problem in the past. Scholars used to worry that a lack of confidence

in the government could lead to a crisis in democracy. They considered high levels of political trust to guarantee the stability of democratic political frameworks and regarded it as a fundamental component of civic culture (Almond & Verba, 1963). However, many experts today think that this combination of values (that is high levels of diffuse political support combined with low levels of specific political support) signals the rise of the '**critical citizen**' (Van der Meer, 2019:17). This means people still value democracy overall, but they are also more critical of how political institutions work; they are willing to question and evaluate the actions of their leaders and government.



3.3 Differences in democratic values across countries in Europe

When looking at differences in democratic values between countries in Europe, it is important to know that over time, many countries – even those that used to be more autocratic – have become more democratic (Huntington, 1993). This means that people in European

became more democratic after the fall of communism in the late 20th century. As Eastern European countries have experienced more democracy over time, their people have become more supportive of democratic governance, while they are less supportive of autocratic systems. This shift is a result of the increased experience with democracy (Haerpfer, 2008).



countries today place a high value on being governed democratically. Western and Nordic European countries, in particular, score very high on diffuse political support. Why is that?

A first explanation for these country differences is that Western European countries have had **longer traditions of democracy**. This means people there have been living under democratic systems for much longer than people in Eastern European countries, which only

A second explanation relates to how well **democracy is working** in each country. In countries where people feel that democracy is working well and is efficient, they are more likely to support democratic governance (Ferrín & Kriesi, 2016). This idea of democracy performance is often connected to the country's **economic conditions**. Support for democracy is thus viewed as the result of an evaluation of its (economic) worth (Waldron-Moore, 1999). Democratic values are highly supported in countries that are



economically affluent or have low levels of inequalities. Andersen (2012) in this respect argues that the level of economic inequality is more important than the level of economic development. However, it's not just about wealth or economic growth. **Perceptions of corruption** also play a role. In countries where people think there is a lot of corruption in politics, support for democracy is lower (Moreno, 2002). However, Karp and Milazzo (2015) notice that support for democracy is not necessarily directly linked to economic conditions or perceptions of corruption; more important is a general dissatisfaction of how democracy functions in practice. This democratic scepticism is seen as an important explanation for why individuals in Eastern European countries tend to embrace democratic governance to a lesser extent than individuals from Western and Nordic European countries.

Finally, studies show that people in advanced industrial democracies (count-

ries with strong economies and stable political systems) tend to support democratic values more (Dalton and Ong, 2005). As we already mentioned earlier (and more elaborate in Chapter 2), Inglehart (1997) argued that people in wealthy countries shift away from material values focused on survival and security towards more **postmaterialist values**, which are values focused on personal freedom, self-expression, and democracy. These countries thus value democracy more because individuals are more focused on issues like individual rights, freedom and equality.

3.4 Individual differences in democratic values: groups in society

So far, we looked at differences in democratic values between countries. However, the theoretical notions outlined above can also provide insights when explaining differences between individuals within countries. We look at income, education, age, gender and religion as important factors.

First, individual's democratic values can be influenced by their **level of income** and **education**. For example, individuals who are struggling with **economic difficulties**, such as those with lower incomes, may feel that democracy is not helping them. Because of this, they might feel less satisfied with the government and have less trust in political institutions. As a result, they may also be less likely to support democracy, especially compared to those with higher incomes (Andersen, 2012). The same pattern is often true for people with lower levels of education. These individuals might find themselves in more unstable or challenging social positions, which can make them less likely to embrace democratic values. In addition, education has a strong socializing role, especially in democratic societies. This means that schools teach students about the importance of democratic norms, like freedom of speech, voting, and respecting others' rights. Through this education, students learn how to be good and active citizens in a democracy (Pallas, 2000). Because people with higher levels of education often have a **better understanding** of these democratic principles, they are more likely to support democratic values compared to those with lower levels of education (Ferrín & Kriesi,

2016; Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012). This idea also fits with the theory by Inglehart (1997), which says that as people's economic situation improves and societies become wealthier, people start to focus more on **postmaterialist values** like freedom of speech and democracy; values that go beyond just survival and basic needs. Since more educated people are generally more focused on these values, they tend to be stronger supporters of democracy than those with less education.

Inglehart's postmaterialist thesis may also explain differences between **age** groups in a country. Unlike the older generations, younger generations grew up in times of economic prosperity and welfare. Because they didn't have to worry as much about basic needs like food and shelter, they were able to focus more on 'higher-order needs' such as personal growth and freedom. As a result, younger people often have more postmaterialist **values**: values that emphasize democracy, human rights, and freedom. This is why, in general, younger generations are more supportive of democracy than older generations, who grew up in more difficult economic times (Inglehart, 1997). However, the latest research shows that the youngest cohort is somewhat more in favour of authoritarian political systems than previous cohorts (Eatwell and Goodwin, 2018; Foa and Mounk, 2016; 2017; Wuttke, Gavras and Schoen, 2022). This decline in democratic values can (again) be linked to economic insecurities. Although the general level of prosperity has risen substantially, the youngest generation in Europe experiences relative deprivation: they feel more insecure than previous generations because of flexible labour contracts, problems on the housing mar-

ket, rising inflation and (threat of) wars (Muis & Reeskens, 2022).

Finally, we discuss two additional explanations for differences between individuals within countries. The first involves **gender** differences. Research shows that women are often less supportive of democratic values than men, especially in Eastern Europe (Oakes, 2002). There is no clear answer as to why this happens, but some scholars suggest that women may be more traditional in their beliefs and less progressive in their views about change. Similarly, people who are **religious** tend to hold more traditional views as well, which might make them less likely to strongly support democratic values. However, other research suggests that religion can actually promote support for democracy (Meyer, Topper & Price, 2008). Religious individuals often show high levels of trust in public institutions, including political ones. They are seen as law-abiding citizens who follow the rules of society and tend to support the basic norms of democracy.

Please note that in the social sciences, we look for general patterns when explaining differences in support for democracy between countries and between individuals within countries. It is important to know that these patterns are probabilistic, not deterministic. Probabilistic means that something is more likely to happen when a certain factor is present. Deterministic would mean that whenever a certain factor is present, a certain outcome must happen every time. In the social sciences, this kind of strict cause-and-effect is rare. People are complex, and what they value depends on many factors. So when we state "Individuals living in countries with less corruption value democracy more", it does not mean

that everyone in those societies always values democracy more, just that the chance of this happening is higher. This notion is important as it reminds us that we are looking for overall tendencies and trends, not absolute rules. Exceptions can exist, both at the individual and country level.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we argued that while democracy varies in form across countries, it has become a universal value. Democratic values are closely linked to political support, which was categorized into diffuse support (general beliefs in democratic values, such as the importance to be governed democratically and democracy-autocracy preferences) and specific support (trust in government



and political institutions). Individual's diffuse political support tends to be rather stable over time, influenced by early life experiences, while specific political support can change quickly as it depends on government performance. Differences in democratic values across countries are influenced by factors such as democratic traditions, democratic performance, macro-economic conditions, levels of corruption, and population's postmaterialist values. Individual differences in democratic values within countries can be linked to the same type of explanations: individuals in economic hardship, with lower levels of education, and of older (as well as the most recent) generations value democracy less. Finally, gender and religious differences can impact support for democracy as well.

When discussing these democratic values and difference between countries and individuals, it remains important to note that democracy is a multifaceted concept. Definitions and meanings vary and depend on different contexts. The same holds for (aspects of) other forms of government. For example, the meaning attached to the role of the army, or to a strong leader, is dependent on historical and cultural circumstances. This makes that democratic values are a complex phenomenon, and that there are many exceptions to the general patterns and explanations outlined above.

Finally, it is good to note that democracy has many layers. In this chapter, we focused on the national government, but one can also think of other forms of government (supranational, regional, and local), as well as democracy outside the public domain, like democracy in families, business, and in schools and classrooms.

Example teaching strategy:

"INSERT"

Controversial topic for discussion:
"The best political system is having a strong leader"

Text to read: For example, a text about the rise of populism across the Europe

Explanatory theories: Post-material values; Social trust; Authoritarian values



See: <https://atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/materials.html>

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This chapter is based on the theoretical background report on democracy available at www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu. We added some new elements and updated literature. Moreover, ChatGPT was used with the prompt “could you please improve this text to make it more accessible for democracy and civic education in secondary schools”.

Pluralism

Chapter 4





Summary

Pluralism is the idea that individuals with different backgrounds, cultures, beliefs and opinions can live together in a democratic society. Pluralism as a value is reflected in the motto of the European Union: United in Diversity.

Pluralism values are linked to ingroup and outgroup thinking; it demands respect for and acceptance of outgroups, such as minority religious groups and migrants. (In)tolerance towards outgroups is generally based on two principles: (1) perceived threat, that is feelings of competition over scarce cultural (norms and traditions) or economic (jobs, assets) goods; and (2) contact which is constructive (based on equality, cooperation, similar goals, supported by authorities, law or custom, and sustainable).

Pluralism is valued less in countries with (perceived) larger migrant groups, worse macro-economic conditions, presence of more culturally distant groups, and more religious diversity.

Pluralism is valued less by individuals who have lower income and educational levels, who are men, who live in urban areas, and who are religious.

Implementation in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education can be achieved by focusing on tangible measurements such as:

- Not wanting outgroups such as Jews, Roma, Muslims, Christians, people of a different race and migrants as neighbours (*social distance towards religious and ethnic outgroups*)
- Feelings of cultural or economic competition with immigrants (*perceived ethnic threat*)

>> Example teaching strategy: “Chess Board”

4.1 Introduction

Pluralism is the idea that individuals with different backgrounds, cultures, traditions, and beliefs can live together in society. In this sense, it is an interpretation of social diversity (Yumatle, 2015): pluralism recognizes that individuals (or groups of individuals) often have different opinions, views, and interests that cannot always be ranked in a clear order or fully combined into a single solution. Therefore, it encourages respect for diversity and supports the idea that no single way of thinking or living should be imposed on everyone. Pluralism thus is beneficial in a democracy, as it stimulates open debate, multiple perspectives and shared decision making. After all, power in a democracy is not held by a single elite (or group of elites), but is spread among a variety of economic

and ideological groups.

Pluralism is at the heart of the European Union as it is reflected in its motto: “United in Diversity”. The EU specifically aims at respecting its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, as is laid down in article 3 of the Treaty of Lisbon.

https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/aims-and-values_en

The most important premise of pluralism thus is that different groups of individuals more or less peacefully coexist in society. Of course, group differences can lead to disagreements or competition. Even in pluralistic societies, a distinction is felt between ‘we’ (the group we identify with; also called ‘ingroup’) and ‘them’ (or ‘the others’, that is ‘outgroups’) (cf. Winter, 2011). However, what is key in pluralism is that there is mutual respect



for and acceptance of these differences and outgroups. In this chapter, we focus on two outgroups to describe pluralism values: minority religious groups and migrants. It should be noted that the two are quite related, as migrants bring their own religious and cultural traditions to the host country which are oftentimes different from the religious traditions of the native majority. Both are therefore often viewed as outsiders by the majority populations (cf. Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010) and prone to prejudice, discrimination and, sometimes, even violence. Also note that migration is not a new phenomenon in the world, but is nowadays more affected by globalization than ever before. It means that migrants come from an increasing array of origin countries, leading to a greater diversity in ethnicity, culture, and religion in destination countries (De Haas, Castles & Miller, 2020). Europe thus has become a multicultural patchwork with millions of new migrants (Zick, Pettigrew & Wagner, 2008: 235).

Research confirms the widespread existence of negative attitudes towards outgroups in general, and religious groups and migrants in particular, in all European countries (Scheepers et al., 2002, Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010), although there are differences in pluralism values between countries and between individuals within countries, as we will show below.

4.2. Pluralism values: perceived threat and contact with outgroups

To explain attitudes towards outgroups, the social sciences offer two main theoretical frameworks. The first is **competi-**

tion theory. This theory combines ideas from realistic group conflict theory and social identity theory (Scheepers et al., 2002). It helps explain why some individuals may have negative attitudes toward groups that are different from their own, such as religious minority groups or migrants. The basic idea is this: when people feel that their group is competing for limited resources, they may start to see other groups as a threat. These resources can be material goods like jobs, affordable housing, or access to government support (Billiet, Meuleman & De Witte, 2014). But it is not just about money or work; people can also feel threatened when their cultural values or traditions seem to be challenged. For example, minority groups or migrants may follow different religious or cultural practices, which can make some individuals feel like their own way of life is under threat (Manevska & Achterberg, 2013). Conflicts can thus also happen over things like values, identity, or fears about losing national traditions or control (Schneider, 2008). In addition, news about terrorist attacks can trigger even more negative views of religious minority and migrant groups, as it increases feelings of imminent danger and a more salient perception of migration threat (Böhmelt, Bove & Nussio (2020). In all cases, both economic and cultural, the trigger for hostility toward immigrants is the threat to the group's resources or status, rather than to those of individuals (Lancee & Pardos-Prado 2013: 108). Since there is conflict (competition) between groups in society over these scarce goods, natives perceive threat by outgroups such as migrants. This reinforces individuals' social (contra) identification: the mechanisms proposed by social identity theory that individuals identify with their own ingroup (Turner et al., 1987). They often

feel proud of this ingroup and compare themselves to others (the outgroup) to feel better about who they are. So, when individuals feel both economically and culturally threatened, and strongly identify with their own group, it can lead to negative views of minority groups and migrants. Please note that the threat we refer to here is not always real; it is about how people feel or interpret a situation. Even if in- and outgroups are not truly in competition over scarce cultural and economic goods, people may still perceive outgroups to be a threat to their ingroup's jobs, culture, or way of life (Blalock, 1967).

Individuals from different ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds spend time together in a positive way, it can help reduce fear and build understanding. The contact however needs to be constructive to work this way. Constructive contact is contact between people who are treated as equals, it is based on cooperation and similar goals, with the support of authorities, law or custom, and is of a sustainable nature. When these conditions are met, contact can indeed lead to more feelings of understanding. Research backs this up: studies show that the more constructive contact individuals have with migrants, the less negative their attitudes tend to be (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Pettigrew, Wagner & Christ, 2010).



The second theoretical perspective has a more positive outlook, as it focuses on the possibilities to diminish prejudice and negative attitudes towards outgroups. The basic idea of this **contact theory** (Allport, 1966) is that when indi-

It is important to understand that contact theory and competition theory offer very different (and contrasting) explanations for how individuals form attitudes toward outgroups. Competition theory says that when outgroups are present, people may feel like they are competing with them for jobs, housing, or cultural influence. This feeling of competition leads to more perceived threat and more negative attitudes toward these outgroups. Contact theory, on the other hand, suggests the opposite: the presence of outgroups gives people more chances for positive and meaningful

contact. When individuals from different groups interact in a respectful and equal way, they tend to feel less threatened and develop more positive attitudes.

4.2.1. Application of pluralism values: social distance towards religious and ethnic outgroups

As mentioned above, pluralism is the idea that people of different backgrounds and traditions, or in our case: people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds, can live together. This ties into the principles of contact theory described above and to the concept of social distance introduced and measured by Bogardus (1967). In his view, social distance is about the level of understanding and intimacy between individuals or social groups; this distance often is larger between individuals of outgroups than between individuals of ingroups. Prejudice in turn is the automatic reaction where someone prefers to keep distance from individuals in other social groups. In order to measure this social distance, Bogardus (1967) used different degrees of intimacy, from becoming kin, club member, neighbour, co-worker, to citizen in country.

When implementing the concept of **social distance towards religious and ethnic outgroups** in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education, we can use the tangible measurement of Bogardus with respect to becoming neighbours, such as this question (EVS, 2017):

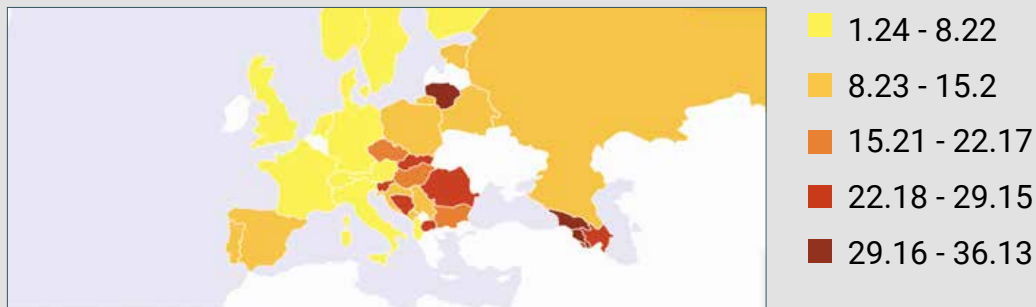
Could you identify any group of people that you would not like to have as neighbours?

- **Jews**
- **Roma**
- **Muslims**
- **Christians**
- **People of a different race**
- **Migrants**



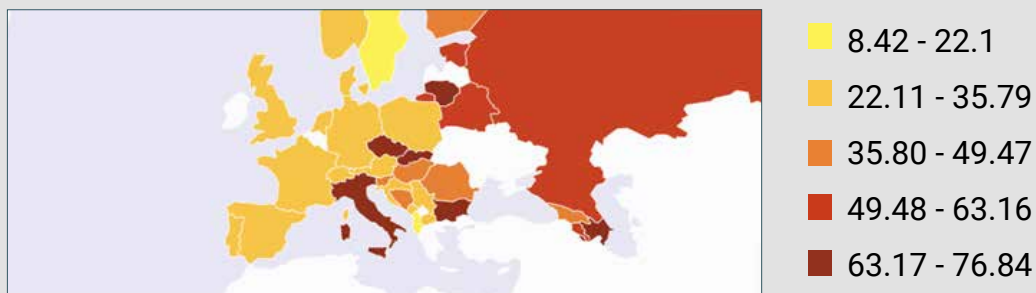
Figures 4.1 to 4.6 show differences in social distance towards religious and ethnic outgroups across countries in Europe.

Figure 4.1 Percentage of people who would not like to have Jews as neighbours



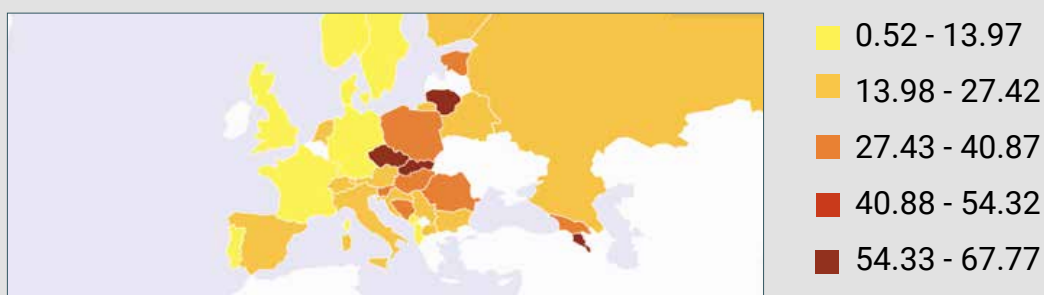
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 4.2 Percentage of people who would not like to have Roma ("Gypsies") as neighbours



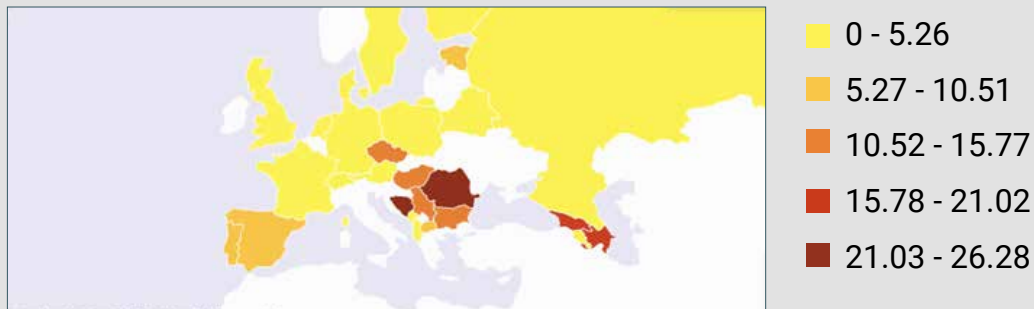
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 4.3 Percentage of people who would not like to have Muslims as neighbours



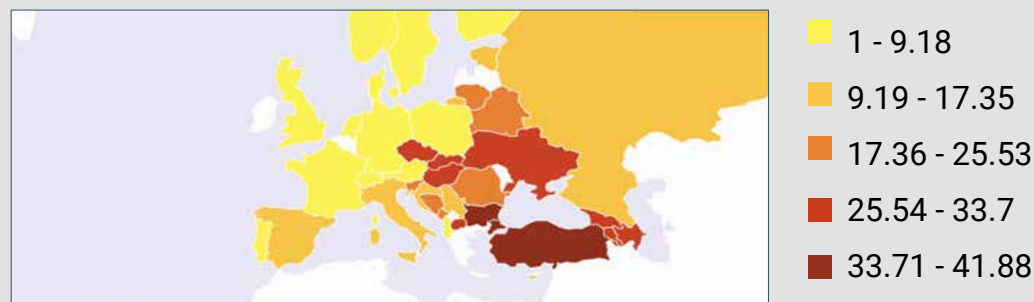
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 4.4 Percentage of people who would not like to have Christians as neighbours



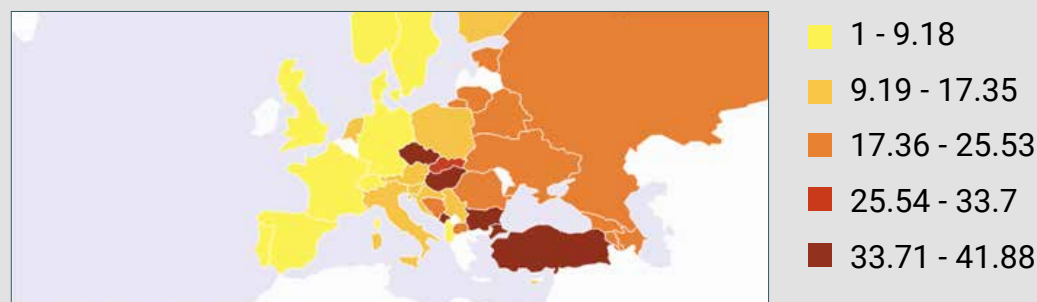
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 4.5 Percentage of people who would not like to have people of a different race as neighbours



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 4.6 Percentage of people who would not like to have migrants or foreign workers as neighbours



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

4.2.2. Application of pluralism values: perceived ethnic threat

Another way to understand pluralism values is by looking at perceived threat, a concept that can be linked to the competition theory described above. When we apply this concept to migrants, we can measure **perceived ethnic threat** tangibly as follows (EVS, 2017):

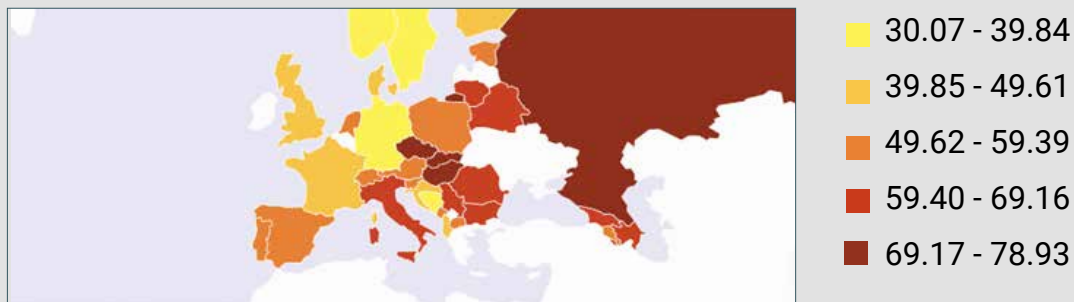


Please look at the following statements and indicate where you would place your views on this scale (1-10)?

- (1) Immigrants take jobs away from a country's citizens TO (10) Immigrants do not take jobs away from a country's citizens*
- (2) Immigrants make crime problems worse TO (10) Immigrants do not make crime problems worse*
- (3) Immigrants are a strain on a country's welfare system TO (10) Immigrants are not a strain on a country's welfare system*
- (4) It is better if immigrants maintain their distinct customs and traditions TO (10) It is better if immigrants do not maintain their distinct customs and traditions*

Figures 4.7 to 4.10 show differences in perceived ethnic threat across countries in Europe.³

Figure 4.7 Average opinion on a scale from 0-100: Immigrants take jobs away from a country's citizens



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 4.8 Average opinion on a scale from 0-100: Immigrants make crime problems worse



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 4.9 Average opinion on a scale from 0-100: Immigrants are a strain on a country's welfare system



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

³ Opinions are reverse coded from original questions and transformed into a scale from 0-100.

Figure 4.10 Average opinion on a scale from 0-100: It is better if immigrants maintain their distinct customs and traditions



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

4.3 Differences in pluralism values across countries in Europe

We can use the two theoretical frameworks of competition and contact described earlier to explain differences in pluralism values between countries in Europe. The situation in each country can make economic and cultural competition (related to *perceived threat*) either stronger or weaker, and can also affect how likely individuals are to have positive interactions with each other (related to *social distance*).

We first look at competition, which is larger in countries where goods are more scarce. This depends on two elements: (a) the size of both in- and outgroups in society and (b) the amount of resources these different groups are competing for (Schneider, 2008). Let's look at the size of groups first. If we assume that the amount of resources does not change, the influx of a *larger outgroup* in a country

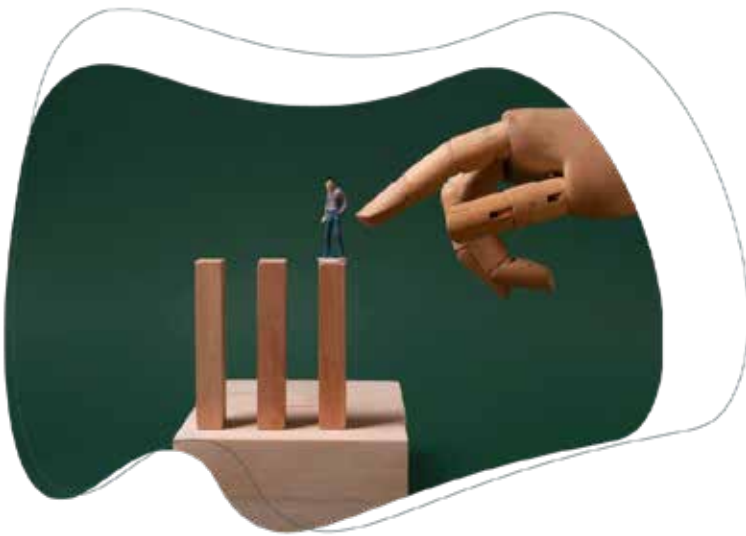
would increase intergroup competition. After all, more people would then compete over the same amount of scarce cultural (norms and traditions) or economic (security benefits, jobs, houses) resources. Many studies indeed confirm a relation between migrant group size and ethnic threat perceptions (for an overview, see Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010), although others find no significant relation (Billiet, Meuleman & De Witte, 2014). Again other scholars show that it is not actual group size, but perceived migrant group size that is a more important factor in this case. They also show that people often have misconceptions on migrants' population size: individuals in general tend to overestimate the number of migrants in their country (Semyonov, Raijman, Tov, & Schmidt, 2004).

When we turn to the second element, the amount of economic resources present in a country, we can infer that this is affected by a country's *macro-economic conditions*. When a country goes through tough economic times (like

when there is less economic growth and more unemployment), people often feel like they have to compete more for jobs, money, and other important resources. Because of this, some may start to see individuals from different ethnic backgrounds as a threat, especially if they believe these groups are also trying to get the same resources. Some researchers have specifically looked at how *changing* economic conditions, such as a

from the majority group of the native population. Ciftci (2012) for example argues that in many western societies, natives might perceive Muslim migrants as a threat because of their distinct cultural values and symbolic practices.

Finally, research shows that individuals may feel more tension between groups in countries where there are many different religions (Scheepers, Gijsberts & Hello, 2002). In these **religious diverse societies**, cultural competition is larger because religious groups try to gain more followers and influence. National or local religious leaders might invest in strategies saying that their religion is the only true one, or emphasizing religious, social, or even ethnic alignments. In addition, scholars mention that since the 1960s, another kind of competition has also become more common in Europe: the one between religious and non-religious (secular) views (Stolz et al., 2016). This has made divisions between different religious (and non-religious) groups even stronger. Moreover, in countries where there is already a lot of religious diversity, the arrival of migrants with different religious beliefs can lead to even stronger feelings perceived ethnic threat and social distance.



decrease in economic growth and rising unemployment rates, influence these feelings of perceived ethnic threat. Their findings suggest that (changes in) economic growth has a bigger impact on how people perceive ethnic threat than (changes in) unemployment alone (e.g. Billiet, Meuleman & De Witte, 2014).

In the same way, perceived ethnic threat and social distance is larger when cultural competition becomes stronger. A larger outgroup might not only increase economic competition, but also cultural conflicts over symbols, national unity and norms and values. This is particularly the case when religious minority or migrant outgroups are **culturally distant**

4.4 Individual differences in pluralism values: groups in society

So far, we looked at differences in pluralism values between countries and used the theoretical frameworks of perceived ethnic threat and contact to explain these differences. These frameworks can also provide insights when explaining differences between individuals within countries. We look at socio-economic position, education, age, gender, urbanization and religion as important factors.

First of all, perceived ethnic threat and social distance towards religious and ethnic outgroups is thought to be higher among **socioeconomically vulnerab-**

groups often have similar jobs or economic positions to many migrants, so they might feel like they are competing for the same resources, like jobs, housing, or social support. Even if the competition is not real, the feeling that they are losing out to others can make people see migrants as a threat to their well-being.

The same kind of arguments are made for other groups in society based on age, gender and urbanization. **Younger individuals** might face competition over jobs from the increased presence of (young) migrants when entering the labour market. Older persons on the other hand would be less prone to this competition, as they have often already established their working positions



le individuals such as those with lower levels of education and income, the unemployed, and low-skilled workers (Billiet, Meuleman & De Witte, 2014). These

during their lifetime. Therefore, younger individuals would be more susceptible to perceived ethnic threat and feelings of social distance. **Men** more often than

women work in the labour market and thus might be more exposed to competition over economic resources. In addition, since most migrants live in urban areas, competition over material goods such as jobs and houses could be higher in large cities and their suburbs than in rural areas (Schneider, 2008). For people to feel like they are competing with others, there needs to be a situation where there are actual (potential) competitors, such as is the case in urban areas. However, cities are also places of diversity and contact with other groups is more easy, equal and potentially sustainable. Constructive contact is related to more positive experiences with religious and ethnic outgroups and thus to less social distance and perceived threat.

Individuals with less **education** may feel more threatened by migrants, not just because of economic competition, but also because of fears about losing their own culture or values. Education helps people to develop critical thinking skills and learn about other cultures. So, individuals with higher education are usually better at understanding and appreciating cultural differences. They are also more likely to see diversity as a positive thing, which makes them feel less threatened by other cultures (Manevska & Achterberg, 2011). On the other hand, individuals with lower education levels may have more daily contact with migrants, especially at work or in their neighbourhoods. If the contact is not constructive, it can make them more aware of cultural differences, and sometimes more concerned about possible conflicts. That is why research shows that lower levels of education are often linked to stronger feelings of ethnic threat (Scheepers, Gijssberts & Hello, 2002).

Finally, competition and conflicts over cultural resources can also be linked to **religion**. Individuals who are religious might sometimes feel uncomfortable or even threatened by migrants who have different religious beliefs or cultural traditions, especially if those beliefs seem very different from their own. For example, as Ciftci (2012) explains, in many Western countries where Christianity is the main religion, some individuals may see Muslim migrants as a cultural or religious threat because their traditions and values are not the same and may even seem to conflict with Christian values.

Please note that in the social sciences, we look for general patterns when explaining differences in support for pluralism between countries and between individuals within countries. It is important to know that these patterns are probabilistic, not deterministic. Probabilistic means that something is more likely to happen when a certain factor is present. Deterministic would mean that whenever a certain factor is present, a certain outcome must happen every time. In the social sciences, this kind of strict cause-and-effect is rare. People are complex, and what they value depends on many factors. So when we state "Individuals living in countries with decreasing economic growth value pluralism less as they show more perceived ethnic threat and more social distance towards religious and ethnic outgroups", it does not mean that everyone in those societies always values pluralism less, just that the chance of this happening is higher. This notion is important as it reminds us that we are looking for overall tendencies and trends, not absolute rules. Exceptions can exist, both at the individual and country level.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we defined pluralism as the idea that individuals with different backgrounds, cultures, beliefs and opinions can live together in a democratic society. Pluralism is not so easily achieved as people often think in ingroups and outgroups. In general, individuals identify with their own ingroup. To achieve a positive ingroup distinctiveness, they compare their ingroup with outgroups, that is people who are from different cultures or traditions. At the same time, these comparisons often lead to negative attitudes towards these outgroups since they reinforce stereotypes and prejudices. In this chapter, we looked at opinions about religious and ethnic outgroups: the distance felt to these outgroups (for example not wanting Jews, Roma, Muslims, Christians, people of a different race or migrants as neighbours) and perceived ethnic threat (feelings of competition over cultural and economic resources with migrants). Tolerance towards these (and other) outgroups is linked to two perspectives: perceived threat and contact. First, individuals who perceive that they are in competition with outgroups over scarce resources (these can be cultural norms and traditions or economic assets such as jobs and houses) feel more threatened by these outgroups. This makes them more negative and less open for pluralism. On the other hand, individuals who are more in (constructive) contact with outgroups feel less negative about them and support pluralism more often. Differences in support for pluralism across countries are influenced by factors such as size of outgroups and their cultural distance, macro-economic conditions, and religious diversity. Individual differences in

pluralism values within countries can be linked to socio-economic position, education, age, gender, urbanization, and religion.

When discussing the concept of pluralism and differences between countries and individuals in the context of migration, it is important to note that it is difficult to define what a migrant exactly is. In Europe, migrants consist of very diverse groups. We can for example distinguish between temporary and permanent, legal and undocumented, forced and voluntary migration. In addition, we can group migrants by why they move: for jobs (labour migration), to join family (family reunion), to seek safety (asylum), or for resettlement (Samers & Collyer, 2017). The concept of migrant therefore is multifaceted, and, due to different migration histories and policies, not uniform across countries in Europe. As Anderson (2013) points out, dividing migrants into different categories can reinforce an “us versus them” politics. Migration thus has become politicized: the topic has moved to the centre of national and international political debates (De Haas, Castles & Miller, 2020).

Finally, it is good to note that the value of pluralism is not limited to tolerance towards religious and ethnic outgroups, but is about diversity with respect to many other elements as well. One can think of variations in cultural traditions, expressions of lifestyles, and of other minorities which could be perceived as outgroups in society, such as members of the LGBTIQ+ community. We discuss some of these elements in chapter 5 on Freedom.

Example teaching strategy:

„Chess Board“

Controversial topic for discussion:
„I don't want a migrant as a neighbour.“

Explanatory theories: Contact theory; Modernisation theory



See: <https://atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/materials.html>

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This chapter is based on the theoretical background report on migration available at www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu. We added new elements and updated literature. Moreover, ChatGPT was used with the prompt “could you please improve this text to make it more accessible for democracy and civic education in secondary schools”.

Freedom

Chapter 5





Summary

The EU is founded on the value of freedom, which is about the general idea that everyone can live their lives the way they choose, without pressure or coercion from authorities or other people.

Freedom values are linked to tolerance and respect for different lifestyles and opinions. Processes of modernization, individualization and secularization have led to a declining influence of authorities such as religious institutions and to an increase in values emphasizing autonomy and self-expression. These changes enable individuals to make their own, free choices. In addition, it induces permissiveness: the acceptance of moral issues that are considered to be part of private life, such as sexual freedom and issues concerning decisions about life and death.

Freedom is valued more in countries with more economic affluence and higher levels of secularization.

Freedom is valued more by individuals who have higher income and educational levels, who live in urban areas, who are religious, and who are young.

Implementation in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education can be achieved by focusing on tangible measurements such as:

- Feeling of having completely free choice and control over your own life (*feeling of free choice*)
- Justification of homosexuality, abortion, divorce and euthanasia (*permissiveness*)

>> Example teaching strategy: “Opinion Line”

5.1 Introduction

Freedom in general is the idea that everyone can live their lives the way they choose, without pressure or coercion from authorities or other people. Individuals deserve respect for the choices they make, even if these choices are different from the choices that others in society make. Freedom also means that individuals can freely express these choices: they have the right to hold and express differences of opinion (freedom of thought) and to discuss these openly with others (freedom of speech). As such, freedom is closely linked to democracy, but also to other related values such as pluralism and equality (Beetham, 2004; Dunn & Singh, 2014). At a societal level, freedom may thus lead to more inclusion and social cohesion (Vollhardt, Migacheva, & Tropp, 2009).

The EU is founded on the value of freedom. Individual rights to freedom, such as for private life, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression and information are protected in the Charter of Fundamental Rights (chapter II).

https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/aims-and-values_en

This definition of freedom implies tolerance and respect for the way other people live their lives, because freedom is not just about living the way *you* want; it also means letting *others* live the way *they* choose. If we want freedom for ourselves, we have to give that same freedom to others, even if we don't always agree with them. A well-known quote often linked to the French thinker Voltaire explains the concept of tolerance well:



„I detest everything you write, but I would give my life for it so that you can continue to write it.“

Voltaire in the words of Hall (1906)

This would mean that tolerance works like a two-stage rocket: in a first step, there is the confrontation with expressions or behaviours that lead to disapproval, for example because they are against what most people consider “normal” (general societal norms). However, in a second stage, the offended individual suppresses this reflex of disapproval and becomes tolerant: she or he allows deviant behaviour and shows tolerance and respect towards those who are different. Research shows that freedom is highly valued in Europe, but levels of support vary between countries and between groups within countries (e.g. Halman et al., 2022), as we will also show below.

5.2. Freedom values: feeling of free choice and permissiveness

As mentioned above, freedom is about making choices without the pressure or coercion of authorities and others. What

we choose for our lives depends on what we consider good, just, fair, right. This is closely connected to the concept of morality: knowing what is right and what is wrong, what people should do and should not do. Morality thus refers to a set of normative standards that help guide our behaviour and how we treat others. In the past, moral standards were set by collective authorities, such as religious institutions. However, processes of **modernization, individualization and secularization** lead to **authority decline** and a growing anti-institutional mood (Inglehart, 1997). Individuals thus rely less on traditional authorities to tell them what is good or bad, what to believe, or how to live. Instead, more and more people want to make their own choices about what is right for them. This is caused, according to modernisation theory (see also chapter 2), by increasing levels of economic welfare, which have led to a change in values: from traditional values focusing on security, safety and survival, to more postmaterialist values emphasizing **personal autonomy and self-expression** (Inglehart, 1997). Moderniza-

tion also goes hand in hand with rising levels of education. As a result, more and more people are able - and feel the need - to make their own, autonomous decisions, not just following rules set by others (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

Individuals decide who they want to connect with, based on shared interests or goals. It also means that **social control** is less in cities: there is less pressure to follow traditional rules or to behave in a certain way just because that is what the



In addition, as societies modernize, more people move to cities and life becomes more complex (Welzel et al., 2003). In cities, there are more opportunities to meet and interact with many different individuals, but the basis of human contact is different than in small, rural communities. Here, individuals often know each other through family ties or because they depend on each other. But in cities, relationships are more about personal choice and mutual respect.

community expects. City life exposes people to many different lifestyles, beliefs, and cultures. Looser social bonds, less social control, and the confrontation with **diversity** lead to less acceptance of conforming values. As individuals become 'liberated from structural constraints' (Beck, 1992: 2), the 'role of subjectivity' (Courtois & Laermans 2018: 61) increases, meaning that individuals increasingly make their own choices in deciding what they consider good or

bad, independently of collective authorities or traditions.

All these processes make individuals more open to the idea that everyone should have the freedom to live in their own way, to have the freedom to make their own, free choices. This is especially true for issues which are considered to be part of the private (instead of public) domain, such as sexual freedom and issues concerning decisions about life and death (Halman & Van Ingen, 2015). These issues are nowadays considered deeply personal choices. Again, in the past, traditional authorities like religious institutions had strong opinions about these topics. Their views were often conservative and directive, meaning that they proscribed strict rules and did not allow much freedom or difference in how people lived their private lives (Draulans & Halman 2005). However, as society becomes more focused on individual freedom and self-expression, and religion plays a smaller role in public life (because of the process of secularization), people are taking more responsibility for making their own moral decisions. Choices that used to be controlled by religious rules are now increasingly left up to the individual. This has led to more freedom, tolerance and an open, permissive society: people accept that others may make very different personal choices.

5.2.1. Application of freedom values: feeling of free choice

As mentioned above, freedom is the general idea that everyone can live their lives the way they choose, without pressure or coercion from authorities or other people. Freedom thus is about an individual's ability, opportunity, and autonomy to make free choices.

We can implement this concept of **feeling of free choice** in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education by a tangible measurement, such as this question (EVS, 2017):

Some people feel they have completely free choice and control over their lives, and other

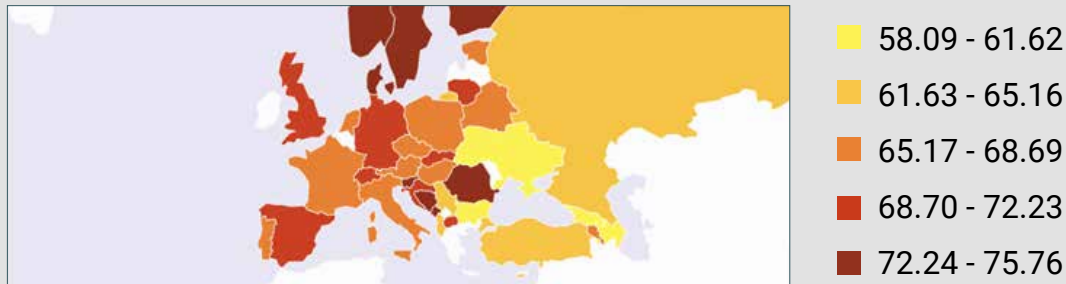
people feel that what they do has no real effect on what happens to them.

Please indicate how much freedom of choice and control you feel you have over the way your life turns out?

Please give your answer on a scale from 1 'none at all' to 10 'a great deal'

Figure 5.1 shows differences in the feeling of free choice across countries in Europe. The map confirms the idea that in most modern, individualized societies (such as in north-western Europe), feelings of freedom of choice are highest.

Figure 5.1 Average opinion on a scale from 0-100: Feeling of free choice and control over life⁴



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

5.2.2. Application of freedom values: permissiveness

Another way to understand freedom values is by looking at permissiveness. Permissiveness refers to a situation in which behaviour that some people might disapprove of is allowed. In the literature, permissiveness focuses on issues that relate to people's private life, in particular moral issues regarding sexual preferences and end-of-life decisions (Halman & van Ingen, 2015; Halman & Sieben, 2023). Driven by religious prescriptions, the normative framework of traditional authorities took a rather conservative and non-tolerant stance on these issues (Draulans & Halman 2005). However, the increased emphasis on personal autonomy and self-expression, combined with a declining role of religion in some parts in Europe (secularisation), makes that moral choices that were under the authority of the churches

are systematically being transferred to individual authority and more and more linked to personal freedom. Permissiveness thus concerns the degrees of freedom with respect to the acceptance of multiple moral standards in society concerning sexual and private ethical behaviours, such as homosexuality, abortion, divorce and euthanasia (Halman, 1990).

We can measure **permissiveness** tangibly as follows (EVS, 2017):

Please tell me for each of the following whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between:

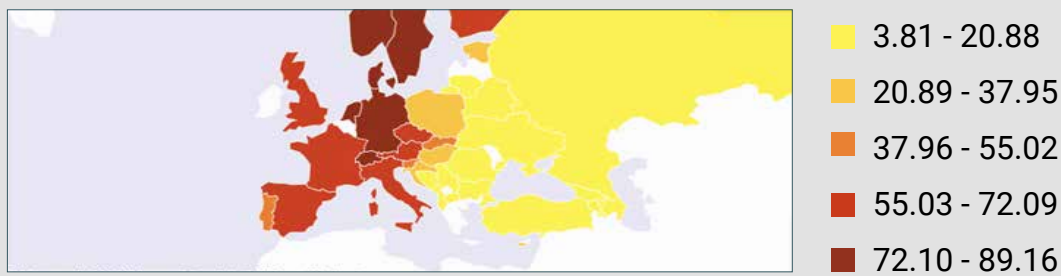
- **Homosexuality**
- **Abortion**
- **Divorce**
- **Euthanasia (terminating the life of the incurably sick)**

Please give your answer on a scale from 1 'never be justified' to 10 'always justified'.

⁴ Opinions on original scale (1-10) are transformed into a scale

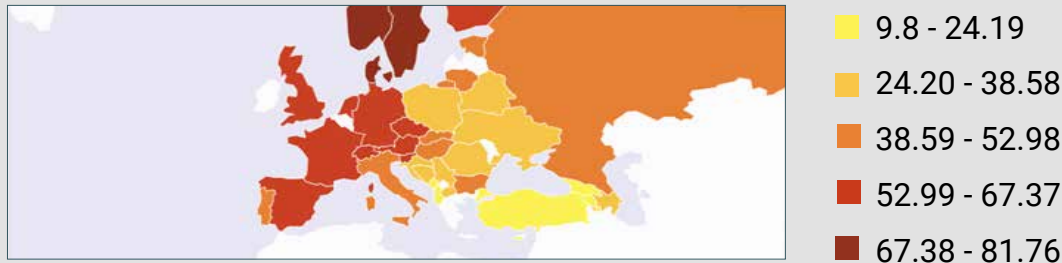
Figures 5.2 to 5.5 show differences in permissiveness across countries in Europe.⁵ In general, the European publics of countries in North and Western Europe are quite permissive when it comes to the acceptance of homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia and divorce, whereas citizens of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe are less tolerant towards these issues (cf. Halman & Van Ingen, 2015).

Figure 5.2 Average opinion on a scale from 0 ('never justified') to 100 ('always justified'): homosexuality



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 5.3 Average opinion on a scale from 0 ('never justified') to 100 ('always justified'): abortion



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 5.4 Average opinion on a scale from 0 ('never justified') to 100 ('always justified'): divorce



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

⁵ Opinions on original scale (1-10) are transformed into a scale from 0-100.

Figure 5.5 Average opinion on a scale from 0 ('never justified') to 100 ('always justified'): euthanasia



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

5.3 Differences in freedom values across countries in Europe

We can use the described theoretical framework of the modernization theory (see also chapter 2) to explain differences in freedom values between countries in Europe. The higher the level of modernization, individualization, and secularisation in each country, the more emphasis on making choices without pressure or coercion of authorities or other people (*feeling of free choice*) and the higher the level of acceptance of moral issues related to private life (*permissiveness*).

Modernization is closely linked to how well a country is doing economically. According to modernization theory (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005), individuals who live in poorer countries often face more challenges and insecurities in daily life. As a result, they may support more traditional or conservative values that focus on stability and survival. They often rely on authorities, such as religious institutions, for moral guidance when making decisions on how

to live their private lives. On the other hand, in countries with more **economic affluence**, basic needs are more easily met, and people tend to feel more secure. This allows them to focus on values such as self-expression and autonomy. In these societies, individuals are less likely to accept strict authority, and hold more open and progressive views that focus on personal freedom (cf. Slenders, Sieben & Verbakel, 2014).

The level of **secularization** in a country, which is related to modernization, plays a role as well. In countries where religion, especially the church, plays a strong role in society and daily life, people are more likely to follow strict traditional rules, especially around personal behaviour. They rely more on the moral authority of religious institutions to make choices in their private life. Driven by religious prescriptions, these institutions take a rather conservative and non-tolerant stance, especially concerning issues of sexual preferences and decisions about life and death (Draulans & Halman 2005). Research indeed shows that acceptance of homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia, and divorce is higher in

more secularised countries (e.g. Scheepers, Te Grotenhuis & Van Der Slik, 2002; Rudnev & Savelkaeva, 2018; Halman & Ingen, 2015).

5.4 Individual differences in freedom values: groups in society

The theoretical frameworks of modernization and secularisation can also provide insights when explaining differences between individuals within countries. We look at income, education, urbanization, religion, gender and age as important factors.

First, looking at the modernization framework, we can expect that individuals with a higher **income** feel secure and safe, and therefore place more emphasis on autonomy and self-expression than individuals with lower incomes that need to struggle in life to meet daily needs. Therefore, individuals with higher levels of income feel more in control to make free choices. They are also more tolerant and open regarding private moral issues such as homosexuality, abortion, divorce and euthanasia (e.g. Slenders, Sieben & Verbakel, 2014).

Research shows that individuals with more **education** tend to be more tolerant of different lifestyles and moral choices such as homosexuality and euthanasia as well (Moore & Ovadia, 2006; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2007; Scheepers, Te Grotenhuis & Van Der Slik, 2002). One reason is that higher education helps peo-

ple develop critical thinking skills. This means they learn how to look at issues more objectively and from different angles. They are also trained to think for themselves, rather than just following what others, including religious or political leaders, say. In addition, schools and universities bring together indivi-



duals from many different cultures and backgrounds. Being exposed to different viewpoints helps students become more understanding and respectful of others' choices and beliefs (Vogt, 1997).

Individuals living in **rural areas** (the countryside) often have more traditional views, especially about personal and moral issues (D'Augelli & Hart, 1987; Weston, 1995; Oswald & Culton, 2003). They therefore rely more on moral authorities to make choices in life and show lower levels of permissiveness. This is partly because small communi-

ties tend to have close social networks, where everyone knows each other and there is more pressure to follow shared norms and rules. In contrast, individuals who live in cities usually experience less social control and are often exposed to a wider variety of cultures, ideas, and ways of life. Therefore, city life often comes with more personal freedom and less pressure to conform, which can lead to more open and tolerant values.

Religion is a key aspect when it comes to morality (Halman & Van Ingen, 2013). Religious individuals are less permissive towards moral issues than non-religious



individuals (Yip, 2005; Halman & Van Ingen, 2015). Church attendance plays an important role here: individuals who attend religious services hear religious teachings more often and spend more time with others who share the same beliefs and norms. This can lead them to adopt stricter freedom values than people who rarely or never attend church (Moore & Vanneman, 2003).

Differences in freedom values between

women and men are quite small. In general, women are slightly more permissive than men (Halman & Van Ingen, 2015; Sieben & Halman, 2015), but scholars offer no clear explanation for this **gender** difference. Married individuals are usually less permissive (Sieben & Halman, 2015), possibly because they often hold more traditional values. Finally, **age** also plays a role. Older people tend to be less permissive than younger people (Halman & Van Ingen, 2015; Halman & Sieben, 2014). This is again related to modernization theory: because they grew up during harder times, the focus was more on survival. These experiences often lead to more conservative and religious views with less emphasis on personal freedom (Inglehart, 1997).

Please note that in the social sciences, we look for general patterns when explaining differences in support for freedom between countries and between individuals within countries. It is important to know that these patterns are probabilistic, not deterministic. Probabilistic means that something is more likely to happen when a certain factor is present. Deterministic would mean that whenever a certain factor is present, a certain outcome must happen every time. In the social sciences, this kind of strict cause-and-effect is rare. People are complex, and what they value depends on many factors. So when we state "Individuals living in countries with more economic affluence value freedom more", it does not mean that everyone in those societies always values freedom more, just that the chance of this happening is higher. This notion is important as it reminds us that we are looking for overall tendencies and trends, not absolute rules. Exceptions can exist, both at the individual and country level.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we defined freedom as the general idea that everyone can live their lives the way they choose, without pressure or coercion from authorities or other people. Values on freedom are closely linked to tolerance and respect for different lifestyles and opinions and therefore closely linked to democracy, but also to other related values such as pluralism and equality. Processes of modernization, individualization and secularization have led to a declining influence of authorities, such as religious institutions, on the way individuals lead their lives. Instead, there is an increase in values emphasizing autonomy and self-expression. Individuals therefore increasingly feel free to make their own choices. Moreover, these changes lead in many parts of Europe towards a more open society with high levels of permissiveness: the acceptance of moral issues that are considered to be part

of private life, such as sexual freedom and issues concerning decisions about life and death. Differences in support for freedom across countries are influenced by factors such as macro-economic conditions, and levels of secularization. Individual differences in pluralism values within countries can be linked to levels of income and education, age, urbanization, religion and age.

Finally, it is good to note that the value of freedom is, of course, not limited to permissiveness on moral issues related to sexual preferences and decisions about life and death, such as the acceptance of homosexuality, abortion, divorce, and euthanasia. Freedom is about tolerance and respect for all types of different lifestyles and opinions. One can think of beliefs and behaviours of individuals with different ways of living, belonging to both majority groups and minority groups (such as religious communities and migrants) in society. We discussed some of these elements in chapter 4 on Pluralism.



Example teaching strategy:

„Opinion Line“

Controversial topic for discussion:
„Euthanasia should be legalized.“

Labels of opinion line ends: Yes/
no; Agree/disagree

Explanatory theories: Private tolerance/morality theory; Modernisation theory



See: <https://atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/materials.html>

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This chapter is partly based on the theoretical background report on tolerance available at www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu. We added new elements and updated literature. Moreover, ChatGPT was used with the prompt "could you please improve this text to make it more accessible for democracy and civic education in secondary schools".

Equality

Chapter 6





Summary

The EU is founded on the value of equality: the idea that all individuals have equal rights before the law. Specifically mentioned in this regard is the principle of equality between men and women, which underpins all European policies.

Gender equality refers to equal positions, roles, and responsibilities that men and women take up in society. Traditionally, men are thought to dominate the public sphere and women the private (home) sphere. However, modernization brought about ideational changes (such as individualization and secularization) as well as in changes in the opportunity structure (increased participation of women in education and the labour market) challenging these traditional views. Equality values are therefore related to gender attitudes in public life (e.g. men and women in universities, businesses, and politics) as well as in private life (family versus work obligations).

Equality is valued more in countries with better macro-economic conditions, higher levels of secularisation, higher female labour market participation, and more work-family policies.

Equality is valued more by individuals who have higher educational levels, who are not religious, who live in urban areas, who are younger and who are women, although there is some evidence hinting at the young cohorts of men having more traditional views on gender equality.

Implementation in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education can be achieved by focusing on tangible measurements such as:

- Evaluating the capabilities of men versus women in public positions (*gender equality attitudes in public life*):
 - On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do
 - A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl
 - On the whole, men make better business executives than women do
- Evaluating work-family obligations by mothers (*gender equality attitudes in private life*):
 - When a mother works for pay, the children suffer
 - A job is alright but what most women really want is a home and children
 - All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job
 - A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family

>> **Example teaching strategy: "Four Corners"**

6.1 Introduction

Equality is based on the idea that individuals belonging to different groups in society have the same rights, receive the same treatment, and therefore end up in similar social positions in society. Equality thus can be linked to the concept of fairness (Verba, 2006): all should be treated equally. This equal treatment extends to the law, policies, and governmental processes; these should be impartial and not biased. Equality is also linked to equal representation: individuals belonging to a specific group in society should be represented in a political, social, or organizational context in proportion to its size or importance within the larger population. In a democracy, equal representation ensures a voice for all in decisions that impacts their lives. This is for example shown in the finding that democratic societies usually have more women in parliament than undemocratic societies, indicating more equal representation by gender (Inglehart & Norris, 2002).

The EU is founded on the value of equality: the idea that all individuals have equal rights before the law (see Charter of Fundamental Rights, chapter III). Specifically mentioned in this regard is the principle of equality between women and men, which underpins all European policies and is the basis for European integration.

https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/aims-and-values_en

The idea of gender equality has been important in the Europe Union for a long time (Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi, 2018). It was first mentioned in 1957, when the

European Economic Community (which later became the EU) was created and Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome stipulated that women should receive equal pay for equal work. Later, the European Court of Justice made several important decisions to ensure equal treatment of men and women in the labour market by ruling out direct and indirect discrimination (Timmer 2016). A big step forward came in 1997, when the EU introduced a principle called gender mainstreaming. This means that the EU does not just create special laws and regulations for women, but instead tries to make all laws and policies fair for everyone, irrespective of gender. This implies including gender equality in every part of decision-making, not just in a few areas. Member states should implement this perspective in their policies in order to improve gender equality in their national contexts (Stratigaki 2000). Support for gender equality is widespread in Europe, but varies between countries and across different groups in society (Halman et al., 2022), as we will also show below.

6.2. Equality values: gender equality attitudes in public life and in private life

Gender equality is closely linked to the positions, roles and responsibilities that men and women take up in society. Traditionally, these roles are specialized and separated by gender in two spheres: men typically are the breadwinner of the family and thus in paid employment (public sphere), while women are responsible for domestic work and (unpaid) care (private sphere). Because of this gendered specialization of roles, and because paid labour is associated

with more income and prestige than care responsibilities, there is a perpetuating gender inequality in resources, power, and status in society (Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi, 2018).

This traditional view on gender roles has been challenged by the process of **modernization**. Technological changes and the transition from agrarian to industrial and post-industrial (service oriented) societies brought along **ideational changes**. More wealth, higher levels of education, and migration from rural to urban areas with more looser social ties lead to **individualization** and **secularization**. Moral authorities with traditional views on gender roles such as the church lost ground. People increasingly valued individual autonomy, self-development and self-actualisation, leading to more progressive and equal gender beliefs and attitudes, both in the private and public sphere.

Next to these ideological changes, the **opportunity structure** changed in many European societies: women reached higher levels of education and labour market participation of women increased (Vlasblom & Schippers, 2004). These structural changes impacted gender equality values as well, as can be explained by so-called interest-based and exposure-based perspectives (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004). The **interest-based perspective** highlights that individuals will be more likely to hold gender equal values when their personal interests benefit from gender equality ideology. This is for example the case for higher educated women: they invested a lot in their education, and want to reap the benefits of it in the labour market. This makes them in favour of gender equality promoting equal treatment

of men and women in the workplace (Boehnke, 2011; Rivera-Garrido, 2022). The **exposure-based perspective** on the other hand focuses not on personal interests but on norm conformation: when people are more exposed to a context with gender egalitarian norms about the roles of men and women in the private as well as the public sphere, they will develop more gender equal values (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004). Such a context could for example be a workplace where many women work, an institute for higher education expressing gender equal perspectives in its teaching, or a society in which gender equality ideology is normalized.

It is important to note that gender equality values in the **private and the public sphere are closely interlinked**. The tra-



ditional expectation that women are responsible for care at home (the private sphere) can be a significant barrier to women's role in education and the labour market (the public sphere). Even now that the traditional male-breadwinner model has visibly weakened in Euro-

pe, and dual-earner couples are increasingly becoming more common in most EU member states, research shows that gender equality mainly concerns the public sphere of employment rather than the private sphere of gender roles wit-



hin families (cf. Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi, 2018). In family life, women still do more housework and unpaid care, like cooking, cleaning, or looking after children or elderly relatives. Even though more men are now helping with childcare, the overall burden of domestic work still falls more heavily on women (Le Bihan, Knijn & Martin, 2014).

6.2.1. Application of equality values: gender equality attitudes in public life

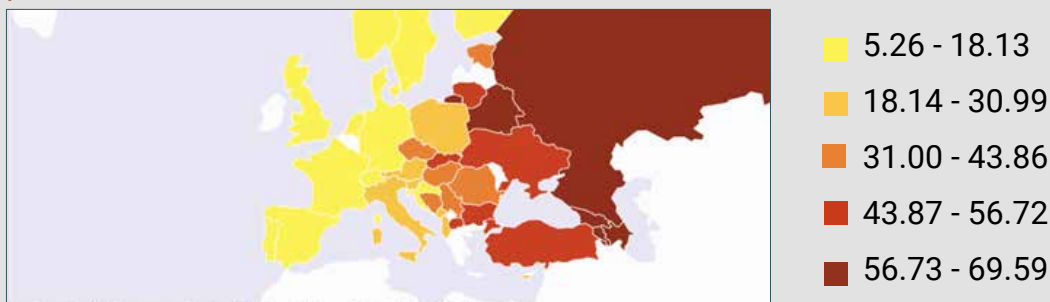
Above we showed that gender equality values are linked to gender ideologies: normative beliefs about desired and proper roles that men and women should take in public and in private life. When we look at **gender equality attitudes in public life**, we can think of roles in education, the labour market, and in politics. A tangible measurement of this concept in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education could be this question (EVS, 2017):

For each of the following statements I read out, can you tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?

- *On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do*
- *A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl*
- *On the whole, men make better business executives than women do*

Figures 6.1 to 6.3 show differences in gender equality attitudes in public life across countries in Europe⁶

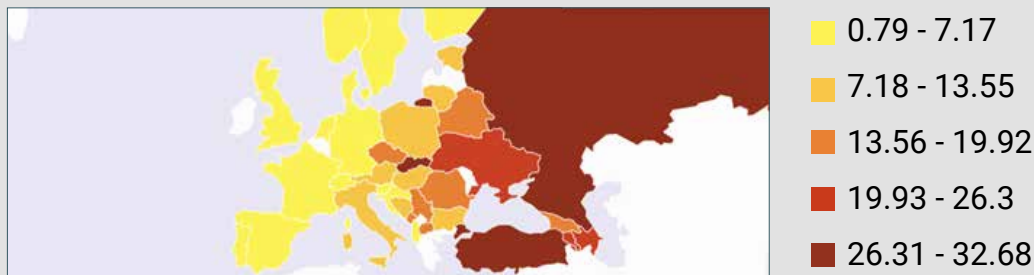
Figure 6.1 Percentage of people that (strongly) agree with the statement that men make better political leaders than women do



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

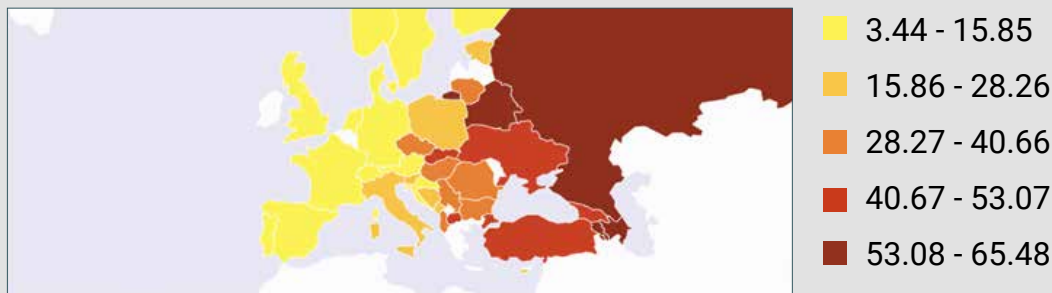
⁶ Please note that these figures show the level of gender inequality attitudes in public life as respondents who agree with the statement are in favour of gender inequality, not gender equality.

Figure 6.2 Percentage of people that (strongly) agree with the statement that a university education is more important for a boy than for a girl.



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 6.3 Percentage of people that (strongly) agree with the statement that men make better business executives than women do



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

6.2.2. Application of equality values:

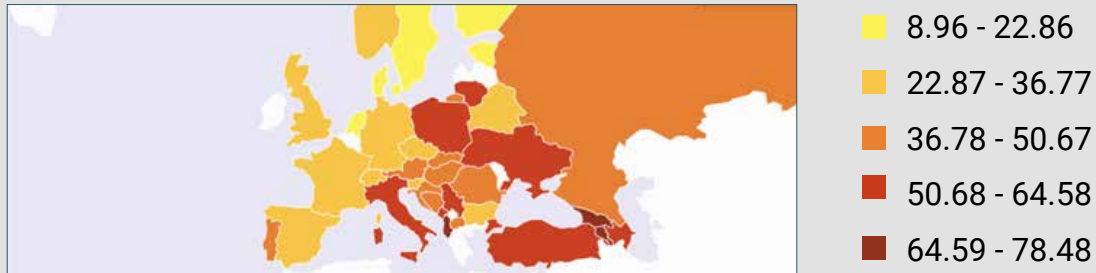
As mentioned above, another way to understand equality values is by looking at the **gender equality attitudes in private life**. This concerns the roles men and especially women take up in the domestic sphere: their responsibilities concerning household work and (child)care. We can measure this tangibly as follows (EVS, 2017):

For each of the following statements I read out, can you tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?

- *When a mother works for pay, the children suffer*
- *A job is alright but what most women really want is a home and children*
- *All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job*
- *A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family*

Figures 6.4 to 6.7 show differences in acceptance of gender equality attitudes in private life across countries in Europe.⁷

Figure 6.4 Percentage of people that (strongly) agree with the statement that when a mother works for pay, the children suffer



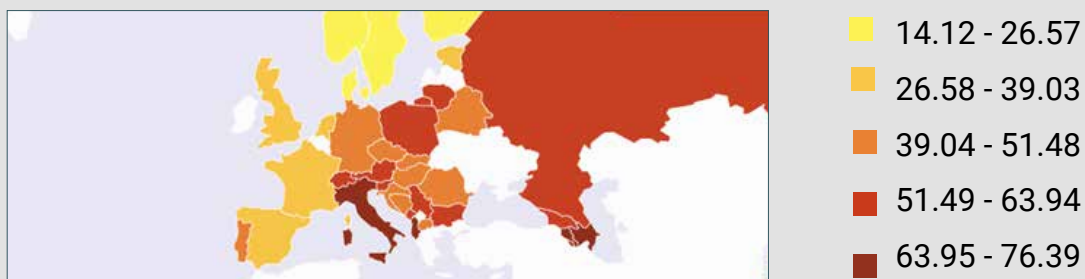
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 6.5 Percentage of people that (strongly) agree with the statement that a job is alright but what most women really want is a home and children



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

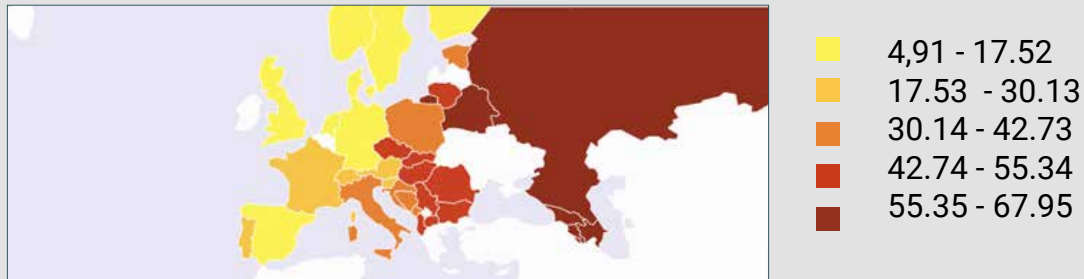
Figure 6.6 Percentage of people that (strongly) agree with the statement that all in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

⁷ Please note that these figures show the level of gender inequality attitudes in private life as respondents who agree with the statement are in favour of gender inequality, not gender equality.

Figure 6.7 Percentage of people that (strongly) agree with the statement that it is a man's job to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family



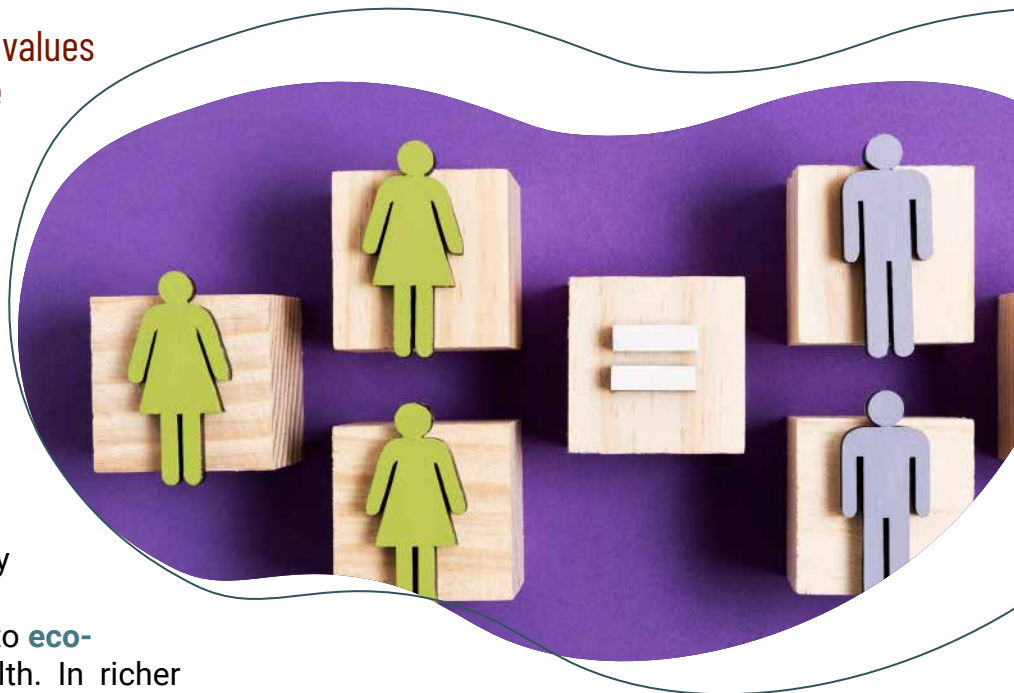
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

6.3 Differences in equality values across countries in Europe

Above, we mentioned the theoretical framework of the modernization theory, which leads to changes in both gender ideologies and structural opportunities. Both can explain differences between countries in gender equality values across Europe.

First, modernization leads to **economic affluence** and wealth. In richer countries, the basic needs of many individuals are met, leaving them to focus on higher-order needs such as personal autonomy and self-development (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). In these societies, individuals are more open to gender equality values, both in the private and the public sphere (Halman et al, 2022).

The same holds for countries with high levels of **secularisation**. In such societies, the role of religion is decreasing,



leaving more room for personal autonomy (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). People do not rely on the church anymore to tell them how to lead their lives, also when it comes to the roles that men and women take in the private and the public sphere. Applying the exposure-based perspective (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004), this means that people in secularised countries are more exposed to gender equality norms than people in more re-

ligious societies, where more traditional norms about gender and family prevail (Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi, 2018).

Modernization does not only bring about ideational changes, but also changes in structural opportunities. Research shows that in countries with higher **female labour market participation**, support for more egalitarian gender values is higher (Andre et al, 2013). Again, this can be linked to the exposure-based perspective of norm conformation: individuals living in a more gender equal society are more exposed to a gender equal norm, and therefore develop more gender equality values. This is even stronger the case for women than for men (André et al., 2013), which is in line with the interest-based perspective as well.



Structural opportunities such as rates of female participation in higher education or the labour market are however not stand-alone factors. They are closely linked to institutional arrangements and social policies that support women to take up roles in the public sphere and men to take up roles in the private sphere (Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi, 2018). Therefore, scholars investigated the impact of

work-family policies. These policies help men and women to balance work and family responsibilities and can take many forms, such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave options, and support for childcare. Studies showed mixed results. Sjöberg (2004) for example observed that in countries that implemented institutionalised family policies aimed to support the dual-earner family, public support for egalitarian gender-role attitudes is higher. However, studies found no effect of the length of parental leave on gender equality values (André et al., 2013; Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi, 2018). The picture for parental leave options seems quite complex indeed. Longer parental leave arrangements are mostly taken up by mothers (and not fathers), confirming the tradi-

tional separation of gender

roles. But also when

taking into account

the length of ma-

ternal versus pater-

nal leave, it seems

that countries vary

substantially to the

degree that leave

systems are adapta-

ble to personal needs,

also depending on child-

care availability (Lomazzi,

Israel & Crepsi, 2018). Moreo-

ver, policies at the institutional

level need to be complemented with

company-level policies and norms, such

as the acceptance of fathers taking up

parental leave (Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi,

2018).

6.4 Individual differences in equality values: groups in society

So far, we looked at differences in equality values between countries and used the theoretical frameworks of ideational changes and opportunity structures to explain these differences. These frameworks, combined with the interest-based and exposure-based perspectives mentioned before, can also provide insights when explaining differences between individuals within countries. We look at education, gender, age, religion and urbanization as important factors.

Studies show that people with higher levels of **education** are more likely to support gender equality (André, Gesthuizen & Scheepers, 2013; Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi, 2018). Opportunity structures lead the higher educated to workplaces where gender egalitarian views are more common. Therefore, it is in their own benefit to hold gender equality values (interest-based perspective) while they are also more exposed to these values (exposure-based perspective). In addition, there is the 'enlightenment effect' of education: higher educated people are longer socialized in school, leading to more open-mindedness and more supportive of gender equality (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2007; Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi, 2018).

In addition, research shows that women are more supportive of gender equality

than men (e.g., Davis & Greenstein, 2009; André, Gesthuizen & Scheepers, 2013; Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi, 2018). One reason for this **gender** difference is that gender equality directly benefits women:



it can lead to better job opportunities, fairer pay, and more equal treatment at home and in society. Following the interest-based perspective, it thus is not surprise that women value gender equality more. After all, this perspective means that people are more likely to support values that improve their personal situation (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004).

Younger individuals also tend to be more in favour of gender equality than older individuals (Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi, 2018). These **age** differences can be linked to the exposure-based perspective

ve: younger generations were socialized in more gender-egalitarian societies, which means that they are more exposed to egalitarian ideals than older generations (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004). However, more recent research hints that the youngest generations, and especially younger men, seem to be somewhat more traditional and conservative in their gender ideologies than generations before them (e.g., Moon & Kim, 2024).

The same exposure-based perspective can be applied to **religion**. Even if religious doctrines are not necessarily opposed to gender equality, they often support a more traditional view on the division of roles between men and women (Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi, 2018). Especially people who regularly attend religious services are exposed to these traditional gender norms, and therefore hold more traditional gender equality values (e.g., Goldscheider, Goldscheider & Rico-Gonzalez, 2014; André, Gesthuizen & Scheepers, 2013).

Finally, individuals living in **urban areas** tend to value gender equality more than people living in the countryside (Lomazzi, Israel & Crepsi, 2018). Again, this can be linked to the exposure-perspective. Big cities come with a wider variety of cultures, ideas, and ways of life, leading to more open, tolerant and less traditional values, also with respect to gender equality. People living in these cities are thus, in general, more exposed to gender egalitarianism than people living in rural areas.

Please note that in the social sciences, we look for general patterns when explaining differences in support for equality between countries and between individuals within countries. It is important

to know that these patterns are probabilistic, not deterministic. Probabilistic means that something is more likely to happen when a certain factor is present. Deterministic would mean that whenever a certain factor is present, a certain outcome must happen every time. In the social sciences, this kind of strict cause-and-effect is rare. People are complex, and what they value depends on many factors. So when we state "Individuals living in countries with more economic affluence value gender equality less", it does not mean that everyone in those societies always values gender equality less, just that the chance of this happening is higher. This notion is important as it reminds us that we are looking for overall tendencies and trends, not absolute rules. Exceptions can exist, both at the individual and country level.

6.5 Conclusion

Equality, and gender equality in particular, is a core value of the European Union. Gender equality values refer to the support for equal positions, roles, and responsibilities that men and women take up in society. Traditionally, men are thought to dominate the public sphere and women the private (home) sphere. However, modernization brought about ideational changes (such as individualization and secularization) as well as in changes in the opportunity structure (increased participation of women in education and the labour market) challenging these traditional gender ideologies. Individuals show more support for gender equality in both the public and the private sphere if it is in their own personal interest (interest-based perspective) or if they are more exposed

to gender equal norms (exposure-based perspective). Differences in gender equality values across countries are influenced by factors such as economic affluence, secularisation, rate of female labour market participation, and work-family policies. Individual differences in gender equality values within countries can be linked to education, religion, urbanization, age, and gender.

When discussing gender equality values in the public and private sphere, it is important to note that the picture is quite complex. First, we already noted that both spheres are interlinked. Traditional expectations of women caring at home (the private sphere) lead to barriers in education and employment (the public sphere), making gender ideologies relevant in both domains. Complexity can also be seen in the fact that contextual (country) and individual (group) conditions do not act independently of each other, but rather interact. Let's explain these **cross-level interactions** with an example. We argued above that the level of female labour market participation in a society would lead to more public support for gender equality values. This effect is stronger for women than for men though (Andre et al, 2013).

Finally, it is good to note that the value of equality is not limited to gender equality. One can think of equal rights for all

kinds of groups in society: privileged and non-privileged, majority and minorities, in- and outgroups. The European Union takes a firm position on non-discrimination and fair treatment for all its citizens, no matter what background or position in society they have.



Example teaching strategy:

„Four corners“

Controversial topic for discussion:
„Men are better political leaders
than women.“

Labels of corners: I agree, but...; I
disagree, but...; I disagree

Explanatory theories: Modernisa-
tion theory



See: <https://atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/materials.html>

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Solidarity

Chapter 7





Summary

The EU defines solidarity as one of its core values in its Charter of Fundamental Rights. Solidarity means helping others or supporting your community, even when it does not benefit you directly.

How much solidarity we feel with others is based on five criteria: whether the people who need help (1) are responsible for their situation (control); (2) show gratitude and respect (attitude); (3) give something in return for help received (reciprocity); (4) resemble us (identity) and (5) really need help (need).

Solidarity is valued more in countries with a liberal or conservative welfare state regime, more economic affluence and/or less income inequality.

Solidarity is valued more by individuals who are unemployed, higher educated, older, religious, women, and/or married.

Implementation in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education can be achieved by focusing on tangible measurements such as:

- Feeling concerned about the living conditions of people nearby and far away, such as people in your neighbourhood, people in the region you live in, fellow countrymen, Europeans, and all humans all over the world (*spatial solidarity*)
- Feeling concerned about the living conditions of people in need, such as elderly people, unemployed people, immigrants, and sick and disabled people (*social solidarity*)

>> Example teaching strategy: "Head Heard Hands"

7.1 Introduction

Solidarity is an important concept as it is linked to social cohesion (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012): it strengthens the bonds that hold society together as people feel connected to one another. Solidarity thus plays a big role in building strong, united communities. We can see how important solidarity is by looking at history. During the French Revolution, one of the main values – alongside freedom and equality – was *fraternity*, which means brotherhood, or as many translate it: solidarity. It shows how deeply connected solidarity is to the idea of democracy (Gonthier, 2000).

Solidarity refers to the willingness to help others or to support the group one belongs to, without immediately getting something in return (De Beer & Koster, 2009). Others say true solidarity means helping others even if it might go against your own short-term interests (Van Oorschot, 2014).

The EU defines solidarity as one of its core values in its Charter of Fundamental Rights. In addition, one of its core aims is to contribute to solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, as laid down in article 3 of the Treaty of Lisbon.

https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/aims-and-values_en



How willing people are to show solidarity depends on how connected they feel to others in society (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012). Solidarity comes from the concern for the well-being of others and the community (Habermas, 1995). It is therefore closely linked to the idea of inclusion: who do we choose to help? Do we feel responsible for everyone, or just certain groups? These are important questions for democracy, because a strong and fair society includes and supports all its members.

In the past, solidarity was organized in a so-called **mechanical way** (Durkheim, 1956). People were part of a close community and shared the same norms, values, and socio-economic, cultural, religious and/or ethnic backgrounds. They helped others in their community based on these shared norms, values and backgrounds. In modern (post-industrial) societies, people are becoming more individualistic, and traditional communities like families, religious groups, and neighbourhoods are becoming less central in daily life. Some experts worry this might lead to a decline in shared values and social connections, which could weaken the sense of solidarity in society (Koster, 2009; Komter & Vollebergh, 2002). At the same time, modern societies still have something called **organic solidarity**. This means that individuals are connected through their different roles in society, for example, farmers grow food, teachers educate students, and doctors provide healthcare. Because of this division of labour, everyone depends on each other to meet their basic needs. Today, the welfare state helps to manage this interdependence by organizing systems of support, such as healthcare, education, and unemployment benefits. These solidarity schemes work

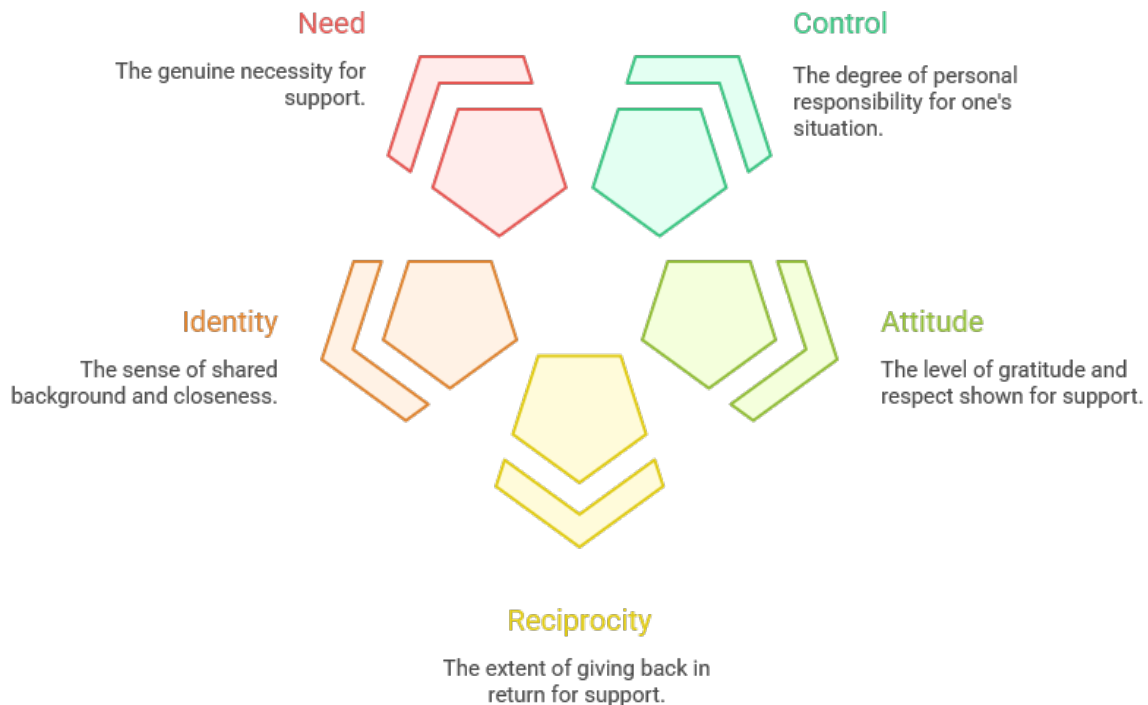


differently depending on the type of welfare state a country has (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Paskov & Dewilde, 2012):

- **Social-democratic welfare states** (for example in Scandinavian countries) aim to support everyone equally, based on need. They offer broad and generous support to all citizens.
- **Liberal welfare states** (for example in the US or UK) also recognize that people need support, but they emphasize individual responsibility and expect people to rely on themselves when possible.
- **Conservative welfare states** (for example in Germany or France) focus more on supporting traditional social groups, like families or specific professions, and tend to keep resources within those groups.

Even though solidarity is a shared value across Europe, the way it plays out in society depends on the type of welfare state (and other factors). Moreover, people may have different ideas about solidarity. Some countries or individuals may thus show higher levels of solidarity than others (e.g. Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Van Oorschot, 2006; Paskov & Dewilde, 2012) as we will also show below.

7.2 Solidarity values: five deservingness criteria



The important role of the welfare state in providing solidarity in contemporary Europe brings up the question: who deserves help, and who does not? To understand how individuals answer this question, researchers have developed the deservingness framework (Reeskens & van der Meer, 2019). This framework doesn't only apply to help provided by the government and the welfare state, it also works in everyday life, for example when people decide whether someone should get charity or community support.

The deservingness framework is based on five criteria which form the acronym CARIN (van Oorschot et al., 2017):

1. **Control** refers to the extent to which an individual is personally responsible for his or her needy situation. In general, people feel more solidarity if individuals are in need because of events that are beyond their control, such as disability or old age. This criterion can be linked to two concepts of social order. First, the moral order, since people tend to help those they see as "good" and following social rules. Control indeed implies a "perceived normative conformity of individual behaviour with commonly accepted norms and values" (Staerklé, 2021: 208). This moral order leads to a division between norm-conforming, 'good' and thus deserving people on the one hand and norm-deviating, 'bad' and thus non-deserving individuals in the other hand. Second, control is linked to the free market, as

it stresses individual responsibility. This implies a division between hard-working, productive, and responsible 'winners' who deserve solidarity, opposed to lazy, free-riding and responsible 'losers' who do not.

2. **Attitude** refers to the extent to which an individual in need shows gratitude and respect for the support received. People feel more willing to help if someone is thankful and respectful. This criterion can also linked to the moral order and conformity, as gratitude for received support is seen as the "right" attitude in many societies; it is an accepted norm.
3. **Reciprocity** refers to the extent to which an individual in need gives something back in return for the support received. This can be a contribution to the solidarity scheme (for example by working and paying taxes) or to society in general (for example by volunteering). More reciprocity leads to more feelings of solidarity. This criterion can be linked to free market and individual responsibility (see control): needy individuals should give back when they can.
4. **Identity** refers to the extent to which people can identify with an individual in need, thus to the extent to which they feel similar and part of the same in-group, for example when they share the same background, culture, or when they live nearby. This shows how feelings of solidarity can depend on spatial, socio-economic and cultural proximity or closeness. This criterion can be linked to social diversity and intergroup differentiation in society.

5. **Need** refers to the extent to which an individual really is in need of support. More essential and necessary support is seen as more legitimate and thus induces more feelings of deservingness and solidarity. This final criterion is closely associated with principles of fairness and inequality (Staerklé, 2021).

Together, these five factors help explain why people (and countries) differ in how much support they are willing to give, and to whom. Some groups may receive more sympathy and help based on how they are judged through these CARIN criteria.



7.2.1. Application of solidarity values: spatial solidarity

As mentioned above, one important part of understanding solidarity is thinking about who we feel connected to. People are often more willing to help others who are geographically close to them, like individuals who live in the same town, region, or country. This idea of spatial solidarity is linked to the criteria of 'identity' mentioned above. The closer we feel to someone – because they live near us, speak the same language, or share our culture – the more likely we are to support them. This is called the proximity effect: the idea that we show more solidarity with individuals who are "closer" to us.

The concept of **spatial solidarity** can be implemented in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education by tangible measurements, such as this question (EVS, 2017):

To what extent do you feel concerned about the living conditions of

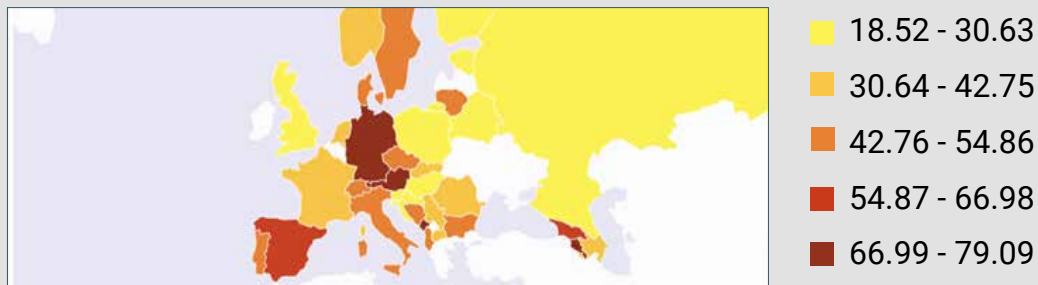
- *People in your neighbourhood*
- *The people of the region you live in*
- *Your fellow countrymen*
- *Europeans*
- *All humans all over the world.*

Is this 1 Very much; 2 Much; 3 To a certain extent; 4 Not so much; 5 Not at all?



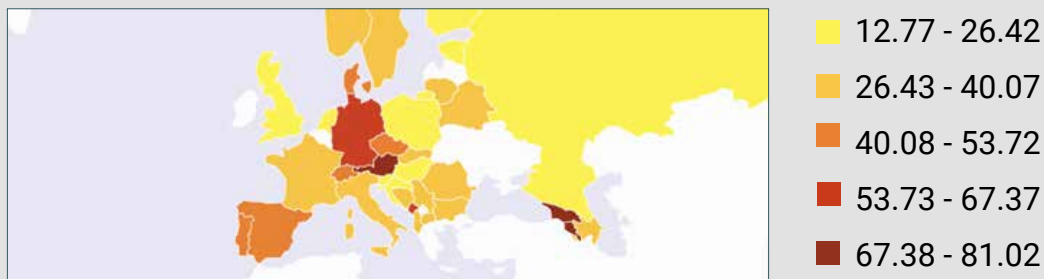
Figures 7.1 to 7.5 show differences in spatial solidarity across countries in Europe and confirm the idea that people are more concerned with the living conditions of people living nearby (Halman & Sieben, 2021). This indicates that geographic closeness matters when it comes to solidarity.

Figure 7.1 Percentage of people who are (very) much concerned about the living conditions of people in their neighbourhood



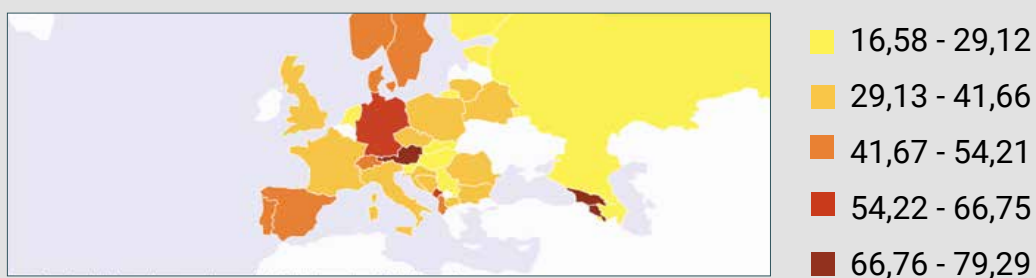
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 7.2 Percentage of people who are (very) much concerned about the living conditions of people in their region



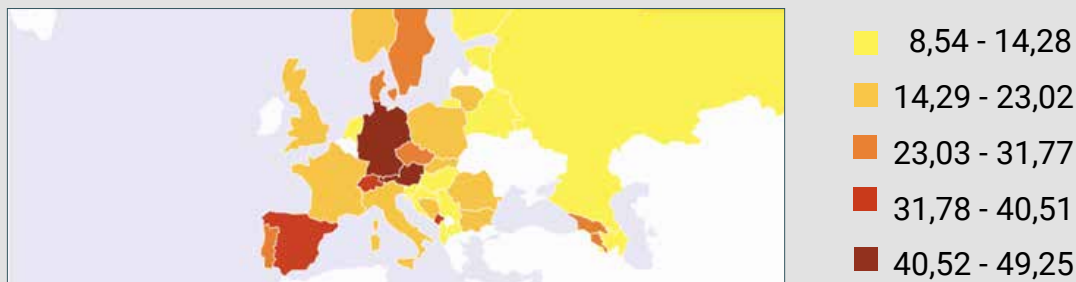
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 7.3 Percentage of people who are (very) much concerned about the living conditions of people in their country



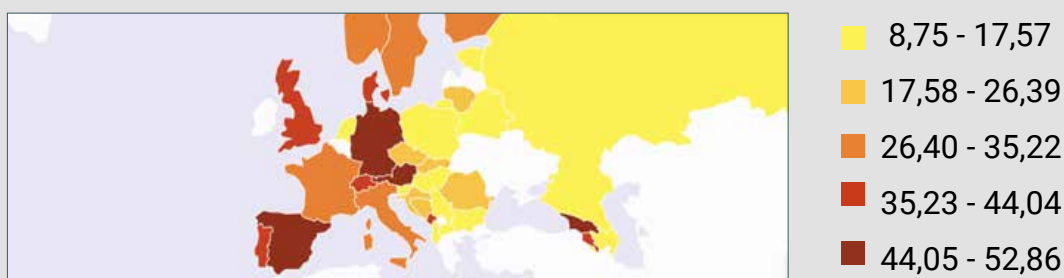
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 7.4 Percentage of people who are (very) much concerned about the living conditions of Europeans



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 7.5 Percentage of people who are (very) much concerned about the living conditions of all humans in the world



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

7.2.2. Application of solidarity values: social solidarity

Another way to understand solidarity is by looking at who people think deserves help the most. In society, some groups are seen as more “deserving” than others, meaning people feel more willing to support them. Keeping the recipients of social benefits in the welfare state in mind, four main groups in need of support are identified in the literature: elderly individuals, unemployed, migrants, and the sick and disabled (van Oorschot, Roosma, Meuleman & Reeskens, 2017). The idea of social solidarity helps us understand that solidarity is not just about helping in general, it also

depends on how people view the needs and situations of others.

The concept of **social solidarity** can be tangibly measured as follows (EVS, 2017):

To what extent do you feel concerned about the living conditions of the following groups living in your country:

- ***Elderly people***
- ***Unemployed people***
- ***Immigrants***
- ***The sick and disabled***

Is this 1 Very much; 2 Much; 3 To a certain extent; 4 Not so much; 5 Not at all?

Figures 7.6 to 7.9 show differences in social solidarity across countries in Europe. Moreover, they reveal a consistent pattern, a “common deservingness culture”: elderly are seen as most deserving, closely followed by sick and disabled individuals; unemployed individuals are seen as less deserving, and immigrants as least deserving of all (Van Oorschot, 2005: 23). This pattern fits the five criteria of the deservingness framework described above:

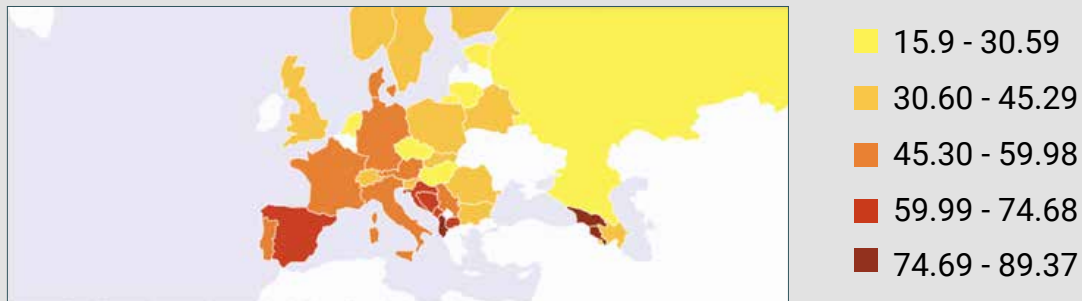
- People relate more easily to **older individuals** because they think that “everyone including me will get old eventually” (criteria of control and identity). People also believe that older individuals have worked and contributed to society over their lifetime, so they have “earned” support (criterion of reciprocity).
- **Sick and disabled individuals** are also seen as deserving of support as they are in genuine need and through no fault of their own (criteria of need and control). They score somewhat lower on the criterion of reciprocity than the elderly as sick and disabled individuals may not have had the same chance to contribute to society as much over their lifetime.
- **Unemployed individuals**, on the other hand, are often viewed more negatively. Research shows that many people perceive the unemployed as rather undeserving because they think that the unemployed are not willing to work and that they abuse welfare benefits (Halvorsen, 2002; Furaker & Blomsterberg, 2003), which is related to the criteria of control, need, and reciprocity. Because of this, conditionality to get financial assistance in case of unemployment has increased and many Europeans find this fair: they support stricter rules for obtaining unemployment benefits, such as showing proof of job searching (Meuleman et al., 2018).
- Finally, **migrants** are often seen as the least deserving group (Kootstra; 2016; Reeskens & van der Meer, 2019). This is often because people feel less connected to them (criterion of identity); they may not share the same background, culture, or language, which makes it harder for some to identify with them (Holmes & Castañeda, 2016).

Figure 7.6 Percentage of people who are (very) much concerned about the living conditions of elderly people in their country



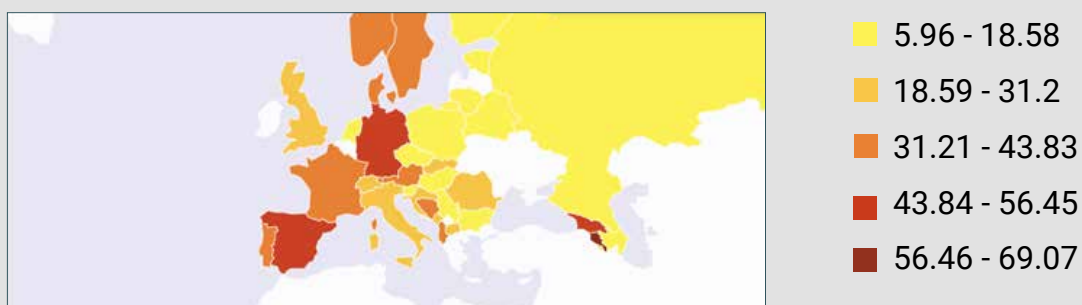
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 7.7 Percentage of people who are (very) much concerned about the living conditions of unemployed people in their country



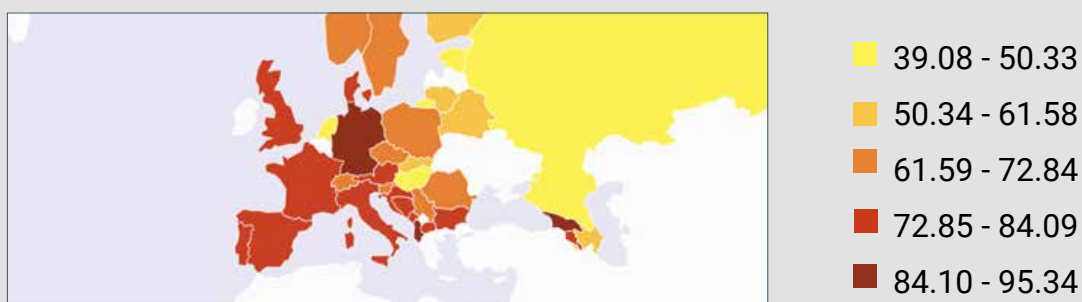
Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 7.8 Percentage of people who are (very) much concerned about the living conditions of immigrants in their country



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 7.9 Percentage of people who are (very) much concerned about the living conditions of the sick and disabled in their country



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

7.3 Differences in solidarity values across countries in Europe

When trying to explain differences in spatial and social solidarity between countries in Europe, we first look at the **type of welfare state**. As pointed out above, generous welfare systems, such as the social-democratic welfare states in the Nordic countries (e.g. Sweden, Norway, Denmark), might reflect public opinions on solidarity. People in these countries often seem to care deeply about fairness and helping others. Social-democratic welfare states provide support for everyone, based on the idea that helping each other is a shared responsibility. Some researchers believe this kind of system can even encourage people to feel more solidarity because it is seen as the normal thing to do. Citizens thus conform to a social norm when adhering to solidarity values (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012). Other scholars, however, point out that generous welfare systems may have unexpected downsides for solidarity. After all, in these systems, state organized support replaces informal support (van Oorschot, Arts & Halman, 2005). When the government takes care of individuals in need through formal institutions (like healthcare or pensions), families and communities may stop helping each other as much. In addition, people in these welfare states pay high taxes to fund social services. Some might feel they have already done enough by paying into the system and no longer feel personally responsible for helping others (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012). Research indeed shows that individuals living in social-democratic welfare regimes show lower levels of solidarity

than individuals in other types of welfare regimes (Gelissen, 2000; Paskov & Dewilde, 2012).

Related to this is a so-called 'national burden' effect: Solidarity tends to drop in countries where there are **more needy groups**. In countries with an older population, with higher unemployment, and with a higher percentage of migrants, people might feel like there is too much pressure on the system, and they become less willing to support others (van Oorschot, Arts & Halman, 2005).

This burden effect is also felt in times of **economic downturn**. When people experience more economic hardship, they



become more concerned about their own problems, and have less room to worry about others (Durr, 1993). As we saw in Chapter 2, This aligns with modernization theory (Inglehart, 1990): individuals in wealthy and stable countries tend to grow up feeling secure. Because their basic needs are met, they can afford to care about bigger issues like justice, equality, and caring for others. This leads to more solidarity.

A final explanation looks at differences in **(income) inequality** between countries. In unequal societies, individuals from different groups often live very different lives. Because of different socio-economic positions, people often do not share the same lifestyles and networks, attend different schools and live in segregated neighbourhoods. This means that in unequal societies, there is more social and physical distance between groups. People are thus less likely to

understand or identify with each other. When individuals feel they have little in common with others, they may be less willing to show solidarity. So, in more unequal societies, solidarity tends to be lower (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012).

7.4 Individual differences in solidarity values: groups in society

So far, we looked at differences in spatial and social solidarity between countries and used the deservingness framework to explain these differences. This framework can also provide insights when explaining differences between individuals within countries. We look at unemployment, income, education, age, migrant status, religion, gender and marital status as important factors.



First, the criterion of identity in the deservingness framework can be applied to **unemployed** and working individuals who are at risk of getting unemployed. Research shows that they are more in favour of unemployment benefits and also feel more solidarity with the unemployed (Iversen & Soskice, 2001) because they feel closely connected to people in the same (current or future) situation. The same applies to individuals belonging to lower **income** groups and those who obtained lower levels of **education**. Both groups are more at risk of becoming unemployed, or sick and disabled, and therefore feel more close these needy groups resulting in higher levels of solidarity. However, research shows that it is particularly individuals with higher levels of education who often show more solidarity (Van Oorschot, 2002). In school, especially at higher levels of education, students often learn about democracy, fairness, and the common good – that is the idea that everyone should work together for the benefit of society. These values can help to understand why it is important to help others and to show solidarity (Gelissen, 2000; Paskov & Dewilde, 2012). Others have suggested that helping others is a 'luxury' (Banks & Tanner, 1997). Only those who live in material security can afford to care for the needs of others instead of their own needs. That is why individuals who are wealthier are more likely to show solidarity; they have the resources and peace of mind to do so (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012).

With respect to **age**, studies find that older individuals are often more solidary than younger individuals (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012). Young people generally feel less moral responsibility towards others

(van Oorschot, 2002) as they might be more focused on their own lives. Furthermore, older and retired individuals identify more with other older, sick and disabled people.



For **migrants**, scholars give a same line of reasoning (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012). Migrants may feel less connected to the wider population in their new country. If people feel like they do not fully "belong", they may not feel the same sense of responsibility to help others. In general, we can thus say that social and spatial distance matters: the closer people stand to others, the more they identify with them and the more they show higher levels of solidarity.

The link between **religion** and solidarity is not framed in terms of feelings of connection and identification. Here, a sense of moral duty plays a more dominant role. Religiousness is associated with donating time and money to help the less fortunate (Scheepers & Te Grotenhuis, 2005), and religious individuals indeed often show more solidarity those who are not religious (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012).

Finally, scholars have argued that **women** on average place more value on caring, helping others, and mutual responsibility (Diekmann & Sneider, 2010). Because of this, women show higher levels of solidarity than men. In addition, being in a relationship, especially married, may also lead individuals to feel more responsible for others. **Married individuals** may be used to caring for their partners and families, and this sense of responsibility can extend to others in society as well (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012). This would imply that married individuals show more solidarity than single people.

Please note that in the social sciences, we look for general patterns when explaining differences in solidarity values between countries and between individuals within countries. It is important to know that these patterns are probabilistic, not deterministic. Probabilistic means that something is more likely to happen when a certain factor is present. Deterministic would mean that whenever a certain factor is present, a certain outcome must happen every time.

In social sciences, this kind of strict cause-and-effect is rare. People are complex, and what they value depends on many factors. So when we state "Individuals living in social-democratic welfare state regimes value solidarity less", it does not mean that everyone in those societies always values solidarity less, just that the chance of this happening is higher. This notion is important as it reminds us that we are looking for overall tendencies and trends, not absolute rules. Exceptions can exist, both at the individual and country level.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we defined solidarity as helping others or supporting your community, even when it does not benefit you directly. We noted that solidarity is a key value in European democracies. In these modern, post-industrial societies, solidarity is of an organic nature and closely linked to the welfare state. Solidarity values can be about spatial solidarity (feeling concerned about people living nearby) and about social solidarity (feeling concerned about needy groups in society). How much solidarity we feel with others is based on five criteria: whether the people who need help (1) are responsible for their situation (control); (2) show gratitude and respect (attitude); (3) give something in return for help received (reciprocity); (4) resemble us (identity) and (5) really need help (need). Differences in spatial and social solidarity across countries are influenced by factors such as type of welfare state, macro-economic conditions, and levels of income inequality.



Individual differences in solidarity within countries can be linked to unemployment, income, education, age, migrant status, religion, gender, and marital status.

When discussing these solidarity values and differences between countries and individuals, it is important to note that solidarity is a complex phenomenon. We already pointed out the different perspectives regarding the link between solidarity on the one hand and type of welfare state or educational level on the other hand, leading to opposite outcomes (that is higher versus lower levels of solidarity). Moreover, factors at the individual level and the country level do not act independently of each other, but can also interact. For example, earlier, we mentioned that during economic hardship, such as a recession or financial crisis, people often show less solidarity. But it is important to remember that not everyone is affected in the same way by such conditions. Some groups in society feel the burden more: individuals with lower incomes or less education are more affected by economic problems than wealthier or more educated individuals. For example, they might lose their jobs more easily or struggle more with rising prices. The same groups may also perceive that they are in competition with other needy groups in society, such as unemployed individuals or migrants, for support and resources like housing, jobs, or benefits. When people feel resources are limited, they may become less willing to help others, especially if they are struggling themselves. Thus, in countries with low economic growth, solidarity might go down for everyone, but especially for those with lower incomes or education levels (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012).

Example teaching strategy:

„Head Heart Hands“

Controversial topic for discussion: „A society is fair when it takes care of those who are poor and in need regardless of what they give back to society“

Visual input: “Fuck of the poor” video: <https://youtu.be/4AhiElzMwLs>

Explanatory theories: Mechanic and Organic Solidarity; CARIN deservingness criteria



See: <https://atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/materials.html>

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This chapter is based on the theoretical background report on solidarity available at www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu. We added new elements and updated literature. Moreover, ChatGPT was used with the prompt "could you please improve this text to make it more accessible for democracy and civic education in secondary schools".

Justice

Chapter 8





Summary

Justice is about fairness in the way that people are treated by law and government. It is closely connected to the concept of rule of law: justice is thought to help protect freedom and equality, prevent abuse of power, and give people a way to solve conflicts and to show political engagement. Justice is therefore linked to democracy and a fundamental aim of the EU.

Justice values are closely related to civic rights. Fair and equal treatment by government is laid down in laws upheld by an independent justice system; this asks for citizens to put their trust in justice institutions. At the same time, justice also comes with civic duties: acting without harming the collective. Justice values can be explained by taking an instrumental rather than moral approach as these values are closely related to people's experiences in past and present, on their evaluations of the way both justice institutions and the collective work effectively.

Justice is valued more in countries with no legacy of communist rule, longer traditions of democratization, better functioning of democracy, and lower levels of corruption.

Justice is valued more by individuals who have higher income and educational levels, who are religious, who are women, and who are older.

Implementation in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education can be achieved by focusing on tangible measurements such as:

- Confidence in the justice system, the policy, and civil services (*trust in justice institutions*)
- Justification of harmful public actions (*acceptance of violations against the public good*):
 - Claiming state benefits which you are not entitled to
 - Cheating on tax if you have the chance
 - Accepting a bribe in the course of their duties
 - Avoiding fair on public transport

>> Example teaching strategy: "Values Compass"

8.1 Introduction

Justice is about fairness in the way that people are treated by law and government: citizens should be treated in a reasonable and unbiased way, no matter who they are. The principle of justice is closely linked to the idea of the rule of law. This means that a country should have a strong and fair legal system that applies to everyone. The rule of law is based on four important ideas (World Justice Project, n.d.). First, institutions (including the government) and citizens are accountable to (the same) laws. Second, laws must be just, that is fair and clear. Third, the government must be open and laws must be transparent. And

finally, fourth, there should be accessible and impartial justice, which means that everyone must have access to justice and fair treatment. These ideas help protect freedom and equality, prevent abuse of power, and give people a way to solve conflicts and to show political engagement. Justice therefore is also closely linked to democracy (Valentini, 2013).

Justice is at the heart of the European Union as it is one of its fundamental aims. It is closely linked to EU's guiding principle of rule of law. Rights related to justice are protected in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Chapter VI).

https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/aims-and-values_en



Justice as we defined it above is closely linked to rights of citizens. Justice implies that people are treated just and fair by the government and its institutions. Everything the government does is founded in constitutions, laws and treaties, which are upheld by an independent justice system. At the same time, justice comes with duties of citizens as well. This is because justice is an ethical idea: we can define a “just” person as one who typically does what is morally right and is disposed to giving everyone his or her due. Looking at this from a societal perspective, justice is about civic behaviour, behaviour that is law-abiding and does not harming the collective. Justice values therefore are both about justice as a system (rule of law) and about respect for the public good. Research shows that justice is valued highly in Europe, but differences between countries exist (Hough, Jackson & Bradford, 2013; Schaap & Scheepers, 2014; Sieben & Halman, 2015), as we will also show below.

8.2 Justice values: trust in institutions and acceptance of violations against the public good

The aforementioned civic rights and duties can serve as a starting point for the description of justice values and for the explanation of differences in these values between countries and between groups within countries. Civic rights with respect to justice are about the functioning of the justice system: it should work properly and fair for all citizens. In order to make this work, justice institutions need the trust of the citizens. At the same time, these citizens themselves



need to act according to their civic duties: their actions should abide the laws and should not harm the collective. Both aspects (civic rights and duties) are interlinked: When people trust the justice system, they are more likely to believe that the courts and legal institutions are fair and deserve respect. This trust gives these institutions real authority. As a result, people are more willing to follow the rules and work with the system (Hough, Jackson & Bradford, 2013).

Some people tend to support justice more: they are more willing to put trust in justice institutions and they show more law-abiding behaviour that does not harm the public good. Since we are talking about justice values, which are ethical standards of what is considered right and wrong when it comes to justice, we can explain these differences by taking a **moral perspective**. Traditionally, religious institutions and their teachings and prescriptions played an important role in raising respect and obedience for authorities and preventing unlawful behaviour. An example of this is the well-known hellfire hypothesis of Hirschi and Stark (1969). This hypothesis states that religious teachings, which are reinforced by religious institutions, warn sinners for eternal punishment by referring

to the sanctioning system of hellfire. However, this does not imply that secular people are amoral and accept deviant behaviours and actions (cf. Widdows, 2004). The idea that a religious decline is accompanied by a moral decline in Europe, as conservative politicians and traditional Christian believers sometimes proclaim (Rubin, 2015), cannot be confirmed by research: secularization does not imply an increase in self-interested values or anti-social behaviour (Storm, 2016).

Therefore, the literature points at a second, and probably more appropriate, perspective to explain justice values: a more pragmatic and **instrumental approach** (Hough, Jackson & Bradford, 2013). People put trust in justice institutions when they evaluate these institutions positively, when they think the system works effectively. We saw a comparable mechanism working for (specific) political support in chapter 4: people place more confidence in go-

vernment when it is evaluated positively. Such evaluations are based on past and present personal experiences with justice institutions, either directly (by the individual him/herself) or indirectly (by the experiences of others, in the media, etc.). The same instrumental perspective holds for the (non)acceptance of actions that harm the collective. People might notice that unlawful behaviour “pays off”, for example because the justice system is not working properly and fair, or because the reward is high and the sanction low. This implies that individuals support actions that harm the public good more when they see “there is something in it for me”. Again, this is linked to personal (direct and indirect) experiences.



8.2.1. Application of justice values: trust in justice institutions

As mentioned above, justice is the idea that individuals are treated fairly by government and its laws. In order for this to work, citizens have to rely on and place trust in justice institutions. Public trust in justice helps to build public beliefs about the legitimacy of the institutions of justice. This confers authority on them, and cooperation and compliance flows from this legitimate authority.

First of all in the justice system: courts at the regional, national and supranational level, its judges, the prosecutors and lawyers, but also law enforcement agencies such as the police. In addition, it involves trust in public servants working in organisations that implement government laws and policies, such as civil

services at national and regional levels. Fairness and impartiality are also expected of these governmental bodies.

We can implement the concept of **trust in justice institutions** in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education by a tangible measurement, such as this question (EVS, 2017):

How much confidence you do have in:

- *The justice system*
- *The police*
- *Civil services*

Is it (1) a great deal, (2) quite a lot, (3) not very much or (4) none at all?

Figures 8.1 to 8.3 show differences in trust in justice institutions across countries in Europe.

Figure 8.1 Percentage of people that have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the justice system



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 8.2 Percentage of people that have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the police



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 8.3 Percentage of people that have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in civil services



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

8.2.2. Application of justice values: acceptance of violations against the public good

As mentioned above, another way to understand justice values is by looking at its moral component. Citizens not only have civic rights, but also civic duties, and that means that they should act in ways that do not harm the collective. We therefore also look at the **acceptance of violations against the public good**. We can measure this tangibly as follows (EVS, 2017):

Please tell me for each of the following whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between:

- *Claiming state benefits which you are not entitled to*
- *Cheating on tax if you have the chance*
- *Accepting a bribe in the course of their duties*
- *Avoiding fair on public transport*

Please give your answer on a scale from 1 'never be justified' to 10 'always justified'.

Figures 8.4 to 8.7 show differences in acceptance of across countries in Europe.⁸ In general, we see quite low levels of acceptance of actions that harm the public good in Europe. Highest levels are found in countries that used to be part of the former Soviet Union (cf. Sieben & Halman, 2015).

Figure 8.4 Average opinion on a scale from 0 ('never justified') to 100 ('always justified'): claiming state benefits which you are not entitled to



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 8.5 Average opinion on a scale from 0 ('never justified') to 100 ('always justified'): cheating on tax



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

Figure 8.6 Average opinion on a scale from 0 ('never justified') to 100 ('always justified'): accepting a bribe



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

⁸ Opinions on original scale (1-10) are transformed into a scale from 0-100.

Figure 8.7 Average opinion on a scale from 0 ('never justified') to 100 ('always justified'): avoiding a fare on public transport



Source: www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu

8.3 Differences in justice values across countries in Europe

We can use the theoretical framework of the instrumental approach (which focuses on evaluations and personal experiences with the functioning of justice institutions and the collective) that we described earlier to explain differences in justice values between countries in Europe.

First, literature points at the **legacy of communist rule**. Research shows that trust in justice institutions is lower in Eastern European countries than in Western European ones (Hough, Jackson & Bradford, 2013; Schaap & Scheepers, 2014). Moreover, acceptance of violations against the public good is rather high in post-socialist states, especially in countries that used to be part of the former Soviet Union (Listhaug & Ringdal, 2004; Frey & Torgler, 2007; Halman & Sieben, 2014). This findings are explained by the countries' historical past (see also Trüdinger & Hildebrandt, 2012; Sieben & Halman, 2015): During Soviet times, the communist government used

strict and harsh control, which caused many people to distrust the state. In countries that were once under this kind of rule, people often still feel distant from the government. Because of this, they may feel less responsible for following civic duties like paying taxes honestly. They might be more willing to accept behaviour like benefit fraud or tax evasion, even though these actions harm the public and the state.

The above also implies that the way a country is governed affects how people think about justice. In democratic countries, the government does not use fear or force like totalitarian regimes do. Instead, democracies rely on citizens choosing to follow the law and respect government and justice institutions their own (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Because of this, individuals living in countries with **longer democratic traditions** or where **democracy functions better**, are more likely to act honestly when it comes to their civic duties and care about the common (public) good.

Applying the framework of perceived experiences with the functioning of justice institutions and the collective, we

can also see that the **level of corruption** plays an important role when it comes to justice values. Corruption is a key aspect of the fairness and impartiality of government and can be considered the most important measure of the quality of government (Uslaner, 2017). It violates the principle of transparent governance, erodes its legitimacy and even increases societal inequalities (Kääriäinen, 2007). Research indeed shows that in countries with higher levels of (perceived) corruption, confidence in justice institutions such as the police is lower (Kääriäinen, 2007). In addition, people show more acceptance to violations against the public good in these countries (Halman & Sieben, 2015).

Finally, we take a look at **collectivistic cultures**. Some societies host cultures that focus more on the group and community; these are called collectivist cultures. Individualistic cultures on the other hand focus more on personal freedom and independence. In collectivist cultures, people are often taught to follow group norms and to put the needs of the community first (Hofstede, 2001). This might suggest that people in collectivist cultures would
care

more about public behavior and rules. However, research shows that there is not a strong link between a country's culture, whether collectivistic or individualistic, and how tolerant people are of actions that harm the public good (Halman & Sieben, 2015).

8.4 Individual differences in justice values: groups in society

So far, we looked at differences in justice values between countries and used the theoretical framework of the instrumental approach (focusing on evaluations and personal experiences with justice institutions and the collective) to explain these differences. This framework can also provide insights when explaining differences between individuals within countries. We also rely on the second theoretical approach (the moral perspective) that we mentioned earlier, as it still has value here as well. We look at income, education, religion, gender, and age as important factors.



First, research shows that individuals with higher levels of **income** place more trust in justice institutions such as the police (Kääriäinen, 2007). At the same time, they also are more accepting of actions that harm the collective (Marriott, 2017; Sieben & Halman, 2015). The instrumental explanation for this latter finding is that illegal actions against the public good, such as tax evasion and acts of bribery, might be more beneficial for wealthy individuals, because they have more resources to use and to manipulate.

People with higher levels of **education** on the other hand are usually less accepting of actions that violate the public good (Sieben & Halman, 2013). Education helps people develop thinking skills that allow them to understand complex issues and make thoughtful decisions (Vogt, 1997). It also helps them see why being involved in society and working for the common good is important. Because of this, higher educated individuals are more likely to disapprove of behaviours that harms the collective.

Applying the moral perspective on justi-

ce values, we see that **religion** is a key aspect when it comes to law-abiding behaviour – see the famous hellfire hypothesis of Hirschi and Stark (1969). Religious individuals are thus thought to be less accepting of actions that harm the collective than non-religious individuals. Church attendance plays an important role here: people who attend religious services regularly are more often reminded of moral teachings and spend time with others who share the same values. This suggests that they internalize stricter norms than individuals who do not (often) attend religious services (Moore & Vanneman, 2003).

Differences between women and men regarding private and public tolerance are quite small. In general, women are slightly more accepting of action that violate the public good (Sieben & Halman, 2015), but there is no clear explanation for this **gender** difference.

Finally, younger individuals tend to trust the justice system less and are more likely to accept actions that harm the collective (Halman & Sieben, 2014; Halman, 2011). The main reason seems to be that older people often have more traditional and religious beliefs than younger people, because they more often grew up in times of insecurity and survival (Inglehart, 1997). Research also seems to indicate that as people **age** and get older, they become more law-abiding and more concerned about protecting the public good (Halman, 2011). Please note that in the social sciences, we look for general patterns when ex-



plaining differences in support for justice between countries and between individuals within countries. It is important to know that these patterns are probabilistic, not deterministic. Probabilistic means that something is more likely to happen when a certain factor is present. Deterministic would mean that whenever a certain factor is present, a certain outcome must happen every time. In the social sciences, this kind of strict cause-and-effect is rare. People are complex, and what they value depends on many factors. So when we state "Individuals living in countries with legacy of communist rule value justice less", it does not mean that everyone in those societies always values justice less, just that the chance of this happening is higher. This notion is important as it reminds us that we are looking for overall tendencies and trends, not absolute rules. Exceptions can exist, both at the individual and country level.

8.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we defined justice as fairness in the way that people are treated by law and government. Justice is connected to the concept of rule of law and is thought to help protect freedom and equality, prevent abuse of power, and give people a way to solve conflicts and to show political engagement. Justice therefore is closely related to democracy. It is a fundamental aim of the EU. Justice values can be linked to civic rights because fair and equal treatment by government is laid down in laws upheld by an independent justice system. This asks for citizens to put their trust in justice institutions. At the same time, justice also comes with civic du-

ties: acting without harming the collective. Justice values can be explained by taking an instrumental rather than moral approach as these values are closely related to people's experiences in past and present, on their evaluations of the way both justice institutions and the collective work effectively. Differences in support for justice across countries are influenced by factors such as legacy of communist rule, democracy, and levels of corruption. Individual differences in justice values within countries can be linked to income, education, religion, gender and age.

Finally, it is important to stress the interplay between macro level (country) and individual (group) conditions. These conditions do not work separately; they influence each other. For example, earlier we saw that religion can help prevent dishonest behavior (Stack & Kposowa, 2006). Religious people often care deeply about justice and are less likely to accept actions that harm the collective like tax evasion or bribery. But this is not the case everywhere in Europe. In Eastern Europe, the connection between religion and support for justice is weaker (Halman & Van Ingen, 2013). This is partly because, in the past, communist governments tried to control or even ban religion (Tomka, 2005). In some places, the state took over the role that religion plays in teaching law-abiding norms. As a result, religion became less influential in shaping people's values toward justice in these countries (cf. Stark 2001).

Example teaching strategy:

“Values Compass”

Controversial topics for discussion: *“To what extent do you think the following things are okay (justifiable)? Homosexuality; Abortion; Divorce; Euthanasia; Claiming benefits you’re not entitled to; Tax fraud; Taking a bribe; Avoiding fair on public transport*

Values:

0 = absolutely not;

10 = absolutely yes

Explanatory theories: Private and public tolerance/Morality theory; Modernisation theory



See: <https://atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/materials.html>

This chapter is partly based on the theoretical background report on tolerance available at www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu. We added new elements and updated literature. Moreover, ChatGPT was used with the prompt “could you please improve this text to make it more accessible for democracy and civic education in secondary schools”.

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Implementing European Values in Democracy Education: a Summary in Three Overviews

Chapter 9





Summary

In this final chapter, we present a short summary of the report in three overviews. These overviews show the relevance of European Values for the implementation in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education.

Overview 1: European Values – definitions, concepts for implementation in education, and tangible measurements

Overview 2: Macro conditions impacting European Values

Overview 3: Individual conditions impacting European Values

9.1 Overview 1: European Values

The first overview provides short definitions of the six European Values central in this report: democracy, pluralism, freedom, equality, solidarity, and justice. Each value is linked to two key theoretical concepts that can be implemented in education for democratic citizenship in secondary school education. Finally, tangible measurements for these concepts are presented. Together, this information functions as input for the teaching strategies, of which we provide an example for every value.

Democracy

Support for political system in which citizens have the power to make decisions

>> *Example teaching strategy: "INSERT"*

Concept for implementation in education	Tangible measurement
Diffuse political support (general beliefs about political system: democracy)	1. How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically? Answer on scale (1) not at all important – (10) absolutely important. 2. What do you think about these types of political systems as a way of governing this country. Is it a (1) very good, (2) fairly good, (3) fairly bad or (4) very bad way of governing this country? • Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections • Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country • Having the army rule the country • Having a democratic political system
Specific political support (positive evaluation of government and parliament)	How much confidence you do have in: • Parliament • Political Parties • Government Is it (1) a great deal, (2) quite a lot, (3) not very much or (4) none at all?

Pluralism

Support for the idea that individuals with different backgrounds, cultures, beliefs and opinions can live together in a democratic society

>> *Example teaching strategy: "Chess Board"*

Concept for implementation in education	Tangible measurement
Social distance towards religious and ethnic outgroups (acceptance of outgroups as neighbours)	Could you identify any group of people that you would not like to have as neighbours? • Jews • Roma • Muslims • Christians • People of a different race • Migrants
Perceived ethnic threat (feelings of cultural or economic competition with immigrants)	Please look at the following statements and indicate where you would place your views on this scale (1-10)? • Immigrants take jobs away from a country's citizens TO Immigrants do not take jobs away from a country's citizens • Immigrants make crime problems worse TO Immigrants do not make crime problems worse • Immigrants are a strain on a country's welfare system TO Immigrants are not a strain on a country's welfare system • It is better if immigrants maintain their distinct customs and traditions TO It is better if immigrants do not maintain their distinct customs and traditions



Freedom

Support for the idea that everyone can live their lives the way they choose, without pressure or coercion from authorities or other people.

>> *Example teaching strategy: "Opinion Line"*

Concept for implementation in education	Tangible measurement
Feeling of free choice (feeling of having completely free choice and control over your own life)	Some people feel they have completely free choice and control over their lives, and other people feel that what they do has no real effect on what happens to them. Please indicate how much freedom of choice and control you feel you have over the way your life turns out? Answer on scale (1) none at all – (10) a great deal
Permissiveness (justification of homosexuality, abortion, divorce, and euthanasia)	Please tell me for each of the following whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between: • Homosexuality • Abortion • Divorce • Euthanasia (terminating the life of the incurably sick) Answer on scale (1) never be justified – (10) always justified



Equality

Support for the idea that all individuals have equal rights before the law

>> *Example teaching strategy: "Four Corners"*



Concept for implementation in education	Tangible measurement
Gender equality attitudes in public life (evaluating the capabilities of men compared to women in public positions)	For each of the following statements I read out, can you tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each. Do you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, or (4) strongly disagree? • On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do • A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl • On the whole, men make better business executives than women do
Gender equality attitudes in private life (evaluating work-family obligations of mothers)	For each of the following statements I read out, can you tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each. Do you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, or (4) strongly disagree? • When a mother works for pay, the children suffer • A job is alright but what most women really want is a home and children • All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job • A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family

Solidarity

the willingness to help others or to support the group one belongs to, without immediately getting something in return

>> *Example teaching strategy: "Head Heard Hands"*

Concept for implementation in education	Tangible measurement
Spatial solidarity (feeling concerned about the living conditions of people nearby)	To what extent do you feel concerned about the living conditions of • People in your neighbourhood • The people of the region you live in • Your fellow countrymen • Europeans • All humans all over the world. Is this (1) Very much; (2) Much; (3) To a certain extent; (4) Not so much; (5) Not at all?
Social solidarity (feeling concerned about the living conditions of people in need)	To what extent do you feel concerned about the living conditions of the following groups living in your country: • Elderly people • Unemployed people • Immigrants • The sick and disabled Is this (1) Very much; (2) Much; (3) To a certain extent; (4) Not so much; (5) Not at all?



Justice

Supporting the idea of fairness in the way that people are treated by law and government

>> *Example teaching strategy: "Values Compass"*



Concept for implementation in education	Tangible measurement
Trust in justice institutions (confidence in the justice system, the policy and civil services)	How much confidence you do have in: • The justice system • The police • Civil services Is it (1) a great deal, (2) quite a lot, (3) not very much or (4) none at all?
Acceptance of violations against the public good (justification of harmful public actions)	Please tell me for each of the following whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between: • Claiming state benefits which you are not entitled to • Cheating on tax if you have the chance • Accepting a bribe in the course of their duties • Avoiding fair on public transport Answer on scale (1) never be justified – (10) always justified

9.2 Overview 2: Macro conditions impacting European Values

The second overview provides key macro conditions that impact the European Values of democracy, pluralism, freedom, equality, solidarity, and justice. These macro conditions (country characteristics) can be grouped in economic conditions, historical and cultural conditions, and other conditions. The overview shows how they are linked to populations' support for the six values and gives some examples on how to measure these country characteristics.

Macro conditions	Higher (+) or lower (-) support for European Values
Economic conditions	
Economic affluence (e.g. GDP per capita)	Democracy (+) Pluralism (+) Freedom (+) Equality (+) Solidarity (+)
Economic growth (e.g. growth in GDP per capita)	Pluralism (+)
Pluralism (+)	Pluralism (-) Solidarity (-)
Income inequality (e.g. GINI coefficient)	Solidarity (-)
Historical and cultural conditions	
Democratic tradition (e.g. years in democracy)	Democracy (+) Justice (+)
Communist legacy (e.g. part of Soviet Union)	Justice (-)
Secularization (e.g. proportion of non-religious people in population)	Freedom (+) Equality (+)

Religious diversity (e.g. PEW religious diversity index)	Pluralism (-)
Other conditions	
Functioning of democracy (e.g. EIU democracy index)	Democracy (+) Justice (+)
Level of corruption (e.g. transparency corruption index)	Democracy (-) Justice (-)
Large outgroups in society (e.g. proportion of migrants)	Pluralism (-) Solidarity (-)
Female labour participation (e.g. female labour participation rate)	Equality (+)
Social-democratic welfare state (e.g. SE, NO, DK, IS, FI)	Solidarity (-)

9.3 Overview 3: Individual conditions impacting European Values

Finally, the third overview provides key individual conditions that impact the European Values of democracy, pluralism, freedom, equality, solidarity, and justice. It shows how people's characteristics are linked to individual support for these values. Moreover, aggregating these individual conditions demonstrates how the composition of a country's population can influence the support for these values, e.g. how a population of more highly educated is related to higher levels of support for democracy in that country.

Individual conditions	Higher (+) or lower (-) support for European Values
Level of income	Democracy (+) Pluralism (+) Freedom (+) Solidarity (-) Justice (+)
Level of education	Democracy (+) Pluralism (+) Freedom (+) Equality (+) Solidarity (+) Justice (+)
Unemployed (compared to working)	Pluralism (-) Solidarity (+)
Living in urban areas (compared to living in rural areas)	Freedom (+) Equality (+)
Religious (compared to non-religious)	Democracy (+) Pluralism (-) Freedom (-) Equality (-) Solidarity (+) Justice (-)

Older (compared to younger)	Democracy (-) Pluralism (+) Freedom (-) Equality (-) Solidarity (+) Justice (+)
Women (compared to men)	Democracy (-) Pluralism (+) Equality (+) Solidarity (+) Justice (-)
Married (compared to not-married)	Solidarity (+)

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