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Altruistic, ego-centred or both? A value-based typology of supporters of a pro-European movement

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Pro-European movements differ in their evaluation of how and to what extent the current EU should be reformed. Unlike anti-European movements, they are hard to classify by recent typologies because of this variety. Our paper proposes using information about followers' value preferences to refine these typologies. Our exploratory study uses data from a survey among followers of the European Democracy Lab (EDL). Schwartz's theory of human values provides us with a useful tool for discerning our respondents' value patterns and motivational basis. Our results are in line with Schwartz's assumptions on prosocial behavior and political engagement finding that values like Universalism and Benevolence are important drivers for engagement. On the other hand, we also find clear preferences for the values of Conservation and Self-Enhancement among our respondents. This leads us to question the progressiveness of such movements, when especially for young "performers" in our sample, this engagement is not merely altruistic but can also significantly boost one's own professional (political) career. In light of this additional benefit for its proponents and a strong affirmation for values which preserve the status quo, one can wonder about the character of the future EU which may evolve from pro-European movements like the EDL.

Keywords: pro-European movements; human values theory; political engagement; European Union reform; value-based typologies

1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the European Union experienced several severe crises which have fueled the polarization among pro- and anti-European forces to a new extent. Turning from a "permissive consensus" to a "constraining dissensus" (Hooghe and Marks 2009), the European "project" has become politicized like never before (Grande and Hutter 2016). The success of (right-wing) populism indicates that people have lost trust in the problem-solving capacity of the political system's current elites (see Bremberg and Norman 2023; Roos and Schade 2023; Shim 2024) which led many to become politically active themselves. Social movements are one field within which such political activities take place with increasing engagement from 2000

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onwards (Dolezal, Hutter, and Becker 2016; Roose 2018; Seubert 2021). Especially during the social and economic crisis beginning in 2008, many European citizens stood up for a reform of the EU's current political system. Since criticism can have a constructive function, the question of whether these new movements should be characterized as pro- or anti-European is highly contested and decidedly normative.

In this article, we contribute to research on pro-European social movements by providing micro-level findings from a survey of their followers. While much research up to now has been dedicated to the analyses of frames, or the “supply-side” (Klandermans 2013) such movements provide (see Caiani and Weisskircher 2022; van Kessel and Fagan 2023; Petithomme 2012; Seubert 2021), less is known about individuals' motives for joining a pro-European movement. Accordingly, our research approach is of necessity exploratory and introduces the case of one pro-European movement, which is the European Democracy Lab (EDL). Since less is known about individuals' motives, we use this perspective for gathering insights that can be applied to the study of other cases of pro-European movements. We can, however, already anticipate that, since organizational frames and motives are multi-layered (see van Kessel and Fagan 2022), a classification of individual motives will be likewise difficult and multidimensional. Values provide an important component of these motives and are drivers to get “active”. Social movements require an especially strong basis of such commonly shared values to create a collective identity in order to compensate for their low grade of institutionalization. While we can observe that social classes lost their key role in recruiting members for social engagement and protest movements, political participation nowadays tends to be a matter of middle-class population (Gallego 2007; Marien, Hooghe, and Quintelier 2010). Eversberg and Muraca (2019) argue that only those who do not have to struggle for sustenance and well-being on a daily basis have resources to engage for collective issues. Considering the bourgeois roots of many pro-European social movements, we ask how much openness to change can be found among their followers, and to what extent these followers hold ambitions to alter the EU's political system. Openness to change in our understanding can address both, progressive content *and* unconventional ways of engagement. Moreover, we dig deep into individual value profiles of their proponents, asking for the ratio of altruistic and self-centered motives held by those engaging in pro-European social movements.

In the next section, we outline how social movements are currently classified in the research literature on a spectrum ranging from pro-European to anti-European. We identify a research gap consisting in the unclear classification of pro-European movements and propose examining values of the proponents in order to refine the typologies involved. We then explain our case selection and briefly introduce the European Democracy Lab (EDL), an important agent in the public discourse concerning its concrete and progressive ideas to improve European democracy at the point in time. Our research questions are answered using a transnational survey which we conducted among followers of the EDL. We examine the value structures and types of followers of the EDL and find a mixture of motives for engaging in this pro-European movement. Finally, we discuss what these results suggest concerning the readiness of such movements to engage in truly substantial changes in the current European political system by evaluating their “openness to change” from the viewpoint of their followers.

2. Theoretical–conceptual framework

Whenever people feel that their voice is not being heard by institutionalized actors, they turn to less institutionalized forms of political participation (cf. Della Porta 2013; Scharenberg

2021). In this context, social movement activism can be a form of political protest lying somewhere between (radical) protest and more conventional activities such as voting or signing a petition (see van Deth 2014). A core pillar of a social movement lies in a shared ideological basis, which is even more important in the case of transnational social movements for integrating its followers on a common ground. We believe that an analysis of values can be one important factor in determining a movement's core political and societal goals. Because of the difficulties involved in assessing the ideological background of pro-European movements, we argue in favor of considering their value basis in more detail. We regard values of Openness to change and Self-Transcendence as relevant indicators for examining a movement's progressiveness, since we expect an interest in political change as well as a will to engage for a collective as central motives for engagement. We are going to elaborate on these core assumptions of us in the next two sections.

2.1. Challenges of EU integration and a continuum of pro- and anti-European movements

In the aftermath of several crises in Europe and around the globe at the beginning of the new millennium, several movements emerged (Della Porta and Parks 2018). These movements expressed a broad range of positions towards the future of Europe and the EU (Blokker 2021; Caiani and Weisskircher 2020; Della Porta 2022). Some of these only endured for a short time, some stabilized, and some like VOLT and DiEM25 even became institutionalized as parties. Two determinants seem to be relevant for the life circle of social movements in the EU and European context: first, due to ideological differences, we can observe difficulties in bringing together left-wing or liberal actors under one common umbrella (De Cleen et al. 2020; Scharenberg 2021); second, we may note the intense effort and usage of resources required to earnestly pursue the aim of becoming a transnational movement (Caiani and Weisskircher 2022; Císar and Weisskircher 2021). Especially the latter includes the challenging task of developing frames and visions which are of transnational importance.

A common ideological basis and shared values are therefore of vital importance for the foundation, existence and durability of social movements (Petrova and Worschech 2022). It is difficult to classify social movements into fixed categories of pro- or anti-European (van Kessel and Fagan 2022). Della Porta and Caiani (2009, 167–168) point out that “[s]ocial movement attention to the EU does not automatically translate into either approval or disapproval, as support for Europe emerges as a polymorphous term that refers not only to different processes, but also to different ‘Europes’”. Starting from research on Euroscepticism (De Vries 2018; Leruth, Startin, and Usherwood 2018), we can identify one end of the continuum of pro- and anti-EU attitudes rather clearly: “Eurorejects” totally dismiss the idea of supranational cooperation in the context of the EU. The other end of the continuum, the pro-Europeanists or Europhiles, are comparatively hard to define since attitude patterns can also include constructive critique towards the EU. Several definitions attempt to capture a constructive form of criticism towards the EU in its current form by describing such movements as “critical Europeanists” (Della Porta and Caiani 2009) or by characterizing their ideological background as “radical Eurocriticism” (Milan 2020), “Euro-disenchantment” (Zamponi 2020) or as opting for “visions of Europe” (Caiani and Weisskircher 2020). In addition, Caiani and Weisskircher (2020) state that left-libertarian movements can most often be characterized as “Eurosceptics”, “Euroalternativists” and “critical Europeanists”, since they do not question membership in the EU per se, despite disillusionment with the

current state of the European Union and calls for alternative development paths of the integration process.

A core category which is helpful in classifying movements is their attitude towards the future importance of nation states within the EU. While movements on the left-libertarian spectrum (officially) represent the values of a cosmopolitan and post-national Europe (Blokker 2021), movements on the right-wing spectrum pursue ideas of national sovereignty which are opposed to supranationalist developments. By advocating a “Europe of Nations”, they intend to protect their own national sovereignty and culture against a stronger, supranationalist EU (De Vries 2018). Going a step further, some movements on the right-wing spectrum are in favor of EU disintegration or even suggest the exit of their member state; these may be classified as “Eurorejects” (Caiani and Weisskircher 2020). Since anti-European movements strive for a complete exit of their member states and a dissolution of the EU as the “natural” endpoint of their engagement, they can be identified rather clearly. Conversely, the other end of the continuum is rather hard to capture and fluctuates between notions of preserving more or less the status quo (traditional Europeanists) on the one hand and arguing for a more progressive development of the EU on the other. Claims of this sort are manifold, including a redefinition or empowerment of central institutions of the current EU (as in the case of the EDL), the introduction of a European Citizenship on a strong political basis (Seubert 2021), and claims for more citizen participation, bottom-up governance and decentralization (Della Porta 2019). Since the EDL fulfills several characteristics of a pro-European movement at the time of our survey (empowerment of EU institutions, reduced influence of nation states against supranational institutions, advocating EU citizenship and a general commitment to EU integration and enlargement), we can use it as a typical case for our exploratory study.

2.1.1. *The European democracy lab (EDL) – a pro-European movement*

The European Democracy Lab (EDL) was founded in 2016 by Ulrike Guérot in the aftermath of the European financial and economic crisis.¹ This movement, a self-described pro-European think-tank, promotes the idea of a “European Republic” (Guérot 2016) as an answer to a perceived democratic deficit of the EU. This idea, which the founder also refers to as a political utopia, pursues an institutional, territorial and economic reorganization of Europe. The “European Republic” is intended to overcome the nation state in Europe (a characteristic for a pro-European movement as described above) by restructuring Europe on the basis of provinces and metropolitan areas. A core pillar is equality before the law to all European citizens. However, ideas proposed by the EDL such as the European citizenship and equal rights for EU citizens are not as new as proclaimed by the EDL. In scholarship there are contributions to issues such as European citizenship (cf. Bauböck 2019; Bruzelius, Reinprecht, and Seeleib-Kaiser 2017; Seubert 2021; Seubert and Eberl 2018) and free movement of persons and non-discrimination with regard to access to welfare state measures (cf. Schmidt, Blauberger, and Martinsen 2019). Republican elements may be found in the bi-cameral structure of the “European Republic” government: a European Senate (two Senators for each Province or Metropolitan Area) and a European House of Representatives (one (wo)man one vote), both directly elected by the citizens (cf. Figure 1). The European Republic proposed by the EDL draws on the idea of a “Europe of the regions” (Hepburn 2008; Moore 2008). The most radical approach of a “Europe of the regions” attempts to implement a paradigmatic shift by re-founding Europe based on regions. This approach involves a territorial reorganization of Europe with the dissolution of nation states and a

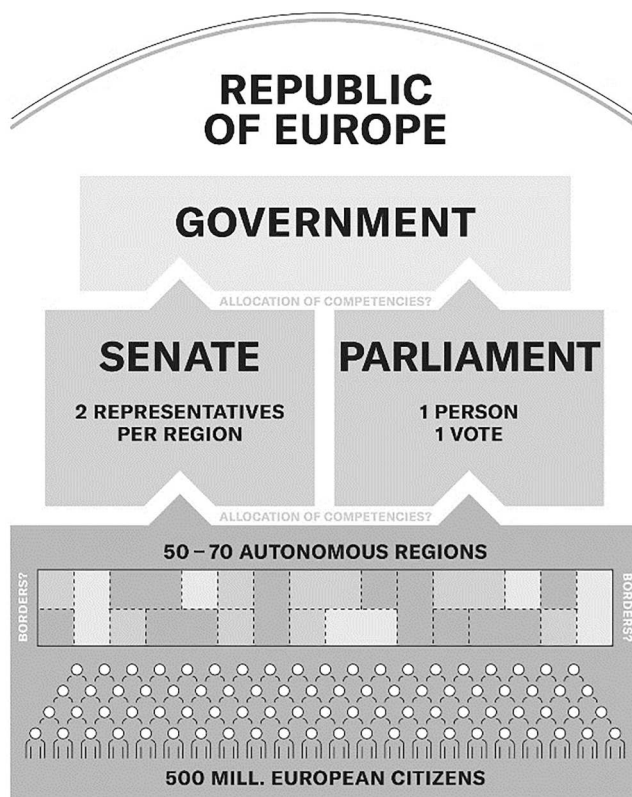


Figure 1. European Republic, source: European democracy lab.

new, regional demarcation along historical, cultural or linguistic lines. Such utopian concepts date back to the early days of the European integration process or even precede it in some cases. In the 1950s and 1960s, regional concepts of this kind were also discussed in public discourse, particularly in the writings of the Swiss Denis de Rougemont or the Austrian Leopold Kohr, and then received an increased reception in the European debate from a more conservative side in the 1970s.

In addition to its political agenda, the EDL is engaged in transdisciplinary projects connecting science, art and advocacy. The mission statement of the EDL in 2018, at the time of our survey, outlined the following aims and goals: “The European Democracy Lab is a think tank generating innovative ideas for Europe. We promote the European common good beyond the nation state. The core issue of the Lab is to develop a transnational paradigm and explore alternative conceptions of the European polity. We connect research, advocacy and culture.”² Recently, the EDL changed its ideological focus and turned towards an anti-western and pro-Russian stance. This major change might be an example of how a lack of recognition for democratic ideas in favor of European Integration can soon turn into sympathies with autocratic systems, if not being heard. Nevertheless, our research was conducted before this major turn which leads us to focus on the initial ideas and followers of the EDL in the year 2018. By followers we include people working for the EDL at that time or being engaged in projects as freelancers, supporters in terms of active engagement or financial support and followers who signed online petitions or subscribed to the newsletter.

At the time the EDL was founded, a number of pro-European movements arguing for a democratization of the EU emerged all over Europe. Prominent movements and think-tanks aside from the EDL that were also founded in Germany include The European Moment, European May, European Alternatives, Polis180, Volt and the Pulse of Europe (PoE) to name just a few. The last-named movement, Pulse of Europe, can be described as founded and supported by middle-aged and older adults, while other movements, like Polis180 and the Volt have been mainly organized by young supporters. The EDL occupies a middle position since its founder comes from the adult generation but many of its initial supporters, followers and volunteers belonged to the younger generation.³ Many of these movements share a background in the bourgeois milieu, attracting first and foremost students and academics. A typical example is the PoE, which was founded by two lawyers, Daniel and Sabine Röder. While the leaders of such movements are often internationally active and embedded in transnational networks, the core membership of the movements have their main field of engagement at the national level (Roose 2018).

Finally, the EDL shares some characteristics of intellectual movements. According to Frickel and Gross (2005, 207), the production of ideas is central in the context of the EDL, as well as a “strong interest in the maintenance, distribution and transfer of power”, both typical to intellectual movements. At the forefront of the EDL, an intellectual leader provides social and symbolic capital to the movement and strives for a more intellectual power and influence. At the same time, a clear distinction can be drawn towards other scientific intellectuals at the time of our empirical investigation (see Misztal 2012). Medeiros (2015) describes the role of European scientific intellectuals by referring to their aim to open the discourse and stimulate an *invention* of responses towards crises. The EDL deviates from this role by suggesting a concrete model (the “European Republic”).

Due to its precarious financing, consisting in donations and project grants, as with many other similar projects and movements in the field, the EDL’s staff consisted of volunteers, interns and part-time workers with limited contracts at the time of our survey. Nevertheless, engaging in a pro-European social movement seemed to be a win-win situation for many of its (younger) proponents: it meant promoting the idea of democratic change in the EU while also profiting from intense networking with other activists and political actors. These networks have been important steppingstones for future careers to many of its proponents, as social movements generate experienced activists and enduring networks (Petrova and Worschech 2022). Our analysis examines how deeply followers of the EDL have engaged with the progressive ideas of the leadership and which ego-centred motives might also accompany this engagement.

2.2. Values as drivers for engaging in a pro-European movement

While determinants like perceived injustice, perceived efficacy and social identity provide general information concerning whether people are willing to engage in political protest (van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears 2008), an investigation of values can tell us more about the concrete content and goals actors pursue in their engagement (Schwartz 2010). For example Universalism as a value gives us concrete information on how wide or narrow people conceptualize their political engagement. Values therefore motivate acting towards a concrete direction (Shalom H. Schwartz 2010) and are further linked to questions of ideology (Klandermans 2013). Our second central research question concerns the “share” of different values involved in engaging in a social movement like the EDL: are values like universalism and benevolence at the forefront when striving for a

more democratic EU? Alternatively, are individual goals like achievement, power and one's own advancement more important to our respondents?

One of the most influential theories on human values was developed by Shalom Schwartz (1994) who proposes a universal structure (Michalos 2014; Saris, Knoppen, and Schwartz 2012) of 10 core human values guiding our behavior (Universalism, Self-direction, Stimulation, Hedonism, Achievement, Power, Security, Conformity, Tradition and Benevolence). These values can be best illustrated by a circle, wherein dissimilar values lie on the opposite sides of the circle, whereas values which share something in common are close to each other (cf. Figure 2). Additionally, two main motivational dimensions structure these 10 core values: Openness to change and its opposite Conservation, as well as Self-Transcendence and its opposite Self-Enhancement. These dimensions reflect different poles of a spectrum humans need to take into consideration when acting and link values directly to motives. Furthermore, these motivational dimensions express a major dilemma involved in human action, which consists in balancing between the individual and the self on the hand and being embedded in a collective on the other. Openness to change includes values that emphasize independence of thought, action, and feelings, as well as readiness for change, whereas Conservation encompasses values that emphasize order, self-restraint, preservation of the past, and resistance to change (Schwartz 2010, 225).

Schwartz (1994) understands his model as dynamic and as allowing for overlapping patterns of adjacent values. The four proposed dimensions reflect motivational drivers which lead to different salencies of certain values from the perspective of the respondents. As Schwartz (1994) adds, all of this has behavioral consequences as well: values can provoke (internal) conflicts if they contradict each other. For example, Achievement can enhance one's own career, while Benevolence is unlikely to be achieved while pursuing selfish career plans. Additionally, Schwartz (1994) expects values which are located close to each other to mix at times in empirical studies, and he therefore emphasizes the heuristic nature of his circular conception of human values. Schwartz (1994) assigns a special place to three values in this circular structure: Hedonism relates to both dimensions (Openness to change and Self-Enhancement), while Conformity and Tradition share one segment since "... both imply subordination of the self in favor of socially imposed expectations" (Schwartz 1994, 24).

Schwartz (2011) encourages us to focus not only on values that stimulate or enhance behavior, but also to investigate the "flip-side" of the coin, which consists of values that prohibit certain behaviors. On the "positive" side, Schwartz (2011) posits Universalism, Benevolence and (to some extent) Conformity as factors relevant to social engagement, while he identifies Security and Power as values opposing prosocial behavior. Striving for Power aims at attaining dominance for oneself and is most often done at the cost of others and at the cost of equality. Schwartz (2011) finds evidence of these associations by observing that Universalism and Benevolence positively correlate with "macro-worries" like hunger, war or the destruction of the environment, while Power and other self-centered values exhibit a strong negative correlation with these kinds of "macro-worries". If social engagement is undertaken in the form of political activism, Schwartz adds "Stimulation" as an important value for activists, which should be especially the case for young proponents of social causes. This leads us to one final core assumption of Schwartz's theory of human values, stating that values are deeply linked to a person's sociostructural position, as defined by characteristics such as age, education, gender and many more (Schwartz 2005). These sociostructural characteristics (Schwartz 2005, 5) are in turn closely linked to specific experiences during socialization, as well as to corresponding social roles and the expectations and sanctions linked to these roles.

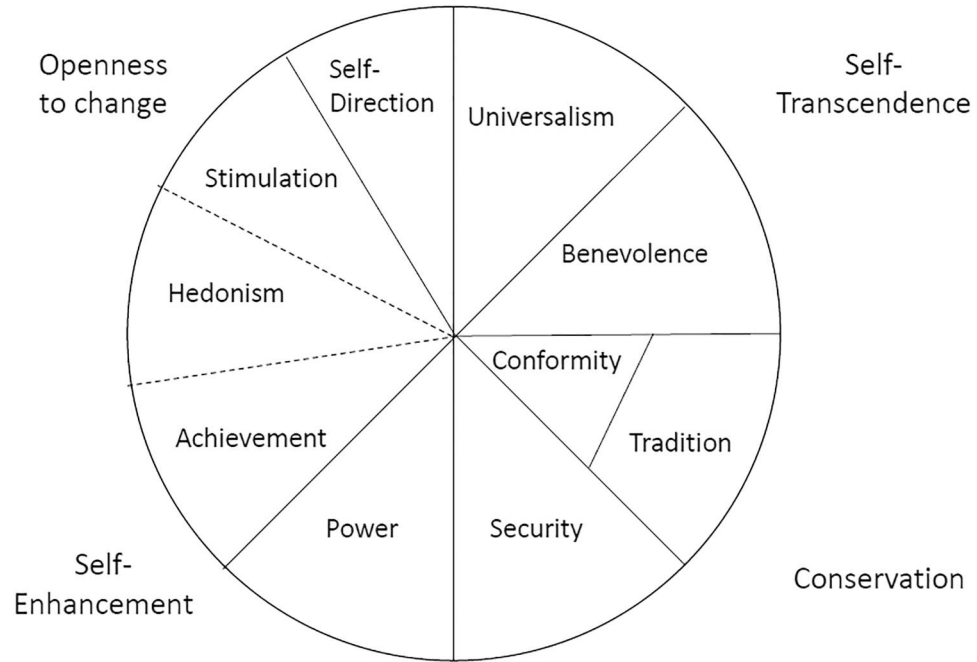


Figure 2. Human values according to Schwartz (1994, 24).⁸

Researchers have observed that social engagement today is often chosen and performed under the consideration of “biographical fitting”, or in other words, with regard to one’s own biography and life plans (Heinz and Brand 2015; McMahon et al. 2020). Political engagement in movements can, for example, help to improve one’s professional skills in debating, campaigning and negotiating. Furthermore, it can grant access to political actors and organizations which might be interesting employers later on. The possibility of acquiring (individual) social capital even by means of elite-challenging activism has been demonstrated by Welzel, Inglehart, and Deutsch (2005). Hence, engagement in pro-European movements and initiatives can also be interesting from a strategic point of view, especially to younger proponents striving for a political career. Therefore we examine the sociostructural characteristics of followers of the EDL, assuming that the organization attracts mainly young and highly educated followers.

2.3. Research questions and assumptions

Against the background of our literature review, our exploratory research questions will address the following issues:

- Which sociostructural characteristics do followers of the EDL exhibit, and how transnational is the network of EDLs followers? (R1)
- Which value patterns do the followers of the EDL exhibit? (R2)

Deriving from our literature review and our research questions, our research assumptions⁴ are as follows:

- (A1) We expect our sample to consist mainly of young and highly educated respondents, since political engagement in the context of the EU requires high political interest and extensive political knowledge from activists (see Gallego 2007; Henn and Foard 2014; Kitanova 2020; Marien, Hooghe, and Quintelier 2010).
- (A2) We assume high approval and even incorporation for the values representative of Openness to change among our respondents, which allows them to participate in a social movement striving for societal change (Schwartz 2011). Accordingly, we expect values at the opposite of Schwartz’s values scale, namely those typical of Conservation, to be of comparatively low importance to our respondents.⁵
- (A3) Since the EDL strives to improve democratic legitimacy by increasing political participation at all levels of the EU, we assume values like Universalism and Benevolence to rank high among our respondents. By contrast, we expect our respondents to deny values like Power. Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that a political movement (unlike other types of movements) may aspire to concrete political influence and power in the near future.
- (A4) Since young adults are at a stage of life in which finding a place in society and taking first steps in the world of work are of high importance, we expect Achievement as a value to rank highly among our young respondents. According to Schwartz (2011), this value stands in opposition to social engagement since it hinders empathic concern and perspective taking. Hence, this may cause some degree of internal conflict among our respondents.

3. Method, sample and measurement

We used survey data from an online survey conducted with SoSciSurvey to answer our research questions. The questionnaire was developed in cooperation with the University of Münster Department of Linguistics.⁶ Our survey questions included respondent attitudes towards general ideas of the EDL, followed by the human values scale developed by Schwartz, Breyer, and Danner (2015), and concluded with some sociodemographic questions.⁷ The human values scale is available in 29 languages since it is widely used in international surveys like the ESS (ESS ERIC 2023). We used convenience sampling and distributed the invitation to participate in this survey on social media accounts of the EDL, as well as by email and newsletter. Additionally, networks and address lists of the EDL were used to contact respondents directly and to request help from multipliers in different countries. Our fieldwork took place from summer to fall 2018. The final sample consists of 2314 respondents residing in 14 countries (cf. Table 1). Most respondents came from EDL’s “home base” which is located in Berlin, Germany. EDL’s network in Greece and Italy was also well developed at the time of the survey. Overall, the EDL seems to have been quite successful in transnational networking in 2018, as the presence of respondents from all geographical areas in Europe (North, South, East, West) suggests. According to the second part of our first research question (R1), the EDL can be described as a transnational movement in 2018.

3.1. Measurement: the human values scale

We used items from Schwartz’s human values scale (Schwartz, Breyer, and Danner 2015) to detect value patterns among our respondents (see Questionnaire in the supplementary material). Since early measurements of the human values scale addressed values at a rather abstract level, Schwartz, Breyer, and Danner (2015) developed the portrait values scale (PVQ) which “wraps” each value in a short “story” about a person with certain characteristics (corresponding to each value). Respondents have the opportunity to state how similar they feel to this person. The individual value patterns are then derived from these ratings of similarity. This scale is available in a separate version for

Table 1. Countries and number of respondents.

	%	n
Germany	31	708
Greece	11	244
Italy	10	232
France	7	160
Netherlands	6	133
Poland	6	131
Hungary	5	123
Austria	5	104
UK	4	94
Spain	4	86
Sweden	2.5	58
Belgium	2	43
Switzerland	1	24
Serbia	1	22
other	6	152
TOTAL		2314

males and females and answer choices can be given on a 6-point rating scale with the following categories: 1 = “Very much like me”, 2 = “Like me”, 3 = “Somewhat like me”, 4 = “A little like me”, 5 = “Not like me”, 6 = “Not like me at all”. In addition to Inglehart’s materialism-postmaterialism scale, the HVS is one of the most prominent survey instruments for researching values and has been part of every European Social Survey (ESS ERIC 2023) since 2002/03.

4. Results

Before we present results on value patterns, we describe our respondents along central sociostructural characteristics which corresponds to our first research question R1. Table 2 depicts some sociodemographic characteristics of respondents in countries where we yielded a minimum of 100 respondents. Since we have no complete list or record of the total number of followers of the EDL, the evaluation of the sample is limited and allows no statistical inference to the total population of all followers. Therefore this data, which is not a random sample, allows no computation of measures of significance (Janczyk and Pfister 2023). Nevertheless, our sample includes respondents from all age groups, with mainly adolescents and young adults participating in the survey (median age of the total sample: 34 years). In Poland, comparatively more younger persons (14–20 years) participated in the survey, while the respondents in Hungary were more often of higher age (61 years and older) compared to the total sample. 74% of our respondents were men, which is obviously a high value given the gender distributions in the general populations of the respective countries. The educational level of the respondents was very high in all countries, as we expected in this kind of social movement stemming from a bourgeois milieu. Apart from a few minor deviations, our sample appears to be quite homogeneous in terms of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. This homogeneity results from the strong collective identity a social movement needs to pursue their contested goals. Hence, at least in the beginning, a social movement naturally attracts people from the same background (Petrova and Worschech 2022).

Because of the low sample sizes in many countries, we will continue our analysis by focusing mainly on Germany, which allows for multivariate analysis due to a reasonable sample size. Additionally, the EDL was founded in Germany and delivers most of the information in German or English, and also by means of a multilingual newsletter. We use data supplied by all respondents who are currently residing in Germany and who have German as their native language ($N = 644$). In addition to age, gender and education (cf. Table 2), we can provide information on the occupational background of our German respondents. We were able to capture a variety of occupations and professions in this sample (cf. Table 3) with science, IT, consulting, education, politics and public service being the most prominent occupations among our respondents.

4.1. Value patterns of EDL’s followers

In the first step of our analysis, we strictly followed the instructions of Schwartz for computing value patterns (Schwartz, Breyer, and Danner 2015) and address our second research question by the subsequent analysis in section 4.1. and 4.2. All items were inverted, and centered scores were calculated. These centered scores can be obtained by subtracting the mean score across all items from a value’s raw score. Centered scores designate how important each value is to a person compared to all other values.

Table 2. Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents in various countries.

	Germany	Greece	Italy	France	Nether-lands	Poland	Hungary	Austria	Total Sample
<i>Age</i>									
14–20 years	7.4	24.5	14.8	24.8	16.8	28.5	10.8	4.8	12.9
21–40 years	47.3	48.1	52.6	45.2	48.9	52.3	24.2	60.6	47.2
41–60 years	33.2	22.4	16.5	14.0	20.6	10.0	31.7	29.8	27.3
61 years and older	12.1	5.1	16.1	15.9	13.7	9.2	33.3	4.8	12.5
<i>Gender</i>									
Male	69.3	81.4	81.4	82.4	85.7	80.9	71.3	65.0	74.0
Female	28.3	18.2	18.2	17.6	12.8	19.1	28.7	35.0	24.0
other/ no response	2.3	0.4	0.4	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
<i>Education</i>									
No mandatory school-leaving certificate	0.3	0.4	2.7	1.3	0.0	0.8	1.6	0.0	1.0
Mandatory leaving certificate	7.9	1.2	2.7	5.1	2.3	6.9	4.1	5.8	5.0
High School Diploma and non-tertiary educational institutions	32.4	34.7	47.3	28.0	26.3	40.0	28.7	30.1	30.0
Tertiary Degree = BA Level	23.4	36.4	15.0	24.8	33.8	12.3	30.3	22.3	24.0
Tertiary Degree = MA Level	24.9	20.7	23.9	29.9	22.6	26.9	24.6	29.1	28.0
Ph.D., Post-Doctorate., Prof.	8.6	2.9	6.6	6.4	10.5	3.1	3.3	8.7	8.0
Other Degree	2.5	3.7	1.8	4.5	4.5	10.0	7.4	3.9	4.0

Table 3. Occupations of respondents (Germany, N= 644), respondents were allowed to give multiple answers.

	n	% of responses	% of cases
Science and Research	118	11	21
IT	106	10	19
Education/ Pedagogics	84	8	15
Politics	79	8	14
Public Service	68	7	12
Consulting	65	6	11
Design/Arts/Culture	54	5	10
Marketing/PR	45	4	8
Management	39	4	7
Media	39	4	7
Social Services	42	4	7
Foundations/ Non-Profit	37	4	7
Engineering	42	4	7
Medicine/ Pharmacology	36	4	6
Sales	32	3	6
Law	26	3	5
Architecture/ Civil Engineering	21	2	4
Assistance/Administration	23	2	4
Tourism	23	2	4
Finance/ Banking	17	1	3
Logistics	13	1	2
Human Resources	13	1	2
Controlling	11	1	2
Facility Management	3	1	1
TOTAL	1036	100.0	182.4

This procedure results in 10 different values comparable to ESS data, which allows the use of the same items and calculation.

Only three values were evaluated positively by respondents of the German sample: Benevolence, Universalism and Self-Direction (cf. Figure 3). All other values scale negatively in this sample. Interesting differences can be observed when comparing our data (followers in Germany) to the main population in Germany using the European Social Survey (ESS). Since we are lacking reference values from all followers of the EDL, and in absence of research in similar settings (surveys among pro-European social movement followers), we compare our German respondents to the German population in general. In comparison to the ESS dataset of 2016, our sample rates slightly higher on values like Universalism and Self-Direction. By contrast, our respondents more often refuse values like Conformity, Tradition and Security compared to the ESS sample. One last remarkable difference can be found in the values of Achievement and Stimulation: both values are less often negatively evaluated by our respondents compared to the representative German sample. We will come back to this observation later on, when trying to reproduce this factor structure and build clusters based on these attitudes.

A comparison of the values scale in our German sample to respondents of the total sample (EDL followers in all surveyed countries) reveals only a few differences. EDL Respondents from Germany more often deny Conformity as a value and more often incorporate values of Benevolence, Universalism and Self-Direction compared to followers in other countries (cf. Figure 4).

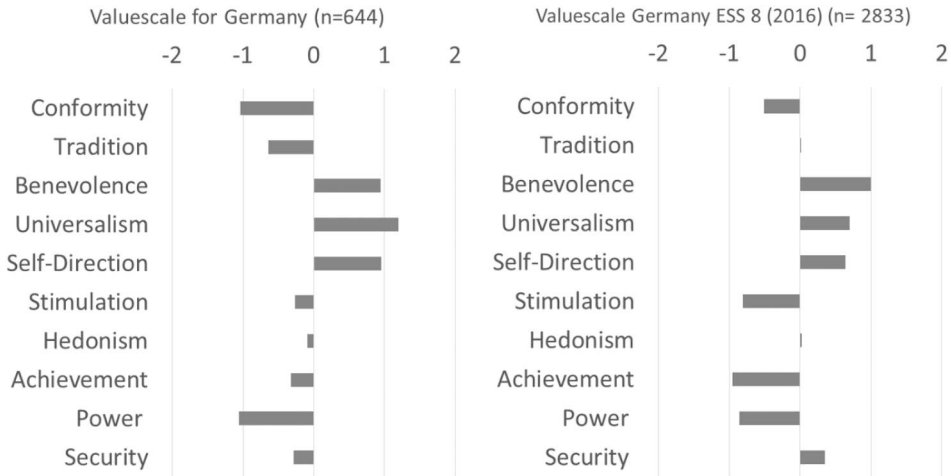


Figure 3. Value structure of sample for Germany according to Schwartz, Breyer, and Danner (2015) – own data (followers of EDL) and ESS 2016 (ESS ERIC 2023).

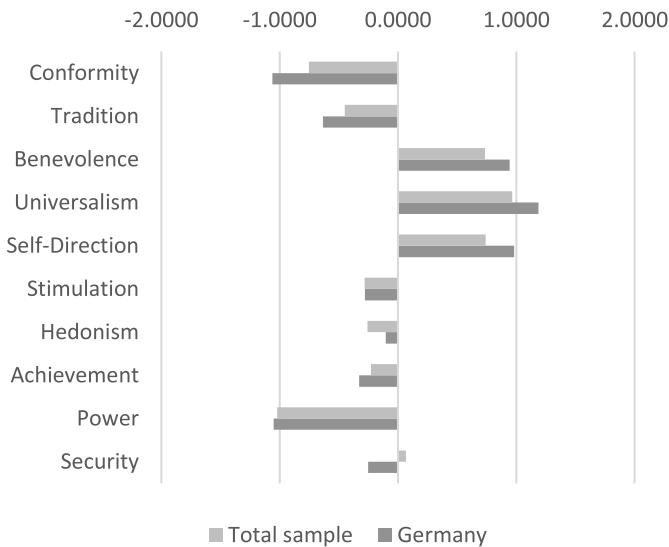


Figure 4. Value patterns in the German sample ($n = 644$) compared to followers in all other surveyed countries ($N = 1670$).

After following the “restricted” guideline provided by Schwartz, Breyer, and Danner (2015) to calculate and measure his hypothesized value dimensions, we were interested in whether this value structure will also occur if coefficients are calculated “freely” by means of factor analysis. By doing so, we aim to investigate whether the proposed value structure does occur in our sample if we do not impose any restrictions from the beginning. Hence we do not take the proposed structure for granted and check for deviations in our specific sample (see Hinz et al. 2005; Patricio et al. 2022; Torres, Schwartz, and Nascimento 2016 for a similar approach in their analysis). Accordingly, the value dimensions were not fixed from the beginning of our calculation but were instead derived by exploratory factor

analysis. Schwartz, Breyer, and Danner (2015) recommend using uncentered values when calculating factor analyses. We used principal axis factoring and Varimax rotation; the latter is a rather strict procedure due to its assumption of uncorrelated factors, but it enables very clear interpretations of the evolving factors. After eliminating several items with insufficiently high factor loadings (factor loadings below 0.5), we obtained the structure contained in Table 4. A factor is considered as relevant latent construct for the associated variables if the factor loading is equal or above 0.5 (Backhaus et al. 2021). Factor loadings below this threshold indicate some association to other factors which is typical in large field studies. These effects are very low in our analysis. Instead, we have been able to detect a very clear pattern, with low “cross-loadings” of the respective variables with more than one factor.

The analysis yielded four distinct dimensions which measure Achievement/Power, Universalism/Benevolence, Hedonism, and Conformity following Schwartz’s ideas of value dimensions. These four factors explain 43.8% of cumulated variance in the initial data. Two dimensions, Achievement/Power on the one hand and Hedonism on the other, belong to Schwartz’s value segment of Self-Enhancement; Universalism/Benevolence pertains to the dimension of Self-Transcendence, while Conformity is a value representative of Conservation. Since these values are close to each other in the circular value structure given in Schwartz (1994), it is not surprising that they sometimes overlap or even mix in empirical analysis, as already discussed. Interestingly enough, we could not reproduce Schwartz’s Openness to change dimension, which we would assume to be a core motivation for engaging in social movements. According to Schwartz (1994), Hedonism can belong to this dimension as well, but, considering that no other items of Openness to change appear in this pattern, it is more reasonable to assign Hedonism to Self-Enhancement in our data set. We found no correlations between items measuring Openness to change according to Schwartz (see supplementary material) which implies that they can’t be bundled into one single factor. Obviously, from the viewpoint of our respondents, these items share nothing in common.

4.2. Types of EDL followers

Since many current theories on values hypothesize a pluralization of values (Hechter, Joas, and Moore 2002; Joas 2000; Reckwitz 2020), we were interested in discovering the types of EDL followers which may be found in our German sample. Another exploratory statistical procedure, cluster analysis, helped us identify groups of respondents who share similar attitude patterns, as revealed by the items used in our factor analysis. After eliminating a few outliers by single-linkage procedure, we applied hierarchical clustering along with the Ward method as a measure of distance. Cluster analysis revealed three different clusters (cf. Figure 5), with the largest consisting of nearly 40% of our respondents (“Unconventionals”). The second largest group were the “Universalists” (35.5%), with the “Performers” ranking third and representing 24.7% of our respondents. These groups were named after the attitude patterns revealed by comparing arithmetic means to the initial items. It must be said that all groups exhibit high values on items belonging to Universalism/Benevolence. Nevertheless, the three groups may be clearly distinguished with respect to some of the items. The “Unconventionals” more often refuse items which relate to issues of Conformity (“do what they are told”, “behave properly”, “get respect from others”). As in the case of the “Universalists”, the values of Achievement aren’t rated very highly by this group either (“being successful”, “show abilities”). “Performers”, by contrast, rate especially highly on the values of Achievement, Conformity and Power.

Table 4. Exploratory factor analysis of human values scale (Principal Axis Factoring, Varimax Rotation).

	Achievement/ Power (13.0%) ⁹	Universalism/ Benevolence (11.6%)	Hedonism (10.9%)	Conformity (8.3%)
It's important to her/him to show her/his abilities. She/He wants people to admire what she/he does.	0.683	0.071	0.124	0.119
It is important to her/him to get respect from others. She/He wants people to do what she/he says.	0.520	-0.169	0.075	0.229
Being very successful is important to her/him. She/He hopes people will recognize her/his achievements.	0.783	0.055	0.115	0.067
She/He thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. She/He believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.	0.012	0.640	0.052	-0.004
It is important to her/him to listen to people who are different from her/him. Even when she/he disagrees with them. she/he still wants to understand them.	-0.045	0.493	0.004	-0.005
It's very important to her/him to help the people around her/him. She/He wants to care for their well-being.	-0.011	0.537	0.026	-0.020
She/He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to her/him.	0.040	0.516	0.065	-0.008
Having a good time is important to her/him. She/He likes to "spoil" herself/himself.	0.174	0.109	0.740	0.036
She/He seeks every chance she/he can to have fun. It is important to her/him to do things that give her/him pleasure.	0.096	0.035	0.775	0.028

(Continued)

Table 4. Continued.

	Achievement/ Power (13.0%) ⁹	Universalism/ Benevolence (11.6%)	Hedonism (10.9%)	Conformity (8.3%)
She/He believes that people should do what they're told. She/He thinks people should follow rules at all times. even when no-one is watching.	0.129	-0.110	0.015	0.621
It is important to her/him always to behave properly. She/He wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.	0.154	0.096	0.038	0.674
<i>Scale Reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha)¹⁰</i>	<i>0.634</i>	<i>0.707</i>	<i>0.734</i>	<i>0.599</i>

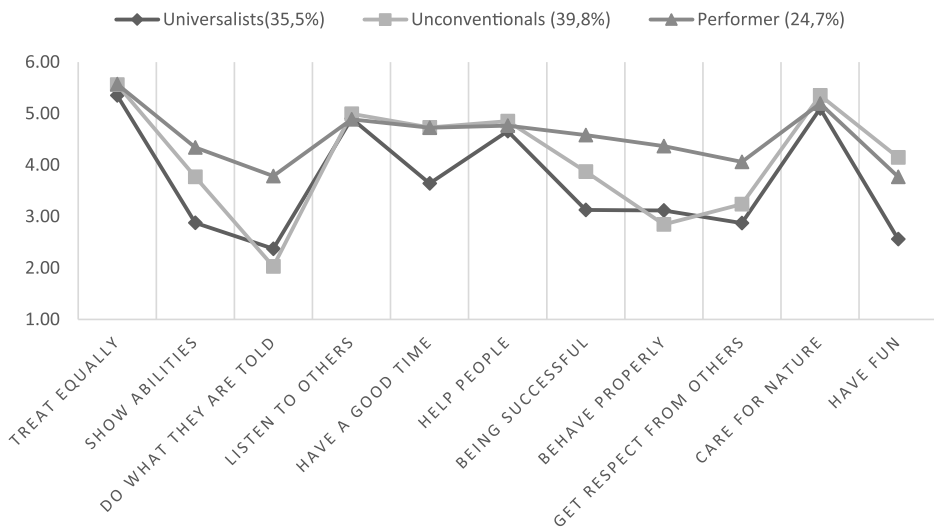


Figure 5. Cluster means on human values items (clusters derived by hierarchical clustering, Ward method; 1 = not like me at all, 6 = very much like me, N = 644, Germany).

In addition to comparing groups by their attitude patterns, it might be useful to consider the respondents' sociodemographic attributes in order to characterize the clusters more precisely. When comparing age groups (cf. Figure 6), it becomes obvious that older respondents more often belong to the group of "Universalists", while younger respondents more often rank among the "Unconventionals". The group of "Performers" seems especially remarkable to us, with most respondents belonging to the three youngest cohorts of our sample. We haven't identified any major differences by gender in our cluster groups.

These results are partly in line with what Schwartz (2005, 6) expects from younger age groups, namely a preference for values of Hedonism, Stimulation, Self-direction, and

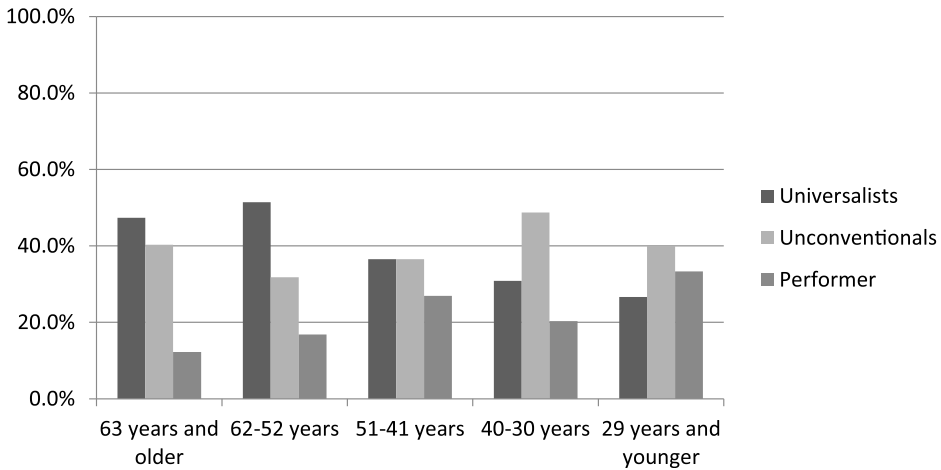


Figure 6. Cluster groups by age.

sometimes Universalism, with less approval for values like Security and Tradition. Our results obviously differ in the relevance of Conformity to the younger age group: “Performers” seemingly think that success can be best achieved by conforming to societal rules.

5. Discussion

We conducted a survey among the followers of a pro-European movement, the European Democracy Lab (EDL), to find out who is engaging in such movements and which values motivate this engagement. Our study is a rare example of an in-depth analysis of a pro-European movement, motivated by the argument that it is worth considering individual attitude patterns in order to define different pro-European movements more precisely. To this end, we concentrated on the importance of values of Openness to change to assess the progressiveness of the EDL and its followers. One main finding of our research is that not all followers of pro-European movements may be as progressive as perceived at first glance. Here, we will briefly summarize the findings which support this assessment.

In the first step, we analyzed the sociodemographic profile of our survey respondents, finding that it is mainly young and highly educated respondents that sympathize with the European Democracy Lab. An analysis of the occupations of our German respondents reveals a large number of participants working in the “knowledge sector”. Thus, our first research assumption (A1) can be confirmed: at the time of the survey, our sample seems to be quite typical of pro-European movements, given its middle- and upper-class composition. Given the homogeneity of the EDLs followers, approaching new followers from other social strata becomes obviously challenging. The EDL therefore faces similar challenges like other social movements which get stuck at a critical size at some point in time, when the recruitment of new followers has reached some “natural ceiling” because of a social “bubble” effect. This result foregrounds one main limitation of our study, which is its sampling. Since we have no data on the complete population of EDL followers, we are unable to apply inferential statistics. Additionally, more cases in other countries would be useful for using multivariate statistics and making cross-cultural comparisons.

In the next step of our analysis, we examined the value structures of EDL followers by employing the human values scale developed by Schwartz (Schwartz, Breyer, and Danner

2015). A comparison of our German sample to the 2016 ESS data for Germany already revealed high importance assigned to Universalism and Benevolence among our respondents, but also less critical attitudes towards the value of Achievement. This pattern reoccurred when we computed an exploratory factor analysis, adding Hedonism, as well as Power and Conformity, as relevant parameters to respondents' value structures. We must reject our second research assumption (A2) since values of Openness to change were revealed to be of low importance to our respondents. We can confirm our third research assumption (A3), which states that values of Self-Transcendence, like Universalism and Benevolence, play an especially important role in the political engagement of our respondents. This result is in line with Schwartz's literature review, which characterizes these values as core determinants of prosocial behavior. Aside from this, we identified values pertaining to Conservation as important to our respondents, adding a key facet to Schwartz's research on prosocial engagement and political activism. In factor analysis, Achievement and Power formed a single factor, which reflects the closeness of these two concepts from the viewpoint of our respondents. Additionally, this factor accounts for the highest amount of variance in the value patterns of our respondents.

While we expected Achievement to be of high importance in our sample (research assumption A4), especially among the young "Performers", its closeness to Power seems remarkable to us. A comparison of value patterns held by proponents of different social movements could clarify whether this pattern is specific to political engagement only, or whether a strong approval of Achievement and Conformity is caused by the young age of our respondents and their struggle to find their place in society. Schwartz (2005, 6) points out the importance of finding a place in society during young adulthood, a task which is accompanied by values of Achievement: "In early adulthood, establishing oneself in the worlds of work and family is the primary concern. Demands for achievement are great, both on the job and in starting a family. Challenges are many, opportunities are abundant, and young adults are expected to prove their mettle". While Schwartz (2010) reminds us that striving for Achievement can be motivated by the desire to acquire social approval, which is typical of adolescents and young adults, Power is clearly driven by self-interest and competitive advantage. Given the importance of Conformity as a value for some of our respondents, they may be said to follow a clear strategy, according to which Self-Enhancement can be best achieved by Conformity, i.e. adaption and compliance to given circumstances.

6. Conclusion

From our empirical investigation, we can conclude that engagement in a pro-European movement like the EDL is driven by an ambivalent value structure, relying on values of Self-Transcendence on the one hand, but also on values of Conservation, along with a strong focus on Self-Enhancement, on the other. This leads us to question the progressiveness of such a movement and its followers respectively. While the leaders' ideas were quite radical, it seems that followers of the EDL have not fully internalized these ideas at the time of our survey. Their engagement with the core ideas of the EDL might have reached only a superficial level since other aspects, like using pursuing one's own career, might have dominated the engagement, especially for its younger proponents. Even more, the EDL changed its ideological focus recently and many proponents left the movement because of this shift, but perhaps also because their engagement has achieved its goal and new employment opportunities have arisen. Since our study introduces just one case, namely the EDL, further research should investigate the validity of

our approach for other pro-European social movements. Even more, hypotheses could be developed on value patterns of followers of other thematic social movements and could test the generalizability of our findings.

Additionally, further research could broaden the scope of values under study using a more fine-grained scale of values like Rokeach's value scale (Rokeach 1973). Qualitative studies could provide in-depth insights in how different values are related to each other, reinforce each other and refer to other spheres of life (work, family, leisure time etc.). Even more, qualitative research could capture a longitudinal perspective in asking respondents about how their values developed in a biographical timeline. While we have focused on a pro-European movement which aimed to reform the EU, further research could examine fundamental EU values (Art. 2 TEU) like the defence of the rule of law, given the rise of populist and Eurosceptic movements. Even more, the current changing geopolitical situation could set values like security at the forefront of social movements.

Considering the circumstances young followers of the EDL find themselves in, namely a society in which achievement is held in high esteem, there may be no way to find one's place in society other than by advancing one's career. Ulrich Bröckling famously called this steady need for achievement and self-marketing the "entrepreneurial self" (Bröckling 2016). Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that values of Conservation are generally held high by this group of young adults. It is questionable whether this is a necessary evil (in the sense of adaption to structures which they wish to enter) or whether this should be considered a stable preference for the preservation of societal conditions and hierarchies. Hence, it would be interesting to see – with respect to EDL's "project" of a European Republic – what kind of Republic would actually emerge if the EDL's ideas fall on fertile ground. Perhaps it is too early to conduct a final appraisal of these developments, but we should keep our eyes on the youngest cohort of our sample, who may be the proponents of a major change in European politics in the years to come. It is yet to be seen how this generation, raised on the values of Achievement, will shape the future of Europe and a potential "European Republic". In the meantime, we conclude that the EDL should be classified as a rather "traditional Europeanist" movement, at least judging by the paths and strategies we expect its followers to choose in pursuing their goals.

Our conclusions are based on a cross-sectional study and further research should integrate a cohort-design to test the generational effects we have found. Even more, we are lacking insights from other pro-European movements but hypothesize similar structures because most often younger and highly educated generations are involved in social movements (Chironi, Della Porta, and Milan 2024; Giugni and Grasso 2021). Additionally, it is especially the field of political engagement that can be associated with aspirations to pursue a career later on in this field (Pinar 2011). Since the followers of social movements can be described as a highly volatile group, further research should also include the value structures of the leaders, as these people obviously have a decisive influence on the respective movement. This could be done by narrative and biographical interviews, providing in-depth insights in leaders motives and aims.

Recent research on voluntary engagement has emphasized the joint occurrence of universalistic and ego-centered values, going beyond mere altruism, in today's volunteer organizations (Cornelis, Van Hiel, and Cremer 2013; Inglehart 1990; Merrilees, Miller, and Yakimova 2020; Stukas et al. 2016). One must wonder whether universalistic values are themselves merely supplemental or whether they truly motivate social action. Furthermore, there is obviously a fine line between achievement and exclusion in a society which defines itself primarily on values of performance. Schwartz (1994)

reminds us that values of Power and Achievement share an especially strong emphasis on social superiority and self-esteem, while values like Achievement and Hedonism, which are also prominent among our respondents, focus on self-centered satisfaction. To serve as a seemingly objective criterion capable of “measuring” a person’s inclusion in the community, Achievement would require equal life chances, which would guarantee “real” inclusion. What’s more, contemporary sociologists have underlined the competitive and hence sometimes even destructive character of a society based on such values: thus Alain Ehrenberg’s “Weariness of the self” (2010) and Hartmut Rosa’s analysis of acceleration in contemporary capitalism (Rosa, Dörre, and Lessenich 2017) – to name just a few – raise doubts concerning the integrative potential of this value.

Ethics statement

No ethic approval was needed according to national law and universities guidelines: <https://www.donau-uni.ac.at/de/universitaet/organisation/satzung.html>

Permission to conduct the interviews for the purposes of this research was obtained by all respondents, who were fully informed about the purposes of this research and how their responses would be used and stored.

Notes

1. Recently, the EDL changed its focus and structure; our descriptions, findings and conclusions relate to 2018, the point in time when the survey was conducted.
2. <https://europeandemocracylab.org/en/> (18.12.2018)
3. Source: Annual report 2019, EDL Berlin.
4. We consciously refrain from formulating hypotheses due to the exploratory nature of our research design.
5. However, we do not expect values of Conservation to be entirely unimportant: since we are dealing with a movement which is critical of the EU, proponents do not strive to completely dissolve the EU but rather to reform it to a more or less ‘radical’ extent.
6. This project was developed and conducted together with Prof. Christine Dimroth and Sonja Ebbing, Department of Linguistics, University of Münster.
7. The questionnaire is provided in the supplementary material.
8. Dashed line: Hedonism relates to both dimensions, Openness to change and Self-Enhancement
9. Percentage of explained variance
10. Sandy et al. (2017) note that Cronbach’s Alpha can underestimate reliability, especially when applied to very short measures of broad phenomena

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