'United through our values'? Expressing unity through value-talk after terrorism in France and Norway

Rojan Tordhol Ezzati*

Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), Grønland, 0134 Oslo, Norway and Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo, Blindern, 0317 Oslo, Norway
*Corresponding author. E-mail: rojezz@prio.no

Abstract

In the immediate aftermath of terrorism, references to 'our values' as a source of unity become a substantial part of public discourse. Leaders, the media, and the public emphasize 'values' to express that 'we' are united across ethnic, religious, and political differences. This article comparatively examines formulations of 'we', 'us', and 'them' with reference to 'values' (i.e. value-talk) after terror attacks in France (November 2015) and Norway (July 2011). To access speech, events, and symbols as they were unfolding, the analysis draws on the first week of national television news following these attacks. Whereas the terrorists in France were self-proclaimers of an Islamic State, the terrorist in Norway was a self-proclaimed defender of the Christian civilization. The central place of a value-based unity—regardless of the terrorists' ethnicity and motivations—contrasts with the otherwise common idea expressed in public debate that 'values' embody a fundamental divide between 'natives' and immigrant populations. This article argues that scholarship on values, in migration studies and beyond, reifies the much-repeated assumption in public debate that there is a value-based divide between groups of people. By examining expressions of unity in contexts of conflict, the analysis untangles the dynamic and flexible 'groupness' articulated through value-talk. Analytical attention to this variability, I argue, better reflects the widespread attention to cultural complexities in migration studies. Through the study of value-talk in the immediate aftermath of terrorism, the article explores some of the dimensions of how and when unity is mobilized in societies marked by migration-related diversity.

Keywords: migration-related diversity, post-terror, unity in diversity, us-and-them, value-talk, values

1. Introduction

> Daesh [ISIL], a jihadist army, against France, against the values we uphold all over the world, against what we are: a free country that speaks to the whole planet (President Hollande after Stade de France and Bataclan attacks, November 2015).

> We must never give up our values; to show that our open society passes this test, too. That the answer to violence is even more democracy. Even more humanity (Prime Minister Stoltenberg after Oslo and Utøya attacks, July 2011).

From France and Spain to New Zealand and Norway, in their immediate responses to terrorism, leaders, the public, and the media have emphasized that 'our values' are under attack and, simultaneously, form a source of unity against the terrorists (Bogain 2019; Pop-Flanja 2019; Rafoss 2019; Monin 2020). Such responses contrast with the now-mainstream conception in public debate that 'values' represent a divide between residents who are deemed 'native' to European countries and immigrants or descendants of immigrants to these countries, particularly Muslims (Bechhofer and McCrone 2013; Mondon and Winter 2017; Phoenix 2019). To address concerns that foreign values pose a threat to European cultures and social cohesion (Cruz, D'Alessio, and Stolzenberg 2020), governments have increasingly stressed particular 'values' as essential for holding together national identity (Bauböck 2002; Kraus 2012; Iversen 2019).

The central place of 'values' in contestations over migration-related diversity in European public debate affirms the largely coherent scholarly consensus that values come to the forefront of awareness when perceived to be under pressure (Gecas 2008). However, contemporary scholarship on values also reifies the much-repeated assumption in public debate about a value-based divide by treating values as core characteristics of cultural groups (Inglehart and Baker 2000; Hitlin and Piliavin 2004; Norris and Inglehart 2004) and as 'an especially efficient way to capture and characterize cultures' (Schwartz 2006: 138–39). To a great extent, and despite its particular attention to the complexities inherent to 'groups' and 'culture', literature on migration-related diversity mirrors such approaches (Brubaker 2004; Vertovec 2011; Ezzati 2021).

The immediate aftermath of terrorism crystallizes the complexities linked to the repeated emphasis on 'our values' in public debate. In these points in time when leaders, the media, and the public define who 'we' are through reference to 'values', it is the terrorists who constitute 'them': those who threaten 'us' and 'our values'. Formulations of 'we', 'us', and 'them' with reference to 'values' are what I term value-talk. This article's post-terror analysis untangles the variable, dynamic, and context-dependent dimensions of value-talk. Analytical attention to these dimensions, I argue, provides a counterpoint to approaches that reify values as static core traits that divide cultural groups. Moreover, such expressions are not mere talk, but have actual consequences. Expressions of unity in diversity mark a distinctive contrast to these terrorists' goals to achieve a unity based on homogeneity, for example, in the shape of racial nationalism (Meissner and Heil 2020).

My attention to 'values' in use and values as a concept was first sparked while conducting a research project on the July 2011 attacks in Norway. The initial responses to the attacks were perceived and presented, by leaders, the media, and the public, as unique and

telling of 'who we are' (Falkheimer and Olsson 2015; Thorbjørnsrud and Figenschou 2018). However, as time passed, I noticed similar messages of a value-based unity after terrorism elsewhere in Europe, of which the November 2015 attacks in France constitute the deadliest to date. Outside Paris on a Friday evening, suicide bombers detonated bombs outside Stade de France. Attacks continued with killings at cafés and restaurants in Paris, and culminated at the Bataclan theatre, where a hostage situation lasted past midnight. One hundred and thirty people were killed, and hundreds were injured. The attacks in Norway began with a car bomb that exploded in the government area in Oslo on a Friday afternoon, and continued with shootings on the island of Utøya near Oslo, where the Norwegian Labour Party's youth organization was gathered for its annual summer camp. Seventy-seven people were killed, and hundreds injured. In both Norway and France, the attacks were described as the worst acts of violence on national territory since World War II.

While the terrorists in France were self-proclaimed seekers of an Islamic State, the terrorist in Norway was a self-proclaimed protector of the Christian civilization. Despite the differences in the terrorists' ethnicities, religions, and motivations, the response from leaders, the media, and the public in both settings largely contained the message that the terrorists had targeted 'our values'. These various actors repeatedly and explicitly highlighted a value-based unity that transcended differences. In other words, within these post-terror contexts, unity in diversity was put center-stage through articulations revolving around 'our values'. It is this empirical content that I analyze in this article.

Drawing on the first week of national TV news coverage after each of these attacks, I address the question: How do leaders, the public, and the media express unity through value-talk in immediate responses to terrorism? By 'responses to terrorism', I mean the words used, physical gatherings, and other expressions that directly referenced the attacks. Through this question, I explore some of the dimensions of how and when unity is mobilized in liberal democracies marked by migration-related diversity.

The use of TV news data allows for the responses to be captured as they unfold, 'prompted by an extraordinary event' (Toft 2020: 10). The nature of this data entails, however, that these are responses to the attacks as they were portrayed by the media. Media coverage will always be selective and partial, and media events—broadcasting the unity on display in response to happenings—certainly show an ideal version of society (Dayan and Katz 1992). However, for something to turn into a media event, leaders, the media, and the public must all contribute to asserting it as such (Dayan and Katz 1992). For this reason, the research question explicitly includes the media as an actor. In sum, this article takes as its starting point that bottom-up responses from the public and top-down responses from leaders, as well as the media portrayal of these responses, reinforce one another.

The next section discusses traditional approaches to the study of 'values', before introducing the concept of 'value-talk' as an analytical alternative. I then describe the data and methods used, before presenting an analysis of value-talk in the two post-terror cases. Finally, I discuss how, under certain conditions, 'values' can serve to mobilize unity.

2. From values as core traits of groups to value-talk

2.1 The study of values

There is a long history of studying 'values' as explanatory independent variables in sociology (Hutcheon 1972; Barry 1978). Although the sociological study of values has waxed and waned in cycles, the causal effect of values has remained in focus over the decades (Spates 1983; Hitlin and Piliavin 2004; Gecas 2008; Wuthnow 2008). Based on their mapping of values in sociology and related fields, Hitlin and Piliavin (2004: 359) describe this pattern: 'Often, values are considered in an overdetermined way as "causing" observed behaviors. More often, values are ignored as too subjective or too difficult to measure accurately'. Based on a comprehensive literature review, Wuthnow (2008) finds that the emergence of a critical literature in the 1980s and 1990s reinforced a divide that had already been present in the study of values: stories and strategies were usually studied qualitatively, whereas values continued to be investigated quantitatively. Determinism, the abstract character of values, and the tendency to redescribe behavior were among the criticisms in this literature; so was the conceptual emphasis on a link between 'culture' and 'values' (Wuthnow 2008). At the forefront of the latter was Swidler's (1986) objection to the scholarly assumption that values constitute the main link between culture and action.

With the acknowledgement that values are abstract, internalized, and usually subconscious, how best to measure values is an area of contention in quantitative approaches (Hutcheon 1972; Barry 1978; Spates 1983; Gecas 2008). Among the most influential contemporary value, scholars are social psychologists Hofstede (e.g., 2001) and Schwarz (e.g., 2006) who, despite differences in operationalization, both emphasize 'the nation as a meaningful cultural unit for comparing values' (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004: 378). Schwartz (2006: 138–9) explicitly identifies values as 'shared conceptions of what is good and desirable in the culture' and thus 'an especially efficient way to capture and characterize cultures'. Other influential scholars include Inglehart, Baker, and Norris (e.g. Inglehart and Baker 2000; Norris and Inglehart 2004), who have contributed to developing and refining several rounds of the World Value Survey and the European Values Study. These constitute widely used sources of data across disciplines and research fields. The idea of comparable 'cultural' or 'national' values has also been influential in political sociology (Barry 1978), for instance in the study of public opinion, where values are often approached as 'key to understanding sociopolitical variation' (Manza and Brooks 2012: 92).

In sum, the current predominant approach that seeks to identify and compare 'cultural' or 'national' values can be traced back to the 1950s (Barry 1978; Manza and Brooks 2012) and has developed into a largely quantitative field of value studies. Scholars in this field commonly approach values as culturally agreed-upon and enduring traits of groups and ideals that guide action (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004). The question of 'agreed upon by whom' within 'the culture' often remains obscure, which, arguably, reflects a lack of attention to the individual agency involved in approaches that highlight values as core and enduring traits of groups.

2.2 Value-talk and migration-related diversity

The field of migration studies has increasingly challenged long-held ideas of the 'national' or 'ethnic' group as a naturally given unit of analysis (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002; Brubaker 2004), on the basis that such units do not 'reconcile with the kinds of social processes migration researchers have been witnessing on the ground' (Meissner and Heil 2020: 7). Findings have guided this research field towards more nuanced understandings of the migratory processes and consequences that lead to migration-related diversity (Pisarevskaya et al. 2020). Yet, the studies that do make 'values' a primary and explicit subject of analysis devote significant efforts to measuring which values selected 'immigrant groups' have (Carol 2016; Koopmans 2016; Albertini et al., 2019) or whether and to what degree immigrant groups adopt 'Western values' (see e.g. Gundelach 2010; Röder and Lubbers 2016; Kalmijn and Kraaykamp 2018). Thus, much research in migration studies resonates with the approaches that dominate in the social sciences, treating values as more or less static markers dividing bounded cultural groups (Brubaker 2004; Vertovec 2011; Ezzati 2021). The current emphasis on a strong connection between 'national culture' and 'values' accentuates static and structural over dynamic and agency-driven understandings. Such emphasis downplays that values such as 'equality' and 'liberty' are interpreted and applied differently within a national culture (Bauböck 2002).

This article suggests that approaching 'values' as variable, dynamic, and context-dependent, rather than as fixed and static traits inherent to groups of people, better fits the complexities found in the study of migration-related diversity. The article's starting point is that through 'values' people express something that is important to their sense of belonging to a 'we' and to the distinctions they draw between themselves and others. Although much has been written about 'us-and-them' distinctions and 'we–they' relations, often conceptualized as 'group identity', here my attention is on a contextually fluctuating 'groupness' rather than the classification of a group bounded by specific identity attributes (Brubaker 2004). The variable formulations of 'we', 'us', and 'them' with reference to 'values' or value-talk, denote a dynamic and flexible 'groupness' rather than static and bounded cultural groups. Such references can be explicit, but also encompass implicit expressions of values, such as national symbols, which I return to below.

From this perspective, value-talk is a means to communicate context-dependent internal cohesion (*we-hood*) and external distinction (*us-hood*) (Eriksen 1995). Although both are part of identifying with others, us-hood entails 'cohesion by virtue of an external agent', while we-hood suggests identifying with others through perceived internal commonality and 'cohesion by virtue of a shared task' (Eriksen 1995). In the immediate aftermath of terrorism, the terrorists and those who agree with their actions constitute the 'external agent' against whom us-hood is determined, and the 'shared task' that creates the cohesion of we-hood revolves around unity.

2.3 The national embeddedness of 'values'

'Values' are a common point of reference to invoke us-hood in contrast to immigrants and their descendants whether in policy (Iversen 2020), public debate (Meer and

Mouritsen 2009), or everyday life (Bechhofer and McCrone 2013). The rhetoric of shared national values binds 'us' together in ways that resonate 'with ethno-cultural and racialized understandings of nations' (Iversen 2020). The nation is thus a unit of social membership that can provide 'a sense of belonging together and a desire to act collectively' (Kymlicka 2015). Membership is formalized within the nation-state through citizenship, but also encompasses informal and dynamic negotiations about who belongs to 'the nation' (Erdal 2019). The empirical recurrence of connecting 'values' and 'the nation' means it is analytically difficult to separate the two in a meaningful way. For the sake of the current analysis, 'the nation', or rather 'nationalism', provides the context within which actors mobilize unity through value-talk. By 'nationalism', I mean an empirically observable mechanism that is routinely used to both include and exclude people.

To mobilize unity through value-talk requires a variety of actors. Although talk about common values 'as public rhetoric from positions of power' is influential in its own right (Iversen 2020: 2), unity is not mobilized by actors in power positions alone. Thus, analysis of the TV news in this article is designed to bring into view top-down, bottom-up, and media perspectives. Incorporating these various perspectives aligns with much contemporary research on nationalism, which underlines that the politically and historically constructed 'nation' is not only produced top-down, but also bottom-up through people's everyday activities in a predominately routine and taken-for-granted way (Billig 1995; Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008).

However, the immediate aftermath of terrorism is not 'everyday' and 'ordinary'. These times of rupture bring into consciousness a form of nationalism that is triggered by a sense of crisis (Hutchinson 2006). Nationalism becomes a bond of solidarity and brotherhood that unites a vast people (Collins 2012). The unity in focus does not last, which is why Collins (2012) describes these, and other instances of conflict-mobilized solidarity, as 'time-bubbles of nationalism'. While it lasts, however, this form of unity is intensely experienced. Events unfold at the center of collective attention through leaders' words, popular gatherings, and national symbols such as flags and historical sites, channeled through the mass media, which combine to generate a 'feeling of totality' where enemies 'are defined away; not part of the people but an alien quality to be combated' (Collins 2012: 387–8). The TV news data illustrate that 'national values'—or rather, what 'are deemed to be "national" values' (Bechhofer and McCrone 2013: 546)—are part of these expressions of collective unity. Value-talk is explicit in leaders' speech, journalists' framing of segments, and the public's oral and written messages of unity. However, value-talk is also implicitly conveyed through, for example, national symbols because 'values' are embedded in the French and Norwegian history, institutions, and politics.

The French Republic does not recognize citizens' racial, ethnic, or religious affiliations (Koff and Duprez 2009). The foundational motto from 1789—*liberté, egalité, fraternité*—persists as the pillar of the Republic, as well as *laïcité*, the French version of secularism that came with the 1905 law on separation of Church and State (Fassin 2015). This foundational motto of the Republic is an important international reference (Bechhofer and McCrone 2013), and the Norwegian flag is designed with reference to the red, white, and blue of the French tricolor (Elgenius 2011) following Norway's independence from Sweden (1814–1905) and 400 years of subordination to Denmark prior to that. The Church remains symbolically meaningful to many Norwegians, even though, officially,

the State has been increasingly separated from the Church since 2008. Despite similarities between the two countries in their emphasis on an egalitarian framework, the concrete implications thereof differ. Arguably, Norwegian egalitarianism builds on an idea of imagined sameness (Gullestad 2002), which entails a perceived closeness between authority figures and the people. In contrast, the centralized nature of the French state reinforces the separation between leaders and the public (Koff and Duprez 2009).

Through such embeddedness, 'the nation' provides a framework for value-talk in telling a story of who 'we' are. This framework includes representations of 'the shared experiences, sorrows, and triumphs and disasters, which give meaning to the nation' (Hall 1996: 613). Within such a framework, communicating about 'values' underlines who 'we' are by telling the stories 'about the experiences from which our commitments arose, about other people's experiences or about the consequences a violation against our values had in the past' (Joas 2001: 55). This is not, however, necessarily a consensus-oriented story. The centrality of 'Muslims' values' as in opposition to 'European values' in the controversies over the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed is a telling example (Meer and Mouritsen 2009; Hutchins and Halikiopoulou 2020). The post-terror story of who 'we' are involves both unity and contestation of who is included and excluded within 'the nation'.

3. Data and methods

In the first few days after terror attacks, national media almost exclusively concentrate on the attacks and responses to them, thereby contributing to generate 'the experience of the people united in action' (Collins 2012). This media concentration informs the timeframe for the article data, which I drew from the first week of national TV news after the attacks: 13–20 November 2015 on *France 2* and *France 3* and 22–29 July 2011 on *NRK* and *TV2*. These networks reflect what was available in the University of California, Los Angeles NewsScape Archive of International Television News, which I used to access news recordings.[1] This is an electronic, indexed archive that contains broadcast TV news from around the world.

The archive contained the morning, midday, and evening news on the two French networks. Like these news segments on the French networks, the evening news on *NRK* is routinely recorded in the archive. However, the project on the 22 July attacks, which this article is part of, had obtained the full week of broadcasting from the two Norwegian networks. The data for Norway thus contain a comprehensive news coverage that was unprecedented in Norwegian television, as the state-run *NRK* and the commercially run *TV2* both went into 24-h news cycles for the first few days before resuming parts of their regular programming. The public networks of *France 2* and *France 3* resumed commercial breaks and much of their regular programming within two days, though with expanded news segments.

Hence, the material for Norway (up to 24 h a day) was considerably larger than for France (a total of about four hours a day). To get an overview of the effect of this data imbalance, I began by going through the data available from the first two days in full, while taking detailed notes.[2] This exercise showed that the Norwegian material contained far

more repetition and more live segments. To minimize the effect of the latter in the analysis, I concentrated, for example, on the parts of the Norwegian Prime Minister's speeches that were covered in the evening news rather than the live broadcast of his speeches in full.

The detailed notes formed the basis for an initial content analysis through which I identified and sorted through recurrent topics in the French and Norwegian news. Recurrent topics I identified in both settings were: (1) how widespread the *ideology* of the perpetrator(s) was nationally and internationally; (2) *logistical consequences* stemming from the attacks; (3) *security* in terms of investigation, the terrorists' paths to radicalization, and future prevention of terrorism; and (4) national and international expressions of *unity*. There were also some topical differences. *Criticism* of Hollande and his government was immediate, but Prime Minister Stoltenberg and the Norwegian government were barely criticized. *Military action* taken abroad in response to the attacks was a theme in France only. Although *religion* was a theme discussed in both settings, in Norway the attacks were described as 'a reminder that terrorism has no religion', whereas Muslims' dissociation from terrorism was repeatedly discussed on French TV.

Based on this initial content analysis, I concentrated on 'expressions of unity' and 'religion' when I searched the remaining five days' coverage. The search was guided by the project's thematic focus on expressions of we-hood and us-hood after the July 2011 terror attacks in Norway. It was within this project that the empirical appearance of 'values' after the 22 July terror attacks first came to my attention. I have thus taken an abductive approach (Thagaard 2018) where developing the scope of the analysis of this dataset has entailed to draw on thematic and theoretical analysis I have conducted in other parts of the project. In practical terms, this entails relying on a coding guide developed in the analysis of other media data on 22 July (Ezzati 2021) using the Qualitative Data Analysis Software NVivo and several rounds of extensive literature reviews using the Mendeley Desktop software for notes and analytical memos.

After mapping the 'what' through the content analysis, I conducted discourse analysis by examining 'what kinds of words or images are used to convey something' within particular contexts (Saldaña and Omasta 2017: 150). The analysis below is based on closely watching, and re-watching, the segments about 'expressions of unity' and 'religion', while writing detailed notes and analytical memos. Through this cyclical work, I examine how leaders, the media, and the public use 'values' when they talk about 'we', 'us', and 'them' in these mediatized post-terror settings.

While the news segments were clear in how they presented information, which reflects the need for TV news to be accessible to a broad audience, various forms of power nevertheless influence media representations (Hall 1996). These forms of power showed in, for instance, how politicians and experts were often interviewed in live, in-studio slots with more time to present a comprehensive account while 'man on the street' segments were typically shorter and included small excerpts from interviews with several people. To adjust to these differences, I have not included segments where it was difficult to see what role the journalists' questions played in interviewees' answers. When relevant, I include the media perspective in the analysis, and comment on whether the media accentuated or questioned expressions of unity.

Whereas the two national leaders' speeches emphasized messages of unity that were delivered top-down, popular gatherings manifested a bottom-up message of unity. However, the analysis of value-talk in expressions of unity through the lens of the TV news means that these are mediatized responses, since, despite the high number of attendees, most citizens experienced popular gatherings through media coverage rather than their own physical presence. Nevertheless, the data illustrate that journalists, leaders, and other citizens (i.e. 'the public') did engage in value-talk in expressions of unity.

4. Value-talk in expressions of unity

In examining the mediatized expressions of unity formulated through value-talk, the first analysis section examines the emphasis on we-hood, followed by a section that examines value-talk in dissociating from the terrorists (us-hood). I return to when and how such expressions mobilize unity in the subsequent discussion.

4.1 Emphasizing we-hood

References to 'values' are common in national leaders' post-terror calls for unity (Pop-Flanja 2019; Monin 2020), and the Norwegian Prime Minister and the French President were not exceptions (Raymond 2018; Bogain 2019; Rafoss 2019). In his first official statement,[3] Norwegian Prime Minister Stoltenberg (2011b) first official statement cited 'our values' in a call for unity:

We must never give up our values; to show that our open society passes this test, too. That the answer to violence is even more democracy. Even more humanity. But never naïveté.

He delivered these remarks on the evening of 22 July when little was known about the motivations behind the attacks. Stoltenberg (2011a) repeated his value-based call for unity at the Sunday service in Oslo Domkirke (the capital's Lutheran cathedral): 'We are a small country, but we are a proud people. We are still shaken by what hit us, but we will never give up our values'. Stoltenberg stood in church, close to survivors, authority figures, and members of the public. The major political parties, the Royal Family, and victims' next-of-kin were represented in the cathedral, and hundreds of people had gathered outside. Combined, these images depicted the perceived closeness between the people and authority figures, asserting strong-held perceptions of Norwegian values (Gullestad 2002).

In his first official statement, French President Hollande (2015a) named the enemy 'a jihadist army' and described the attacks as 'an act of war' committed 'against France, against the values we uphold all over the world, against what we are: a free country that speaks to the whole planet'. He positioned French values as international and universal, while grounding them within the powerful Republic:

My dear compatriots, what we are defending is our homeland, but it's much more than that. It's the values of humanity, and France will be able to shoulder its responsibilities, and I call on you to show this essential unity.

Long live the republic, and long live France!

Despite Hollande's continued emphasis on unity, there was a change toward more war and defense rhetoric in his speeches after the November attacks, as compared to what became known as the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January that same year (Bogain 2019). This rhetorical change reflects expectations of reinforced security measures (Raymond 2018), which was a clear message depicted in the TV news as well. For example, after his next substantial speech, when Hollande (2015b) addressed the joint session of parliament, the evening news (*France 3*, 16 November 23:09)[4] concentrated on the sections where he announced security measures and proposed changes in the law rather than his repeated call for unity. Unity was invoked only at the very end of the segment. With footage of representatives on their feet, singing the national anthem, the reporter commented: 'A speech receiving much applause, and everyone singing *La Marseillaise*, symbol of a found unity; for an instant'. The moment was a reminder of a similar one after the attacks in January that same year when, for the first time since 1918, all the elected representatives sang the national anthem during a parliament session (Fassin 2015). The segment thus highlighted the institutionalized history of the Republic, while signaling the fleeting character of 'a found unity'.

In these speeches and those to follow, both heads of state invoked a message that was tailored to the respective national settings: Stoltenberg with reference to a small country that would overcome this hardship as it had past struggles; Hollande with reference to historical triumphs and France's positioning as an international power. As the above analysis illustrates, through value-talk—framed within two distinctive settings—the two leaders established a link between the past and the present, referencing what lay within 'us', ready to be mobilized in the face of hardship. Moreover, with reference to institutionalized values, they were able to highlight a sense of we-hood and us-hood in contrast to the terrorists.

The news footage shows that references to 'our values' were also present in written and oral utterings from the public. Cameras caught such expressions at sites of gathering, and journalists often emphasized these expressions in their segments. In one segment (*France 3*, 16 November 22:51) filmed opposite the Bataclan, which had become a main gathering site in France, a reporter read aloud a hand-written banner strung from a building: 'Liberty is an indestructible monument'. Accompanied by footage of people gathered, some in prayer, the reporter continued:

> A unified France, where all faiths have come together to gather their thoughts. Buddhists, Catholics, Jews, but also Muslims, who have come to firmly condemn the barbarism of the Islamic State.

Beyond such explicit expressions of value-talk, values were implicitly imparted to the unity expressed at popular gatherings, since symbols such as flags and particular sites incorporate 'what are deemed "national" values' (Bechhofer and McCrone 2013: 546). One example is the Place de la République, near the statue of Marianne, the female embodiment of the French Republic (Raymond 2018)—the most important site of gathering after the Charlie Hebdo attacks. Thousands gathered at this site after the November attacks as well, despite a prohibition against doing so due to security concerns (*France 3*, 15 November 23:56:15).

Where the statue of Marianne underlined the French republican values, in Norway, journalists and interviewees alike commented on 'the ocean of flowers' at Oslo Domkirke as a reflection of the importance of community—regardless of religious or other differences. The cathedral's doorstep filled with flowers, flags, and notes, and was a recurring scene in national and international coverage.

The cathedral also became the destination for the 'rosetog', describing the procession of people who marched together, holding roses. This unofficial procession took place after the initially planned procession was cancelled due to security concerns, as the number of attendees to a preceding event at Rådhusplassen, the Town Hall square in Oslo, grew far beyond expectations. This event, which gathered some 200,000 people, was initiated by a single individual through social media platforms but developed into an on-stage program where the Crown Prince of Norway, the Prime Minister, and civil society representatives underlined the high number of participants as a manifestation of 'our values' (see *NRK* 25 July, 19:00).

The above illustrates the interplay between expressions of unity from leaders, the media, and the public, which all emphasized we-hood. The 'feeling of totality' generated through this interplay (Collins 2012: 387–8) does not mean that all actors contribute in the same way. The ways and extent to which various actors contribute to public debate are no doubt marked by power imbalances (Hall 1996). However, as the analysis above illustrates, leaders' responses are anchored within historical and institutional agreements that have developed over time and in process. In liberal democracies like Norway and France, such agreement requires that leaders are receptive to citizens' expressed needs. These needs are particularly visible in the immediate aftermath of terrorism, evidenced through popular events and gatherings.

In both post-terror settings, then, there was a certain agreement on emphasizing we-hood. An emphasis on we-hood is, however, always simultaneously accompanied by some demarcation of us-hood (Eriksen 1995).

4.2 Us-hood: dissociating from the terrorists

After terrorism committed by self-proclaimed Islamists, both concerns about radicalization and Muslims' dissociation from the terrorists form a substantial part of the media coverage (Bleich et al., 2015). These ideas were expressed through the French TV news, where journalists, experts, leaders, and members of the public expressed concerns about maintaining unity and the extent of radicalization. The Norwegian perpetrator's self-proclaimed Christian faith provides a comparative perspective.

Many French segments featured Muslims dissociating from the terrorists (e.g. *France 2*, 17 November 13:28). The following segment is a case in point. The news anchor's introduction explained that a text that 'condemns all forms of violence and terrorism' had been read at all French mosques at that day's Friday prayer (*France 2*, 20 November 13:29). The ensuing report showed a long queue outside Grande Mosquée de Paris. The prayer attendees interviewed emphasized French unity and dissociated Islam from the terrorists' actions. For example, one interviewee said: 'We live in this country called France. We have chosen France. We love France. France is in mourning. France is strong.' Another interviewee said: 'If you read the whole Quran, like you should, it is really

unjustifiable, what they do.' With footage of the mosque's minaret 'lit in the French flag's colours', the reporter commented that the number of prayer attendees was particularly high on this first Friday after the attacks. Footage showed a meeting where 'the Imams of most of the mosques in Val-d'Oise were gathered', and one Imam interviewed said:

> This Friday, the Imams should really insist on the human values that Islam carries, the value of human rights. God considers that someone who kills one single person, it's as if he had killed the entire humanity.

Another Imam said: 'Tolerance, living together, co-existence, love, fraternity. Today, more than before, we are obliged to get closer to each other.' The reporter ended the segment: 'In the 2,500 French mosques, the same message was distributed: in the face of the blind violence of terrorists, attachment to the Republic and to its values will be Muslims' only response.' Through the combination of attendance, value-talk, and the French flag, the journalists, religious leaders, and prayer attendees all dissociated Muslims from the terrorists, and communicated that being Muslim and a *citoyen* is reconcilable.

In Norway, the perpetrator's self-description as a conservative Christian initially surprised some commentators (e.g. *TV2*, 23 July 2011 01:43), but ultimately enabled a repeated message that the attacks served as a reminder that 'terrorism has no religion' (see e.g. *TV2*, 25 July 07:18). Again, the significance of Oslo Domkirke was evident. Like Prime Minister Stoltenberg, the bishop of Oslo spoke at the Sunday service held there. He also highlighted the 'societal values' that had been targeted:

The youth at Utøya was gathered in engagement for society, for justice, and peace. Those who lost their lives and were hurt in the Government quarter were victims of an attack against those same values (*NRK*, 24 July 11:13).

An interview with the Dean of Oslo Domkirke (*TV2*, 25 July 08:44) further emphasizes that this cathedral, and the church in general, became a unifying site at that point in time. With 'the ocean of flowers' in the background, the Dean explained that on Saturday he and his colleagues had placed candles and flowers outside the cathedral 'to provide an offer to those who do not feel that the church is the right place for them'. From there, the number of flowers, notes, and flags grew by the minute. He commented on the engagement of the public in its response to terrorism:

That a Norwegian too takes part in doing these things, hits us deeply, I think. Because we all feel that this is so un-Norwegian, this is not what Norway stands for.

The Dean's description of the popular engagement as a response to the perpetrator's 'un-Norwegian' actions casts the perpetrator outside the bounds of national unity. Arguably, then, this site of broad we-hood contributed to emphasizing a Norwegian 'us' in contrast to a 'them' so narrow that it perhaps only, or mainly, excluded 'him', the perpetrator. This narrow demarcation of 'them' in the construction of us-hood is particularly evident in terms of religion, as the Norwegian terrorist's self-proclaimed that Christian faith was generally not placed under scrutiny (Bangstad 2014; Falkheimer and Olsson 2015).

In contrast, the media did place the perpetrator's political affiliations under some scrutiny in this early news coverage (Thorbjørnsrud and Figenschou 2018). Among those questioned were representatives of the Progress Party, a right-wing party that has been an agenda-setter on immigration issues since the mid-1980s (Fangen and Vaage 2018). After

it became known that the perpetrator had previously been a member of this party and its youth organization, Progress Party leader, Siv Jensen, said in an in-studio interview (*TV2*, 23 July 11:40):

> I think that is utterly terrible to think about. But first and foremost, I have thoughts about what kind of serious actions this person has committed against Norway, against all of us who live here, against all the values we stand for. And we will not let that frighten us to silence. Quite contrarily, we will now safeguard all the values we believe in, safeguard the openness that this society is founded on.

When the news anchor asked whether Jensen was 'worried that there could be elements' at 'the fringes' of the Progress Party with opinions like those of the perpetrator, Jensen responded:

> At the outset, I'm not, but I can just say it right out, that people who have muddy attitudes, they have nothing to do in the Progress Party. We are part of this common democracy. We fight for individuals' freedom. We fight for some completely basic values and are part of the Norwegian political community.

Through value-talk, Jensen dissociated the Progress Party from the perpetrator.

Her description of the attacks targeting 'all of us who live' in Norway and 'the values we stand for' indicates a national we-hood that transcends differences. Such a formulation contrasts with otherwise common Progress Party rhetoric, which typically emphasizes a value conflict between Muslim immigrants and Norwegians (Fangen and Vaage 2018).

In Norway, such dissociations from a perpetrator whose ethnicity and religion the majority of citizens could identify with helped form a rather cohesive narrative (Falkheimer and Olsson 2015). This focus on unity, however, limited examination of the attacks as part of wider societal patterns (Falkheimer and Olsson 2015; Ezzati and Erdal 2018). An in-studio segment that followed the Jensen interview illustrates this limited critical scrutiny, as the in-house political commentator (*TV2*, 23 July 14:37) remarked that what the perpetrator did 'is far into fanatism and madness', and that 'it is not in the Progress Party or other political milieus that one finds the reasons for this'.

In France, despite the many segments where Muslims dissociated from the terrorists, questions about the Muslim population's loyalty to 'the Republic's values' remained prominent. The in-studio discussion that followed the above mosque segment is illustrative, as invited Islam and radicalization experts questioned the role of mosques in radicalizing young Muslims and discussed how to reinforce Muslims' loyalty to France (*France 2*, 20 November 13:32).

We can see the flexibility of value-talk in how a variety of actors invoke 'values' to dissociate 'us' from 'them' across the two settings, regardless of the differences in the terrorists' self-proclaimed religions and political motivations. However, whereas the terrorists' religion and ethnicity in France fit Europe-wide public debates about 'the Muslim threat' (Meer and Mouritsen 2009; Bleich et al., 2015; Mondon and Winter 2017; Phoenix 2019; Toft 2020), research suggests that the terrorist in Norway was largely considered an anomaly (Bangstad 2014; Falkheimer and Olsson 2015; Ezzati and Erdal 2018). Arguably, this difference mattered in terms of the extent and coherence of the unity mobilized.

5. Mobilizing unity

Through a discussion of the differing degrees of cohesiveness in the two post-terror settings, in this section, I explore some of the dimensions of how and when unity is mobilized in liberal democracies marked by migration-related diversity. The above analysis shows that leaders, the media, and the public in Norway all contributed to a widely adopted story of a national we-hood that largely revolved around 'our values'. The flexibility of value-talk served well to underline consensus within—i.e. what 'we all' could agree on—and to demarcate difference from the terrorists. This coherence in expressions of unity from leaders and the public, disseminated and further underlined by the media, accumulated into a more consensus-oriented story of we-hood in Norway than in France.

However, even when unity is in focus, conflict does not disappear (Elgenius 2011). The 'feeling of totality' does not require that *all* citizens to participate. Participation in popular gatherings was divided in terms of religion and political affiliation in both Norway and France (Mayer and Tiberj 2016; Ezzati and Erdal 2018). However, mediatized reports of those who did gather at particular sites or events come to symbolize a shared task of standing together (we-hood) and marking opposition to the terrorists (us-hood). Such symbols bring unity to the center of collective consciousness (Collins 2012), telling the story of 'who we are'. 'Values' are useful in communicating this story (Joas 2001) because they are ideals that many people can gather around (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004; Gecas 2008). As such, value-talk serves to mobilize unity, whether through explicit expressions such as speeches or implicit expressions through, for instance, the act of gathering at sites of significance such as Place de la République and Oslo Domkirke.

Moreover, unity is not only mobilized through the message sent—whether through top-down or bottom-up expressions of 'our values'—but also in the way the message is received. Value-talk is perhaps more explicit and strategic in leaders' expressions of unity. Previous research has found that the two leaders' calls for a value-based unity was, in part, a discursive strategy (Ezzati and Erdal 2018; Bogain 2019), and one that overemphasized agreement on the French and Norwegian national histories (Bogain 2019; Rafoss 2019). Despite the many similarities in the two leaders' calls for unity, there are indications that the reception of these calls was to a greater degree marked by conflict in France. For example, after Hollande's speech in parliament, where he called for both unity and a series of security measures, political opponents immediately criticized Hollande's government for voicing expectations of 'concrete action' beyond 'the strong words' already heard (see *France 3*, November 16 23:11).

In contrast, in Norway, criticism in the immediate aftermath was scarce, and picked up force one year later when the government-appointed *Gjørv Commission* published its evaluation (Thorbjørnsrud and Figenschou 2018). Both media analysis and interview research have found that the all-encompassing consensus orientation that leaders, the media, and the public all contributed to ultimately led to depoliticizing the attacks and narrowing the space for critical debate (Bangstad 2014; Falkheimer and Olsson 2015; Ezzati and Erdal 2018; Thorbjørnsrud and Figenschou 2018). The depoliticization of the Norway attacks has also been linked to the perpetrator's ethnicity and religion (Falkheimer and Olsson 2015). As a result, beyond criticism of the security and police handling of the attacks, the political consequences of the attacks were

marginal (Bangstad 2014). The fact that the Progress Party continued to gain a steady increase in votes and joined a coalition government with the Conservatives in 2013 (Fangen and Vaage 2018) illustrates the limited political consequences.

There was a temporal dimension to the more visible presence of conflict in France. Whereas mass mobilization after the Charlie Hebdo attacks seemed to yield 'a unified sense of national purpose, memory and shared commitment to the values that had shaped the Republic', such a unified sense seemed more difficult to achieve after the November attacks (Raymond 2018: 36–7). This development aligns with the point made by Collins (2012) that the sense of totality and unity triggered by crisis cannot be sustained. The temporal dimension is also linked to security concerns: whereas in Norway the police deemed the lone-wolf theory a likely explanation relatively early in the investigation, in France, there was an on-going hunt for multiple suspects for months, both nationwide and internationally. Moreover, despite the intensified efforts to counter radicalization among young Muslims in France (Fassin 2015; Połońska-Kimunguyi and Gillespie 2016; Hutchins and Halikiopoulou 2020), in November 2015 even more people were killed than in previous attacks. Thus, despite the increased emphasis on security measures in his speeches (Bogain 2019), political opponents interpreted Hollande's value-talk as only talk, not action. Arguably, then, value-talk further underlined conflict within the national 'we'. A link between Muslims and terrorism as a symptom of clashing values was debated across the political spectrum (Raymond 2018), although the National Front (the National Rally since 2018) was particularly explicit about 'containing the entry of the foreign "other," who poses a threat to our national identity and security' (Hutchins and Halikiopoulou 2020: 3). The two cases thus reiterate that who constitutes 'them' matters in terms of mobilizing a coherent and broad unity.

6. Conclusion

In immediate responses to terrorism, leaders, the media, and the public invoke value-talk to emphasize we-hood within and us-hood in contrast to the terrorists, through which they mobilize unity. The TV news captures further accentuate that references to 'our values' are part of the representations of 'the national we'. This article's analysis shows that these various actors' expressions of unity reinforced each other: for instance, when leaders praised the public's united and peaceful gatherings, and the media further highlighted the importance of such expressions of unity. This interplay highlights the relevance of the TV news data the analysis draws on.

As much academic literature and policy has concluded, categories of 'we', 'us', and 'them' matter—particularly in contemporary polarized public debates across Europe. However, while much research tends to take polarization and conflict as its starting point, in this article, my aim has been to flip the starting point and investigate how and when a sense of unity is mobilized in a conflict-ridden context, such as the aftermath of terrorism. As such, the comparative analysis shows that whether the mobilized unity grows as part of a consensus-oriented story, or a more fragmented story marked by conflict, is context-dependent.

The analysis brings into sharper relief that unity is by no means a default position but, rather, crystallizes through actors' assertion of we-hood and us-hood. Value-talk, which features

strongly in such expressions of unity, is not merely political rhetoric. Rather, through the flexibility of value-talk, various actors delve into the spectrum of unity, contestation, and conflict in liberal democracies marked by migration-related diversity. Value-talk signals understandings of membership into 'who we are': who is included and who is excluded, and why. Such a perspective brings an alternative to the currently predominant conceptualization that values are core distinguishing features of bounded political or cultural groups.

Considering that value-talk can be deployed to both underline unity and to further underline conflict, how leaders and policy makers talk about 'our values' matters. Thus, the way 'our values' are addressed in policy documents could be one area of future research. Are 'values', for example, used primarily to describe conflictual or unifying dimensions of migration-related diversity? To what extent are they purely used in abstract terms and without further definition, and to what extent are they used in a purposeful way that attempts to ground, or challenge, people's understandings?

Whether from a policy or a research perspective, paying explicit attention to how and when 'we' express unity within diversity is particularly important given the repeated violent actions of extremists who seek division. Since 2015, ISIS and ISIS sympathizers have carried out several more attacks in France and elsewhere. In Norway, a young man attacked a mosque in August 2019, claiming to be inspired by the March 2019 terrorist in New Zealand; he, in turn, had been inspired by the July 2011 terrorist. The central place of value-talk in post-terror responses suggests the importance of 'values' to the story of 'who we are', but this story is not pre-narrated nor set in stone. The way people—in leadership positions, the media, or in everyday life—communicate through reference to 'values' in times that are ordinary, or out of the ordinary, can provide insights into some of the conditions that facilitate or impede unity in diversity in liberal democracies marked by migration.

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Notes

1. I was trained in working with the archive during a visiting fellowship at UCLA and have continued to work with it remotely.
2. With the help of a Research Assistant for parts of the first 48 h on *TV2*.
3. The excerpts by President Hollande and Prime Minister Stoltenberg are from the official English translations of their speeches. All quotes from the TV news are transcribed and translated by the author.
4. Indicates the local broadcast time.

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