

Leonce Bekemans (ed.), *A Value-Driven European Future* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012)

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As an editor Bekemans presents to academic readers a rich collection of essays initially presented at the international workshop 'Cultural and Value Roots for Intercultural Dialogue in a European Context' held in October 2011 at the University of Padua under the auspices of the Jean Monet Centre. The essays presented at the conference and published a year latter provide to the reader an excellent overview of the topic and capture the engaging academic discourse that took place at the conference. The book aims to define the set of values that in turn define European identity. It also poses very important questions, such as what is the common set of 'core values', how to maintain and enrich those values in the face of globalization, multiculturalism and economic crises and how to work across institutions to promote and preserve those values.

Three years after the conference and two years after the publication of the book these same questions remain an ongoing source of discussion and debate in the European countries. Those questions are of great importance for the European countries, however even more so for the countries on their way to join the European family. The views and recommendations presented in the scholarly essays are equally useful for scholars and policy-makers. Some of the essays literally provide a road-map to policies, actions, documents and trainings within the area of intercultural dialogue and education as well as the institutional framework to enable the human-rights approach.

Structurally the essays are grouped in three camps with Part One referring to the conceptual framework of intercultural dialogue and the human-rights based approach. The second part begins with providing a historical overview of the creation of the 'core' European values including some of the challenges and the way these values have been created and are evolving. For example, in his essay Thomas Jansen brings attention to the 'need to recover the common historical and cultural origins of Europe' (p. 57). Furthermore in this part and throughout some of the essays, including Bekeman's essay there is a reference to the Christian foundations of the European values and the Christian ethics principles, such as solidarity, justice and freedom. Part three 'Perspectives of a Value Oriented Europe in the World' gives an overview of the role of the institutions of promoting the preserving the core values. The European Parliament for example can be seen as an institutional keeper of the European values. Luc Van den Brande discusses and presents the system of multi-level governance in enabling openness, participation and commitment at all levels. For the author's argument is it very important for leaders to make sure the system of values is transferred and in sync with the policies and

values promoted on institutional level. Basically, to have coordination between, what can be perceived as, top-down policies with the bottom-up values at all levels. This is important in order for the values not to be lost or altered along the way. This part also refers to the role of education in the promotion and preservation of values. One can argue that the most important point is to incorporate the European core values of mutual respects, tolerance and solidarity in the formal as well as non-formal education especially for the young generations. Overall part three touches upon three of the biggest challenges when it comes to defining the European values and those are: Migration, Enlargement and Economy.

As much as the collection of essays encompasses many important issues, there are few questions that remain unanswered. When the scholars are referring to the European core values it may remind the reader of the post-1989 appeals to the countries of Central Europe and their 'Return to Europe'. This idea was part of the political discourse in the emerging democracies of Central Europe and it referred to the natural path of development for those countries that was inhibited for nearly fifty years by Communism. By returning to Europe, the CEE countries were returning to their core, original values and political culture with it. The book provides the view of renowned scholars that are obviously supporters and advocates to the European project. It would be interesting to see an opposing view or view that challenges some of the arguments presented in the book. The reader would also like to see the opinions from scholars from other European Countries about this topic such as French, Spanish, Greek, German, Dutch scholars in order to present different academic voices in Europe.

Another question that the reader cannot help but ask is, in a time of multicultural and multi-religious communities is it possible to refer to a more universal approach, such as the Human Rights Based Approach rather than refer to religious-based values? Religion is, indeed a large part of one's culture and therefore when we talk about 'intercultural dialogue' we are addressing a set of religious values as well. What is the role of religion in determining the core values? Different standpoints are presented, however without a conclusion. Finally, to connect some of the arguments with the current reality, a question that has not even been mentioned and it is a pressing issue in reality is: What about the values created and promoted by political parties? Many of the values that are currently promoted by political parties in the countries across Europe seem to stray away in a large degree from the core European values that European identity as such has been built upon. Example of this political rhetoric is the Danish People's Party, Belgium's Flemish Interest Party, National Front in France, Freedom Party of Austria and the populist parties from the Scandinavian countries that have a solid support of 11 to up to 22% of the population. With this contrasting reality between the fundamental core European values and the ones currently internalized by EU citizens that originate from

political parties it would be really challenging to reach the value-driven future of Europe.

The discussion presented in this rich collection of essays provides many open ended questions that can and will be a good basis to continue this never-ending and very important question for European countries. The contributors to this book and the editor are committed and deeply believe in the human values of Europe. This notion gives confidence to the reader that there is a substantial and solid group of supporters across European universities and institutions dedicated to make this idea reality.

Hartmut Behr and Felix Roesch (eds.), *Hans J. Morgenthau, The concept of the Political* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)

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The Concept of the Political, translated from the 1933 study – *La Notion du "politique" et la théorie des différends internationaux*, represents a significant contribution for the European public specialized in the field of international relations. While this text may at the first sight seem different from other versions of realism and more related to international relations theory today, in fact, the core assumptions addressed in this study are connected to political realism. The translation of this book represents the first initiative to make Morgenthau's European writings more accessible to students of international relations, particularly to English-speaking researchers. This endeavor both in French and English is relatively little known compared to his major and successful textbook *Politics Among Nations*, published in 1948 and considered one of the leading writings of the realist school. As the title indicates, this book is constructed around the complex and controversial "concept of the political", a concept whose correct understanding Morgenthau, and many others before him, considered essential for any theory of political life. Thus, the purpose of this book is to provide an understanding of Morgenthau's *oeuvre* and worldview and to emphasize the ontological and epistemological commitments of the author, which influenced his later works.

Hans J. Morgenthau, *doyen* of international relations and the most important figure for the development of this discipline, engaged in an intellectual journey by comparing and criticizing different schools of thoughts (Carl Schmitt, Hans Kelsen) concerned also with this concept, later to provide a general theory about the political, seen as a core requirement for society. The book is organized in two important parts. The first one represents a comprehensive introduction into Morgenthau's study written by the two editors of the book, Hartmut Behr and Felix