

Hans-Joachim Höhn: Misjudged or overrated? On the questionable surplus of meaning of values

The importance of values is articulated repeatedly, even though in the field of ethics the status of values cannot be easily determined. Obviously, in the process of communication about morals there is a power of association, set free by the term "value", that makes up for the lack of clearness of the concept. The concept evidently has connotations of moral dispositions and sensitivities that are emotionally significant but difficult to define. The concept of value can not be satisfactorily defined by means of differentiation, demarcation and "dissociation" of other basic concepts of morals. This indicates the existence of a pre-reflective field of moral experience, characterized by the interweaving of being and utopia, of that which is good and just, evaluative and normative. Is there then an invisible moral network, a subliminal, widely branched moral rhizome? Is there a common root of moral experience to be discovered? Is this the key to comprehending the unconditional as the foundation of unavailable values?

Michael Schramm: The price of values. *Economic-ethical notes.*

There is a variety of types of values (economical, moral, religious, technical). Which of these values are of relevance in the everyday decision-making of persons and companies, is controversial in theory and varies in practice. In this article a schematical sketch of the different types of values is outlined. Moreover, the article

shows in which way values are considered as a moral good that does not come for free. Stabilizing socially desirable values has its price. The vitality of moral interests is a prerequisite for the necessary investments into socially desirable values.

Thomas Bohrmann: More than Entertainment – Discourses of values on the television as a leading medium

Because of its common availability Television has become of outstanding cultural importance – it often takes on the role of a leading medium in the viewers' private lives. Apart from its entertaining function the audience is being addressed – on a second level – with topics relevant to life in general and questions of meaning. By, for instance, soap operas, series and game shows Television displays moral standards and notions of values. It presents some particular form of "everyday life ethics" and thus contributes to the general discourse of values. With regard to these values, social change can be observed: The distinction between privacy and public is abandoned in documentary game shows, thereby diminishing taboos in the presentation of daily life. This effect is reinforced by putting on stage the private lives of prominent politicians in popular talk shows.

Armin Nassehi: Interview about values and the discourse of values from the sociological point of view

Where and why is all that happens in our society associated with values? Values had in fact never disappeared, but only recently they have resurfaced as an important issue. This fact in-

dicates that they are in acute danger. For parts of the younger generation a renaissance of so-called secondary virtues seems to compensate for uncertain future prospects. In other areas, such as ethics committees in hospitals or in business ethics, the motives of individuals are put to the test and a system of rules is created, in which socially desired value-oriented behaviour leads to real benefits.

Furthermore, it applies to religiously motivated values, that they cannot be achieved by moral appeals but rather through religiously motivated action and practice.

In his commentary Klaus Arntz puts forward proposals for the future of volunteering. On the one hand, individuals should not be made accountable for the deficiencies of the public sector and politics. On the other hand, society and democracy depend on their citizens' dedication to volunteering, subsidiary self-sufficiency and value-oriented action. Arntz suggests that it would be advisable to activate the currently unused volunteer resources by specific perks and advantages (tax exemption, free hours etc.) as well as improved conditions both at work and at home (more opportunities for short-term commitments and self-fulfilment).

In an interview with Manfred Güllner, the director of FORSA, the market and opinion research institute, the significant difference between the younger and older generations in regard to value orientation emerges. Public virtues seem to be disregarded. At the same time there are high value expectations, e.g. of family, job, local ties, but less of politics, on which

Abstracts

especially younger people often turn their back. Increased attention to people's specific problems is expected of the elites of the various areas of social life. There are growing complaints about the disappearance of local charitable institutions that in the wake of privatization have not found equivalent replacements yet.

Friedhelm Hengsbach: The Partners of a Revised Social Contract

The post-war compromise of allocation is no longer valid. A new social contract is necessary if the reconciliation of economic prosperity and individual liberty for everyone is to be preserved in the future. But

which collective social actors could be the partners of a revised social contract? Nation-states and the big international organisations possess their own options for future action, which they have by no means exhausted. On the other hand, the actors of civil society such as unions, church initiatives and associations, new social movements and NGOs, communal and social self-governments as well as businesses and corporations may be able to critically advance the existing approaches towards a democratic and solidary renewal. All of them have different resources and forms of action at their disposal, which should be used in a confident and active manner.

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