ValEUs Workshop: Critical Perspectives on European Values

June 20th-21st, 2024
University Paris 8, 2 Rue de la Liberté, 93200 Saint-Denis
Building A, room A2-201

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Outline

In its title, the Jean-Monnet-Network 'ValEUs – Research & Education Network on Contestation to EU Foreign Policy' prominently refers to 'European values'. The project engages 20 partners all over the world and has, since its start in January 2024, already facilitated discussions that revealed a variety of perspectives on the key terms of the network. This first academic workshop of ValEUs, co-organised by Kolja Lindner at University Paris 8 and Amelie Kutter at European University Viadrina, aims to clarify the foundations of a constructive critical perspective on European values, engaging with their immanent critique, performativity and historical contextualisation.

Programme

Thursday, June 20th

9:15h Reception of participants

9:45h Welcome Address
Annick Allaigre (President of University Paris 8)

10h Critique of European Values
Introductory remarks by Amelie Kutter (European University Viadrina, Germany) and Kolja Lindner (University Paris 8, France)

10:15h-11:45h De-centring and Re-centring EU Values
Chair: Randal Halle (University of Pittsburgh, USA)
- Belinda Davis (Rutgers University, USA): Critical Perspectives on European Values: The 'West is Best'?
- Thomas Brisson (University Paris 8, France): Is 'Scientific Truth' a European Value? On Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe*
- Kolja Lindner (University Paris 8, France): Provincializing or De-linking: Is Decolonialism a More Radical Critique of European Values?

11:45h-12:15h Coffee break

12:15h-13:15h Constructing EU Values Through European Public Policies
Chair: Timm Beichelt (European University Viadrina, Germany)
- Alexandre Dupeyrix (University Paris 8, France): EU and Environmental Democracy
- Enza Cirone (University of Florence, Italy): Promoting European Values through Digital Sovereignty: Much Further to Go?

13:15h-15h Lunch break

15h-16h Contradictions of Value-Based Europeanisation 1
Chair: Jean-François Caron (Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan)
- Nina Sajic/Aleksandar Vranjes (University of Banya Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina): De-Europeanization of Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Role of the OHR
- Laura Leonardi (University of Florence, Italy): European Values as a Battlefield: A Negative Backlash or an Opportunity to Rebuild EU?

16h-16:30h Coffee break

16:30h-17:30h Contradictions of Value-Based Europeanisation 2
Chair: Petar Popović (Zagreb University, Croatia)
- Jarosław Jańczak (Adam Mieckiewicz University, Poland): Construction and Perception of EUropean Values on the EUropean Peripheries. Between Mythmaking and (Conflictive) Legacies
- Amelie Kutter (European University Viadrina, Germany): Negotiating Socio-Spatial Asymmetries through EU-Values: Conditionality-driven Europeanisation as (De-)Peripheralization

19:30h Conference dinner
Wepler, 14 Place de Clichy, 75018 Paris, Metro line 13: Place de Clichy
(https://www.wepler.com/acces/)

Friday, June 21ˢᵗ

8h-10h Work package leaders' coordination meeting

10h-11:30h European Values and (Neo-)Colonial Practices
Chair: Kolja Lindner (University Paris 8, France)
- Randal Halle (University of Pittsburgh, USA): European Developmentalism: The Transition from Colonial Rule to Foreign Aid Across European Media
- Driss Maghraoui (Al Akhawayn University, Morocco): European Liberal Discourses and Colonial Practices: A Longue Durée of Inherent Contradictions
- Sadia Abbas (Rutgers University, USA): Resuscitating the European Imperium, Erasing European Colonialism

11:30h-11:45h Coffee break

11:45h-13:15h De-mystifying 'Transfers' of EU Values
Chair: Amelie Kutter (European University Viadrina, Germany)
- Silvana Insignares-Cera/Mariangela Rueda Fiorentino (Universidad del Norte, Columbia): Democracy Clause in EU Trade Agreements in Latin America
- Cecilia Muzika-Minteer (University of Pittsburgh, USA): European Values in the Extra-territorial Construction of Western Sahara (Population Displacement, Natural Resources, Development)
- Filip Cigić (University of Banya Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina): The transfer of European Values to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Process of European Integrations

13:15h-15h Lunch break

15h-16:30h The Use of EU Values for Illiberal Projects
Chair: Laura Leonardi (University of Florence, Italy)
- Veronica Federico (University of Florence, Italy): European Values as Justification? A Critical Discussion of Gender Equality's Weaponizing in the European Legal Framework
- Daniel Mikecz (HUM-REN Center for Social Sciences, Hungary/University of Pittsburgh, USA): The 'Traditional' European Values as Master Frame of Populist Top-down Mobilization in Hungary
- Jean-François Caron (Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan): Russia's Soft Power Through the Contestation of European Values

16:30h-17h Coffee break

17h-18:30h Conclusion and Further Planning of ValEUs
Chair: Amelie Kutter (European University Viadrina, Germany) and Kolja Lindner (University Paris 8, France)
- Claske Vos (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands)
- Timm Beichelt (European University Viadrina, Germany)

Presentations

The presentations will last 15 minutes max; chairs will have to watch the time. Each presentation will be supported by a power-point or a handout. Please send your presentations to Amelie and Kolja up until Wednesday 19th, 6pm latest, and handouts up until Tuesday 18th, 6pm, at kolja.lindner02@univ-paris8.fr and kutter@europa-uni.de. For the time being, you are expected to produce well-structured talks only, not full academic papers, but we would like you to already think of what type of publication you could commit to up until early 2025.

Access University Paris 8

University entrance: rue Guynemer (opposite the Metro station)
Address: 2 rue de la Liberté, 93526 Saint-Denis cedex

Underground: Last stop Metro line 13 'Saint-Denis Université' (beware of the two terminuses when boarding the train)

Further means for joining Paris 8 on https://www.univ-paris8.fr/en/access-and-maps

Venue: the workshop takes place at building A, room A2-201 (second floor)

Follow the blue line

Abstracts

De-centring and Re-centring EU Values

<u>Belinda Davis: Critical Perspectives on European Values: The 'West is Best'?</u>

It is said that, when asked about his views on 'Western civilization,' Mohandas Gandhi replied, 'I think it would be a good idea.' All aside from his intended point, how good an idea is it actually? Western civilization, and 'the West,' are among a number of relational terms, the latter one side of a binary couplet commonplace in the historiography of Europe, in forms imputing values, despite continued belief for some in a value-free history. Notions such as the West, inconsistently as such terms are used with respect to Europe (and also the U.S.), continue to reinforce views of cultural superiority—and, thereby, a right to reward or punish other regions of the world, not least through military force, all aside from associated economic and environmental practices. Such terms are all the more important as deployed in textbooks. Twenty years after Dipesh Chakrabarty's *The Provincialization of Europe,* historians of Europe recognize the insalubrious implications of concepts like the West, as they do closely related terms such as 'advanced,' v. 'backward,' and 'developed' v. 'undeveloped.' Yet many continue to use it, even as a term of abuse, via which it can be nearly as problematic. This presentation reviews the contradictory history of the concept, as created and maintained by historians.

<u>Thomas Brisson: Is 'Scientific Truth' a European Value? On Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe*</u>

The intervention intends to focus on Dipesh Chakrabarty's seminal work *Provincializing Europe*, offering a critical reinterpretation within the context of the conference theme, which concerns the interrogation of European values. More specifically, I would like to re-examine the status of the book, which is seen as foundational for the criticism of the West by the peoples of the so-called Global South, and focus on the many warnings issued by the author himself, who urges us to be wary of reading his project too quickly—i.e. concluding that the European influence in the scientific field could be dismissed purely and simply. In fact, Chakrabarty not only makes it clear that the idea of social sciences freed from their European origins remains a utopian horizon, but he also points out that these very social sciences are still essential for the continuity of progressist and emancipatory politics in the former colonized countries. In my contribution, therefore, I would like to propose a reading of *Provincializing Europe* that is attentive to the limits of the 'epistemic decentring' that Chakrabarty himself has urged us to pay attention to. In particular, I would like to develop the thesis that, far from calling for the creation of non-Western social sciences, *Provincializing Europe* is in fact an invitation to explore the emancipatory potential of the body of knowledge born in Europe at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. The slightly polemical title of my talk should thus be understood as a way of highlighting the fact that Europe, which is the target of a certain number of contemporary postcolonial political and scientific criticisms, not only is not a homogeneous reality, but that it continues to provide a certain number of theoretical resources on which these same criticisms are based.

Kolja Lindner: Provincializing or De-linking: Is Decolonialism a More Radical Critique of European Values?

In the last twenty years or so, Decolonialism has claimed to be a more radical assement of Eurocentrism than Postcolonialism. Two distinct critical moves are at stake in this confrontation. Postcolonialism tries to rehabilitate non-European history in the development of the modern world, i.e. to conceive of Europe as a 'province' among others (Dipesh Chakrabarty) and thereby to overcome a particularistic take on historiography and normativity. Only a complete account of modernity's entanglement would result in true universalism. Decolonialism on the other hand argues that modernity is inextricable of its 'coloniality of power' (Aníbal Quijano). Hence the argument for a 'de-linking' (Walter Mignolo) from Western epistemology and normativity. I would like to discuss consequences of these two strategies for key European values. How would provincialized European values look like or what would replace European values after we have de-linked ourselves from them?

Constructing EU Values Through European Public Policies

Alexandre Dupeyrix: EU and Environmental Democracy

By definition, environmental problems require cooperation between states and citizens across national borders. The European Union therefore has a role to play in promoting 'environmental democracy'. The Green Pact, decided by the European Commission, is supposed to contribute to the development of this democracy. Civil society has put forward a number of proposals for shaping this environmental democracy and enabling citizens with an interest in ecological issues to be better integrated into the deliberative processes and representative bodies: better constitutional protection of environmental rights, setting up citizens' conventions, creating an 'assembly of future generations' that would include climate refugees and non-human entities, etc. (see C. Spector, *No Demos*). The environmental issue is a paradigmatic example of how new norms are constructed from new values (respect for life and biodiversity, the right to live in a healthy environment, transgenerational justice, etc.), how values and norms are often thematised and articulated under the pressure of historical experience (see H. Joas, *Die Sakralität der Person*), and how values and norms oscillate between universal definition and specific application.

Enza Cirone: Promoting European Values through Digital Sovereignty: Much Further to Go?

The discussion surrounding European digital sovereignty has broadened to encompass various policy domains and levels of significance. At its core, this concept entails the EU's control over the Digital Single Market and its key global role in the digital domain. The EU is dedicated to enhancing its digital sovereignty through 'human-centric' digital governance, overseeing technology and infrastructure, and setting global standards. The surge of recent EU legislation in the digital domain reflects a response to the imperative of affirming the EU's sovereignty to protect its values and uphold them amidst evolving global dynamics. Against this background, the proposed paper would aim to understand digital sovereignty within the EU by examining its interpretations and challenges. Initially, it would delve into the term's definition by briefly reviewing its application in European discussions. Subsequently, it would investigate three current obstacles confronting European digital sovereignty, which the EU should address to maintain its ability to exercise its sovereign powers. These include the significant role of private actors in the public digital sphere, interference by foreign actors and Europe's rule of law crisis. In conclusion, the proposed article would provide final thoughts, recognising the complex trade-offs the EU couldnavigate in its digital strategies.

Contradictions of Value-Based Europeanisation 1

Nina Sajic/Aleksandar Vranjes: De-Europeanization of Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Role of the OHR

Bosnia and Herzegovina was granted an EU candidate country status in December 2022, almost seven years after the country officially submitted application for EU membership. In March 2024 the European Council decided to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. While these decisions may be seen more of a geopolitical nature, rather than merit-based, the issue of the strong international presence has often been seen as the main obstacle to the Europeanization of the country. On several occasions, and most recently after the amendments to the Election Law were imposed by the OHR (Office of the High Representative, created under the Dayton Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina), the EU has underlined that extensive international presence is incompatible with the European future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This article analyses the role of the OHR in de-Europeanization of democracy and creation of the Potemkin democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It argues that promotion and adoption of the European values have been contested by and large by the actions of the OHR and strong international presence.

Laura Leonardi: European Values as a Battlefield: A Negative Backlash or an Opportunity to Rebuild EU?

I propose a reflection on the interpretative paradigms that we can use to analyse phenomena related to Europeanisation and European integration and the implications for European values. I advocate a *paradigm shift,* assuming a conflictual perspective of Europeanisation, noting the confusion and ambiguity generated by the theses that, for several decades, postulated European integration in terms of homogenisation and increasing convergence of political, economic and social institutions among European countries (and possibly outside of the EU). The basic idea was that Europeanisation was a one-way street, leading towards common peace and security policies, liberal democratic systems, Western welfare-state models and at least a basic canon of a shared European self-image. Nevertheless, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, and equality between women and men are fundamental values of the European project, enshrined in the Treaties. However, a significant gap emerges in the way values are interpreted and put into practice in different European cultural contexts. To point out, value conflicts have significantly shaped the history of post-war Europe. For a long time, moreover, Europe's role as an advocate of 'universal' values has been subjected to external and internal pressure, perceived as a dominant and still colonising ideology. More recently, the 'cultural backlash' (Norris and Inglehart) also affects European society, with the loss of consensus of liberal-democratic values in the face of the advance of authoritarian and populist values. Studies on Europeanisation at the margins, in Eastern European countries or those involved in neighbourhood policies, show that Europeanisation leads to empirical plurality, cultural divergences and non-conformities: Is there a potential for innovative forms of social cohesion supporting European Values? The conclusions will try to point out some trends in this direction.

Contradictions of Value-Based Europeanisation 2

Jarosław Jańczak: Construction and Perception of EUropean Values on the EUropean Peripheries. Between Mythmaking and (Conflictive) Legacies

How coherent are the European values across EUrope? The paper claims that misfits in constructing the EUropean values between the EUropean core and its peripheries (and further

neighboring regions) does not result only from double morals or power asymmetries, but has been originating, first of all, from superficial (or even missing) debate on the nature of normative dimension of the integration project. (External) Europeanization in the process of enlargements has been based, among others, on locally imagined EUropean values, reproduced in the process of (rapid and unreflected) socialization in the form of Westernization. Together with some level of indifference towards normative contribution from the peripheries in the core, this has resulted in significant differences between EU's core and peripheries when approaching current challenges, especially originating from outside the EU, e.g. migration waves, security threats, or environmental issues. Empirical study on normative contribution of Central and Eastern EUrope reveals limited performability of some of the center-designed policies. On the other hand, some of the local normative constructs, as the *defender syndrome* or *periphery complex*, have been strongly driving local interpretation of spatial-political realities and shaping peripheries' interpretation of the European values. Especially when it comes to relations with the external environment.

Amelie Kutter: Negotiating Socio-Spatial Asymmetries through EU-Values: Conditionality-driven Europeanisation as (De-)Peripheralization

The transfer of EU norms and regulations to newly acceded, accession and neighbourhood countries has been studied, so far, from the neo-institutionalist perspective of Europeanisation or Differentiated Integration and framed as an example of the EU's normative power. The focus is on why EU norms are differentially adopted, due to what policy traditions, actor constellations or contestations. What remains under-researched to date is how the very process of norm transfer, prompted by accession conditionality, structures social-political relations within the European Union. The paper suggests a power-critical perspective that conceives of recent EU association and accession as a process of (de-)peripheralization that establishes new socio-spatial asymmetries within the expanded European Union, asymmetries that can be revealed in political-economic structures, the governance of norm transfer, and the discursive constructions of central and peripheral 'Selves'. EU values, such as (shared) sovereignty or rule of law, serve the legitimation and negotiation of these asymmetries. This is illustrated drawing on the example and existing studies of the EU's external migration management and its fight against corruption in relation with recent association and accession preparations in the EU's South-Eastern neighbourhood

European Values and (Neo-)Colonial Practices

Randal Halle: European Developmentalism: The Transition from Colonial Rule to Foreign Aid Across European Media

The presentation will chart out the long difficult path from a colonial gaze to an eye-level co-operation that is ostensibly the goal of current EU foreign policy and investment. It will chart out how in the post-war era and the transition from direct colonial control to neo-colonial entanglement a new developmental model emerged: *Lebensraum* and *Mission civilisatrice* gave way to development aid and humanitarian relief. The decolonization process is violent and partisan but given the 'success' of the anticolonial forces, decolonization must generate a new relation to the former colonies for a 'post-colonial era' to be possible. To attend to this transformation of political policy, I will review the attendant representational system. Depictions of anti-colonial violence and pacification give way to a new depiction of development aid. Colonialism is replaced by developmentalism, I will argue. Such developmentalism continues to shape German and EU relations to the present.

<u>Driss Maghraoui: European Liberal Discourses and Colonial Practices: A Longue Durée of In-herent Contradictions</u>

This paper will use the Braudelian notion of the 'longue durée' to examine the long term and structural contradictions that are associated with the ways in which Europe and the United States have historically elaborated a discourse that legitimated their policies and involvement in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). I would like to show that there has been an entrenched and consistent contradiction between a language that inspired by liberalism and a 'discursive democracy' and actual practices that reflect a lingering colonial mentality. I argue that in order to better understand the 'endurance of authoritarianism' in the region and the evolving regional situation in the MENA, we cannot ignore the historical formation and continuity of the inherent contradictions associated with the foreign policies of Western powers since the 19th century. The civilizational discourse and the metanarratives about the supremacy of European values have remained potent as part of legitimating the actions of European states in the region, and in parallel ways, the language of European foreign policy remained attached to an essentialist, manichaeistic and culturalist discourse that is as much evident in the colonial intrusion of Algeria in the early 19th century as in the devastating war against Gaza.

<u>Sadia Abbas: Resuscitating the European Imperium, Erasing European Colonialism</u>

This talk will examine the way in which the war in Ukraine is being used in calls for the resuscitation of a European imperium as a model for the EU that simultaneously erase, minimize, or try to bracket the history of racialized European colonialism. The talk will argue that this double move is entirely consonant with the European Union's foundational contradictions and embedded in a Europe-wide failure to confront the (ongoing) presence of colonial epistemic and politico-economic structures both in individual nation-states and in the European Union— that, indeed, both Union and individual nation(s) use each other as alibis in the evasion of a necessary confrontation with a recursive and persistent colonial history and tendency.

De-mystifying 'Transfers' of EU Values

<u>Silvana Insignares-Cera/Mariangela Rueda Fiorentino: Democracy Clause in EU Trade Agreements in Latin America</u>

The presentation will focus on presenting a series of issues related to the value of democracy, as a determinant, in the trade relations between the EU and LA; highlighting the main challenges facing this type of relations between the two regions and the strategies that could serve as facilitators for the consolidation of bi-regional cooperation in a real and effective way. The presentation will have an interdisciplinary approach based on legal, economic and international policy analysis as central axes to foster the debate. It will present some of the findings of the research project 'Development Agendas, Cooperation and International Trade: Latin American and European Perspectives', developed by Professors Mariangela Rueda-Fiorentino and Silvana Insignares-Cera. Among the main aspects to be argued is the characterization of the EU as a *sui generis* actor in international relations, which, despite conjunctural and structural challenges, has managed to assert itself as the main regional integration project, a global civil power, a major development cooperator and the main implementer of the Sustainable Development Goals. The role of the EU as a global actor using soft power to promote its values in the conduct of international relations will also be highlighted. The debate will therefore focus on questions such as: how does the EU promote

democracy in bi-regional trade relations?; how does EU trade cooperation materialize in the Latin American integration processes CAN and Mercosur?; what are the lessons to be learned from the dynamics of association?; and how does the EU promote democracy in bi-regional trade relations? Finally, some final reflections will be offered to stimulate debate among participants.

Cecilia Muzika-Minteer: European Values in the Extraterritorial Construction of Western Sahara (Population Displacement, Natural Resources, Development)

By using language woven with colonial binaries and singularities, universalized values and goals from globalizing legal bodies underwrote the extraterritorial construction of Western Sahara through ideas of emergency, survival, sustainability and security. The environment's resource wealth has been central to its non-self-governing status and the displacement of the Sahrawi population. Despite legal decisions made by EU courts and the ICJ, EU states continue to receive these conflict-laden resources; industrial phosphate extraction and wind and solar energy production are uniquely interwoven with the transformation of 'sustainable development.' Cold War legal discussions about the human settlement, habitat and environment defined what geographies were within and outside of this repaired and organized future. The desert became geopolitically 'useless,' 'invading,' 'terrifying,' 'empty' and historicized; thus, Western Sahara and the Sahrawi people's geographies were framed as outside of a secure future. Values which formulate the ideal of 'sustainable development' continue to underpin the occupation of Western Sahara despite its paths hinging on the preservation of indigenous knowledge systems which the SADR admits have deteriorated after decades of forced sedentarization in refugee camps. The maintenance of these binaries within universally framed goals requires the fabrication of 'empty' space to ensure the security of 'sustainable development.'

Filip Cigić: The transfer of European Values to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Process of European Integrations

The end of the Cold War paved the way for integration of former communist countries into the European family of states. The European Union started multiple projects which included transitioning former socialist countries into regimes based on liberal democracy and market economy. The countries formed after the breakup of Yugoslavia, which were facing major difficulties at the time, have also become part of the EU integration process. In this process of integration of the former Yugoslav states into the EU, Bosnia and Hercegovina is probably the most complex case, due to its history, political and economic issues, and ongoing internal conflicts. This can be seen if we look at how European values are being adopted and to what extent by its people and political institutions. This paper analyzes the process of transfer of EU values to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main purpose of this study it to look a what hinders this process, how its subjects can change the course for the better, and explore other political options based on those values, with the main goal being long-term peace, stability and cooperation for the people of this complex, multiethnic country.

The Use of EU Values for Illiberal Projects
Veronica Federico: European Values as Justification? A Critical Discussion of Gender Equality's Weaponizing in the European Legal Framework

In the last two decades, anti-immigrant claims, often materializing in restrictive migration regulations, are seen as key to the success of populist radical right parties (PRR parties). Migration

legal and institutional developments under populist governments in Europe have been characterised by increasing barriers to immigration (physical, legal and institutional), migrants' rights downsizing and restriction to remedies' access, and by growing uncertainty as migration governance strategy. Interestingly enough, migration has served PRR parties also to re-craft their position towards gender issues. The use of veils, the treatment of women in a number of extra-European cultures, and particularly in Islam, have been framed in PRR parties' political discourses and legal measures as threats to modern European societies, thus legitimizing the restriction of the access to Europe as well as increasing integration requirements for migrants to settle in the EU. By discussing the legal developments in immigration and integration legal framework in a number of selected EU countries through the prism of the portrait of migrant women depicted by those same legal developments, the paper aims at unveiling the use of European values as justification for the anti-immigrant claim and to adapt the conservative vision of PRR parties to new societal challenges by finding a new enemy, that is the backwardness of Third Countries (and particularly Islamic) societies.

Daniel Mikecz: The 'Traditional' European Values as Master Frame of Populist Top-down Mobilization in Hungary

Viktor Orbán is deemed a prominent figure of eurosceptic political forces in the European Union, even though he is the prime minister of a country where the vast majority supports EU membership. According to the poller Median, in March 2023, 84 percent of Hungarian respondents fully or rather agreed with the country's EU membership. Furthermore, various European funds are contributing to the stability of the Hungarian illiberal regime (see Bozóki and Hegedűs, 2018). Nevertheless, despite these factors, the Hungarian government uses a populist eurosceptic narrative by claiming that 'Brussels' represents the corrupt elite (see Csehi and Zgut, 2021) and frames the EU's intervention as a violation of the country's sovereignty (see Schlipphak and Treib, 2017). This paper investigates how the Hungarian regime can use Eurosceptic messages during their voters' mobilization despite the high support for EU membership. The paper argues that Viktor Orbán contrasts in his interpretation traditional European values with the declining Western Europe, which—according to him—is losing its traditional identity, while the new member states in East Central Europe are protecting real European values. The paper employs frame analysis and the study of the discursive political opportunity structure in Hungary. For the former, the analysis will include speeches of the prime minister during campaign rallies and political messages of the so-called national consultations. The discursive POS will be understood with the help of secondary analysis of attitudes towards the European Union (see Bíró-Nagy and Szászi, 2024).

Jean-François Caron: Russia's Soft Power Through the Contestation of European Values

The contestation of European values has been an integral part of Russia's foreign policy over the last decade. Not only have they fueled the Kremlin's nationalist rhetoric at the domestic level by using them as a mirror of what its people ought to value, but they have also been used as a core element of Russia's soft power in former colonies of European powers. Through a largely hidden manner and at a relatively low cost, the Kremlin has been able to extend its civilizational discourse and influence far beyond its national borders. Far from being inconsequential, this rhetoric is laying the foundations for what appears to be a determinant factor in the shaping of tomorrow's world and ought to encourage European statesmen and lawmakers to reassess the orientations of the EU's foreign policy in a more pragmatic way.