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European Union values in documents of youth organizations operating in Poland

Abstract

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The article aims to present the research results concerning European Union values in the documents of youth organisations operating in Poland, namely: AIESEC Poland, ATD Fourth World, Youth Initiatives Center Horizons, UNESCO Initiatives Centre, All-Polish Youth, and the National Radical Camp. A qualitative strategy, the secondary source search method, was applied. Atlas.Ti software was used for coding. All the available documents posted on the websites of the investigated organisations, including their statutes, rules and regulations, and reports and accounts covering activities and operations, as well as Facebook posts, were analysed. An analysis of the content of these documents was carried out within the “values/ideas” category and the subcategories: standards, problematisation, and aims of activities. Within the analysis, the values present in the documents were compared with those enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, which also mentions pluralism, tolerance, justice, solidarity, non-discrimination, and equality. The carried-out analysis reveals whether the values guaranteed by all the member states of the European Union also underpin the mainstay of the activities of the youth organisations operating in Poland.

Keywords

youth organisations; European Union values; qualitative strategy; secondary source searching

Introduction

The combination of these two terms: youth and values, often used as a watchword in European Union (EU) media space, social campaigns, and within its strategic

actions.¹ Following the example of Nico (2019), it is worth considering the extent to which these European Union campaigns and actions promoting specific EU values like equality or human rights act as self-fulfilling prophecies, since they reach young people who in fact share these values earlier and were and/or are active in non-governmental organisations, and they make these values the basis of their actions also described on their websites, and whether – and to what extent – they reach the youth organisations that will not share and treat these values as their priority or even overtly contest them in their documents?

A review of the literature led us to find that if researchers are conducting studies on the values professed by youth, they focus particularly on topics like learning mobility, young people at work, and digitisation, considering them, especially in the context of young people achieving and practising social values in particular (Calligaro et al., 2016). No publications would indicate how youth understand or live out EU values in their activities within an organisation.

The idea behind this article is to describe the occurrence of European Union values in the documents of Polish youth organisations in 2018, shortly after when: "In November 2017,² the European Council adopted a recommendation on common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching. It proposes education strategies "to help young people understand the importance of and adhere to common values set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union". The promotion of values is presented as part of "the fight against the rise of populism, xenophobia, divisive nationalism and the spreading of fake news." This text builds on a previous "Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education," issued in March 2015 by the EU Ministers of Education as a response to the terrorist attacks on Charlie Hebdo (Foret & Calligaro, 2018, p. 1). Ultimately, the recommendations also concerning common values, particularly enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), were published on 22 May 2018,³ but their

¹ Exemplification: A. Strategic framework: The EU Youth Strategy for 2019–2027: engagement, inclusion and empowering young people, B. EU Funding Programmes for Youth: Erasmus+ Programme, European Solidarity Corps, C. Other initiatives: Reinforced Youth Guarantee, Child Protection Policy, Youth and the Media, European Youth Portal, European Youth Week, European Youth Year, European Youth Capital, Youth4Regions Competition; <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/pl/sheet/141/mlodziez>; <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/youth-organisations-and-youth-programmes>

² EU Leaders Meeting in Gothenburg.

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018H0607%2801%29>

presence in the media space and the promotional actions of the EU were already visible at the end of 2017.⁴

The actions promoting the significance of EU values in the lives of citizens, especially the young generations, were also undertaken, apart from European institutions, governmental organisations of member states, by non-governmental organisations, including youth organisations. At this point, it is worth explaining what we understand by the term youth organisation.

Quoting after Karpowicz, it should be emphasised that:

It is difficult to specify precisely what a youth organisation essentially is, what is the scope of the term and the collection of its designators. They undoubtedly belong to a group of entities called social organisations, non-governmental organisations, and associations. ... It is most commonly referred to as a voluntary association of young people seeking to fulfil designated tasks. A literature review of the subject matter reveals that the term "youth organisation" is used both in reference to an organisation bringing young people together, as well as an organisation whose (statutory) objective is acting for the good of young people like, for instance, in the following definition: youth organisations are groups of young people undertaking activities in a particular field ... and creating an internal organisation functionally directed at the execution of goals related to the needs of young people ... A youth organisation ... brings together young people, operates in the milieu of young people, and fulfils the needs of young people through its activities (Karpowicz, 2009, p. 93).

In turn, the European Commission understands under the term "youth organisation" such that are:

... youth-led, non-profit, voluntary non-governmental associations and, under some circumstances, can instead be part of the state apparatus or be youth worker-led. They are mostly established to further the political, social, cultural, or economic goals of their members. This is done by implementing activities for young people and/or engaging in advocacy work to promote their cause. Typically, youth organisations focus on promoting and ensuring young people's democratic and social rights; encouraging their social and political participation at all levels in community life; and offering opportunities for personal and social development through leisure activities, voluntary engagement and non-formal and informal learning.⁵

In this article, we treat youth organisations as a place where young people can express their approach to what is important to them; thus, they are places where contemporary values are dictated within the youth space can be identified.

⁴ <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality/inclusive-education/common-values>

⁵ <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/youth-organisations-and-youth-programmes>

The article comprises the following sections: the basic terms, the research methodology, the research material, along with an example of a unit of analysis, the presentation of research results in relation to two research questions, and the conclusions.

Basic terms

Within the deliberations on the most significant values, an assumption has been made that a value is something that is good in some way, that is an end in itself, but also that serves other values or aims, constituting the basis for judgements and standards. According to Stradowski (2014): “Values also constitute an educational goal. Every person builds their own hierarchy of values for themselves throughout their life. A person evolves to values, acquires maturity by coming to know the world of values and undertaking the challenge to shape one’s own world view that is made specific in the professed values” (p. 28).

Values can be understood as

... normative signposts that guide opinions and behaviour; as such, they form the basis of representations of life in society and guide the actions of individuals and groups [...]. Although values influence decisions, it is impossible to establish a direct, infallible link between values and behaviour. As we are reminded by Tchernia [...] – following practically all researchers in the field of values – individuals always maintain a certain freedom of action with respect to the principles to which they are attached. Therefore, one cannot instil values in a unilateral manner, since subjectivity and free will are what make changes in values possible and, conversely, they are what oppose attempts to forcibly transform them (Molga, 2010, p. 7).

It is also worth noting the relationship between the individual and the social dimension of values that is explained by Argandoña, clarifying the dependencies between them: “Thus, values’ individual and social dimensions are interrelated, they influence each other mutually – which does not mean that our values are imposed on us by other people’s values” (Argandoña, 2003, p. 16). In the context of the actions taken by youth organisations, it is worth highlighting that being a member of a given organisation does not at all mean that a person unequivocally identifies with all the actions undertaken by it in order to defend or promote specific values, but it certainly allows an area of commonly shared and practised values to be identified, both in an individual and social dimension.

Every political community, including the European community referred to as the European Union, refers to values usually stated in the preambles of documents

establishing its existence, not just to show what it builds its identity on but also to justify any long-term and current actions within its internal and external policies. In this article, we present the values enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, which mentions respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.⁶ The selection of the presented values is not incidental. All of them remain closely related to each other. This is because it is difficult to imagine a democratic legal state, thus, also the organisations operating within its territory, without respecting human rights, human dignity, and non-discrimination (Florczak & Pacześniak, 2014, p. 346).

Attempting to define European values is very problematic because, in so much as they can be easily listed by referring to Article 2 of the TEU, collecting and writing up their interpretations in various sociocultural contexts of European states is extremely difficult. It is emphasised in literature, particularly political science literature, that European values are often termed as: "EU values", "our values", "common values" or the "values of Europe" (Calligaro et al., 2016, p. 10).

Some researchers point out that the nature of the European value system is fractal, in other words, that different structures and dimensions that are almost identical in different analyses are always defined by the same variables. According to Galland and Lemel, referring to the results of research carried out in different age groups, different countries and timeframes: "An object is said to be fractal if its shape remains unchanged – at least in an approximate way – at various stages of observation. It is what we notice in the European value system. Obviously, the fractal nature of an object as a value system cannot be "proven" in the same way as a mathematical object in which structures can be shown through mathematical functions. Besides, the fractal nature of an object makes sense only in a mathematical context" (Galland & Lemel, 2008, p. 160).

Thus, in the context of the European community, we can conclude that despite it being created on the basis of opposing values, it is, however, these values that connect with one another and create a cultural creation that is unified in its diversity. As Chodubski emphasised in relation to the European culture: "On the one hand, it can be noticed that it is not an original creation, but it consists of elements of Greek, Roman, Judaistic and many more cultures and on the other hand, it can be seen that it has always been dominant and expansive. It was followed, never vice-versa; in its expansion the most important are the openness for changes on the one hand and the other strong conservatism" (Chodubski, 2010, p. 35).

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/pl/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012M002>

According to Rokeach's concept of values coined in the 1960s, wherein he distinguished between terminal values (breaking them down into personal and social) and instrumental (divided into moral and competency values), European values can be classified as terminal (autotelic) values, society-centred, thus, of an interpersonal nature. According to Rokeach, terminal values take on the form of the statement that: "I believe that this specific end-state of existence (e.g., salvation, peace on earth) is personally or socially worth fighting for" (Rokeach, 1968, p. 160, quoted after Kościuch, 1983, p. 87). Therefore, European values such as: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights are those values that member states and their citizens should always be occupied with when undertaking social and unit activities.

The definitions of EU values enshrined in Article 2 TEU are posted on the official website of the European Commission,⁷ however, for research purposes, we have developed their operational definitions based on an analysis of the literature⁸:

1. Respect for human dignity – an inherent, inalienable and inviolable value; its respect and safeguarding constitute the duty of public authorities; the nature of dignity lies in it being the source of all other human rights and freedoms, for instance, the right to live, the right to integrity, the prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the prohibition of slavery and forced labour;
2. Freedom – the expression of feelings and convictions, making choices, and the actions of a person that are in conformity with their own will. Freedom is possible when two conditions are cumulatively fulfilled: (1) knowledge, skills, health, social standing, and resources of a given person create for them a broad scope for self-expression, choosing and acting (condition of possibility); positive freedom (freedom to, real freedom); (2) absence of real or potential unnecessary and harmful interventions, manipulation, limitations and requirements in relation to that person (condition of the absence of interference); negative freedom (freedom from, formal freedom), for example, the right to freedom and personal security, freedom of thought,

⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/component-library/eu/about/eu-values/>

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>; https://ipu.org/pl/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/GLOWNE-WARTOSCI-UNII-EUROPEJSKIEJ-W-PRAWIE-TRAKTATOWYM_dr-Joanna-Siekiera.pdf; <https://www.edukacjaprawnicza.pl/godnosc-czlowieka-jako-zrodlo-podmiotowosci-prawnej-i-granica-wladzy>; <http://rszarf.ips.uw.edu.pl/pdf/wolnosc.pdf>; <http://www.kontrateksty.pl/index.php?action=show&type=news&newsgroup=16&id=102>; <https://depot.ceon.pl/bitstream/handle/123456789/5546/rownosc1.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>; <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/pl/sheet/165/prawa-czlowieka>

conscience and religion, freedom of speech and information, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of movement and freedom to work in the territory of the EU;

3. Democracy is both an autonomous and instrumental value; as an autonomous value, in its own right, it signifies a positive value because the opposite of democracy is dictatorship, and there can be no good dictatorship; as an instrumental value, it is a means to an end – power, it is also an instrument of exercising this power, for instance, the right to vote and stand as a candidate in elections, socio-economic system ensuring the universal, equal participation of citizens in the property and management of national production assets, access to the benefits of cultures, education and healthcare; this is so-called social and economic democracy.
4. Equality – an instrumental value or a value in its own right; in the first meaning, it is a derivative of some more fundamental moral values, for instance, contributing to reducing suffering, is beneficial to the least well off, promotes solidarity between people and other positively assessed attitudes, strengthens democratic institutions, et cetera, furthermore, it also alleviates suffering, a sense of inferiority, the domination of certain people over others, is conducive to freedom, helping human capabilities and personalities develop and flourish, reduces stigmatisation, facilitates peaceful coexistence and the like; in the second meaning, it is a value in its own right and the very reference to this concept explains many of our moral judgements like, for example, equality before the law, non-discrimination, cultural diversity, religious and linguistic diversity, equality between women and men, the rights of the child, the rights of the elderly, and the integration of disabled persons;
5. The rule of law – all the public authorities operate within the limits set by law, in compliance with the democratic values and fundamental rights and under the control of independent and impartial courts. The rule of law constitutes: lawfulness (i.e., a transparent, responsible, democratic and pluralistic legislative process), legal certainty, the prohibition of arbitrary procedures in the actions of the executive authorities; independent and impartial courts, effective judicial scrutiny, including monitoring that all the fundamental rights are being respected, and equality before the law.
6. Respect for human rights, including the rights of persons who are members of minorities, covers a broad catalogue of rights, for example: fundamental laws (constitutional), personal rights and individual rights, minority rights, economic, social and cultural rights and, while respecting them, the general principles of the rules of law play an important role, as does good governance

and civil society, as well as the right to good administration that in practice means taking any action needed intended to: campaign against the death penalty, undertake a dialogue on human rights, the rights of the child, the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, the protection of children affected by armed conflict, the protection of human rights defenders, the promotion of compliance with international humanitarian law, the prevention of violence against women and girls, the promotion of freedom of religion and beliefs, the protection of the rights of lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender and intersex people (LGBTI), the promotion of the freedom of expression on the Internet and outside of it, non-discrimination in external actions, and safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.

The article concerns youth organisations whose members constitute young people who are an exceptional part of society, who cannot be compared with other so-called “interest groups”, particularly ones forming around economic criteria like producers, manufacturers, and professional and trade union lobbies. The youth are only young for a while – the representatives of all the “adult” social groups will be derived from them, hence, young people are naturally internally heterogeneous and do not necessarily possess one goal or a coherent set of priorities. Compared to traditional socio-economic groups of stakeholders, this is an exceptionally large group – its share in the population of EU countries ranges from 20–25% (EU Youth Report, 2009, p. 9).⁹

The participation of the Polish team in international research carried out on European Values is a unique occasion to observe the changes in the field of European values among adolescents over 18 years of age (European Values Study, EVS). As stated in the study description: “These studies were initiated in 1981 by a group of researchers from the Catholic University of Leuven and only 10 countries that were at the time members of the European Economic Community took part in the first edition. However, as of 1990, other European countries also joined the project, including Poland. Despite certain modifications of the EVS questionnaire in subsequent editions, the studies repeated every nine years on representative samples of Poles offer a unique possibility of tracking the changes taking place in the consciousness of Polish society” (Marody et al., 2019, p. 12). Poland took part in the research in the years 1990, 1999, 2008, and 2017, and the analyses of the Polish team concerning the approach of Poles to European values come from this last study. The EVS study does not directly investigate the attitude of Europeans (aged 18 years and over – there is no upper limit) to European values but, for

⁹ <https://partycypacjaobywatelska.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/dialog-z-mlodzieza.pdf>

instance, the value of: democracy is defined in the study not only as a system of governance but also as the participation of citizens in governance which, in the EVS study, is termed freedom aspirations, and the following serves to measure it: “... the frequency of choice of opinions recognising the «defence of the opportunity to freely express views» and the «creation of better opportunities for people to influence the decisions of authorities» as the most important objectives for the country” (Konieczna-Sałamatin, 2019, p. 30). The conclusions of the Polish team stemming from the EVS study indicate that over 15 years of Poland’s EU membership is connected particularly with an increased acceptance by young Poles of the values mentioned in Article 2 of the TEU (Konieczna-Sałamatin, 2019, p. 28).

Research method

The study results presented hereunder are part of broader research carried out within the project Heterotopias of Citizenship Educational Discourse and Pedagogies of Militarization in the Spaces of Youth Organizations. A Critical-Analytical and Comparative Approach, grant OPUS 18, no. 2019/35/B/HS6/01365, financed by Polish National Science Center. The analysis presented below concerns six youth organisations operating in Poland that were selected for the requirements of the project in view of two independently applied criteria: the criterion of status and visibility.

The first organisation selection criterion concerns youth organisations that belonged to the Polish Council of Youth Organisations (PCYO) in 2018 and, at the same time, were public benefit organisations. PCYO is the largest and most differentiated federation of non-governmental organisations representing the opinions and needs of young people in contacts with national policymakers. This additionally is the only organisation that has been given National Youth Council status in the meaning of European law and international agreements. As one can read on its website, the statutory objectives of the PCYO include:

... the co-creation of policies for youth; the dissemination of the idea of youth participation in public life; the representation of member organisations before the public sector and other milieus; advocacy on behalf of youth, organisations bringing young people together and acting for the benefit of youth before public administration bodies and other milieus; the dissemination of information and promotion of the activities of youth organisations, the affiliation of young people and working for their benefit and for the benefit of unaffiliated youth; the support of cooperation, exchange of information and experiences between youth organisations, the affiliation of young people and working for their benefit; the facilitation of contacts between Polish youth organisations and those bringing together youth

and partners abroad; the support of the development of Polish youth organisations and those affiliating youth.¹⁰

The Federation currently has 30 affiliated organisations within which over 250,000 young people are working and, more importantly, alongside the Children and Youth Council of the Republic of Poland (CYCRP), which is recognised by the European Commission as a non-governmental organisation that is independent of the Ministry of Education.¹¹

The second criterion concerns the media presence of Polish youth organisations in the context of their youth-directed activities in 2018, for example, through social media like Facebook.

Six organisations were selected based on these two criteria (Tab. 1).

Table 1

The origins and mission of the studied organisations

Organisations	Origins	Mission
AIESEC Polska (belongs to PCYO)	youth organisation in Poland since 1990	striving to achieve peace and fulfilment of humankind's potential https://aiesec.pl/historia/
ATD Czwarty Świat (Fourth World) (ATD) (belongs to PCYO)	international organisation: The International Movement ATD Fourth World; in Poland since the 1990s, first in Kielce and then followed by Warsaw in 2004	counteracting social exclusion of persons and entire families https://www.atd.org.pl/ruch-atd-w-polsce/
Centrum Inicjatyw UNESCO (UNESCO Initiatives Centre) (UNESCO IC) (belongs to PCYO)	international organisation; in Poland, Wrocław, since 2008. At the beginning, as an information group supporting the work of the Polish National Commission for UNESCO	enlightenment, education, promotion in the scope of global, European education, for democracy and for human rights, as well as counteracting discrimination and exclusion https://unescocentre.pl/sekcja_team/misja/
Centrum Inicjatyw Miedzykulturowych Horyzonty (The Horizons Centre for Intercultural Initiatives) (Horizons CII)¹ (belongs to PCYO)	organisation established in 1996 in Poznań	initiating, conducting and supporting educational, social, and cultural actions from and for the local communities and building intercultural dialogue between the representatives of different cultures https://cimhoryzonty.org/

¹⁰ <https://prom.info.pl/o-nas/>

¹¹ <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/poland/53-youth-representation-bodies>

Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny (The National Radical Camp (NRC))	beginnings date back to 1934; established in 1993; in 2012 was registered as an association	continuing development and work on the revival of national and Catholic values https://www.onr.com.pl/czym-jest-onr/
Młodzież Wszechpolska (All Polish Youth) (MW)	beginnings date back to 1922; it was reactivated in 1989; registered as an association in 2003	Building a Catholic state, a state constituting the pillar of the European Latin civilisation https://mw.org.pl/idea-i-statut/

Source: data from own research.

AIESEC Poland, ATD Fourth World, Youth Initiatives Center Horizons,¹² UNESCO Initiatives Centre, All-Polish Youth, and the National Radical Camp. The first four organisations belong to PROM, the remained do not but all are visible in the media. Within the studies carried out within the project, all the documents available on the websites of the studied organisations were analysed, including the statutes, rules and regulations, reports and accounts of activities, as well as Facebook entries.¹³ The values were reconstructed based on an analysis of the content carried out using three analytical categories: standards, in other words, the world vision (what it should be?), problematisations (what is considered to be the problem?), and the objectives of the activities (the state of affairs which the given organisation is heading towards). The results of these analyses were collated with the six values mentioned in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and respect for human rights.¹⁴

Thus, the basic research category constitutes European Union values (hereinafter referred to in short as “EU values”) that have, do not have any at all, or have a negligible amount of their representations in the documents of the studied organisations. According to Rapley, “exploring a text often depends as much on focusing on what is said – and how a specific argument, idea or concept is developed – as well as focusing on what is not said – the silences, gaps or omissions” (Rapley, 2007, p. 111).

Referring to the above arrangements, the following research questions were posited: Which European Union values are present in the documents of the youth organisations operating in Poland?

¹² The organisation was called the Horizons Centre for Youth Initiatives until 2019.

¹³ Because the Facebook (FB) page of the NRC organisation was blocked in 2018, we do not have the FB entries for this organisation.

¹⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/pl/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012M002>

Could the absence of certain or all of the EU values in the operations reported in the documents of the youth organisations in Poland be indicative of a lack of understanding of their significance in fighting populism, xenophobia and nationalism, in other words, in fact of their support?

The carried out studies are set within a constructivist paradigm, among others, due to the role of the researcher in the data collection and analysis process, which Denzin and Lincoln (2005) refer to as the “mediator of multiple voice reconstruction” (p. 196). We are aware of the fact that the reconstruction of the meanings in the documents analysed by us is one of the many possibilities but, at the same time, is a consequence of the adopted ontological and epistemological assumptions in relation to the subject of the research. These studies were carried out using a qualitative strategy.

The data collection method involved searching through secondary sources, whereas the method of analysis entailed a content analysis based on the defined categories of EU values. The analyses were also supplemented by an inductive analysis the aim of which was to add new categories as the empirical work progressed (Katz, 2001; Szczepaniak, 2012, p. 99). The coding was carried out using Atlas. Ti software. All 362 documents made available by these organisations on their websites, including their statutes, rules and regulations, declarations, reports, and statements and accounts of their activities, as well as 332 Facebook entries, were analysed. The scope of the studied sources was the year 2018, which was dictated by the aim of the main project and the earlier-mentioned actions of the European Commission concerning the promotion of the concept of common values that was begun at the meeting of the heads of state and government in 2017 in Gothenburg. The timeframe for the collection of the materials is January 2021 to May 2022.

The documents collected in the Atlas.Ti software were given appropriate symbols that were then used by us in the analysis. Every symbol comprises the name of the organisation and the document type, for example, “CIM Horyzonty, FB posts” means that this is a document of the Horizons Centre for Intercultural Initiatives and that it is a Facebook post.

Research material and example of a unit of analysis

The content was coded in a two-fold manner. At the beginning, the material was coded using the basic project category of the value/concept, and within its realms, three sub-categories: standards, problematisation, and objectives of activities. Then, the coded fragments were subject to re-coding but this time with European Union values.

Due to the definitional capacity of the analysed EU values, their presence was read twice-fold – directly from the text, literally, and based on a content analysis. We have provided the value of “democracy” as an example:

- Democracy, as a term that is directly and literally read from the text, for example:

We enlighten, educate, promote in the scope of global, European education, **for democracy** and for human rights (UNESCO IC, Website).

- Democracy as a term that was drawn from an analysis of the content (of the described actions of the organisations for the benefit of social life or the use of the possibilities that a democratic system gives in Poland), for example:

Do not wait until fate will bring you the ideal circumstances to act – such do not happen. Use what you already have available to you and **exert a positive effect on the world!** (AIESEC, FB posts).

Our starting point was the number of coded EU values in the documents of specific organisations, which depicted the categories that are represented. All the EU values were found in the studied sources although the “rule of law” had the smallest participation. It could be observed that the documents of the organisations belonging to PROM have a representation of all the EU values. Sometimes there were several EU values per single “value” category. However, the opposite was found in the case of the NRC and the APY.

After the quantitative analysis, the next step involved an analysis of the content that was collected from the value documents. Were they within the EU value operational definition proposed by us or were they outside the literal formulation and failed to contain the content defined by us? A repeated and careful reading of the whole of the research material that was identified as suitable for analysis allowed us to capture the maximum diversity of the examples provided by us.

Research results

Below is a presentation of the content analysis that refers to each EU value separately, focusing on both the declarations entailed in statutes or ideological declarations, as well as examples of specific actions that were described in reports or FB posts (Tab. 2).

Table 2
An exemplification of EU values in the operations of youth organisations

UE values	Exemplification of the definitions	Identification in research material	
		Declarations from documents	Examples of activities
Respect for human dignity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> actions for the best interests of others, the weak and needy creation of assistance communities expressing concern for the right to enjoy a decent livelihood in the economic sense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> motto: "Let's put dignity first" declaring openness towards every person; promoting attitudes of tolerance and dialogue with every person drawing attention to the vulnerable expressing concern for the right to enjoy a decent livelihood in the economic sense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> volunteering as helping others, for example, teaching English in India celebrating various different events/feast days, drawing attention to human dignity, for example, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, World Hello Day, International Day of Tolerance, and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women workshops, meetings, projects, for example, Wrzesiński's Workshops, Meetings in the Lazarz district, Meetings with the residents at Dudziarska Street Aid programmes, for example, helping children in the Children's Home in Brzeg and the "Sweet Blood" campaign; "Parcel for a Hero" campaign – material and spiritual support for war veterans; 3rd edition "We will feed the hungry – Wrocław" 5th Hike of the Holy Cross Mountains Brigade of the National Armed Forces – night edition
Freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> overseas travel participation in marches and protests studying and working abroad, for instance, of Polish people or foreigners in Poland voluntary work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the right to freedom and the safeguarding of liberties expressed outright freedom in accessing work, apprenticeship training, and trips abroad volunteering as an opportunity to meet new people with no geographical limitations participation in building an open world apolitism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> volunteering as an experience of personal development, getting to know people, hosting workshops, seminars, performances, for example, creating a mural on the Dudziarska housing estate – "Let's paint something together – upload to the wall!" meetings on the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty – the poor are making their voices heard celebrating anniversaries related to events after the Second World War, for instance, the anniversary of the declaration of martial law
Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> involvement in activities for change (e.g., access to education) actions for sustainable development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> declaration of active participation in social life abiding by the principles laid down in statutes justifying the establishment of an organisation consistent with the principles of democracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participation in events initiated by male and female members of the organisation, for example, participation in the Independence Day March educational and informational campaigns in the media

Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actions to include the excluded • promoting tolerance, dialogue, equal opportunities • anti-discrimination and social exclusion measures • raising key competences of educators working with the topics of stereotypes and discrimination • children, poor people, persons with disabilities as empowered social actors – social inclusion • equality in access to social goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workshops, meetings, seminars, for example, the Festival of Dreams – Summer Seminar for Equal Opportunities, “About Gender (in)Equality” workshops, Intercultural Training, the “New Way - Educated, Motivated, Employed!” training • projects, for example, Inception 3, “Race: Human” #sundaythroughcolours • celebrating feast days and public holidays, for example, the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia • expressed in information activities about social inequalities; seasons greetings about equality
Rule of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expressing the approach to the political system • taking action to maintain the rule of law throughout the country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approach to the legal liability of the state towards its citizens, including children • the cardinal importance of the governmental policy in reaching people who have been left behind • a criticism of the functioning of certain acts and policies
Respect for human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all activities of the organisation intended to protect human rights and prevent human rights violations; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocating/fighting for human rights • protection of the rights of specific social groups (children, women, and refugees) • affiliating youth from different cultural circles • concern for the cultural and natural environment • global, civic, intercultural education

Source: data from own research.

Respect for human dignity is a master category with a broad semantic field and almost always occurs together with other values, constituting for them a kind of umbrella, for example, intercultural training is organised by the UNESCO Initiatives Centre and serves to reduce cultural differences, which is a sign of “equality” but, at the same time, of respect for human dignity. One could say that whenever concern for human rights, equality or democracy is expressed, concern for human dignity is also present. This is why it is difficult to identify this category as one that functions independently.

Statues often contain an openness towards every person regardless of any differences related to culture, beliefs, sex, skin colour or economic status. Independently, it is particularly visible in the assumptions of the ATD Fourth World organisation that is to mainly serve the poor and, consequently, often socially excluded people. The very motto of the organisation is: “Together let’s put dignity first” (ATD, website), which directly communicates the values by which it is guided. Another example of a declaration of this value is the proclamation of its founder, Józef Wrzesiński:

Thanks to them (families) we can fulfil our aspiration to build a society that will respect human dignity and human rights (ATD, Proclamation).

It is implemented by organisations belonging to PROM, primarily through volunteer work, workshops and meetings as well as the celebration of international feast days and bank holidays. Projects addressed to people who have been excluded and which are organised in their direct living space are a very important area of activities and are aimed at integrating these milieus and raising their socio-cultural level. One such example could be the activities undertaken in the Łazarz district of Poznań or in Dudziarska Street in Warsaw. The undertaken projects are also intended to keep past events alive in people’s memory for educational purposes.

The project objective is to show that the values and attitudes represented by the Righteous among the Nations who risked their lives to save Jews during the Second World War are universal and also valid and pertinent today (UNESCO IC, website).

The leading activity of the ATD organisation is celebrating the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, which includes numerous meetings and seminars as well as concerts and performances that are intended to make people aware of the meaning and significance of poverty.

This category is represented in the sources of all the PROM organisations. It occurs the least often in the documents of the All Polish Youth. It is visible in the

operations of the APY in their respect of migrants, Polish citizens living on the Eastern Borderlands, as well as of poor people.

Today, in the Catholic Church, we are celebrating the 2nd World Day of the Poor. "This day is our examination of conscience of whether we can and want to be with poor persons or are we only capable of giving something to somebody," Spokesperson for the Polish Bishop's Conference, Rev. Paweł Rytel-Andrianik. And do you know and are you helping the poor in your immediate milieu? (APY, FB posts).

In the NRC, however, it is present both in the literal form as well as in the actions taken by local brigades. The Ideological Declaration contains the following statement:

The Polish state will not idly watch the economic migration of Poles ... We will not tolerate a situation where our fellow compatriots are forced to seek a dignified life outside the borders of its own state (NRC, Ideological Declaration).

Human dignity in the form of a dignified life is combined here with the value of freedom but set in the context of the problem. This is because going abroad for work is treated as depriving a person of their dignity and, at the same time, of their freedom because they are forced to do this. The definition of "freedom" accepted by us contains the autonomy to make decisions, regardless of their impact on others. Human dignity will be preserved in the cited declaration once Poles will work in their own country. The NRC organisation assumes that going abroad is something that people are forced to do and does not result from their free choice.

There are many activities in the operations of the NRC organisation that express concern for human dignity, like helping war veterans, children from children's homes, or homeless people:

On the 8th December, as the Lower Silesian Brigade of the NRC, we have begun the 3rd edition, our recurring "We will feed the hungry – Wrocław" campaign. The first thing we did was to purchase products to prepare meals for the needy. The funds for this purpose come from our own contributions and from people of good will who have decided to support the 3rd edition of our "We will feed the hungry – Wrocław" campaign. A warm and nutritious meal was handed out to homeless people and needing a roof over their heads ... (NRC, Website).

The second EU value – **freedom** – is also represented in the documents of the studied organisations. Volunteering dominates the actions which, in this case, serves to satisfy the need of curiosity about the world, openness to meeting new people, and personal development. The photographs in the accounts, particularly of the AISCEC

organisation, present smiling youth surrounded by people from all walks of life. Young people have the opportunity to both go abroad (volunteer) and act as hosts to their peers from other countries (hosting). Furthermore, such organisations as the ATD give them the opportunity to express their opinions through the “Our Voices” project, which aims to present the point of view of poor persons to a wider audience.

The freedom category occurs both in the form of “freedom to” and “freedom from”, for example:

Let us be open ... Only as free people, participating fully in the life of society as spokespersons for human rights, will we be capable of passing on our culture to others (ATD, Proclamation).

Moreover, it is often associated with the category of “equality” that also means freedom from any limitations and discrimination. In the analysed documents, every individual is presented as free, with the right to express their own opinions regardless of any demographic, political or ideological differences. Interestingly enough, even the ATD Fourth World organisation that was established by a Catholic monk declares freedom from religious influences. It does, however, focus especially on the freedom to express personal views by excluded persons, also by children.

Negative freedom, in other words, “freedom from”, is present both in the documents of the All Polish Youth as well as the National Radical Camp, directing attention to the time of martial law in Poland:

16. In December of 2018, the activists from the circles in Katowice and Rybnik took part in the celebrations commemorating the victims of the pacification of the “Wujek” mine. The tragic events during which the miners who were on strike against the announcement of martial law were killed occurred in 1981 (APY, FB posts).

Apart from the above example, the value of “freedom” in the documents of the All Polish Youth is present as the freedom of the Polish nation, not of the individual:

The Polish Nation is the common good of every Polish person, a community of faith, history, culture, the land, the language, and the customs. It has a right to freedom, greatness and prosperity, and it demands a sacrificial service from every one of us (APY; Ideological Declaration).

Freedom is understood as linked to the nation in the quoted fragment. It is not the human person who has the right to freedom but the whole nation understood, among others, as a “community of faith” – in this case, understood to be Catholic. The question arises as to what about people who do not share the community thus

understood and are not included in this definition? Following the same reasoning of this content, in a free nation, every person is required to give their sacrificial service, which is a negation of freedom.

The value category of **democracy** has numerous representations in the analysed documents, although mainly in organisations belonging to PROM. This is a value which is directly stated to be one of the objectives or principles specifying the functioning of the organisation, concerning mainly the elections of candidates to the board, the structure, and financial and operational transparency. It can also be very frequently encountered in the content as an expression of the desire to participate in social life for the benefit of change and social good, for instance.

The UNESCO Initiatives Centre is a non-governmental organisation that deals with active participation, promoting tolerance and dialogue ... We believe in change that does not happen on its own but is based on involvement and honest work (Unesco IC, Statute).

Democratic values declared by the All Polish Youth are illusive. One could say that they are visible outside of the broader context. When we isolate a certain fragment indicating the occurrence of the “democracy” category, for instance, concern for universal access to education and cultural goods, we can acknowledge that the content is within the framework of the definition, for example:

Spiritual culture is the reason for national life, evidence of the primacy of the spirit over matter. It requires care for its greatness, creativity and nobleness ... Education as the main instrument of the Nation in the consolidation of the wisdom of generations and disseminating it among Polish youth. It requires special support from the State (APY, Ideological Declaration).

In a situation where specific fragments are superimposed on the whole of the cited document, which states that “God is the highest good, the source and goal of life” and that “there is one, holy and apostolic Catholic Church, the teacher of our Nation, the way to salvation”, and, moreover, young people should be protected against moral corruption, then more interpretational opportunities are opened up. National threads are visible throughout the entire document, which are associated with the mottos of: God and the Catholic Church. Therefore, the state is democratic when it fulfills these defined and only right national catchwords.

The “democracy” value is manifest mainly through the participation of young people in various campaigns that can have an effect on social life. An important area for action is Internet space, which is used to convey information and views. The very fact of informing society about the events that we interpret within the remaining EU values is an expression of involvement in change.

Another way of expressing democracy by the APY and NRC is the organisation of marches, protests, and information campaigns related primarily to defending a traditional family (understood as the relationship between a woman and a man and children from their relationship), as well as globalism. The main activity is participation in the Independence Day March within the celebrations of National Independence Day on 11th November 2018. This is a time of cumulation of activities by these organisations. One could say that thanks to the fact that Poland is a democratic country, it is possible to express one's views and opinions in this way, despite the decision of the Polish capital's authorities to outlaw the event.

The category of the **equality** value is declared in the statutes of the organisation as openness to differences, tolerance, equal opportunities, and non-discrimination. The organisations belonging to PROM have set themselves the objective of raising awareness of equality issues resulting from stereotypes and even developing working methods in this scope, for instance:

Our objective is to create an innovative and interdisciplinary methodology of work dedicated to people working with topics like discrimination, exclusion, prejudices, and stereotypes (UNESCO IC, Statute).

This value is very often implemented along with the “freedom” value. This is because every person has the right to a voice (including children and poor people) which also makes them equal in relation to all the social actors. This can be seen particularly clearly on the implementation level of EU values. The organisations belonging to PROM organise many meetings, seminars and workshops that educate and raise awareness about discrimination on the grounds of sex, age, culture or economic status, for instance, implemented by the UNESCO Initiatives Centre “New Way – Educated, Motivated, Employed!” project addressed to young people with fewer educational opportunities. An important aspect of actions is also informing the media about the feast days being celebrated, often of an international nature, which also educates in the given field. Alongside information about the world, there is a clarification drawing attention to its objective, for example:

Today we are celebrating International Tolerance Day. On this day, it is worth remembering that there are 7 billion people in the world and what makes it beautiful is that every one of us is different. Open up your mind to diversity and show through your actions how to forge beautiful relationships (AIESEC, FB posts).

The All Polish Youth also expresses a striving towards and even as much as a demand for equality to be present among the youth. However, they do so in

combination with the requirement of protecting them from the corruption that comes from the West, which results from an analysis of the remaining documents:

Youth are the treasure of the future of the Nation, the source of its strength, and a guarantee of the continuity of generations. It calls for equal and dignified chances for development work and a life of prosperity, but it does require protection from moral and customary corruption (MW, Ideological Declaration).

The rule of law value category possesses the smallest number of representations. Organisations very rarely express their approach to the rule of law in Poland, and if there are any references to it, it is rather in terms of criticism or demands made of the state. They can be noticed only in the context of the fulfilment of certain goals like; for instance, the ATD Fourth World organisation is working on appointing a Social Rights Ombudsman so that the poor people could have a representative on the level of building a legal framework in Poland and also expresses criticism of certain acts that impede its operations. The All-Polish Youth, however, requires from the state that it protects families, education and culture and, furthermore, refers to the Polish state as an independent organisation, for example:

The Polish State is a sovereign and independent political organisation of the Nation that is a politically necessary form of life of the Nation required for the separate development of domestic forces. It requires our constant care to promote its autonomous development (APY, Ideological Declaration).

The last of the analysed EU values – **respect for human rights** – is very heavily represented in the materials. The main areas include human rights, civic education, and the natural environment. The organisations affiliated with PROM promote respect for human rights and even fighting for it, in view of the rights of children, women, poor people, migrants, or convicts. It is through volunteer work that they help people around the world access education, culture and material goods, for example:

Go out and join the project with AIESEC Warsaw UW! Support Sustainable Development Goal no. 4 and help Turkish youth develop their linguistic skills and openness to other cultures (AIESEC, FB posts).

These organisations promote environmental protection, making society more sensitive to the issue of waste and recycling education. Such actions like “Let’s Clean the World!”, battery collections or cleaning up forests will contribute to caring for our planet. Action programmes on the environment are part of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN, which have an established

place in the functioning of the organisation. Moreover, just like in the case of the previous EU values, respect for human rights is fulfilled by celebrating feast days, an example of which can be the World Science Day for Peace and Development, World Urbanism Day, or International Migrants Day (AIESEC, FB posts).

Significance of the absence of European Union values in the documents of the organisation

The carried out analyses indicate a low representation of EU values in the documents of the NRC and APY organisations as well as a high representation of values other than those specified in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. Phrases that reveal a conservative value focus can be observed both in statutes as well as in the accounts from the activities of these organisations. Among the declarations and the actions of these organisations, one can also identify ones that do not contradict EU values and such that bear signs of xenophobic actions underpinned by stereotypes.

The All-Polish Youth is clearly involved with the Catholic Church, which is highlighted by their participation in masses during the most important events (e.g., before the Independence Day March) and in many other actions. The organisation carried out actions intended to strengthen the image of the church like, for instance, #PriestsLikeAirplanes, which consisted of “describing one good priest, nun, monk or other religious, along with a description of what they did for us” (APY, FB posts). The campaign was created in response to the flood of negative information about the Polish clergy. The organisation often referred to anniversaries related to the clergy like, for instance, the National Day of Remembrance of Steadfast Clergy or of Mother Theresa of Calcutta. Such actions are not counter to EU values but actually complement them, providing an opportunity for more religious youth to express themselves clearly. The National Radical Camp functions in a similar way. Almost every initiative is preceded by mass in church and the area of action is strictly related to defending life from conception and the traditional family unit.

However, many documents reveal a denial of EU values. Such an example is the Ideological Declaration of the NRC which was set entirely within a religious and national context. The word “Nation” occurs in seven out of the eight points in the document, for example: “The Nation is the highest early value, the Family is the foundation of the Nation, Education is the forge of the Nation’s elite or the Economy in service of the whole Nation” (NRC, Ideologica Declaration). It is difficult to

speak of the freedom of an individual if their life is dedicated to the “service of the nation”. Moreover, God in the Catholic understanding is placed first – “Salvation in God is the ultimate human goal”:

Emphasising the immense role of Catholicism which has for over a thousand years been a culture-forming factor, a pillar of Polishness, and a beacon of national identity, we postulate a vision of Great Poland as a state that has been imbued by the Catholic spirit (NRC, Ideological Declaration).

Such explicit accentuation of the Catholic faith as the foundation for the functioning of the entire Polish nation hinders the implementation of EU values where respect of human rights, equality and freedom are emphasised, as it excludes everyone who has a different vision of Poland. This resounds strongly in the Youth Hymn:

“Let us go forth, clad in the armour of the spirit,
to drive out the Antichrist” (APY, Youth Hymn).

According to the APY, the vision of Poland is free of persons who profess a faith that is different from the Catholic faith. The key catchwords of the APY also include “God, Honour and Country”, “traditional family” (understood as the life-long union of a woman and a man) and “traditional values” (which also include the traditional family model). The defence of a traditional family model was evident in the protests against the so-called “Rainbow Friday” that directly referred to the value of freedom, equality and respect for human rights. The All Polish Youth criticised this campaign on Facebook:

The “Campaign Against Homophobia” organises in 211 schools the so-called “Rainbow Friday”, during which ideologised sex educators will brainwash children and youth ... That is why we appeal to all the pupils and parents who share traditional values: DO NOT BE AFRAID OF EXPRESSING YOUR OBJECTIONS! You have full right to do this! If we do not exert pressure right now, we can expect more such actions in the future (APY, FB posts).

Similar actions were undertaken by the NRC. It also organised the “March for Life and Family” in many cities across Poland, the aim of which was the manifestation of a traditional family model.

Today, the “March for Life” took place in Zawiercie, just like in many other Polish cities. Right after Holy Mass, those who are proponents of dignity and the right to life have set out of the Basilica in Zawiercie to the Church of St Stanislaus Kostka. The marching people would be incomplete without the national radicals. How very different this march was from

those organised by the liberals. Families with children, the elderly, and younger people marched peacefully with mottos written on banners. “The family is great”, “Boy and Girl = normal family” as well as church hymns accompanying the defenders of life.

Our opponents, shouting, were claiming the right to decide about human life. What’s more, apart from the desire to murder being part and parcel of their liberal package, they offer a comprehensive collection of anti-values, headed by sodomy. For us, the choice is simple – we will always defend a traditional family! (NRC, website).

Attempts of implementing the value of “equality” is, according to the APY, “brainwashing” because it goes against the adopted “traditional values”. The organisation overtly contradicts EU values by using the terms “self-will” or “tolerationism”:

The All Polish Youth intends to bring about moral and national renewal of the young generation, declaring war on doctrines preaching self-will, liberalism, tolerationism, and relativism. We desire to push out what is vile, false and dirty from the life of the nation (APY, Ideological Declaration).

The concern of the organisation for the young generation is also expressed in defending youth from “LGBT propaganda” or a “radical contestation of the Western culture”, which is a contradiction of the “fundamental values of our culture” (APY, FB posts). Freedom is understood by the NRC solely and exclusively as “freedom from” and in a strictly determined dimension – from “Bolshevism”, “capitalism”, “globalism”, “pseudo-progressive milieus”, and “leftist media”.

A clamp joining the operations of the NRC and the APY is the Independence Day March that is of a nationalistic nature, which was emphasised on the NRC website. Both NRC and APY activists took part in the march as well as the Italian New Force (Forza Nuova) formation.¹⁵ What is more, the European Union flag was burnt during the march. The police offered a reward for information leading to the identification of the perpetrator(s), which was attempted to be used for the benefit of the organisation:

The police set the reward at 5,000 zloty for identifying the perpetrator who burnt the fabric of the European Union.

We ourselves would have admitted to it, all they needed to do was ask, but since they’re offering financial assistance...

Away with the European Union! (APY, FB posts).

¹⁵ Forza Nuova – the Italian organisation of a nationalist and neo-fascist nature, which is a member of the European National Front.

The entry directly calls to end cooperation with the European Union, which is also visible indirectly in the declarations and activities reported in the social media of both organisations.

Conclusions

The analyses carried out in the article have led us to the conclusion that when investigating the presence of EU values in the documents of the youth organisations operating in Poland, we are dealing with a situation where some of the organisations align their operations with the values enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, while others largely and overtly contest them.

During the analysis of the documents, we focused on the occurrence and absence of the said values in the given organisations. This is because it turns out that even if the presence of a given value was noticed by us, when a more in-depth analysis was undertaken, it turns out that it is interpreted by the given organisation in a manner that is specific to it, which is different from what was proposed by us in the operational definition, for example, in the APY Declaration, “freedom” occurs directly in passages but it is also additionally set in a nationalistic context as “the freedom of the Polish nation”, and not the “freedom of an individual”. Such a situation can be interpreted as a peculiar dichotomy because, on the one hand, the organisation expresses a striving to freedom and, on the other, by adding a national context, exceeds beyond the definition adopted by us.

Based on the analyses carried out above, it is clear that in certain youth organisations, like UNESCO, for instance, the values that are present in the studied documents are identical to those that have been enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. In turn, other organisations like, for instance the APY or the NRC, do declare in their documents some of the values listed under Article 2 of the TEU but for different reasons about which we can only surmise (e.g., due to the pressure felt by them exerted by a social group with which they live, by a tradition or a political and legal space), in their everyday activities and undertaken initiatives they fulfil values that they truly identify with and in which they believe (conservative values).

Summing up, it's worth emphasising that the values enshrined in Article 2 TEU are sometimes difficult or even impossible to implement, for instance for political and legal reasons, however, the organisations that refer to them in their founding documents should implement them in their initiatives and actions to such an extent that is possible in specific circumstances, guided by objective indicators, an example of which is UNESCO, and not by utilitarian preferences like the NRC.

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