"Science of Values and Identity in the Political Process"

Project plan

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The present document defines the work plan for the JRC project "Values and identity in the political process".

The JRC project "Values and identity in the political process" aims to develop a framework for analysing values in the political process and to improve our understanding of the values and political identities of European citizens with a view to contribute to a better design and implementation of EU policies, as well as to increasing the support for them among EU citizens.

1. BACKGROUND

Several political ideologies and worldviews currently compete in the EU, each embedding different values propositions. This value pluralism has important implications for political institutions and governance, yet it is not clear how to reconcile values in a healthy way within the democratic process and when crucial choices have to be made. Moreover, there is consensus today among analysts that political divides are ambiguous and can go along multiple axes, involving tribal clashes between different political group identities.

For example, a new form of polarisation has emerged in the EU context, with the far right opposing both centre-left and centre-right over issues related to immigration, multiculturalism, European integration and attitudes towards European values (e.g. tolerance, equality, support of the Single Market, etc.). Most far right politicians, often defined as "authoritarian populists", seem to share a worldview which openly questions certain liberal values and social cohesion in multicultural societies.

One question when we move to the EU context is to what extent the "EU values", as expressed in the Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union, defined as "common to all Member States", are "universally" endorsed and fully shared by all citizens.

Values, understood as abstract ideals that guide our behaviour and are the building blocks of our worldviews, have a central position in political decision-making, whether in elections or in policymaking and legislation.

While legislative proposals are currently deeply analysed from a cost-benefit perspective using various impact assessment frameworks, there is considerable scope to support the political process by also analysing them from the perspective of different values preferences they engage. Identifying values trade-offs and building support for a proposed solution among groups with different values preferences is central to policymaking and politics.

However, a solid theory of values would be needed in order to better incorporate the analysis of values in policymaking processes. So far, there is no general consensus

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1 See: "Understanding Our Political Nature – How to put knowledge and reason at the heart of political decision-making". Chapter 4, "Values and identity".
2 The Article 2 of the Treaty states: "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".
3 For instance: Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIA) or Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA).
among social scientists about what values are. As Loek Halman states ")(...) a main issue remains of course that a really convincing and validated theory of values has not been developed yet and that the definition of values is not agreed on. The terminological jungle remains, allowing for different interpretations and appraisals and thus different approaches to investigate them (...)"4. Already in the 1970s, there were 180 different definitions of values in scientific literature.5 For working purposes of the project, values can be defined as "the moral principles and beliefs or accepted standards of a person or social group"6, or "principles or standards of behaviour; one's judgement of what is important in life"7.

2. OVERVIEW OF DIFFERENT THEORIES RELATED TO VALUES IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Different theories have tried to understand the drivers behind human behaviour. The variety of the different theories grounded in philosophy, psychology, neuroscience and politics illustrates the challenges of defining values.

According to Abraham Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs (1954), human behaviours are motivated by the achievement of a series of un-met needs, hierarchically expressed as a pyramid with from bottom to top: 1. Physiological needs; 2. Safety needs; 3. Love and belongingness needs; 4. Esteem needs. 5. Self-actualization needs.

Value played a central role in the work of G. W. Allport (1961) who thought about personal values as a core feature of personality and "the dominating force" or "philosophy of life". The Allport-Vernon Study of Values (SOV) is one of the earliest theoretically grounded surveys measuring personal values. Its revised version measures six types of values: theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, and religious.

The social psychologist Milton Rokeach developed in 1974 the Rokeach Values Survey (RVS), a values classification instrument which asks the respondents to rank 18 Terminal Values and 18 Instrumental Values in order of importance to them.

Terminal Values8 refer to desirable end-states of existence. These are the goals that a person would like to achieve during his or her lifetime. These values vary among different groups of people in different cultures. Instrumental Values9 refer to preferable

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5 ibid.
6 https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/values
7 https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/values
modes of behaviour. These are preferable modes of behaviour, or means of achieving the terminal values.

In the **value theory of Shalom Schwartz**\(^\text{10}\), one of the most dominant taxonomic approaches grounded in social and personality psychology, each value has six main features, which are common to all:

1. Values are beliefs linked inextricably to affect.
2. Values refer to desirable goals that motivate action
3. Values transcend specific actions and situations;
4. Values serve as standards or criteria; Values guide the selection or evaluation of actions, policies, people, and events;
5. Values are ordered by importance relative to one another;
6. The relative importance of multiple values guides action. Any attitude or behaviour typically has implications for more than one value.

The ten values for Schwartz are: 1. Power; 2. Achievement; 3. Hedonism; 4. Stimulation; 5. Self-direction; 6. Universalism; 7. Benevolence; 8. Tradition; 9. Conformity; 10. Security. The theory refers also to the structure of dynamic relations among values: actions in pursuit of any value have consequences that conflict with some values but consistent with others. For example, following novelty and change (stimulation values) is likely to go against the preservation of time-honoured customs (tradition values), while pursuing tradition values are consistent with conformity values\(^\text{11}\). This captures an important point about values: values are not mutually exclusive and each set of circumstances demands a trade-off between them.

More recently, Jonathan Haidt developed the **Moral foundations theory**, according to which morality is made up of different foundational constructs, which are the basis of our values:

1. **Care**: cherishing and protecting others; opposite of harm;
2. **Fairness or proportionality**: rendering justice according to shared rules; opposite of cheating;
3. **Loyalty or ingroup**: standing with your group, family, nation; opposite of betrayal;
4. **Authority or respect**: submitting to tradition and legitimate authority; opposite of subversion;

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\(^{10}\) See for reference: [https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1116&context=orpc](https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1116&context=orpc)

\(^{11}\) Values can also be collated into larger super-groups:
- **Openness to change**: Stimulation, self-direction and some hedonism.
- **Self-enhancement**: Achievement, power and some hedonism.
- **Conservation**: Security, tradition and conformity.
- **Self-transcendence**: Universalism and benevolence.
5. **Sanctity or purity**: abhorrence for disgusting things, foods, actions; opposite of degradation.

The importance each individual gives to each foundation defines his/her values, political approach and choices. For example, those who can be identified as politically liberal typically place a higher moral value on care and fairness than the rest of the foundations, while conservatives place a higher value on authority.

The **Moral foundations theory** has been developed in the USA, where the political system is a historically a two-party one, in which the dichotomy liberal vs conservative would more easily be identifiable.

The Moral foundation theory has been critically approached by the anthropologist Oliver Scott Curry, who identified a number of limitations in the theory, especially because it fails to take into account the four established types of cooperation: kin altruism, reciprocal altruism, competitive altruism, and respect for prior possession.

Trying to go beyond the limitations of the Moral foundation theory, Curry used the non-zero sum games theory, i.e. cooperative interaction which can end up with a win-win outcome. There are seven main types of cooperative interactions, each one can be used to explain a type of morality:

1. Kin selection explains why we feel a special duty of care for our families, and why we abhor incest.
2. Mutualism explains why we form groups and coalitions (there is strength and safety in numbers), and hence why we value unity, solidarity, and loyalty.
3. Social exchange explains why we trust others, reciprocate favors, feel gratitude and guilt, make amends, and forgive. And conflict resolution explains why we
4. engage in costly displays of prowess such as bravery and generosity, why we
5. express humility and defer to our superiors, why we
6. divide disputed resources fairly and equitably, and why we
7. respect others’ property and refrain from stealing.  


3. **OBJECTIVES**

The JRC project "Values and identity in the political process" aims to develop a practical analytical framework for policymakers to use in supporting political choices

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by clarifying the values behind each issue, informing the values trade-off process and communicating with citizens. A state-of-the-science report will provide background to the development of the framework.

Based on the refined framework and understanding of values, a survey will be developed to improve our understanding of the values held by European citizens. Special attention will be given to the understanding of how these values compare and relate with the "European values" established in Article 2 of the Treaties.

4. ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS AND DELIVERABLES

The following activities will be implemented in 2019 and 2020:

a) Expert analytical work on "Science of values and identity in the political process"

b) Development of the framework for analysing values in the political process

c) Special Eurobarometer on "The values of European citizens"

a) Expert analytical work on "Values and identity in the political process"

Building on the experience of interdisciplinary work on the report "Understanding our Political Nature", the JRC launched a call (managed by Unit H.1) for experts from across the globe to provide a state-of-the-science report on the "Values in the political process". The call was launched on 18 July and closed on 10 September 2019.

This strand of work seeks to improve the understanding of the values held by European citizens. This study should provide background to the development of a practical analytical framework for policymakers to use in supporting political choices by clarifying the values behind each issue and informing the values trade-off process.

The analysis will also aim to understand the dynamics of values, i.e. how values preferences and priorities of individuals and societies are established and develop, and the way they change through time at individual and/or societal level.

A review of the existing literature on the subject will be carried out, with a particular focus on the contributions by psychologists, legal scholars, philosophers, historians, anthropologists, evolutionary biologists, sociologists and economists.

The research questions in italics have been included in the Terms of Reference published together with the call for experts. Several other questions could be considered and will be presented to the experts prior to the workshop during which they should prioritise and refine them. They can be clustered into three different sets of sub-topics:

1. Values and related concepts in the scientific literature
   What is meant by 'values'? What are the main values, as taxonomies differ among disciplines? Can we differentiate between “objective” and “subjective” values? What influences or determines our values preferences and priorities as individuals and
societies? Can individual or societies’ preferences or priorities be changed? Do languages affect the way in which values are expressed?

Other possible questions include:

- How (and how many values) can be engaged in the political process? Political issues can differ according to how much they are value-laden. Some are highly technical, others involve no uncontentious desirable outcome and the decision is taken mostly on the basis of the values held by the politicians and/or the population (see the distinction between "tornado politics" and "abortion politics" introduced by Roger Pielke Jr in his book “The Honest Broker: Making Sense of Science in Policy and Politics”).

- What is the relationship between values and related concepts (attitudes, beliefs, worldviews, cultural habits, norms, etc.)?

- What is the relation between identity and values (or related concepts) and behaviour/action? How do values and identity affect political motivations and behaviours? Which values are the strongest in predicting certain political behaviours? How do they form decisions such as voting, demonstrating, engagement (e.g. social media)?

- How issue dependent are value hierarchies?

- What is the connection between universal and culturally specific values? What is the relationship between political and cultural environment and values?

- How do the most known frameworks of values compare to one another?

- How do values mediate the relationship between personality and ideology?

2. The landscape of values in the EU

What are the bases (historical, political, sociological, in moral philosophy…) of values in the EU? What are the values of different national political movements in the EU? How do they compare?

What are the values actually held by European citizens, including in the different geographical areas? What are the main European citizens’ political identities? How do they relate to European values? What is the relationship between their values preferences and priorities and their political identity and behaviour? Are there differences on the personal and group level?

3. The role of values in the policy-making context

How to analyse policy proposals from the perspective of the different values they engage in society?

Other possible questions include:
If value pluralism is inevitable, how to determine in an institutional setting which priorities should trump the others? Which are the main trade-offs involved? One simple practical example is the debate about facial recognition technologies: policy-makers may face the need to measure the trade-off between the need for more security (brought by the installation of more facial recognition devices) vs the protection of citizens' freedom.

How to incorporate values early in the framing of policy problems and possible responses?

The plan is to refine and crowd source the final research questions with the direct involvement of the experts during the kick-off workshop of October 23-24 in Brussels, having in mind the practical importance of this scientific input for the development of the framework for analysing values in the policymaking processes (see point b)).

The literature considered to address these questions should be primarily related to the context of political behaviour, policymaking and decision-making (both individual and institutional).

The final process for this work will be adopted at the workshop on 23-24 October 2019. The proposed plan (open for discussion) assumes the following.

- The research questions will be clustered, with each cluster potentially leading to a chapter of the report. Two scenarios can envisaged:
  a. the chapters become parts of the report as they are, with editing limited to language, coherence, etc.;
  b. the chapters are considered as scientific background papers, which are further translated into the report and used in the development of the analytical framework.

  In option b), it remains to be decided if the report would be written only by the JRC project team, by the experts, or jointly.

- Contributing authors will divide themselves according to the cluster of research questions they are best placed and want to address. Depending on their availability and expertise, authors may choose to work on multiple questions.

- The team working on each chapter will be interdisciplinary. Some contributing authors will become editors coordinating the process. Each chapter will have at least one member of the JRC project team involved in the drafting process in an advisory role. While respecting the autonomy of the experts, their task will be to ensure that the direction the work is taking will deliver usable input for the development of the analytical framework. It is particularly important given that the chapters will not only aim to summarise the state of the literature, but propose answers to the research questions.
• The result of this work will be presented at the second workshop, where the experts and the steering committee members will scrutinise the chapters and hold discussions towards developing the analytical framework.

• The Steering Committee will meet ("virtual" meeting will also be organised) at the crucial points of the development of the project and whenever needed, and advises according to the issues arising throughout the process.

Administrative steps related to the call for experts.

The call for experts closed on 10 September 2019 and 246 applications were received. After the first round of evaluation, the JRC nominated 23 contributing authors and 5 advisors in the form of Steering Committee members, who will form a multidisciplinary research consortium managed by the JRC13.

Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Expected outcomes</th>
<th>Provisional timeline</th>
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</table>
| Kick-off workshop in Brussels with the selected experts14,15 | • Discussion on the scope of work and definition of the research questions  
• Definition and approval of the project work plan (contents, roles, tasks and timeline)  
• Contribution to the development of the questionnaire for the Special Eurobarometer on the "Values of European citizens" (see below point c) | 23-24 October 2019 |

13 Experts will be remunerated at a daily fee of 450 EUR. Each expert’s involvement in the project is envisaged to vary from 8 to 22 working days. Travel and accommodation expenses for the participation to the workshops will be reimbursed.

14 Commission colleagues from relevant DGs (e.g.: EAC, ECFIN,EMPL, JUST, SG, RTD) as well as colleagues from other EU Institutions could be invited to the workshop as appropriate.

15 Experts will be contacted prior to the workshop with detailed information about the objectives, process, desired outputs and proposed research questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributing Authors to work on State-of-the-Science literature review(s), together with JRC project team members</td>
<td>Literature review(s) – one per cluster of research questions</td>
<td>November-December 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second workshop in Brussels with the selected experts</td>
<td>Discussion on the literature review(s)</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussions towards the development of the analytical framework</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conclusions and recommendations for the drafting of the final report</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Science of values and identity in the political process</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Drafting of the report <em>Science of values and identity in the political process</em></td>
<td>Draft report including the analytical framework</td>
<td>January-March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviewing process of the draft report</td>
<td>Reviews and new draft(s) by the Steering Committee</td>
<td>March-April 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final draft</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication process of the report <em>Science of values and identity in the political process</em></td>
<td>Due diligence, proofreading, graphic design PUBSY, etc.</td>
<td>May-June 2020</td>
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<td>Report published</td>
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**Deliverable**

A State-of-the-Science report on the *Science of values and identity in the political process* including the analytical framework to analyse, classify and debate the values held by European citizens and political parties and movements.

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16 As above.

17 Following the experience leading to the publication of "Understanding our political nature" Commission colleagues and external experts could be invited to comment on the draft.
b) Development of the framework for analysing values in the political process

The framework will be developed with the purpose to support policymakers, helping them to detect and analyse the values embedded in policy proposals. The framework will allow policy-makers to analyse the value trade-offs of policy-proposal in a similar way as cost and benefit analyses and impact assessments (e.g.: environmental or Regulatory Impact Assessments) are made. The framework will heavily rely on the scientific input. Therefore, the work of experts resulting in the scientific report will form the basis for the development of the framework.

Actions

The development of the framework will be led by Unit H.1 and will happen in parallel to the work of experts (see actions under point a)). An iterative process will be designed, with possible relevant inputs from policy DGs gathered through an informal Inter-service Group. The process will ensure that the questions addressed by the experts are useful for the framework, as well as that the aims of the framework can be achieved with the envisaged type of scientific input. If needed, the development of the framework can be extended and include other types of sources and information. The results of the Eurobarometer (see point c)), as well as potentially other empirical data, will feed into the framework.

Deliverable

The "values analytical framework", a practical tool to help policymakers to more systematically detect and analyse the values embedded in policy proposals.

c) Special Eurobarometer on "The values of European citizens"

While there are a number of surveys have been conducted in the past (e.g. European Values Study, World Values Survey, some Eurobarometer questions asking citizens to rank a number of pre-defined EU values), these have not provided a clear picture of the panorama of values held by EU citizens and how they relate to EU values. Moreover, different values are not mutually exclusive but all citizens have different preferences for and make different trade-offs between values, for example “freedom” and “security”. In addition, their ranking of different values may change as a function of the socio-political context, which may explain how values play out differently in political behaviour and decisions.

This Eurobarometer (hereinafter "EB") initiative will be implemented in synergy with the above mentioned JRC expert analytical work (see above). The selected experts will work with the JRC in developing the questionnaire, also in cooperation with key partners, such as the European Values Study and the World Values Survey.
The proposed survey will investigate the values held by European citizens, and how they compare and relate with the European values as expressed in the Treaties (Article 2).

**Actions**

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Expected outcomes</th>
<th>Provisional timeline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of the EB questionnaire with the support of the experts</td>
<td>• EB questionnaire</td>
<td>October 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduction of the EB survey by the contractor</td>
<td>• Survey delivered</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey results' elaboration by JRC and DG COMM</td>
<td>• Main survey findings(^{18})</td>
<td>January-February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafting and publication of the EB report by DG COMM and JRC</td>
<td>• EB report</td>
<td>March-April 2020</td>
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**Deliverable**

A special **Eurobarometer report** "The values of European citizens" published by DG COMM in spring 2020.

5. **Resources**

**Staff and governance**

The project will be **managed by the Unit JRC H.1.**

The following staff will be involved:

- David Mair (Head of Unit).
- Giovanni La Placa (project leader until 30/9), to be replaced by Mario Scharfbillig as of the 1\textsuperscript{st} October 2019.
- Laura Smillie (project officer)
- Marta Sienkiewicz (project officer).

The JRC will appoint 2 additional JRC staff external to Directorate H to participate in both the **Selection Board** who will select the experts after the call closure (10 September 2019) and the project **Steering Committee**.

\(^{18}\) The Eurobarometer results will also be used during the drafting stage of the report "Science of values and identity in the political process".
Experts will participate in the project as members of the **Steering Committee** or **Contributing Authors**.

Between 20 and 25 experts should be appointed.

**Steering Committee**

The members of the **Steering Committee**, in addition to JRC staff, will comprise external experts selected through the open call for Expression of Interest. The Steering Committee will advise the project on specific topics and sensitive issues, as well as reviewing the final report.

Members of the Steering Committee will be selected for their expertise and ability to advise upon the following:

- Draft outline of the report *Science of values and identity in the political process* with explanatory notes;
- Advising on sensitive issues (use of non-peer reviewed literature, treatment of uncertainty);
- Number of days required to undertake the work;
- Blind review process of the literature review(s), communicate with Contributing Authors regarding comments and inputs;
- The report *Science of values and identity in the political process*, contributing to the Preface and Conclusions Chapter.

**Contributing Authors**

Contributing authors will be selected for their expertise and ability to help prepare technical information in the form of text, graphs or data for incorporation into the draft literature review(s). Input from a wide range of contributors is a key element in the success for the literature reviews, and consequently the final report. The names of all contributors will be acknowledged.

Contributions should be supported as far as possible with references from the peer reviewed and internationally available literature, and with copies of any unpublished material cited; clear indications of how to access the latter should be included in the contributions. For material available in electronic format only, the location where such material may be accessed should be cited.

One or more *Editors* will also be appointed among the **Contributing Authors**. *Editors* will be selected for their expertise and ability to advise upon the following:

- That the various contributions the literature review(s) are brought together on time and are of uniform high quality;
- That the content of the literature review(s) reflects the latest science available;
- Communicating with the Steering Committee on topics whenever necessary;
• The timely endorsement and incorporation of comments and proof reading results in the course of the review phase.