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ENCLAVING OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE AFTERMATH OF PEREAT MUNDUS. THE DYNAMICS OF EUROPEAN VALUES IN POLISH SOCIETY

Jacek H. Kołodziej*

ABSTRACT

Values have been defined as salient and lasting beliefs shared by members of a culture about what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable, useful or useless. Together with norms, they exert influence on a person's behaviour by providing broad guidelines in all situations. Since 19th Century, various different value systems have been recognised. The main purpose of this study was to reconstruct the system of values shared by Polish society nowadays, in comparison to the system of values publicly declared by the EU leaders and institutions as the core 'European' ones. The analysis was based on a national representative survey carried out before the elections to the European Parliament in 2009 and 2014, with the aim of collecting spontaneous declarations on the meaning of European values. Afterwards, the value categorisation was made, followed by a semantic and collocation analyses to reconstruct the dynamics of the European axiology shared by Poles. The results showed that, in part, Polish value system goes hand in hand with the European normative discourse (with 'freedom to travel' at the top, and a high level of similarity encompassing the basic norms and goals like 'solidarity', 'peace', or 'security'. However, a strong devaluation tendency of once important basic norms like 'democracy', or 'tolerance' was found. The analysis led to the conclusion that the most significant patterns of change can be attributed to the process of material instrumentalisation and pragmatic approach to abstract and high European values, being slowly replaced by the need for security and material satisfaction.

Key words: European values, constitutionalisation of Europe, value theory, tyranny of values, Polish system of values, escape from freedom, Pereat Mundus

It is the paradox of human existence that man must simultaneously seek for closeness and for independence; for oneness with others and at the same time for the preservation of his uniqueness and particularity. As we have shown, the answer to this paradox – and to the moral problem of man – is productiveness.

Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself: An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics*

* Dr. hab. Jacek H. Kołodziej is Associate Professor in Political Science at the Institute of European Studies, Jagiellonian University, Garbarska 7A 31-131 Krakow, Poland, e-mail: uwkolodz@cyf-kr.edu.pl.

Introduction

Values can be understood as those goals that are followed by people for no other reason than their intrinsic worth. That are perfect values. The remaining ones are instrumental (helping to fulfil perfect goals) or utilitarian (followed because they fulfil certain needs) (Elzenberg, 2002, 2005, Kołodziej, 2011). Values are “objective” in the sense that people simply approach them as real, and try to realize what ideas and goals are the most precious. Values reveal themselves through human feelings and emotions, are carried by actions, and kept in memory within cultures. At social level, there are different systems of values because every community may have more than one ethical hierarchy. Conflicts between systems of values are “an intrinsic, irremovable element in human life” and “these collisions of values are of the essence of what they are and what we are” – wrote **Isaiah Berlin** (1979, p. 238), the philosopher famous for his pluralistic approach. He is right in the sense that systems of values are relatively stable, however at social level they are dynamic – because people must restlessly overcome serious ethical challenges and tensions (between moral systems, between groups or individuals, even between different understanding of the same value).

The aim of this study was to reconstruct the changing patterns of social and political awareness among Poles in the context of European integration fostered by the idea of the constitutionalisation of Europe based on common ‘European values’. Such reconstruction is a complex task, encompassing juxtapositioning of theoretical – axiological knowledge with empirical testing of the ways common people think about values, or realize them. To meet the first end, the concept of Nicolai Hartmann’s ‘tyranny of values’ is used, in order to discuss the nature of axiological pressure made by the proponents of closer integration of Europe. Can instrumentalisation of Western / European values lead to a better quality of European integration? Can value generalisation (in the sense proposed by Hans Joas) be a means of positive social change? That question needs a recognition of the axiological aspects as well as of the discourse of the ‘constitutionalisation of Europe’, focusing on its main arguments. The broader context is supported by the classic theory of the evolution of social system and functional differentiation of society (Parsons, 1971).

The second dimension is triggered by the need to empirical knowledge – a true quest for the meaning of ‘European values’ among Polish society. One of the important issues here concerns the differences between public, normative

axiological declarations of European leaders, and common, popular knowledge shared by people. Are 'Western' values common to the patterns of Polish thinking? In what way are these European normative power labels accustomed and internalised – in the context of Europe approaching financial, political and societal crises? To learn the answers for these questions the study reaches for the methodology of value reconstruction and understanding by the respondents of national in-depth survey developed by the Press Research Centre in Kraków (Pisarek, 2002; Kołodziej, 2011). The results (open records with verbal declarations) were subject to further semantic and collocational analysis in order to reconstruct the shifts of meaning and understanding of values by Poles. The data have been collected shortly before the elections to the European Parliament in 2009 and 2014 – in the heated period of political campaigns.

1 Tyranny of values

The premise that values make relatively stable systems which are in permanent conflicts according to different stimulants does not mean that people would not try to construct long lasting value systems' generalisations. The crux of the matter is that it is almost impossible to realize social or cultural values detached from their observable (or assumed) influence. At this point social scientists form different positions. Some follow the ideal-objectivistic path of phenomenologists and claim that values exist objectively, so we may only try to reconstruct their perfect order. Following this option we may build a synthesis of, for example, "Western system of values" in order to propose most positive scenarios for social integration. On the other hand, one may observe that history of humankind is a history of arbitrary imposing certain value generalisations by one group of people upon the others. That observation paved the way for the most radical axiological concept called "the tyranny of values".

"Tyranny of values" is a phrase first used by **Nicolai Hartmann**, and corroborated by **Carl Schmitt** who argued that "values must continuously valueate", "must bring its influence to bear" – because "virtues are practiced, norms are applied, orders are executed, but values are set up and enacted. Whoever asserts a value must bring its influence to bear" (Schmitt, 1996). **Hartmann** pointed out that the peculiarity of values is that they tend

“to raise itself to the position of sole tyrant of the whole human ethos (...). This tyranny of values appears clearly in the one-sided types of the prevailing morality, in the familiar intolerance shown to an alien morality, and moreover, it succeeds in winning over individually any person to a single value. Thus, there is a fanaticism of justice (*fiat justitia pereat mundus*¹), which is opposed not only to love, to say nothing of charity, but essentially also to all the superior values” (after: Schmitt, 1996).

Carl Schmitt develops this concept by stressing that values are used by people in the context of power, and when they are used, it is always done from a certain point of view, because ethics of values, in his opinion, is “a point ethics”:

“Whoever sets a value, takes position against a disvalue by that very action. The boundless tolerance and the neutrality of the standpoints and viewpoints turn themselves very quickly into their opposite, into enmity, as soon as the enforcement is carried out in earnest. The valuation pressure of the value is irresistible, and the conflict of the valuator, devaluator, revaluator, and implementor, inevitable”, writes Schmitt (1996, p. 6).

In **Schmitt's** radical concept, every effort to turn to axiological level in social conflicts is equal to – what **Max Weber** called – “a point of attack” from one's perspective against the meaningful others' point of view. Important is that every conflict at axiological level has the form of a fight between good and bad, between our values, and the negative values of the others. In consequence, axiological conflicts must always be aggressive and total, because values are not negotiated. **Schmitt** concludes: “the struggle between valuator and devaluator ends, on both sides, with the sounding of the dreadful *Pereat Mundus*” (ibidem).

Regardless of how radical and/or cynical is the above concept, it sheds some light on the very nature of every value generalisation. Values are often used to legitimise own group identity with a parallel de-legitimation of other groups, and often are constructed as universal hierarchy – a system of most important goals set for all mankind. This process may have different intensity, ranging from the highest level of imposing universal values by force and

¹ „Let there be justice though the world perish“.

ideological impact, down to the level of dialogue and negotiations of all sides on a common, generalised system. In spite of the level of coercive measures, even in a situation of “building an ideal community” based on a given system of values, the context of symbolic tyranny shall always prevail in one form, or another, in every case when somebody tries to construct and impose “common” system of values. Also in the context of European integration, where the reconstructed system of European values is legitimised by the idea of common good and prosperity, it must be granted that because of sheer axiological circumstances that system would have to face social opposition, if not hostility.

In this text, I am focusing on the dialectic tensions, which take place between the process of constructing and implementing the ideal system of European values by the EU elites, and the process of values realisation and utilisation by European societies. These two processes are complimentary and complex, thus quite difficult for empirical approach, so the text assumes some necessary limitations: it is reduced to the case study of Poland, and narrowed to the following question: To what extent systems of values – this one constructed and generalised at pan-European level, and that one, differentiated and realised within Polish culture, shared by ordinary Poles and Europeans are, in the effect of the constitutionalisation process, corresponding and coherent? And, if they are different, what these differences point at? I am observing this process mainly through the concept of value communication, because it can basically be understood as such: the communication between elites and societies, continuing at different levels, which cannot be reduced either to top-down propaganda of European political integration, or to common societal dimension of axiological experiences. The first cannot live without the other.

2 Constitutionalisation of Europe as value generalisation

According to the classic theory of the evolution of social system (Parsons, 1971) value generalisation process is closely combined with functional differentiation of society (as an outcome, or a tension between differentiations and the factors of generalisation) – what can be attributed to any unification process, e.g. European integration. In his interpretation of **Parsons’** theory **Hans Joas** is stressing that the idea of value generalisation is that “different value traditions can indeed produce a more general, mostly also more abstract, understanding of their common features without losing their roots in the specific traditions and experiences to which actors feel affectively committed” (Joas,

2008, p. 95). Contrary to a popular thesis of **Jürgen Habermas** (1985), that social integration is achieved through rational discourse and, thus, reduction of emotional components, **Joas** claims that a dynamic process of communication about values and mutual modifications – which is the crux of the described phenomenon – must have emotional components, and does not have to be totally agreed upon, like legal norms. It is always a matter of reaching something which is at once “more and less than the result of rational discourse: not a full consensus, but a dynamic mutual modification and stimulation toward renewal of one’s own tradition” (Joas, 2008, p. 94). It can be best understood by the example of the discussion upon the drafting of the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, one of the most “consequential processes of value generalisations in modern history” (2008, p. 95). **Joas** argues that “[p]roponents of the most diverse value traditions came together, united in their rejection of Nazism and Fascism, and formulated a declaration that does not have one rationalist justification but presents itself as the shared articulation of all the value traditions that had been part of the process” (2008, p. 95).

The idea of “constitutionalisation of Europe” is another great example of value system’ generalisation effort. Although it had not been much sophisticated in the matter of pan-European communication and promotion, and became overshadowed by a series of deficits and crises of European integration, it is still an on-going and significant process, which was originated by the EU elites in the name of institutional reform, and found its continuation in the form of divergent flows of communications (reflexions, discussions, declarations). Strengthening European integration by institutional reform that would go beyond market and economy into the field of common European identity dates back to the beginning of 21st Century. The “Debate on the future of the European Union” was initiated in Nice in 2000, and initially expressed in the Laeken Declaration of 15 December 2001. One of the main aims was “constitutionalisation of the Treaties” – an idea to work up a common set of norms and rules for European institutions, based on solid generalisation of European values, which would be shared by Europeans. The process started in December 2001 with establishing the Convention on the Future of Europe, an institutional innovation, charged with channelling a debate and “paving the way for a constitution for the people of Europe”. Part of the process was opening into European public sphere to start wide discussions about the future of EU. A particular way of axiological deliberations was taking place within “reflexion groups on the future of Europe”. Special role played the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi,

who in 2003 asked the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna to organise the Reflection Group on The Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe, following the vision of Europe as “a coherent whole, based on shared values, rules and institutions”, “the common set of ideas and beliefs that constitute its identity, and the ways in which European values could be reflected in the social, economic, legal and institutional frameworks of the enlarged Union” (IWM, 2003). This initial wave of constitutionalisation of Europe was supported by European liberal and democratic elites with a symbolic peak made by famous manifesto wrote by **Jacques Derrida** and **Jürgen Habermas** in “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” and “Libération” (2003), where they claimed that the US intervention in Iraq finally helped to realize European identity based on non-aggression, secularisation, human dignity, the ethos for social security and protection, diminishing role of national states, and future-oriented post-national way of facing political challenges (Derrida, Habermas, 2003).

Constitutionalisation of Europe has been a waving process, with its ups and downs, and a turning point in the years 2005-2007, stopped by the negative outcomes of constitutional referenda in France and Netherlands, which triggered another wave of reflexions about the future. The turning point proved to be a significant disjunction between two major paths of communication about the European values in the following years. The first may be called values-centred communication about common European identity. It is consequently following the visionary concepts of European *dēmos* with European collective identity, based on the premise of European civilisation, common experience and wisdom, has become perpetual and abiding and as a discourse is still present.

Typical examples of this discourse are rooted in the Constitution for Europe draft prepared by the European Convention before July 2003 with particular relevance of the Preamble and its different versions (Wilkanowicz, 2003), the values enlisted in Constitutional first chapters and the Charter of Fundamental Rights – all of them focusing on the axiological synthesis for European identity – the core for European value generalisation. The on-going debate led to some important and visionary activities (Declaration on the occasion of the 50th anniversary..., 2007, Project Europe 2010) and the next waves of reflexions about the future of Europe. In this discourse perfect values prevail. Usually they are summoned in quite a ceremonial way (e.g. Manuel Barroso talking about “four pillars of Europe”: peace, justice, freedom and solidarity, at official 25th Anniversary of Nobel Prize winning by **Lech Wałęsa**, at 6 December 2009 in Gdańsk). Among the main keywords of this discourse one would find: freedom

and liberty, equality, peace, human dignity, tolerance, justice, solidarity, democracy and the rule of law.

The second path can be called norms-centred communication about the legitimisation of European Union. That current is marked by the institutionalisation of values. Triggered by the outcomes of “reflexions”, led to values instrumentalisation within normative order. This happens when perfect values (like *freedom*), instrumental values (like *human rights*) and Union goals (like *peace*) were joined into the normative order in a legal act like the Reform (Lisbon) Treaty of 19 October 2007. Both currents seem to be complimentary with regard to EU regulations and functioning, but at the level of axiology there is one substantial difference: this discourse works on the assumption that at the pragmatic level European values should speak through norms which – contrary to values – can be discussed, negotiated, and arbitrarily changed. **Justine Lacroix** expresses her concerns about it when she writes:

“In that respect, ‘being a European’ does not mean creating a new positive and singular social identity, but rather trying to define a locus of communication and mutual recognition between distinct reflexive national identities. Put differently, ‘Europe’ is not an end in itself ...” (Lacroix, 2009, p. 74).

According to this line of argument, Constitutionalisation of Europe is mainly a process limited to operations on particular value representations – Constitutional norms. Treated as norms, values are detracted from their traditional, historical and cultural ties, to the form of generalised standards which are set down and arranged in the EU reforming documents in the following patterns: Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (“universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity”; “the principles of democracy and the rule of law”, “freedom, security and justice”); Lisbon Treaty on Reforming European Union, Preamble (“freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law”, “the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and of the rule of law”, “the solidarity between their peoples”, “peace, security and progress”, “the free movement of persons”, the safety and security of their peoples”, “freedom, security and justice”).

3 Empirical quest for European values: need for insight knowledge

Since 2007, both discourses have been present in European public sphere, partially as a result of EU promotion activities, and partially as an echo of multi-layered debates originated by European symbolic elites. “The EU point of attack” was marked by rational arguments of a necessary next step of integration for the sake of better European future – but the whole EU communication left a lot to be desired. It missed basic justifications as well as the inherent logic of axiological claims, so at the end of the day both discourses were interwoven into some form of naïve inducement to build a new European society with common identity, “sharing a peaceful future based on common values”. Initially, “the point of attack” was addressed at the Western values in the US aggressive version (Derrida, Habermas, 2003), and later at those social groups of Europeans who rejected the idea of further integration. In consequence, global economic factors, financial and Euro crisis, national/populist rising that has been crossing Western world, and other structural processes of social and political change brought both the optimistic fast-track and direction of change into serious question.

For many reasons it is wise to gather scientific knowledge about values, particularly these important for us, Europeans – no question about it. At the point of view of the discourses providers, the elites – we can catch and describe the content of EU documents and declarations. They include sets of preferred values, organised in specific hierarchies, and they say a lot about their authors’ axiological imagination and visions. Definitely, they do not say all about what common Europeans think and feel, but we may assume major concordance between elites and ordinary people, at least at the general level of positive and “Western” values. The Eurobarometer surveys, run by the European Commission since 1973, provide basic empirical knowledge on European public opinion and people’s attitudes on major questions, including axiological aspects. At relatively general level of abstraction we may learn, for example, that the “most positive result of the EU” are: “peace, free movement of people, goods and services, Euro, student mobility programmes” (Public Opinion in the EU, 2015b); “values best representing EU” are: “peace, democracy, human rights, rule of law, respect for other cultures” (The Values of Europeans, 2012), “personal values of Europeans” are: “human rights, peace, respect for human rights, democracy, individual freedom, solidarity, tolerance, respect for the

others” (Europeans in 2014, 2014). Standard Eurobarometers give some comparative information at the level of value generalisations, and Special Barometers – some more insight into the nature of personal values and European identity.

Quantitative Eurobarometers, however useful and productive, are limited to skin-deep observations as far as axiological perspective is concerned. Important is that these results (and their convincing visualisations) immediately after publication become part of the European elites’ discourses, so the circle of production – interpretation – reproduction etc. of the EU axiological discourse is spinning round.

Perception of values is a complex epistemological process, and every single value is a complex idea, let alone the entire dynamic system, supposedly shared by European societies. There are significant differences between the values projected / assigned (e.g. by European Union), and values felt, realised and followed by people. They seem to be in a constant change, and the essence of this process is the matter of systemic bargaining between three processual logics: value instrumentalisation (shaping relational values, derived from the absolute ones), value utilitarianisation (shaping values fulfilling particular needs), value universalisation (the result of conflicts between different systems). Every value change is vulnerable to contextual factors (social, political, ideological) and, besides, it was observed that axiological changes occur initially at the level of semantic aspects and their swift transformations, rather than whole values replacement. The way people understand the meaning and connotations of every value is quite often much more important than a simple act of selecting one value or another on a list proposed by coders.

Because of these circumstances, in the research developed by the Press Research Centre in Kraków in 1990., and continued by myself at the Institute of European Studies at the Jagiellonian University in 2004-2016, we have been trying to gain possible wide knowledge, encompassing spontaneous value recollection and recognition by Polish society (representative, comparative surveys), value understanding (semantic analysis), and evolution of values semantic aspects (comparative analysis of semantic fields and collocations). In the following pages I will confine to this part of findings which correspond with the question I posed earlier: To what extent the system of European values recalled and realised by Polish society is coherent with the system assumed in EU leading documents?

Judging by the data collected in two national surveys we may reconstruct basic quantitative characteristics. First conclusion is that a slight majority of Poles in 2009 (55.3 per cent) and in 2014 (59 per cent!) either did not understand the notion of a European value at all, or could not say / did not want to say anything about it. The rising share of negative answers is meaningful. However, categorisation of the positive answers leads to conclusion that Polish hierarchy of European values has a lot in common with the EU normative discourse, intertwined with the Western axiological order. Therefore, it looks like Polish society has been split into two almost equal halves: the EU-aware part, and the indifferent, silent rest. High percentage of “unaware respondents” is as meaningful as the high percentage of respondents who cared for the answers. Table 1 shows first 20 categories in 2009, and table 2 – in 2014 (per cent share for all respondents).

Table 1: Verbal representations for European values in Poland (June 2009)

	Verbal categories of European values	NN	Per cent share in 5 series of declarations	Summary per cent for all 5 series
1	Freedom to travel	261	5.00%	25.10%
2	Work, job	154	3.00%	14.80%
3	Freedom of speech	110	2.30%	10.60%
4	Freedom, liberty	109	2.20%	10.50%
5	Tolerance	103	2.00%	10.00%
6	Community	96	1.90%	9.20%
7	Democracy	96	1.90%	9.20%
8	Solidarity	82	1.60%	7.90%
9	Equality	79	1.50%	7.60%
10	Common market	77	1.50%	7.40%
11	Material satisfaction	70	1.40%	6.70%
12	Agreement, consent	67	1.30%	6.50%
13	Security	60	1.10%	5.70%
14	Freedom of religion	59	1.10%	5.70%
15	Fairness	54	1.00%	5.20%

16	Culture, civilisation	50	1.00%	4.80%
17	Community of norms	50	1.00%	4.80%
18	Knowledge	46	0.90%	4.50%
19	Equal rights	43	0.80%	4.10%
20	Common currency	38	0.80%	3.70%

Own source

Table 2: Verbal representations for European values in Poland (June 2014)

	Verbal categories of European values	N	Per cent share in 5 series of declarations	Summary per cent for all 5 series
1	Freedom to travel	240	4.70%	23.00%
2	Work, job	150	2.90%	14.30%
3	Common market	138	2.60%	13.10%
4	Freedom, liberty	127	2.45%	12.10%
5	Solidarity	124	2.43%	11.90%
6	Security	123	2.42%	11.80%
7	Community	78	1.50%	7.50%
8	Material satisfaction	75	1.40%	7.00%
9	Social care	71	1.40%	6.80%
10	Knowledge	62	1.20%	5.80%
11	Common policies	56	1.10%	5.40%
12	Tolerance	52	1.00%	5.00%
13	Trust	48	0.90%	4.60%
14	Equal rights	48	0.90%	4.60%
15	Equality	47	0.90%	4.50%
16	Freedom of speech	46	0.90%	4.40%
17	Common currency	45	0.90%	4.30%
18	Agreement, consent	39	0.70%	3.70%
19	Material equality	34	0.70%	3.30%
20	Democracy	31	0.60%	3.00%

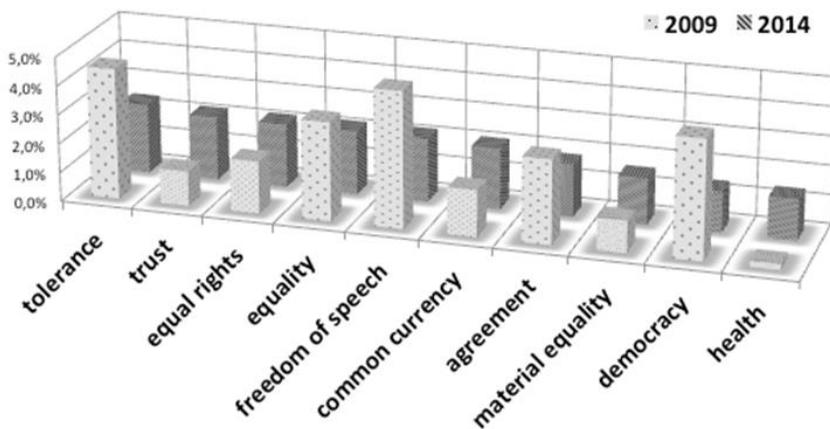
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Part of the reconstructed hierarchies can easily be attributed to the message of European normative discourse, and part to Polish peculiarities. It proved to be a fact that answer to the question “What does EU mean to you personally?” in Eurobarometers, and top of Polish hierarchy, is the same: “freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU” (Europeans in 2014, p. 42) has been a paragon declaration of all Europeans for long time, with “the Schengen” as utilitarian personal symbol of the relevancy for the whole system. It is important to realize that “freedom to travel” is higher valued by Europeans than “peace”, “democracy”, or “economic prosperity”) (*Ibidem*). The way this instrumental value is incorporated into the system of Polish values is also typical, because it is understood as one of main aspects of the notion of “freedom / liberty” – the essential Polish political value, a real “glue” for the whole system. After all, such close functional interconnections between freedom / liberty, and some other social values is shown by some key thinkers, e.g. **Karl Popper** in his “Open Society and its Enemies”, where he wrote; “We must plan for freedom, and not only for security, if for no other reason than only freedom can make security more secure”... (Popper, 1947, p. 182).

As already suggested, when compared with Eurobarometer’s data Polish value hierarchy shows relatively high level of similarity with EU normative message in the following norms and goals: “solidarity”, “peace”, “security”, “equality”, “equal rights”, “social care”, and “democracy”. This proves that either part of EU strategic communication is successful in Poland, or that Polish genuine system of values is consistent, in this part, with the EU norms and goals.

In spite of that, Polish data reveal many meaningful signs of value system transformation in the dynamics between 2009 and 2014. The first important tendency concerns major devaluation of selected instrumental values, traditionally belonging to the repertoire or EU basic norms, like “democracy”, consensualism, “freedom of speech”, “equality” and “tolerance”. It may be called the devaluation of European norms (see the graph 1 below, showing the second ten of hierarchy with selected values).

Graph 1: Devaluation of EU norms in Poland between 2009 and 2014 (values 11-20)



Own source

Second tendency is complimentary to the first in the way it concerns the re-valuation process. This argument is supported by an outcome of semantic analysis of selected verbal categories, and by collocation analysis of the respondents' answers. The analysis revealed some significant patterns of change. "Health", "trust" and "material equality" (from the second ten) and, most of all, "work, job", "security" and "material satisfaction" (first ten, graph 2) make important trace for European values understood only in pragmatic categories of material satisfaction and security assurance. Such values as "solidarity", "community", "common market", "knowledge", even "freedom" are re-validated into the instrumental ones. Once being absolute values, like "freedom" or "knowledge", they have become utilitarian for common material needs.

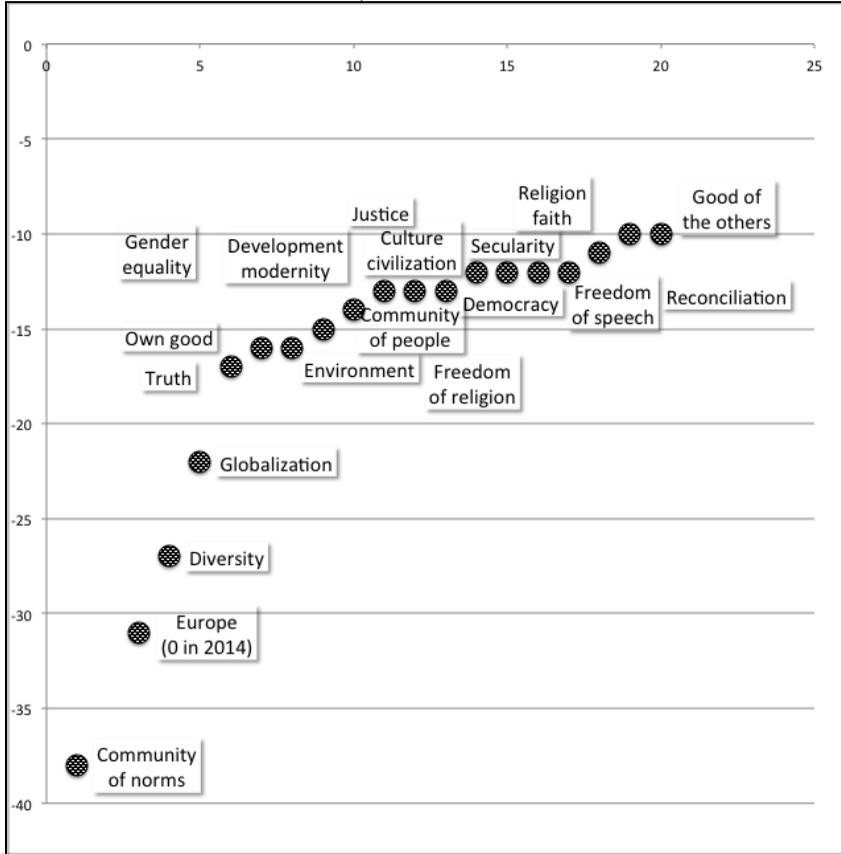
Graph 2: Dynamics of European values in Poland 2009-2014 (values 1-11)



Legend: G=Goals; I=Instruments; V= Absolute Value
Own source

Graph 3 reveals more details. Comparing the ranking lists of 2009 and 2014 helps to highlight the most dramatic changes. Starting from a decline list we can see that among the group of mostly depreciated ones there are such categories as, first, “community of norms”, “community of people”, “diversity” or “Europe”, second, “truth”, “freedom of religion”, “freedom of speech”, and third, “globalisation” and “culture and civilisation” – to name the significant markers. Why did they lose their gravity? It is difficult to form a close conclusion because of the on-going nature of the described process, so hypothetically, it can be concluded that they are signs for Polish’ turning back to Europe defined as “alien” cultural community (first), for Polish tiredness of perfect and abstract values because of the rising individualism, pragmatic stance and material orientation (second), and finally for the renaissance of Polish parochialism or separatism, set against global or external factors (third). These three tendencies mark the essence of the value system decomposition in Poland before the second half of 2015.

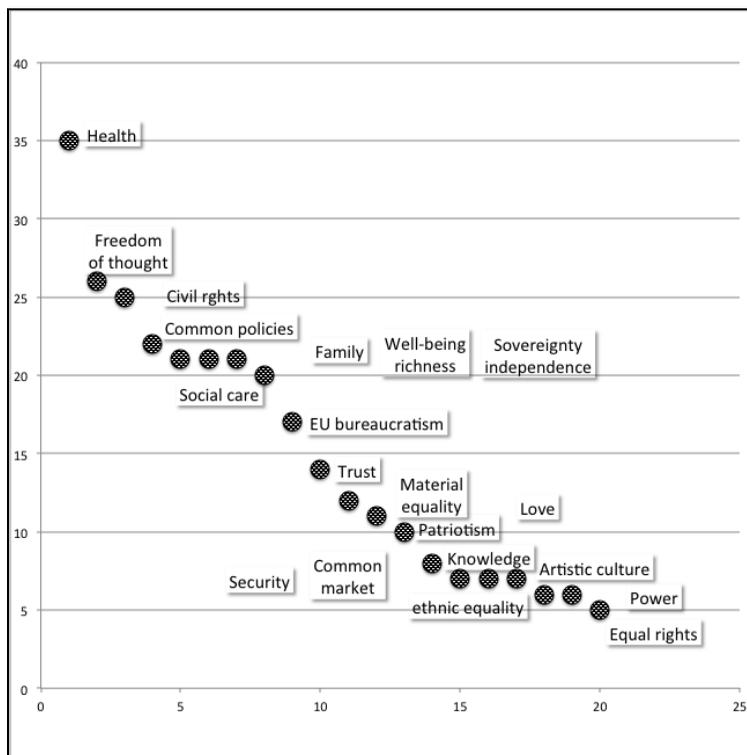
Graph 3: Dynamics of European values in Poland: falling values (rank difference 2014-2009, whole list of 146 values)



Own source

While the above graphs give some insight into the downscale processes of devaluation, the next two should give some more information on the opposite side – the values of highest increase during these 5 years. Graph 4 focuses on some of them, starting with the outstanding first group marked by “health” and “family”, the second – marked by “freedom of thought”, “civil rights”, and “independence”, and the third – paradoxically marked by “well-being”, “richness”, “common policies” and “social care”.

Graph 4: Dynamics of European values in Poland: rising values (rank difference 2014-2009, whole list of 146 values)



Own source

The confirmed tendency of rising individualism of Poles, understood in accordance with a level of individual strategies to organise one’s life (Czapiński, Panek, 2015), is supported by the premium position of “health”, and high position of “family” in the graphs. It has additional flavour because of another Polish feature – an outstanding, at European scale, low level of individual, social and institutional trust (ibidem). In this context, the second group of markers is meaningful because it confirms an old feature of Polish political culture: the noble ethos of forming self-sufficient enclaves, built around the principle of noble dignity and privileges, and often set against the political community. Independence from other enclaves and external authorities was strengthened by a strong sense of individual liberties, and the right to veto political decisions.

The third group of markers, however not quite logic with the idea of an enclave, also corresponds with a feature of Polish noble ethos of 17th – 18th centuries, and additionally with one of the features of Polish peasant culture of 18th – 19th centuries: the restitutionary culture based on claims and pretensions against those who have power. This logic can be simply expressed as: “We need some goods and high status – we stand on our dignity – thus we deserve what we want – so you are obliged to help us”. These cultural patterns, after some hundreds of years still seem to make an important underflow of popular thinking in Poland. Cruel Polish history of 18th – 20th century, and particularly the World War II triggered this thinking off by adding the figure of Poland – a victim country, “destroyed by neighbours and betrayed by the West”. This complex undercurrent explains modern Polish restitutionary and redress political culture, expressed by some populist and radical groups. In a way, it also can be found in the paradoxical claim of being fully sovereign and independent and, at the same time, secure, safe and affluent at “Western level”. In this thinking the EU is metaphorically reduced to a rich and powerful “uncle from abroad”, whose only role is to care for us and pay us visits with substantial gifts.

The factual tendency to focus on individual entrepreneurship and of narrowing social trust – at the cost of growing distance to civic involvement and public activity in Polish society – is strongly upheld by the results of other research (Czapiński, Panek, 2015).

Table 3: Most important private values in Poland - conditions for a better and happy life

Value name	1992 N=3402	1995 N=3020	1997 N=2094	2000 N=6632	2003 N=9397	2005 N=8560
Money	37.2	36.1	39.3	39.2	33.3	32.9
Children	52.3	51.0	50.3	43.4	43.3	45.1
Happy marriage	56.3	55.9	58.8	58.0	53.7	55.6
Job	26.6	29.6	28.9	30.8	35.5	34.7
Friends	4.7	5.6	5.0	4.6	5.9	8.0
God	16.7	16.4	15.6	16.0	15.4	15.6
Cheerfulness	8.5	9.0	7.9	7.8	8.2	9.1
Fairness, honesty	12.3	10.0	9.0	8.8	9.0	10.2

Value name	1992 N=3402	1995 N=3020	1997 N=2094	2000 N=6632	2003 N=9397	2005 N=8560
Respect and generosity	9.0	7.4	6.0	7.8	5.9	6.7
Freedom, independence	3.6	3.8	1.9	3.0	3.3	3.5
Health	59.6	59.6	60.2	62.9	63.7	64.9
Education	1.9	3.7	4.2	4.6	5.1	6.0
Strong personality	4.0	4.1	5.5	3.4	4.5	4.9
Other	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.7	1.2

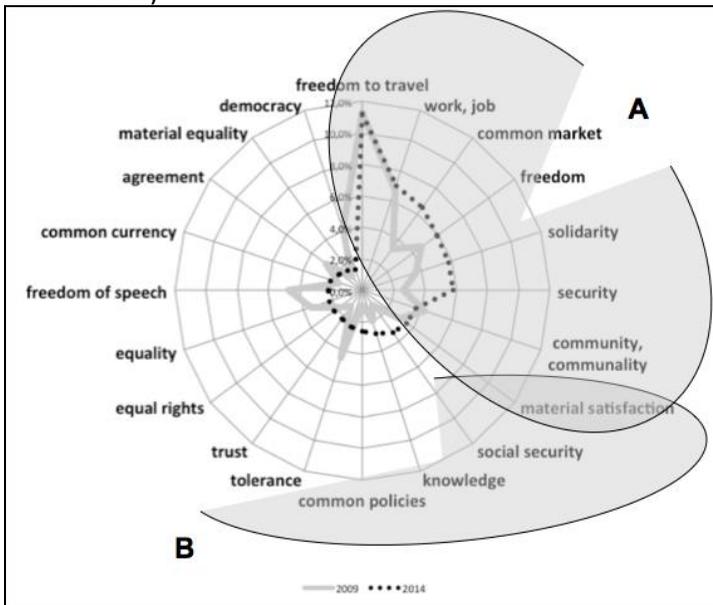
Value name	2007 N=12365	2009 N=23784	2011 N=26221	2013 N=26248	2015 N=21950
Money	30.7	30.3	28.2	29.0	28.3
Children	45.9	48.8	47.6	46.1	48.7
Happy marriage	55.8	56.6	53.4	50.3	50.3
Job	30.2	31.9	30.7	32.1	30.0
Friends	8.6	10.4	10.4	10.6	11.6
God	15.1	15.4	13.3	12.9	13.1
Cheerfulness	9.5	10.7	10.2	9.2	9.5
Fairness, honesty	9.7	11.1	9.9	9.4	9.9
Respect and generosity	6.9	8.4	7.1	6.7	7.2
Freedom, independence	4.1	4.7	4.4	4.9	6.0
Health	65.1	67.8	64.1	65.3	67.0
Education	6.2	6.3	5.6	5.8	5.2
Strong personality	5.0	5.8	5.3	5.8	6.3
Other	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8

Source: Czapiński, Panek, 2015, p. 255

Graphs 1-4 showed selected tendencies occurring at societal level, in the context of European values, like the devaluation of certain norms and main European values, revaluation of certain values into pragmatic and utilitarian ones, alienation from European identity values and rising positions of individual values combined with self-sufficiency and self-reliance. The table 3 presents data at the level of “private values” (psychologically realised, main human needs – conditions for a good life). All these results clearly show that most important is building individual happiness, based on material aims (“health”, “money” and “job”), and realised within a family (“children” and “marriage”) as the best *locus*, shelter and elementary enclave for Poles.

However, what about the European community, indicated earlier in the context of EU normative discourse, present in the initial hierarchy of values (table 1 and 2)? How can we explain the two tendencies that seem to be contradicting? To look for an answer, in the next and last step of analysis it was decided to look at the whole system, particularly on the differences between 2009 and 2014. The reconstructed systemic transformations are presented in graphs 5 and 6.

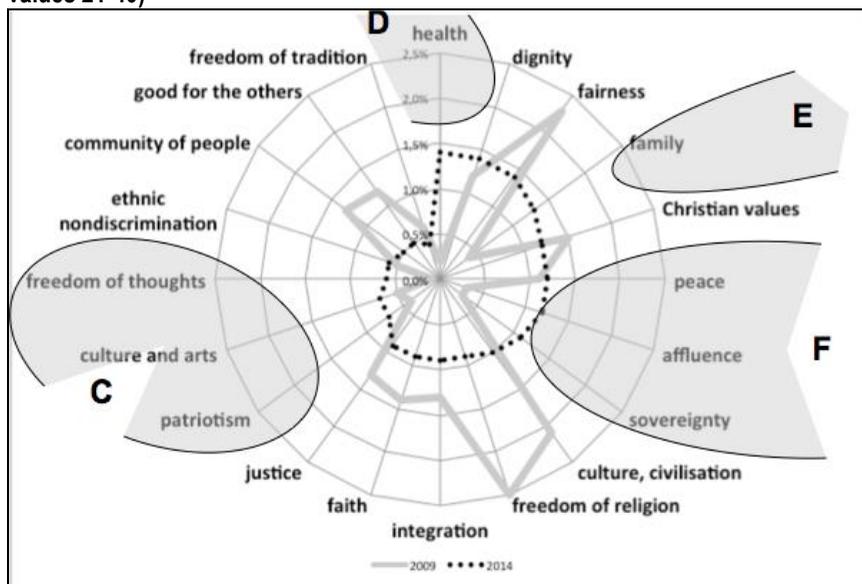
Graph 5: Dynamics of European values in Poland 2009-2014 (systemic differences, first 20 values)



Own source

Graphs 5 and 6 role is to present the reconstructed values agglomerations in their neighbouring positions (according to ranks differences), with particular focus on the rising numbers. Everywhere dotted lines are extending beyond the solid ones, one may observe such groupings. In many cases, values formed their neighbouring positions because they were jointly listed by respondents in their consecutive five declarations, but this element of analysis is skipped here.

Graph 6: Dynamics of European values in Poland 2009-2014 (systemic differences, values 21-40)



Own source

Both graphs 5 and 6 show some value groupings (marked by the grey line excessive position), which express the direction and strength of systemic transformation. Some of them were highlighted to demonstrate meaningful agglomerations. Working at merely hypothetical level, and trying to find some features corresponding with former arguments, rather than opening another chapter of analysis, we may assume that the following six factors explain and show main regularities of Polish axiological system:

- (A) top European values organised around freedom, and realised in the very pragmatic context of Europe as labour market, peace provider, and security assurance;

- (B) Europe as a community in a restricted, material sense;
- (C) Europe as the significant other for the Polish national enclave based on patriotism and independence;
- (D) most important private value regardless European contexts;
- (E) most important private enclave, the *locus* and shelter;
- (F) Polish dilemma to be with / not to be with European community, based on the contradiction between belonging (peace and affluence) and independence (sovereignty).

4 Conclusion

The reconstructed system of values is based on empirical data gathered in Poland in 2009 and 2014, so it does not reflect the aftermath crisis of the EU. Regardless of this fact, the reconstructed system in many ways anticipates the forthcoming events. Some of the frightening tendencies which happened later, like the grow of populist distrust to elites and European authorities, parochial drift for exclusiveness, disappointment with liberal democracy, opening for authoritarian solutions, are in concordance with the reconstructed system's direction of change. Among them, the tendency to prefer "independence" to "belonging" has taken the winning position, what was definitely proved by the results of the Polish presidential and parliamentary elections in May / October 2015.

The years 2015-2016 have been a follow-up of the systemic decomposition scenario. Law and Justice (PiS) which won both elections under populist slogan "We'll make it" ("Damy radę") founded its politics on the idea of rebuilding the "completely ruined" state from fundamentals, and regaining control over all possible political and economic resources. Its political narrative has been focusing on sovereignty and independence, recalculation of the sense of belonging to the EU, what is accompanied by a crawling replacement of liberal constitutional democracy by a system close to authoritarian republic. The crux of this political devolution can be symbolically shown at the example of the words spoken by the newly elected President **Andrzej Duda**, absolutely loyal to the ruling party. In his TV "message for Easter" (broadcast on March 28th, 2016) he said:

"I believe that by remembering the Past, in order to make inspirations, we shall together build a better future for our Homeland. It will be based on our most important values: independence, patriotism, truth and mutual respect".

For beneficent supporters of the new era in Polish politics it is perhaps convincing to learn that “the past is safe” (because the future is not), exclusive national identity is “the only natural one” (European is false and superficial), and nationalistic patriotism is “the universal answer for all problems”. The fact that during last 10 years Polish party system evolved into the one with two strong competing groupings, supported by two substantial and mutually hostile groups of electorate, is quite important, because at the background of political conflict there has long been two oppositional visions of the world. The very conflict has had highest possible temperature, reaching families and institutions, bursting with hatred and aggression. By all means it has been fulfilling the logic of “tyranny of values” – standard and soft marketing way of competition had early been replaced by hard logic of annihilation of the opponent’s views, sometimes including the opponent himself. Part of the process grew at the level of discourse of “value destruction” – constructed around very functional and persuasive practices of negative labelling, dividing and sneering at opponents.

The very nature of this process, particularly in a wider European context of rising populism, xenophobia and authoritarian ideas calls attention to **Erich Fromm**’s idea of voluntary “escape from freedom”, and particularly to the tragic history of the 1930. (Fromm, 1941). It may shock how much **Fromm**’s analyses suit the answers for current problems, Polish and European. Looks like “escaping from values”, supported by the tendency of irrational, populist fascination of destruction, has been a recurrent (cultural and political) phenomenon in European history. Again, *Pereat Mundus* became the recipe for those who cannot bear freedom and openness. Fromm’s analysis originally concerned the development of authoritarian elites, political systems and authoritarian personality in 1930, and then, in “The Sane Society” (1956), provided humanistic antidote to authoritarian, or lost mind. **Fromm**’s humanistic lecture deeply concerns system of values’ structural mechanisms, and he is right when he assumes that freedom shall always be the essence of human being. **Fromm** believes in human beings, when he writes:

“That man can destroy life is just as miraculous a feat as that he can create it, for life is the miracle, the inexplicable. In the act of destruction, man sets himself above life; he transcends himself as a creature. Thus, the ultimate choice for a man, inasmuch as he is driven to transcend himself, is to create or to destroy, to love or to hate” (Fromm, 1956, p. 36).

The main argument is that at the beginning of 20th Century political systems were falling down and lost support because they did not give answers to

complex, unstable modernity and its challenges. Likewise, the authoritarian personality, which was a particular, social and psychological mass answer based in the illusion that it is possible to eliminate uncertainty and fear by prescribing a simple recipe of what to think and how to act. Replacement of the unknown by simplified socio-psychological constructions is always easy. It is based on “automaton conformity” with majority, and with automatic respect for a tyranny of majority values. Sheltering, a process of building safe enclaves to hide, as well as limitless imitation of majority leaders’ postulates, mark the core of this logic. It is often combined with uncritical submission to those who demonstrate power, what opens way to growing authoritarian personalities at mass scale. It is often feeding up a particular syndrome of conspiracy thinking, the need for enemies or hated others, and is blooming by appearing of charismatic and destructive leaders. One of its radical side effects may be the emergence of “paranoid personality” (Robins, Post, 1997) and paranoid logic which develops as new standard of political behaviour.

Because of the complexity of historical factors of the 1930s it is impossible to make any comparison by “cut and paste” method, but one dimension looks identical. Again, in 21st Century history is pacing up, breeding still new challenges to Europeans which hardly can cope with the present ones. Confusions, fears and hardships seem to make permanent state of mind of many Europeans. It is perhaps too banal and obvious for a conclusion but, nevertheless, it is always good to remind that to eliminate confusion and fear one has more than one strategy to choose. In 21st Century, after experiencing another hundred years of complicated European history, it is wise to admit that the second **Fromm**’s scenario, based on the metaphor of “creation”, production, “true connectedness with the others”, focusing on care, trust, responsibility, respect and knowledge etc. (1941) is something more than just an option.

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