

Value-talk after terrorism: articulating a united “we” and a divided “us”¹

Abstract

Whether Muslim immigrants can adapt to Western values is a recurring theme in European contestations over diversity. Yet, a review of literature that engages with “values” in studies of race, ethnicity, and nationalism reveals a dominant and narrow conceptualisation: values as core trait of groups. This conceptualisation reinforces an idea that values mark strict boundaries between homogenous and dichotomous “us” and “them”. “Values” figure particularly prominently in post-terror public debates. An analysis of such *value-talk* after the 2011 terror attacks in Norway shows a prevailing articulation of a value-based unity: an enlarged “we” that supersedes ethnic and religious divisions. Simultaneously, the post-terror setting shows an “us” articulated in contrast to the extremist Other who attacks our values, the immigrant Other that threatens our values, and the multiculturalist Other who fails to protect our values. Drawing on well-known insights on the complex dynamics of racial, ethnic, and national relations, this article untangles the variability in “us” and “them” through value-talk. It thus challenges widely accepted approaches to values as core traits that divide cultural or political groups. Instead, it brings attention to how value-talk works as expressions of multiple and changing constellations of “we”, “us”, and “them” in contestation over diversity.

Keywords: Norway, post-terror, us-and-them, values, value-talk

¹ The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 16 April 2020 <http://www.tandfonline.com/> DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2020.1752637

Introduction

In heated contestation over diversity across Europe, leaders, media, and the public commonly talk about “values” as key aspects of who “we” are. An accompanying question under debate is whether or not immigrants—particularly, Muslim immigrants—are able to embrace so-called Western “values”, such as democracy, freedom, and tolerance (Allen and Isakjee 2015; Bell 2010; Kalmijn and Kraaykamp 2018; Larsen 2011; Mondon and Winter 2017; Nandi and Platt 2015). The sub-text of this concern is that groups of people need to share key values in order to co-exist peacefully (Iversen 2019), which entails that too differing values threaten the very foundation of society (Moosavi 2015; Phoenix 2018; Qureshi and Zeitlyn 2013). Such a perspective has gained force in a backlash against multiculturalism (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010), in response to which European governments have underlined the necessity to build a national identity that emphasises particular “values” (Finney and Simpson 2009).

Given these empirical realities, much research addresses “values” in the study of race, ethnicity, and nationalism. This is certainly not a bounded literature (Brubaker 2009), but includes a wide range of, and partly overlapping, topics which engage with implications of migration-related diversity. Such topics include multiculturalism (Kivisto 2014; Kymlicka 2015; Meer and Madood 2014; Kwon and Hughes 2018), racialization and Othering (Meer 2019; Mondon and Winter 2019; Leddy-Owen 2014), and national belonging (de Galember 2005; Bechhofer and McCrone 2012; Eriksen 2010).

Yet, a review of literature that engages with “values” in addressing race, ethnicity, and nationalism reveals a dominant, and rather narrow, conceptualisation: values as core traits of distinct cultural or political groups (see e.g. Albertini, Gasperoni, and Mantovani 2018; Croll 2013; Gustavsson, van der Noll, and Sundberg 2016; Lancee and Seibel 2014; Röder and Lubbers 2016). Moreover, the review shows a divide where the *political* values of some groups (notably “European natives”) are investigated as potential reactions to the *cultural* values of other groups (notably immigrants, or Muslim immigrants. This conceptualisation reinforces an idea that values mark strict boundaries between a politically heterogeneous “us” in a dichotomous relationship to a homogenous “them”.

By unpacking this literature, and accounting for its broader anchoring in sociological scholarship on values, I contend that a conceptualisation of values as core traits of groups does not reflect the many facets and complexities of race, ethnicity, and nationalism (Brubaker 2004; Eriksen 2010; Gilroy 2012). Building on this foundation, I explore alternative questions to “what values cultural or political groups have”, by concentrating on *value-talk*. What is the work that value-talk does in contestation over diversity? That is, how do people talk about values in expressions of “who we are”? Which “we” are they referring to? What distinctions do they make between “us” and “them” through “values”? Through attention to such questions, we can learn more about how and why “values” refer to more variable constellations of “we” and “us” than what the core traits approach posits.

Particular events make apparent the variability in the framings and interpretations of value-talk. Such events include controversies over the Muhammad cartoons (Levey and Modood 2009; Lægaard 2009; Meer and Mouritsen 2009) or over mosque constructions (Saint-Blancat and Schmitt di Friedberg 2005; Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2009). The deployment of “values” in these settings speaks to the widespread agreement that values enter awareness when perceived to be under pressure (Gecas 2008).

Value-talk has certainly been prominent in the unsettled periods that follow terror attacks in Europe. Value-talk in post-terror Norway provides the setting for this article. The perpetrator who planned and executed the 22 July 2011 terror attacks (hereafter *22 July*) was a self-proclaimed conservative nationalist and Christian crusader (Sandberg 2013). He claimed to act against a Muslim takeover that threatened Norwegian and Western values and culture (Wiggen 2012). He killed seventy-seven people and injured hundreds more, constituting the worst acts of violence on Norwegian soil since World War II. The attacks brought to the surface existing ideologies in which Muslims, multiculturalism, and politicians are depicted as enemies (Andersson 2012, 420). In response, leaders, the media, and the public repeatedly expressed that the terrorist had targeted “our values” – the very core of what it means to be Norwegian. Through value-talk, they deemed the perpetrator an Other, despite the fact that he was a white Norwegian, and a self-proclaimed Christian crusader. The case of 22 July particularly teases out the fluidity of ethnic, religious, and political demarcations through value-talk. In Norway, “a value-based unity” that crossing ethnic, religious, and political divides became the main narrative in the post-terror responses. However, although not as comprehensively, such value-talk has also been present elsewhere in Europe where the terrorists were self-proclaimed Islamists, for example after the January and November 2015 terror attacks in France (Fassin 2015; Ezzati 2017).

After a discussion of the common conceptualisation of values as core traits of groups, I develop on my notion of value-talk. I subsequently analyse value-talk in op-eds about 22 July in three Norwegian dailies in the three years that followed the attacks. The analysis brings to the fore three Others articulated through value-talk: the extremist Other, the immigrant Other, and the multiculturalist Other. I argue that an adjustment that recognises the variability in the constellations of “we”, “us”, and “them” expressed through “values” can provide useful insights on how and why value-talk works in contestation over diversity.

Studying values and studying value-talk

The recurring formulation of “values” as key to “who we are” in often-heated contestation over diversity explains the empirical interest in this topic. Conceptually, an interest in values as explanatory factors for the attitudes, behaviour, and practices of groups aligns with the predominant social scientific literature on values. In order to explore what value-talk does, I first untangle what the predominant literature on values does not do. I begin with an account of the history of values in sociology, before I turn to literature on race, ethnicity, and

nationalism, where some of the same inclinations can be traced.

The sociological study of values

The sociological study of values goes back to the discipline's early classics, including Durkheim, Simmel, and Weber (for discussion of values in these classics, see Joas 2000). In particular, as Barry (1978, 75) found in the 1970s, there is a history of using "values" as explanatory variables. Values were key to Parsons' ambitious functionalist theory of society as social systems (for further discussions of values in Parsons, see Spates 1983; Barry 1978; Joas 2000), in which values were cultural and desirable (Spates 1983, 29).

The Parsonian immense influence in the 1950s and 1960s infamously grew subject to criticism (see e.g. Barry 1978; Hutcheon 1972; Swidler 1986). Objections to the study of values in the late 1970s and 1980s involved that values are abstract and that there are many inconsistencies between values (Wuthnow 2008). Among the most influential critics, Swidler (1986) objected to the conception that values determine action, through which they are the main link between culture and action. Swidler's suggested alternative was to treat culture as a "toolkit" of resources to draw on in constructing strategies of action, including attitudes, rituals, and beliefs – an alternative that did not involve studying values.

However, given the importance of values to societies, the study of values has regained force. Recognising the measurement difficulties, a main focus has been methodological finesse in measuring values (Spates 1983, 39). Contemporary scholarship predominantly treats values as desirable and enduring ideals that guide action, requiring shared agreement (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004). "Values as ideals" entails an emphasis on "shared conceptions of what is good and desirable in the culture" (Schwartz 2006, 139). Values are viewed as "core elements of cultures and subcultures" (Gecas 2008, 344), and thus values feature centrally in influential cross-culture comparisons. The World Value Survey (WVS) and the European Values Study (EVS) are illustrative, and are widely used in, for example, examinations of values as central to cultural change (Inglehart and Baker 2000) and the relationship between values and religion (Norris and Inglehart 2004). Arguably, the ideal of "national" or "cultural" values has also influenced political sociology, in which public opinion is often relabelled as "cultural values" (Manza and Brooks 2012, 97).

With these developments, a qualitative–quantitative gap, that was present from the beginning, has been widened (Wuthnow 2008). Hitlin and Piliavin's (2004, 359) review finds an aligning pattern, in that values often are either considered causally or "ignored as too subjective or too difficult to measure accurately". Consequently, most scholars who make "values" central to their analysis strive to measure and compare the "values" that a group of people shares. In the continuation of this article, I term such conceptualisation *values as core traits*. Below I turn to literature on race, ethnicity and nationalism, where I find that some of the same patterns are traceable, in contemporary contributions.

Values as core traits of groups

A review of recent literature that engages with “values” in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Ethnicities*, and the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* shows that an emphasis on values as core traits is also predominant in studies that address race, ethnicity, and nationalism. Separately, the articles discussed below provide important insights on issues related to race, ethnicity, and nationalism in contemporary Europe. Viewed jointly, however, a pattern starts to emerge: the *political* values of some groups (notably “European natives”) are investigated as potential reactions to the *cultural* values of other groups (notably immigrants, or Muslim immigrants).

The articles reviewed illustrate a perspective where values form conceptual links between religion, and gender and family views, which thus can be understood as core cultural traits of immigrants and their descendants. Albertini, Gasperoni, and Mantovani (2018, 18) “explore the values and norms that underpin immigrants’ views about parents’ support obligations towards adult children” in Italy (Albertini, Gasperoni, and Mantovani 2018, 7). Koopmans (2016) includes “gender values” as one of the sociocultural variables, alongside language and interethnic ties, that determine labour market participation among European Muslims. Lancee and Seibel (2014) address the preservation of traditional values among Muslims, and how these values affect Muslims’ contact with “natives” in six European countries. Studying the role of values and religiosity in terms of intermarriage and partner choice, Carol (2016) does approach non-immigrants – “natives” – as a cultural group, but she does so in a comparative analysis to immigrants. Thus, significant efforts go into investigating whether, how, and to which degree immigrants to European countries adopt national or Western values.

In studies that concentrate on non-immigrants, the emphasis is on *political* values, more specifically, the political values of non-immigrants as potentially evolving in reaction to immigrants’ cultural values. Ford (2011) investigates “social and political” values as one of three factors that influence opposition to immigration. Gustavsson, van der Noll, and Sundberg (2016) offer an investigation of whether Dutch “enlightenment liberalists” and “reformation liberalists”, respectively, view veiling as an indication of illiberal Muslim values, and thus as a threat to European societies. Jungkunz, Hellbling, and Schwemmer (2018, 10) find that the “individual traits and personal values” behind party identification affect “attitudes towards (Muslim) immigrants” in Germany, and link this to the growth of populist right-wing parties and anti-Islamisation movements. Stefanova’s (2009, 1540) study of “extremist political values” in Bulgaria tests for competing explanations of electorate support for the Attack Party in the 2005 parliamentary elections, where the ethnic Bulgarian majority accounted “for 99,2 per cent of its national vote share”. Thomsen and Rafiqi (2018) analyse political ideology, conceptualising values and beliefs as part of that ideology, as a potential moderator for the relation between intergroup contact and opposition to immigration.

Considering the above conception that there are different political values within populations “native” to Europe, which come to the fore in reaction to (particular) immigrants, the analytical interest in whether or to which degree

immigrants adopt the values of “natives” is somewhat perplexing. This is, nevertheless, a main focus in articles that investigate values as potentially influenced by other factors. Comparing measurements of democratic values among Danes, immigrants, and descendants, Gundelach (2010) investigates whether living in Denmark “breeds democratic values”, and finds that differences can be explained by ethnicity, not religion. Kalmijin and Kraaykamp (2018) study whether and how second generation migrants in the Netherlands adapt to the “norms and values of the destination country”. Kwon and Hughes (2018) study whether multiculturalist policies, and Röder and Lubbers (2016) study to which degree public opinion, in European countries influence immigrants towards liberal values in their attitudes towards homosexuality.

Notably, all of the above articles analyse data from Europe. As Williams, Thornton, and Young-DeMarco (2014, 797) point out, much “literature on migration and transnationalism is based on migration to western countries—primarily the United States and Western Europe”. Indeed, these authors’ study on “how values affect migration” among Nepali non-migrants and “how migration influences value changes” among Nepali migrants in the Persian Gulf constitutes an exception in the literature review. It is possible that the preoccupation with values as cultural traits of *immigrants* is particularly widespread in European scholarship, not least due to the extended policy and media focus on value differences over the past decades.

Perhaps there are differences in the United States, where the study of values has a long and strong history (Spates 1983), but also because the United States is inherently an immigrant country. The articles by Chand and Schreckhise (2015) and Croll (2013), which both draw on quantitative data from the United States, support such a speculation: Chand and Schreckhise (2015) study administrators’ political values as an explanatory factor in variations in the implementation of immigration law enforcement, but without braking it down into the administrators’ “race” or “culture”. Croll (2013, 66) finds “no significant differences between racial groups” in views on American individualistic values as explanatory factors for racial inequality, by drawing on a mixed sample in terms of race.

Although particularly visible among the quantitative studies in the review, values as core traits of cultural groups also appear in qualitative studies. Although the aim is not to measure values, values as core traits of cultural groups can appear as a presumption left unchallenged (Levitt 2009; Tekdemir 2018) or adjusted inductively (Harman 2013; Larsen 2011). For example, in her examination of how race and ethnicity influence the support networks available to lone white mothers of mixed-parentage children in Britain, Harman (2013) finds that shared values interests and similarities can cross ethnic boundaries.

Considering the above, what alternatives are there to studying values in issues of race, ethnicity, and nationalism?

Value-talk: conceptualising variability

Beyond values as core traits, some articles make “values” subject to explicit analysis by studying *values in-practice*. Such an approach involves analysing values discourse

in the everyday (Bechhofer and McCrone 2012; Bell 2010; Dryzek and Kanra 2014), the media (Lægaard 2009; Meer and Mouritsen 2009; Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2009), or in policy (Goodman 2010; Jeram 2013; Mattei and Broeks 2018; Stokke and Lybæk 2018). Bringing to the fore the in-practice variability of “values”, such analyses could untangle inconsistencies that challenge a values as core traits perspective. However, this potential is simultaneously a difficulty of such analyses because in everyday life, policy, and media discourse people use “values” differently; they frequently invoke, but rarely define, what they mean by phrases like “our values”.

This variability is perhaps particularly evident in a study that explicitly emphasises respondents’ “natural language”. Dryzek and Kanra (2014) ask interviewees to rank how much they (dis)agree with a set of statements. “Values” turn up in four of these thirty statements based on preceding discussion groups and media analysis. However, a lack of distinction between “values” in such “natural language” and the authors’ analytical approach to values illustrates the pattern of variable usage. “Islamic values” are recurrent throughout the article, but remain undefined; the binary counterpart ranging from “democratic and secular principles”, “Western values”, and “democratic values” – each of which is also left undefined (Dryzek and Kanra 2014). Moreover, the authors do not address this variability.

Schematically put, then, values are conceptualised as core traits of groups or not conceptualised beyond an in-practice analysis. The lack of alternative conceptualisation and the omission of explicitly addressing variability runs the risk of reifying the everyday “commonsense view that all cultural values and practices are inherently interlinked” (Vertovec 2011, 241). Although this is not a particular problem of the values concept, but similar to other easily and commonly-conflated terms, such as “race” and “ethnicity” (Brubaker 2004), alternative approaches are needed.

Considering the overall pattern of studying either values as core traits or in-practice, two exceptions emerge from the literature review. In an analysis of the Danish cartoon controversies, Levey and Modood (2009) illustrate that there are a number of ways to interpret, apply, and defend values. Similarly, from a political rhetoric perspective, through analysis that shows how “values” have become key in articulations of “us” and “them” in mainstream politics, Moosavi (2015: 670) untangles “the inconsistencies, misconceptions and contradictions that Islamophobic representations contain”. These contributions share similarities with what I term “value-talk”.

Value-talk adjusts the analytical gaze away from values as core traits of groups, while taking into account that “values” are important to people’s self-understandings. This importance explains the frequent expressions of “we”, “us”, and “them” with reference to “values”. That is, value-talk accounts for the empirical importance attached to a link between values and culture, without attempting to analyse whether, how, or to which degree this link exists.

Inspired by Barth (1969), instead of emphasising “the content” of culture and the differences between cultures, value-talk brings attention to the ways in which people express and validate “who we are” and “how we are different from others”. Such boundaries can be symbolic, but nevertheless bring to light the dynamic

dimensions of the ways in which people categorise, separate, and come to agree on definitions of reality (Lamont and Molnár 2002). In other words, who the unit of a “we” is, is not set once and for all (Kymlicka 2015).

People express belonging to a “we” by emphasising shared grounds, and simultaneously, what distinguishes “us” from past and present Others (Diez 2004). Whereas identifying as “we” entails an internal sense of community, and the experience of “interdependence and internal cohesion by virtue of a shared task”, identifying as “us” entails “cohesion by the virtue of an external agent (Eriksen 1995). The co-existence of such us-hood and we-hood is not permanent, but relational and situational (Eriksen 1995). These dimensions speak to multiple and changing constellations of groupness, rather than a reification of bounded groups (Brubaker 2004). Rather than reifying widespread dichotomies in everyday contestation over diversity (Brubaker 2004; Vertovec 2011), analysing value-talk centres in on the relational dynamics within a “we” and the distinctions made to multiple Others. The multiplicity of Others entails that people can relate to and contest each other across a range of characteristics, including ethnicity, religion, and politics (Ezzati and Erdal 2018).

Furthermore, “the processes through which political reactions to immigrants’ cultural differences are structured by particular images, narratives, and symbols of national culture” (Vertovec 2011, 242). “Values” are part of the narratives and symbols of a national culture (Bechhofer and McCrone 2012). As such, with Joas (2001, 55), “values” are necessary to self-understanding and communicating the story of who “we” are: “We cannot make plausible and defend our value commitments without telling stories—stories about the experiences from which our commitments arose, about other people’s experiences or about the consequences a violation against our values had in the past”. This narrativity is a necessary aspect to values, putting into words feelings, experiences, “our” commitment to values: “When we talk about values, a strongly affectual dimension comes in” (Joas 2001, 54). Value-talk, then, provides another entry point to investigating value commitments than to posit them as the core traits of groups.

Value-talk is particularly visible after terror attacks. Drawing on the post-terror setting Norway, below I analyse how value-talk works and what it accomplishes in contestation over diversity.

Methods and data

Below I discuss how people active in the Norwegian public sphere addressed 22 July. I do so drawing on op-eds ⁱⁱ published between 22 July 2011 and 31 July 2014 in three of Norway’s largest daily newspapers (*Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet*, and *Dagsavisen*). The term op-ed here refers to a long opinion piece (*kronikk*, in the Norwegian language), the author of which is not employed by the newspaper. A *kronikk* offers an opportunity for the public to engage in debate, although so-called elites such as politicians, academics, and NGO representatives tend to be the most frequent authors. Most of the 298 op-eds were published in 2011 and 2012, which reflects the waning public attention after the conviction of the perpetrator in August

2012.

I inductively developed a codebook using the NVivo software for qualitative research. After an initial mapping, I coded the 184 op-eds that I had categorised under “collectivity” (32), “consequences” (13), “extremism” (9), and “freedom of speech” (17)ⁱⁱⁱ. The analysis below concentrates on how these 71 op-eds address “values”. Sometimes the authors explicitly employ the term. Others refer to it indirectly, for example, by citing Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg’s call for “more democracy and more openness”. Accordingly, the op-eds make visible broader patterns of value-talk.

Value-talk: a post-terror analysis

The below analysis is divided into two sections. The first section investigates what I term *the extremist Other*, expressed through value-talk, while the second section concentrates on *the immigrant Other* and *the multiculturalist Other*. The format of the two sections follow the empirical differences: The extremist Other was very commonly articulated in 22 July debates, and thus constitute most of the op-ed material. By contrast, the latter two types of expressing us-hood are common in public debate (see, for example, the literature review above), but only appeared in two instances in the op-ed material on 22 July. The analysis overall brings to the fore the multiple “us” and “them” through value-talk.

The extremist Other

Responses to 22 July reiterated unity, with reference to “values”. Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg’s call for “more democracy, more freedom” in response to the attacks became a reference point (Rafoss 2018). Value-talk accompanied the many manifestations of unity and solidarity; not least with the so-called rose marches, when several hundred thousand people marched together, in Oslo and elsewhere in Norway, holding roses (Ezzati 2017). Authority figures commended the crowds gathered for standing united (see, e.g., Crown Prince Haakon Magnus’s address at the gathering in Oslo on 25 July 2011). In this *value-based unity* perspective, the terrorists and anyone who sympathise with their actions constitute the extremist Other, who attempts to attack the very foundation of the Norwegian “we”. These remarks are indicative of a value-based unity that shifted the immigrant Other into an enlarged “we”. This was by far the most prevailing perspective in 22 July debates, as reflected in the op-eds.

Many op-ed writers explicitly deemed the terrorist and those who agreed with his actions as an enemy who attempted to destroy “our values”, and by definition, “us” (see e.g. Harpviken, *Aftenposten* 26 July 2011; Gramstad and Remseth, *Aftenposten* 5 August 2011). The following quote ^{iv} from prominent Socialist Left Party (*Sosialistisk Venstreparti*) politicians Audun Lysbakken and Kristin Halvorsen exemplifies this perspective:

The terror attack has made us aware of who we are. Democracy, tolerance and human dignity are the basic values that Norwegian society is founded on. Everyone who shares these values is welcomed into the Norwegian community. The extremists who place themselves outside of the democratic community and spread hatred and violence that are our enemies, whether they are right-wing extremists or Islamic fundamentalists. (Lysbakken and Halvorsen, *Dagbladet* 17 August 2011)

Lysbakken and Halvorsen articulated “our values” through comparison with the “values” of the extremist Other, while suggesting that the attacks brought to the fore “who we are”. As did many other op-eds, some of which stressed the international origin of “our values” to pointed to common ground within diversity (e.g., Bergo, *Dagsavisen* 30 August 2011; Eriksen, *Dagsavisen* 2 September 2011; Griffin, *Aftenposten* 22 July 2012; Støre, *Dagsavisen* 29 July 2011). Others highlighted shared values between religions (see e.g., Leirvik, *Dagbladet* 24 September 2011; Furseth, *Dagsavisen* 4 November 2011). Leading Bishop Helga Haugland Byfuglien and Director of the Church Council Jens-Petter Johnsen (*Aftenposten* 17 August 2011) phrased this commonality in the following way: “The Christian attitude towards strangers is to meet them with hospitality and respect. The Norwegian “we” must comprise all Norwegians regardless of religious and ethnic background”. Byfuglien and Johnsen continued by stressing the necessity to talk openly about both “multicultural challenges” and “the enriching character of diversity”:

Multicultural society is not in itself a threat to our Christian values. But when Christians meet those who have another culture and religion with untruths, fear and discriminatory behaviour, well, then it is we ourselves who undermine our Christian values. (Byfuglien and Johnsen, *Aftenposten* 17 August 2011)

From this standpoint, “we” risk undermining “our Christian values” by acting in opposition to those values. Such formulations speak to the dynamics between the co-existence of a “we” and an “us”: “our” words and actions say something about “who we are” and, simultaneously, take deeper meaning in relation to “them”.

Altogether these responses offered a narrative of a nation that responded peacefully, not vengefully, to acts of terror. Although not everyone felt part of this nationwide unity (Ezzati and Erdal 2018), the op-eds show that the narrative that responses to 22 July were indicative of “who we are” remained as time passed. For instance, several months after the attacks, Jonas Gahr Støre (*Aftenposten* 12 December 2011), Foreign Minister for the Labour Party, specifically pointed to the

rose marches as an example of how “something common in Norway became bigger than the differences”, demonstrating the importance of “we” as a “value-anchored common denominator”.

A value-based unity narrative has also been observed after terror attacks elsewhere. For example, responses to the Charlie Hebdo terror attacks in France were seen to have the potential “to symbolically draw inclusive boundaries in defence of central values and to foster substantive, moderate debate across lines of deep difference” (Wessler, Rinke, and Löb 2016, 323). However, although the French Republican values as a uniting force was a comprehensive part of the narrative, whether Muslim citizens rejected these values was also placed under scrutiny (Fassin 2015). The difference to the 22 July self-proclaimed Christian crusader in Norway was the terrorists in France were self-proclaimed Islamists, although some of them were French citizens (Ezzati 2017). Although some of them were French citizens, this enabled rhetoric by, for example, the National Front to frame the terror attacks “as a clash of values that “we” as a nation can resolve by containing the entry of the foreign “other” (Hutchins and Halikiopoulou 2019, 3).

The above illustrates that value-talk works because it is relational and situational. Although the demarcated Other can vary from one situation to another, value-talk tells the story of who “we” are. Emphasising this variability does not contradict that values are enduring and guiding ideals for people. It does, however, challenge the boundedness of units of analysis divided into cultural immigrant versus political “native” groups. The predominant articulation of the extremist Other after 22 July illustrates this point.

The immigrant Other and the multiculturalist Other

In European public debates about immigration and diversity, references to “values” as a fixed trait dividing cultures is common (see e.g. Moosavi 2015). In Norway this perspective was common in public debate prior to 22 July (Wiggen 2012; Bangstad 2016), but became relatively rare in mainstream public debate about 22 July given the perpetrator’s explicit motivations. Notably, the notion of an immigrant Other appeared again relatively quickly (Kolås 2017), but remained more confined in debates about 22 July specifically. The op-eds about 22 July reflect this rarity, as a value-based divide to the immigrant Other was only articulated in two out of the seventy-one op-eds published in the three years following the attacks, and referring specifically to them. These same op-eds also problematised the multiculturalist Other: those who, in principle, share our culture and our values, but do not live up to these. This Other is constituted by those who pose a threat to “our” Norwegian values because their “political correctness” inhibits them from implementing these values. Such a value-based divide is also common in Norwegian public debate (Eide 2012).

Ole Jørgen Anfindsen (*Aftenposten* 13 October 2011), a computer scientist and well-known critic of immigration policies, responded to criticism about his previous rhetoric. He promised to soften his rhetoric, and acknowledged the dangers of online echo chambers critical of immigration in which people insulate

themselves from worldviews different from their own. However, he argued, traditional media, too, have created an echo chamber; a “multiculturalist echo chamber”.

Anfindsen continued that some cultures “are on a collision course with values that are central in the West”, and that “continued mass immigration from such cultures will necessarily give rise to continuously increasing tensions and contrasts”. Anfindsen did not name or define the “values that are central in the West”, presumably because he can expect the “we” agree on these values. However, he made a distinction within this “we” by writing the following:

Many of us wish to prevent such a development, and think that there is need for adjusting immigration and integration policies. But in the multicultural echo chamber, such warnings and objections are not much welcome; they are brushed aside as intolerant. (Anfindsen, *Aftenposten* 13 October 2011)

The disagreement within this “we”, which presumably shares the “values that are central in the West”, then, lies between those who see a need to prevent “continued mass immigration”, and those who, situated within their “multiculturalist echo chamber”, brush this need aside in the name of tolerance. In public debate, reference to this “them” within the “we”, i.e. what I term the multiculturalist Other, often walks hand in hand with references to the immigrant Other.

The immigrant Other and the multiculturalist Other also appeared in an op-ed by the leader of the Progress Party. The Progress Party started as a small anti-tax group in the 1970s, but gained popularity and support in the mid-1980s as a critic of immigration policies (Hagelund 2003). Since then, this political party has taken on an agenda-setting role in immigration issues (Fangen and Vaage 2018). The op-ed entitled “With the right to offend” (*Med rett til å krenke*), Siv Jensen (*Dagbladet* 26 March 2012) specifically expressed the possibility of an enlarged “we” that would include all those who unconditionally “accept the basic values as overarching to our lives”. Such a formulation aligns with the widespread formulations discussed in the previous section.

Jensen continued: “The growth of radical Islam, or Islamism, in Europe is a significant challenge to our democratic core values. The response to the challenges that this cultural meeting requires is never to betray our liberal value foundation”. Thus, although she explicitly distinguished between Islam and radical Islam, Jensen did link values to cultural others by describing “radical Islam” and “our liberal value foundation” as a “cultural meeting”. She continued:

Today freedom of speech is a right most people in our part of the world take for granted. But it is under significant and increasing pressure, not just from countries and cultures that do not accept such an absolute

right, but also from some of our own that are so concerned about offending their fellow human beings that they are silent when they should be speaking. (Jensen, *Dagbladet* 26 March 2012)

Her criticism accused the Labour Party and the Norwegian political left of using freedom of speech as “a safeguard for what is politically correct”. She wrote that Labour Party politicians claim to defend freedom of speech, all the while attaching “a comprehensive, disciplining ‘but’”. She continued: “After 22 July the mantra has been more democracy and more openness. So far this has only been words”. Jensen’s statements about the Labour Party, while providing 22 July as an example, would have been unheard of in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. Not least because the Progress Party rhetoric as a possible contributing factor to reinforcing links between “attitudes and actions” was called into question after 22 July, when it became known that the perpetrator had previously been member of the party. Jensen’s statements thus illustrate that as time passed, more space opened for criticism in public debate (Ezzati and Erdal 2018; Thorbjørnsrud and Figenschou 2018).

Emphasising visions about an inevitable value-based cultural “collision” or “challenge” are common across Europe (Gustavsson, van der Noll, and Sundberg 2016; Moosavi 2015). Ideas about such incompatibility rest on a view of cultures as static and fixed, guided by inherent, unchanging values. However, the articulation of the multiculturalist Other indicates a politically divided “us”. Disagreements about values, then, need not be consistent with majority–minority ethnic and religious divides. Again, value-talk proves useful for adjusting understandings of “we” and “us” to context and the situation at hand. Analytical attention to such understandings goes beyond which values “we” or “they” have, but rather shows the variability in the work that value-talk does in contestation over diversity.

Discussion: An enlarged “we” and multiple Others

Within this post-terror context, most of the op-ed writers explicitly stated that immigrants who are willing and able to adopt so-called Norwegian values could be included in the national “we”, including Progress Party leader Siv Jensen. The articulation of this enlarged “we” can be said to merely conform to widespread expectations. Several notions speak to this possibility. That is, the expectation to follow the prevailing unity narrative, whether or not one agrees with that narrative. Jensen’s explicit distinction between Islam and radical Islam is indeed consistent with the somewhat milder tone of public debate about immigration and Muslims within the first year after 22 July (Figenschou and Beyer 2014). And the Progress Party rhetoric did consist of a value-based divide between Muslims Norwegians both before and after 22 July (see e.g. Iversen 2014, 116; Fangen and Vaage 2018).

Although a value-based unity perspective was generally more widely articulated after 22 July, it was not a new form of talk for everyone. Religious

leaders explicitly articulated value-based unity from a religious point of view before 22 July as well. Some politicians did the same from a political point of view. For instance, Støre coined the phrase “a new and larger ‘we’” in 2006, soon after becoming Foreign Minister, a phrase that converges with the Labour Party’s social democratic politics (for similar findings in the British Labour Party’s rhetoric, see Moosavi 2015).

In other words, although value-talk that emphasised unity was more common and more widely endorsed in that particular setting, the post 22 July value-talk cannot be taken as a change in standpoint. Thus, one could object that this is precisely *talk*, mere symbolic language that articulates ideals of “who we are”. However, that would be to underestimate the communication aspect of values (Joas 2001). Precisely because “values” are necessary to self-understanding and communicating the story of who “we” are, the way people communicate about them – in everyday life or in response to particular events – is an important area of study. At the same time, such analyses should be aware of, and explicit about, the variability in the deployment of values; value-talk work because “values” are broad enough to hold the potential to encompass a wide range of identifications – including the racial, ethnic, and national – into a “we”. At the same time, “values” are intuitively specific enough to signal distinctions between “us” and “them”. These qualities facilitate the deployment of values as criteria for determining the unit of a “we” and signalling “us” in contrast to “them”.

From this perspective, the predominant narrative of a value-based unity in responses to 22 July implies that an enlarged “we” was perceived as more important than otherwise divisionary lines. Unity triggered by such powerful events have been observed in several contexts, including after the 9/11 attacks in New York (Collins 2012). The sense of unity does not last, but it can be powerful while it lasts (Brubaker 2004; Collins 2012).

While “values” may serve as ideals, then, the us-and-them of value-talk is not set. Through value-talk people articulate overarching agreement about essential matters, signalling the “shared task” required for achieving a sense of a “we” (Eriksen 1995). Hence, values as ideals only cover part of how “values” work in contestation over diversity. Value-talk can enable the articulation of multiple Others. The above analysis identified three Others in debates about 22 July: the extremist Other, the immigrant Other, and the multiculturalist Other. “Values” as core traits of distinct and bounded cultural groups, in which Muslim “values” threaten “our national values”, is widespread across Europe. Such invocations are indicative of “values” as core traits of distinct and bounded cultural groups. Seen up against this common deployment, the two Others identified in the above analysis challenge such a cultural value-based divide perspective. The multiculturalist Other can also be found in heated debates about migration-related diversity across Europe; those whose cultural values are, in principle, the same as “ours”, but their political values are different than “ours”. This Other is often deemed “the politically correct left-wing” and, in often-lacking-nuance public debate, placed as the polar opposite of those deemed “right-wing racists” (Ezzati 2018). The extremist Other was, in this case, “one of us” in terms of majority religion and ethnicity in Norway. And yet, he was understood as an Other. His willingness to turn to violence was in itself

threatened “our” democracy, freedom, and solidarity. The post 22 July setting thus teases out the dynamics and variability in value-talk.

Conclusion

The many articles that engage with “values” in the study of race, ethnicity, and nationalism reflect the importance of this topic in contestation over migration-related diversity. Yet, I find a rather narrow conceptualisation of values as the core traits of groups, or rather: cultural values as core traits of immigrant groups, and political values as core traits of “native” European groups. Such a confined analytical approach to values stands in contrast to widely acknowledged findings on the complex dynamics in race, ethnicity, and nationalism. Instead, such an approach reifies popular ideas that values indicate fixed and strict, perhaps incompatible, divides between “us” and “them”.

With an analysis of value-talk in the aftermath of the 22 July terror attacks in Norway, I have explored value-talk as an analytical alternative. The aftermath of terrorism shows that expressing a sense of sharing “values”, as ideals, is important in its own right. At the same time, however, such settings crystallise that despite the diverse composition of “us”, “we” agree on some key features that the terrorists cannot shake. Such a value-based unity narrative was particularly visible after 22 July, where the terrorist was a white, Norwegian, self-proclaimed Christian crusader. Although perhaps less comprehensively a value-based unity has also been present elsewhere in Europe, where the terrorists were self-proclaimed Islamists.

Post-terror settings, then, crystallise the versatility of “values” in articulating Otherness, illustrating that the lines of Otherness are as not as clear-cut as a values as core traits approach would indicate. “Values” can be deployed to emphasize different lines of distinctions – stressing cultural, religious, or political aspects. People enlarge, narrow, and redefine who “we” are according to the situation at hand and in distinction to multiple Others through value-talk.

Value-talk does not, however, only appear in the in aftermath of terrorism, but also in broader debates about immigration and migration-related diversity. Thus, the variability in ethnic, religious, political – and other – distinctions made through value-talk, in media or policy debates, could also be placed under explicit scrutiny.

Analytical attention to value-talk brings to light the varied and multiple “we”, “us”, and “them” that can be articulated through “values”. Such an approach takes into account the importance people attach to “values as ideals” in their articulations of a sense of belonging to others. Simultaneously it opens up for disentangling the dynamic processes of social relations, by bringing to the fore that despite the enduring ideals for a “we”, the composition of the people comprising that “we” varies in constellation and according to the situation. Such insights challenge the idea of a value-based divide between dichotomous and homogeneous cultural groups, which currently constitutes the predominant approach in studies on race, ethnicity and nationalism, and more broadly. Instead, analysis of value-talk shows the variability in “we”, “us”, and “them”. From this perspective, “values” both unite

and divide people along and across various axes of distinction. This is precisely how value-talk works, by encompassing multiple and changing constellations of “we”, “us”, and “them”.

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ⁱ See Online Appendix 1 for an overview of the full literature review. The review shows a wide range in using "values" as a term or a concept. The articles where

“values” figure as “side points”, without being made subject to explicit analysis, are not included in this discussion.

- ⁱⁱ I collected the op-eds through the Norwegian news database *Retriever*, with keywords such as “22 July”, “Utøya”, and “Breivik” (the perpetrator’s name). 56 additional op-eds either mentioned 22 July or used it as an example without making it a main topic.
- ⁱⁱⁱ I do not analyse the 114 op-eds that I had categorised under “the perpetrator”, “security”, or “miscellaneous”.
- ^{iv} All op-eds were published in Norwegian and translated by the author. The writers’ titles reflect their official positions at the time when the op-ed was published.