Treacherous Liberties

*Isaiah Berlin's Theory of Positive and Negative Freedom in Contemporary Political Culture*

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Abstract

Contemporary attitudes in affluent Western societies are characterised by a growing emphasis on individual freedom. What, then, does this commitment to liberty entail for our openness to diversity; and ultimately for liberal democracy? Previous research on popular attitudes, for example by Ronald Inglehart, tends to assume that valuing freedom entails an encouragement of a plurality of life-styles. This thesis, by contrast, argues that there are several ideals of freedom in public opinion; ideals that may have opposing consequences for our permissiveness towards ways of life that differ from our own.

The introductory essay in this book suggests that Isaiah Berlin’s theory of positive and negative freedom provides a fruitful analytical framework, which helps theorise and empirically nuance our picture of popular ideals of freedom. Essay I goes on to present a novel, psychological, interpretation of Berlin’s Two Concepts of Liberty. This essay also suggests that Berlin was critical not only of enlightened ideals of positive liberty, but also of romantic ones, which might be even more widespread today. Essay II then applies Berlin’s framework to contemporary survey data. Through confirmatory factor and regression analyses, this essay demonstrates that Berlin’s negative-positive distinction does in fact hold also in popular opinion; and that the two dimensions have rather different effects on moral and legal permissiveness. Essay III, finally, revisits a recent example of disrespect in the name of liberty: the Danish cartoon controversy. This essay develops the concept of ‘romantic liberalism’, thereby deepening our knowledge of romantic ideals of positive liberty, and their particularly disrespectful tendencies.

Drawing on Isaiah Berlin, and his critique of positive liberty, the essays in this thesis together suggest that it is crucial for liberal democracy to recognise the existence of treacherous liberties: ideals that lead their supporters to ridicule, condemn, or even prohibit ways of life that differ from their own – all in the name of liberty.

Keywords: freedom, liberty, values, autonomy, authenticity, tolerance, liberalism, permissiveness, Romanticism, Enlightenment, diversity, Inglehart, political culture, civicness, factor analysis

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To Ralph, my rock
List of Papers

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Uppsala, September 21st 2011
Gina Gustavsson
Introduction

The goal of philosophy is always the same, to assist men to understand themselves and thus to operate in the open, and not wildly, in the dark.


What does it mean to value individual freedom? It is often suggested that at the turn of the 21st century, individual freedom has become the main ideal to which the average person in Western societies pays homage. Some even suggest it is the only ideal left. Our commitment to freedom, according to the predominant interpretation, supposedly makes us increasingly permissive towards life styles, sexual behaviour, and cultures that are different from our own (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 144, 259). In other words, valuing individual freedom purportedly goes hand in hand with openness to diversity; an openness that some scholars believe verges on nihilism (Putnam, 2000: 258; Flanagan and Lee, 2003: 238; Bellah, Madsen et al., 2008: 47-48).

However, recent developments in many of the most liberty-oriented societies seem to contradict the expected relationship between valuing freedom, on the one hand, and permissiveness of different out-groups, on the other. Consider for example the debate over the Muslim veil, a term that here denotes both head scarves and face-covering garments, such as the burka and the niqab. The veil is often claimed to be morally problematic for the very reason that it stands in the way of women’s freedom, of their authentic self-expression and self-realization; or because wearing it is supposedly not a free choice to begin with. In such discussions, it is common to invoke individual freedom in favour of a non-permissive stance, or even in support of legal prohibitions (Wallach-Scott, 2007: 125-131; Joppke, 2010: 31).

To value freedom, in other words, does not always seem to mean that one sides with permissiveness and diversity; it can also mean siding against them, for better or for worse. This seems puzzling, in the light of the fact that previous research assumes that anyone who values individual freedom *per definition* accepts ‘no absolutely clear moral guidelines’ in life, or no longer recognises any ‘normative expectations of what makes life worth living’ (Flanagan and Lee, 2003: 239; Bellah, Madsen et al., 2008: 48).

On the contrary, it seems that the very reason the veil provokes such a heated debate, and indeed the reason it has become a political issue, is that it
is regarded as a matter of freedom, and freedom is understood to be a clear moral guideline, a normative expectation of what does indeed make life worth living. Those who take a stand against veils – or blasphemy laws, or arranged marriages, for example – often argue that to do otherwise is to compromise the very ideal of freedom. To permit such practices is, they say, to give in to cultural relativism, and this constitutes an act of moral cowardice, a failure to stand up for freedom itself (Joppke, 2007: 14, 16; Stolzenberg, 2009). This suggests that valuing liberty, far from being regarded as a matter of personal taste, at least for some of our contemporaries means taking a moral stand, and sometimes even fighting for it.

In a similar vein, it has often been argued that penalizing for example prostitution or drugs does not hinder, but in fact promotes, individual liberty. This is the case in Sweden, where surveys show that the value of individual freedom is held higher than in most other countries (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 65, 87), while a considerable amount of the population at the same time strongly supports the penalization of Muslim veils, and prohibitions against prostitution, pornography, marijuana, and the selling of alcohol in regular shops (Dodillet, 2009; Gustavsson, 2010; Mella and Palm, 2010).

Some of these attitudes may of course be peculiar to the Swedish context. However, Swedes are often portrayed as the epitome of freedom-oriented people (Berggren and Trägårdh, 2006; Schwartz, 2006). Inglehart and his associates even speak of a ‘Swedenization’, as opposed to an Americanization, of the world (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 65, 87). The Swedish data may thus also tell us something of a more general interest. They suggest that valuing freedom need not, as previous research often assumes, be incompatible with strongly condemning certain choices, or even favouring their restriction by law. In fact, it is not entirely unlikely that the positive Swedish attitudes towards prohibitions are to some extent an effect of valuing freedom; not in the sense of doing what one pleases unhindered by others, but in the sense of realising one’s authentic self (Berggren and Trägårdh, 2006: cf. 213; Gustavsson, 2010).

Yet, existing research tends to assume that the ethos of valuing individual freedom – which I shall use synonymously with liberty and independence throughout this dissertation – is by its very nature devoid of moral fervour for or against any one way of life. Some empirical scholars lament what they see as a weakened commitment to following any moral constraints and clear moral guidelines in life (Flanagan and Lee, 2003), while others welcome what they see as the natural decline in moral absolutism and closed-mindedness (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). Both sides essentially agree, however, that valuing freedom brings along a general permissiveness towards different behaviours, for better or for worse.1

1 Inglehart and Welzel acknowledge that many practices that have been historically tolerated are now becoming less acceptable for the very reason that they come into conflict with human
This dissertation, by contrast, suggests that if we continue to treat ideals of freedom as a morally ‘empty’ stance that is assumed to be permissive of close to everything, we overlook the possibility that some ideals of freedom may lead a person to strongly oppose, or even to coerce those who engage in, a certain way of life. I suggest that the consequences of valuing freedom depend on what kind of freedom people value. Different ideals of liberty simply lead to different and sometimes conflicting consequences.

My aim in this dissertation is to theorise, operationalise and empirically analyse contemporary ideals of freedom, and their consequences for our permissiveness of different behaviours. In doing so, I will apply Isaiah Berlin’s distinction between positive and negative liberty as a theoretical framework to the empirical study of freedom in contemporary public opinion (Berlin, 2008b).

The three essays in this dissertation each contribute to different scholarly debates. Together, however, they also put forward one shared argument, namely that there are several parallel ideals of liberty in the public mind, ideals that have different empirical consequences for our political behaviour, and in particular for how we handle diversity.

It is therefore mistaken to equate the spreading commitment to individual freedom with the dawn of a new age of tolerance and the welcoming of diversity, as Inglehart and Welzel (2005) for example tend to do. It is likewise erroneous, however, to assume that the rise of freedom in mass values means that people are becoming narcissistic nihilists and free-riders, as Putnam (2000) or Flanagan and Lee (2003) sometimes seem to suggest. My conclusions demonstrate that both understandings of what it means to value individual freedom are conceptually flawed, and empirically erroneous, for both assume that there is only one ideal of freedom and that valuing this ideal necessarily brings along some kind of moral permissiveness.

By including both quantitative analysis of survey data, and qualitative textual analysis, this book employs a mixed-methods approach. This introductory chapter will try to show the rationale behind this methodological eclecticism. Most importantly, it will also try to show why I took the rather un-orthodox decision to combine discussions from political theory with the empirical study of contemporary attitudes, which traditionally belongs to the field of political sociology and is seldom connected to more philosophical debates.

freedom. However, the examples they give of such intolerance in the name of freedom are all about intolerance of discrimination. The authors tell us that we are less likely today than in earlier times to tolerate discrimination of for example ethnic minorities, women, homosexuals, or handicapped persons (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 292-293). Nowhere, however, do they recognise the more complex, and indeed more troubling, possibility which I suggest: that valuing freedom and self-expression might sometimes make us oppose some of these minorities and their practices to begin with.
In what follows, I briefly recapitulate the theoretical background for my dissertation, namely Berlin’s discussion regarding positive and negative liberty. I then turn to consider existing empirical work on ideals of freedom in contemporary attitudes. These overviews of the theoretical and the empirical background help me specify the research gap that I wish to address with my studies. In the fourth section, I present the essays, and address their main findings, contributions and limitations. The final section considers the lessons learned from this research project as a whole, as well as potential avenues for future research.

Ideals of freedom in theory

This book takes its theoretical point of departure in Isaiah Berlin’s distinction between positive and negative liberty (Berlin, 2008b). Two concepts of liberty, his seminal lecture from 1958, was to become one of the classics in political theory. It later became an essay and is still an inescapable starting point for discussing ideals of freedom. By outlining the distinction between positive and negative liberty, Berlin, it has been suggested, ‘opened up critical discussion of the concept of freedom in much the same way that Rawls later opened up discussion of social justice’ (Crowder, 2004: 189).

This is not to deny, of course, that there are other important distinctions between different types of liberty. For example, there is the distinction suggested by Benjamin Constant between the liberty of the ancients and that of the moderns (Constant, 1988). Steven Lukes distinguishes between what he calls the three faces of freedom: personal autonomy, lack of public interference, and the power of self-development (Lukes, 1973: 127-131). There are also distinctions between collective and individual freedom; and between other types of positive and negative liberty, as the terms were originally used by for example T.H. Green (Simhony, 1993; Dimova-Cookson, 2003).2

Yet, the central divide in most of these discussions has regarded the concept of freedom itself. In other words, different thinkers have advanced contending definitions of what freedom is.3 My concern, however, lies not with the true nature of freedom. The aim of this dissertation is instead to achieve a better understanding of the kind of freedoms to which our contemporaries attribute great value in life – independently of how they choose to define the nature of freedom, or how it should be defined.

Hence, my natural theoretical starting point is not to begin with different definitions of freedom, but rather to establish what ideals of freedom there

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2 There is also the so-called third concept of liberty: republican liberty, or freedom as non-domination. See Pettit, 1997 and Skinner, 2002. Also see note 4 in Essay II.

might be. By ideals of freedom, I simply mean various conceptions of freedom that a person may regard as a valuable end in life.

One of the many ways in which Berlin speaks of negative and positive liberty is precisely as this, ideals of freedom; or so I argue in Essays I and II. Berlin speaks of identifying oneself with ‘the creed of’ one of the two freedoms (Berlin, 2008b: 185). He also notes that positive and negative freedom represent two ‘profoundly and irreconcilable attitudes to the ends of life’ (Berlin, 2008b: 212). His discussion of positive and negative liberty thus serves especially well as an analytical framework for studying public opinion. In what follows, I will briefly recapitulate the gist of his distinction. A fuller discussion can be found in Essay I.

Positive and negative liberty

Negative liberty, says Berlin, is the answer to the question ‘What is the area within which the subject (…) is or should be left to do what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons?’ (Berlin, 2008b: 169). Supporters of the negative notion thus believe ‘that all coercion is, in so far as it frustrates human desires, bad as such, although it may have to be applied to prevent other, greater evils; while non-interference, which is the opposite of coercion, is good as such, although it is not the only good’ (Berlin, 2008b: 175).

Berlin clearly believes that the negative notion of liberty has seldom ‘formed a rallying cry for the great masses’; indeed, that the great majority has often gladly compromised this liberty in order to achieve other, more popular values, such as security, status, virtue, power or equality (Berlin, 2008b: 176, 207). One such value that may threaten negative liberty is positive liberty.

Positive liberty answers the following question, according to Berlin: ‘What, or who, is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be, this rather than that?’ (Berlin, 2008b: 169). Supporters of the positive notion of liberty are thus concerned with attaining self-direction. The goal, for them, is not to avoid external interference, but to be a subject ‘moved by conscious purposes’, to be one’s own master, quite simply (Berlin, 2008b: 178).

It is sometimes argued that Berlin denies that the positive notion regards individual liberty, or even liberty altogether (Cf. McCloskey, 1965; Macfarlane, 1966; Taylor, 1997). This, however, seems mistaken to me.4

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4 My interpretation is in line with the suggestions of Gray, 1995: 387; Crowder, 2004: 78; Cherniss, 2007: 95; and Ricciardi, 2007: 126.
Berlin clearly states the following, for example:

The essence of the notion of liberty, in both the ‘positive’ and the ‘negative’ senses, is the holding off of something or someone – of others who trespass on my field or assert their authority over me, or of obsessions, fears, neuroses, irrational forces – intruders and despots of one kind or another (Berlin, 2008b: 204).

Berlin also acknowledges that the two notions may seem ‘at no great logical distance from each other’. He nevertheless insists that they have ‘historically developed in divergent directions not always by logically reputable steps, until, in the end, they came into direct conflict with each other’ (Berlin, 2008b: 178-179).

This strongly suggests that the distinction between positive and negative liberty should not be reduced to a requirement for conceptual clarity for its own sake. Berlin instead believes that we must distinguish between the two notions because we should expect supporters of positive and supporters of negative freedom to end up in very different political camps. The heart of the matter, we shall now see, is that Berlin believed that positive liberty, although valuable in and of itself, risks leading us to the conclusion that liberty is compatible with coercion. This is what George Crowder has called the inversion thesis (Crowder, 2004: 68-71). It is this aspect of Berlin’s thought that I reconstruct in Essay I.

Previous research has mainly understood the link that Berlin saw between positive liberty and coercion to be a matter of logical steps; and thus a concern that he exaggerates, since not all ideals of positive liberty allow for coercion in the name of liberty (Christman, 1991: 359; West, 1993; Crowder, 2004: 86). Others have understood Berlin’s critique more as an observation of a specific case, namely the Soviet Union, and thus largely directed towards an enemy that no longer exists (Galipeau, 1994: 85; Franco, 2003).

The argument that I develop in Essay I, by contrast, is that Berlin’s concerns were neither purely logical nor merely historical. Although the Soviet Union certainly provided him with a relevant example of the inversion of liberty – after, all, he wrote Two Concepts of Liberty at the height of the Cold War – his concerns with positive liberty also extended beyond any particular historical example. In fact, as we shall now see, they should be highly relevant for us today.
The treacherousness of positive liberty

In my reading, Berlin conceived of the inversion process as a trans-historical pattern rooted in human psychology. He believed that this psychological risk originated in two features shared by ideals of positive liberty: first, their focus on internal rather than external obstacles to freedom; and, secondly, their concern for freedom of preference formation, rather than preference enactment. To put it simply, Berlin believed that we have reason to be cautious of ideals of liberty that emphasise freedom from certain un-wanted elements of the psyche, rather than freedom from others; and the freedom of deciding what we want in the first place, rather than the freedom of acting in line with our existing wishes.

‘Cautious’ is a key word, for Berlin does not deny that these are also valuable freedoms. His point, as I shall elaborate in the following, is rather that we should be vigilant towards the risks that are involved in pursuing these positive ideals of liberty.

In the introduction that Berlin added to his essays on liberty in 1969, he acknowledges that unbridled negative liberty may of course also bring its fair share of ‘disastrous’ consequences. Focusing too much on our freedom to act unhindered by others may lead us to overlook the need for legislation that makes life in society possible, or the benefits of welfare provisions that give everyone the necessary means for making freedom of choice meaningful. Yet, he continues insisting that the negative idea has at least more frequently been recognised for what it is; while positive liberty, by contrast, remains more deceitful, for it may lead to ‘the apotheosis of authority’, the very opposite of freedom, and nevertheless remain able to ‘exploit the favourable associations of its innocent origins’ (Berlin, 2008a: 39).

Thus, in my interpretation, Berlin’s concern is not that positive liberty is conceptually flawed or even without value; nor simply that it has, as a matter of historical coincidence, ended up in totalitarian politics. Rather, Berlin seems to think that ideals of positive liberty are psychologically treacherous. Like Frankenstein’s monster, as he puts it (Berlin, 1997: 237), ideas are likely, in his view, to gain a momentous power of their own over our minds, and thus lead to unexpected and unintended consequences. Positive liberty, more specifically, invites us to overlook or even encourage coercion – in other words, to side against negative freedom – without acknowledging that we are doing so; for, we may now claim, we are acting on the side of liberty, not against it.5

From the perspective of political liberalism, it might be objected that the risk of coercion in the name of liberty can be averted as long as the supporters of positive liberty also hold the political attitude that we do not have the right to impose our ideal of liberty on anyone else (Rawls, 1993: 9-13). In

5 For a more thorough discussion, see Essay I.
this view, it need not worry us if people hold positive liberty as a personal
guideline in life; what matters is whether or not they want to use political
institutions to impose this ideal on others.
To this, I believe Berlin would in turn respond that the very problem with
positive liberty as a comprehensive ideal is that it may blind us to the fact
that we are violating the political ideal of non-coercion. Liberty is, after all,
ot just any ideal. In the standard account of liberalism, liberty is the core
ideal for the liberal state to protect and uphold. The problem is that if we
truly think of liberty in terms of positive liberty, we are likely to also think
that upholding liberty sometimes means hindering people from acting in line
with their explicit wishes. When we have come this far, however, it does not
seem very far-fetched to assume that we would also believe that a liberal
state can legitimately engage in such interventions and coercions. After all,
we might say, coercion for the sake of positive liberty is not really to inter-
fere with anyone’s liberty; in fact, to not engage in such coercion would be
to fail to protect and uphold liberty, the very purpose of the liberal state.

The moral problem that undergirds this dissertation is not, then, that it is
always wrong to side against negative liberty, but that it is problematic to do
so without acknowledging it. I do not for example assume that it is necessar-
ily wrong to ban the veil or pornography, or any other of the examples I
listed in the first pages of this introduction. Neither does Berlin wish to deny
that we should sometimes hinder those who we have reason to think are
brainwashed, or lack any knowledge of alternatives from which to choose,
from acting in line with their explicit wishes. Berlin’s point, however, is that
if we do so, we must acknowledge that however noble our intentions, our
attempt to help is also an instance of coercion. This, I suggest, is the mes-

It is one thing to say that I may be coerced for my own good, which I am too
blind to see: this may, on occasion, be for my benefit; indeed, it may enlarge
the scope of my liberty. It is another to say that if it is my good, then I am not
being coerced, for I have willed it, whether I know this or not, and am free
(or ‘truly’ free) even while my poor earthly body and foolish mind bitterly re-
ject it, and struggle with the greatest desperation against those who seek,
however benevolently, to impose it (Berlin, 2008b: 180-181).

Positive ideals of liberty, Berlin believes, tend to invite precisely such a
‘magical transformation, or sleight of hand’ (Berlin, 2008b: 181). They are
treacherous, then, to the extent that they invite us to overlook that we are
indeed coercing people, albeit in the name of liberty. The supporters of posi-
tive liberty might therefore be prone to a certain self-righteousness, or a kind

6 By explicit, I do not only mean that they are ‘manifest’, but rather that these wishes are also
to the best of their own knowledge. I am grateful to Marcus Ohlström for pointing out the
difference.
7 Also see Berlin, 2008a: 31-32.
of moral arrogance, we might say, towards those on the losing side: those who dissent, those whose opinions are not held to be truly free in a positive sense, and are thus not found worthy of our respect to begin with.

Berlin’s contemporary relevance

Many have noted that Berlin’s distinction between positive and negative liberty, and his warnings regarding the former, apply not only to totalitarian regimes, but to liberal societies as well (Crowder, 2004: 173, 176; Cherniss, 2007; Ricciardi, 2007). However, this has to my knowledge remained only a vague suggestion. It remains rather unclear in what way, more precisely, we should expect the inversion of liberty to take place today.\(^8\)

This dissertation thus takes a first step towards applying Berlin’s reasoning to a specific contemporary issue. Given recent developments in many Western affluent democracies, I suggest that Berlin’s distinction between positive and negative liberty is particularly relevant to the study of public opinion today. On the one hand, the great majority in affluent Western democracies seems to be increasingly committed to individual freedom as an ideal in life. On the other hand, there is also an increasing minority of immigrants in many of these countries, many with Muslim beliefs, who are often portrayed as representatives of much less freedom-oriented values.\(^9\) This suggests that what kind of liberty a person values lies at the heart of current political debates, not least concerning integration. The risk that positive liberty becomes a cloak for coercion, without us even recognising it, seems far from an abstract concern, today perhaps less so than ever.

An illustrative example can be found in the debate with which this chapter began: the discussion in several European countries regarding a potential ban on Muslim veils in various public contexts. In France, for example, the pro-ban side has often argued that penalizing this garment is in fact an act of liberation of the very women who nevertheless claim to have chosen to wear the veil out of their own free will. This choice, it is argued, is not really free; for example because by wearing a garment that supposedly expresses submission, one fails to express one’s individuality – and if this is true freedom, then penalizing whatever hinders it is of course an act of liberation. Penalizing the veil thus appears for some as the proper solution, not in spite of lib-

\(^8\) Indeed, Crowder notes that since the 1980’s, the main scholarly attention has turned away from Berlin’s discussion of liberty, towards the theme of value pluralism in his writings (Crowder, 2004: 148).

\(^9\) The extent to which these minorities actually are against freedom is not particularly relevant here; what matters is rather that this is how they are often portrayed.
eral principles, but because of them (Wallach-Scott, 2007: 125-131; Joppke, 2010: 31).10

In sum, if Berlin’s inversion thesis has to do with the notion that liberty has a certain psychological power over our minds, as I argue, then I suggest it should be all the more relevant today, at a time when liberty is perhaps more popular than ever in public opinion. Contemporary inversions of liberty may of course be more subtle, and less openly despotic, than the ones Berlin had in mind. On the other hand, that may also make them all the more treacherous today, when it is perhaps even harder to argue against the increasingly popular positive ideals of liberty, such as autonomy or authenticity, than it was half a decade ago. This suggests that it is particularly important to know more precisely which ideals of liberty surround us in everyday life.

Empirical research on contemporary ideals of freedom

The upshot of the previous section is that it is far from certain that valuing liberty needs to entail that one is permissive and open to diversity; it may very well lead to the opposite, especially perhaps in many contemporary Western societies. We will now see that previous empirical research into the nature of contemporary ideals of freedom does not, however, allow us to assess this possibility. This is because it has neglected to study what can rightly be called ideals of freedom, and instead mainly measures the political attitudes to which valuing freedom might, but might as well not, be conducive.

Freedom values

There is widespread agreement among scholars in the field of mass values, i.e. the study of the ideals of ordinary people, that the past few decades have brought along an unprecedented rise in the commitment to individual freedom. This trend has been given many names. Ronald Inglehart and his associates call it the rise of self-expression values, or emancipatory values (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Welzel, 2010). Others prefer to speak of libertarianism (Flanagan and Lee, 2003). More critical observers often refer to this trend as spreading individualism, or even narcissism (Lasch, 1978; Putnam, 2000; Bellah, Madsen et al., 2008). Political psychologists, finally, tend to speak of anti-authoritarianism or open-mindedness, but also of normative

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10 This is of course just one of several lines of argument in discussions concerning the veil. There were of course many other ideals, such as the notion of laïcité, at play in the French debate. For a longer discussion, cf. Laborde, 2005; Joppke, 2010.
individualism (Rokeach, 1960; Waterman, 1984; Oyserman, Coon et al., 2002; Triandis, 2004).

Although there are of course important differences between these literatures, they nevertheless share a common core: the notion that mass values in affluent Western democracies today display a growing commitment to some kind of individual freedom. As I will show in Essay II, some accounts describe this trend in terms that theoretically resemble negative freedom; and others more in terms of positive freedom. For now, however, suffice it to say that all of them describe the values they examine as values that have to do with freedom of some kind. Thus, I shall refer to them as ‘freedom values’ in the following.11

The growing commitment to freedom values is held to have important political implications. Scholars of political participation and voting patterns for example claim that political cleavages in affluent Western societies have become increasingly centred on the issue of freedom, rather than equality. This means that people from diverging socio-economic groups, different age groups, and with different levels of education, no longer differ as much as only a few decades ago in their positioning on the classic left-right divide. Instead, they differ more and more in their attitudes towards the value of individual liberty.12

A related and still unsettled debate in political sociology regards not the direct effect of freedom values on voting behaviour, but rather their long-term effects on civicsness. A long line of scholars, from Alexis de Tocqueville to Robert Putnam, fear that the rise of freedom values erodes social capital, solidarity and traditional duty-based political participation in a way that risks undermining democracy itself (de Tocqueville, 1998; Putnam, 2000; Flanagan and Lee, 2003; Bellah, Madsen et al., 2008).13

Other scholars, most notably Ronald Inglehart and associates, rather see the emerging focus on individual freedom as a welcome shift away from stifling conformity and authoritarianism – towards more tolerance, individ-

11 It is of course one thing to value individual freedom, and quite another to feel that one has it in one’s own life. The literature often lumps together these issues and speaks of both ideals and identities that have to do with liberty. For this critique, see Oyserman, Coon et al., 2002. In this book, however, my focus is not on the feeling or experience of individualism, but on the normative issue, on the notion that there is something valuable about individual independence.


13 Note that de Tocqueville is sometimes erroneously assumed to have been in favour of individualism. It is certainly true that he was in many ways fascinated by the American ethos, which he described in Democracy in America, and by the self-reliant individualists who considered themselves to stand alone in the world, with their destiny entirely in their own hands. Yet, he clearly also stated that ‘individualism, at first, only saps the virtue of public life; but in the long run attacks and destroys all others and is at length absorbed in downright selfishness’ (de Tocqueville, 1998: 205-206).
ual self-assertion and encouragement of diversity. This side contends that a stronger focus on individual freedom and self-expression makes citizens both more tolerant, and more likely to monitor politicians and demand their rights from them.\textsuperscript{14}

As this shows us, then, most scholars seem to agree that the rise of freedom values has significant consequences for political behaviour, even if some accounts are pessimistic and others optimistic. However, I shall now suggest that this focus on the effects of valuing freedom has led to the neglect of a crucial matter that comes logically prior to the question of consequences: what we know and do not know about what kind of freedom people value to begin with.

**Libertarianism and self-expression values**

Two of the most renowned conceptualisations of freedom values are ‘libertarianism’ and ‘self-expression values’. Libertarianism, as it is used here, is not to be equated with the philosophical position in support of a minimal state (Nozick, 1974). Quite the contrary: libertarians are believed to be in favour of equality and vote for the political left, rather than the right. In this context, libertarianism instead represents the freedom-oriented extreme of a dimension that spans the entire spectrum from very positive, to very negative, to freedom. One extreme end of the dimension is called libertarianism, while the other is called authoritarianism (Flanagan, 1982; Heath, Evans et al., 1994; Flanagan and Lee, 2003).\textsuperscript{15}

A libertarian is defined as someone ‘who believes in freedom of thought and action’ (Flanagan, 1982: 441). Libertarians ‘extol independence and self-determination, equality and freedom’. Indeed, judging from how Flanagan and his co-author describe them, their main characteristic appears to be their concern for ‘maximum personal development and self-realization’ (Flanagan and Lee, 2003: 238).

Inglehart and Welzel prefer to speak of a dimension of self-expression/survival values – but it is clear that this dimension overlaps with that of libertarianism/authoritarianism, both theoretically and empirically. Self-expression values represent what Inglehart and Welzel call ‘the universal human aspirations for self-realization and individual autonomy’ (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 143). The authors tell us that valuing self-expression means valuing ‘freedom and autonomy as good in and of themselves’ (Welzel and Inglehart, 2008: 132). The authors also refer to self-expression values as ‘emancipatory values’ and ‘autonomy values’.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14}Inglehart, 1977; Inglehart and Flanagan, 1987; Inglehart, 2003; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Welzel, 2006; Welzel and Inglehart, 2008.

\textsuperscript{15}This dimension, in other words, is a so-called bi-polar construct.

\textsuperscript{16}As opposed to the libertarianism/authoritarianism dimension, which captures an individual level pattern, Inglehart often speaks of the self-expression/survival dimension as an aggregate,
Theoretically, then, both libertarianism and self-expression values revolve around what we might broadly call the value of individual freedom: autonomy, self-expression, independence, etc. However, as is often the case with mass value studies, neither dimension has been theoretically defined before it has been contrasted to the data. Rather, both dimensions are the result of exploratory factor analysis, the goal of which is to find a pattern that explains the largest amount of statistical variance in the responses to hundreds of survey questions (Kim and Mueller, 1978).

In other words, instead of defining what it means to value freedom or self-expression and then try to capture it empirically, the literature on libertarianism and self-expression values has started in the opposite end. First, it has been found that certain survey responses cluster together, for whatever reason; then, it has been inferred that how a respondent feels towards these particular issues is the result of her stance towards individual freedom (Flanagan, 1982: 409, 438; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 48-52).

However, because there are no clear conceptualisations of what it means to value freedom and what this should entail, there is a significant validity gap in the literature on libertarianism and self-expression values. The validity gap consists in that, while there is a lot of theoretical talk of freedom and self-expression, few of the survey questions can in fact be said to capture people’s commitment to these ideals, but in fact seem more appropriate as measures of the potential *consequences* of valuing freedom.

To understand this validity gap, let us look closer at the variables that represent the self-expression values index and the libertarianism index, respectively (Table I).

Looking first at the left column of Table I, we can note that none of the variables that Inglehart interprets as examples of self-expression values actually asks the respondent about the freedom and autonomy, or indeed self-expression, with which he and his associates frequently associate this dimension.

Indeed, many political psychologists would object that not only does the self-expression values index not measure self-expression values; in fact, it does not measure any values at all. Inglehart’s measures rather reflect issue-specific attitudes (liberty aspirations and the justifiability of homosexuality), predispositions (trust), feelings (happiness) and self-reported behaviour (petition signing) – all of which are generally considered less stable than values (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Jagodzinski, 2004).
Table I: The measures of self-expression values and libertarianism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Self-expression values</strong></th>
<th><strong>Libertarian values</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mean individual level factor loadings within samples, World Values Survey (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 238)</td>
<td>individual level factor loadings on the first unrotated factor, pooled 12-nation World Values Survey sample (Flanagan and Lee, 2003: 239)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the liberty aspirations index (the importance of freedom of speech and having more say in society and work place) 0.55</td>
<td>the importance of freedom of speech 0.341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the justifiability of homosexuality 0.48</td>
<td>more say in government, job, community 0.328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-reported life satisfaction 0.12</td>
<td>teach child independence 0.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general trust 0.35</td>
<td>important in job: using initiative 0.209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whether or not the respondent has signed or would sign a petition 0.45</td>
<td>Sub-dimension 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-dimension 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the importance of freedom of speech 0.341</td>
<td>no absolutely clear guidelines on good and evil 0.435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more say in government, job, community 0.328</td>
<td>teach child imagination 0.398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-dimension 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complete sexual freedom 0.374</td>
<td>new ideas 0.289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parents should have their own life 0.343</td>
<td>Sub-dimension 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-indulgence at the expense of others (an index including the justifiability of keeping found money, adultery, lying in one’s own interest, etc.) 0.597</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social psychologists usually conceptualise values as guiding principles in our life, and thus as something more abstract, more deeply rooted and less malleable than the evaluative attitudes or emotions that Inglehart measures, for example by asking about the justifiability of homosexuality, or our general life satisfaction. Research has in fact shown that values have a strong influence on both attitudes and behaviour (Eagly and Chaiken, 1998: 295-296; Caprara, Schwartz et al., 2006). This suggests that it is especially important to steer clear from the more easily fluctuating and object-specific attitudes that Inglehart measures, and instead try to capture our more abstract values regarding freedom.18

Even if we agreed on a more generous definition of values than the predominant one in social psychology, I would nevertheless suggest that Inglehart’s variables capture other values than those that regard ‘self-realization and individual autonomy’, as he nevertheless assumes (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 143). When we speak of people valuing originality, self-expression, autonomy, or self-realization, we usually do not mean that they support cer-

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18 I suggest that the variables I use to measure positive and negative freedom values do indeed capture values to a greater extent; although they are not ideal. For a discussion of these items, see pp.26-27; and Essay II (Table 1).
tain forms of government, or that they are positive towards for example homosexuality. Rather, we think of the more personal, and not directly political, ideals that people may cherish. It therefore seems odd to identify any of these ideals with holding democratic norms or being morally permissive per definition, as Inglehart does. Such attitudes may be a consequence, but not proof, of a commitment to for example self-expression; at least not if we do not want to stray too far from ordinary language. 19

Nor, it seems to me, can we infer from the fact that someone condemns homosexuality, for example, that this person does not value self-realization and autonomy; quite the contrary. As Berlin suggests, those who believe in the value of autonomy may sometimes condemn certain practices for that very reason, because they believe that those who engage in them are not exercising enough self-government, for example (Berlin, 2008b: 179-181).

Similar problems haunt the work on libertarianism by Flanagan and associates. The first two variables are virtually identical to what Inglehart calls liberty aspirations; and are thus subject to the critique that I have already formulated here above. We may also question why we should assume that just because a respondent believes there are no absolute moral guidelines in life – or that new ideas are to be welcomed, or that complete sexual freedom is a good thing – then he or she can automatically be classified as a person who values freedom of thought and action. Surely it is one thing to ‘extol independence’ or aim for ‘self-actualization’ (Flanagan and Lee, 2003: 238), and quite another to celebrate moral pluralism, new ideas and sexual permissiveness. The latter three positions might of course correlate empirically with valuing freedom. But the fact that a person takes these positions can hardly be regarded as evidence that she values individual freedom.

It seems particularly misleading to say that agreeing that there are no clear moral guidelines in life means that one values individual freedom. Values, as we have seen, are defined as guiding principles in life (Schwartz, 1992); so valuing freedom must surely include the possibility of valuing at least one clear moral guideline in life, namely freedom itself.

The last variable in the libertarianism index, ‘self-indulgence at the expense of others,’ seems problematic for similar reasons. It seems theoretically erroneous to assume that believing strongly in individual freedom is the same as feeling liberated from morality altogether. Consider for example Immanuel Kant, who forwarded an extremely demanding morality and rigorous self-discipline – not in spite of, but because of his commitment to freedom. It thus seems rather problematic to assume that the extent to which someone is willing to accept adultery or lying would allow us to infer that she values ‘independence and self-determination’ (Flanagan and Lee, 2003:

19 This is often called the criterion of simplicity. Cf. Oppenheim, 1981: 180-187; and Sartori, 1984: 50-56.
238), values that Kant would be the first to emphasise, while strongly condemning adulterers and liars (Kant, 1964: 93).\textsuperscript{20}

Indeed, the only variables in the libertarianism index that could be said to measure values regarding freedom are those that ask the importance of teaching a child independence, encouraging imagination, valuing initiative in a job, and agreeing that parents should lead their own lives. Yet these are only four out of ten variables, and two of them show the lowest factor loadings of all. I would therefore hesitate to infer, as Flanagan and Lee do, that the dimension they have found tells us much about the nature of freedom values.\textsuperscript{21}

What happens, then, if we do not start inductively by analysing a sample of hundreds of survey questions, but rather with a selection of the variables of interest, for theoretical reasons, and only then study the patterns in the data? Table II suggests that the empirical results differ greatly, even with only a minimally more theoretical approach than that employed in previous research.

Table II displays an individual level analysis of the dimensionality of those variables used by Inglehart, Flanagan and their associates, which were available in World Values Survey 2005.\textsuperscript{22} I also included six ‘freedom items’, which I argue in fact better capture the concepts of which these scholars speak, as well as positive and negative freedom, respectively. These six variables and their factor loadings are italicised in the table. All six items are also used in the models in Essay II.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{20} The fact that this ‘self-indulgence’ item also shows the highest factor loading out of all the libertarianism measures in fact suggests that this dimension is not about freedom, but rather about what we might call moral egoism, or perhaps moral relativism.

\textsuperscript{21} Other libertarianism indices tend to capture freedom to an even lesser extent than Flanagan’s index does. See for example Kitschelt, 1994; and Evans, Heath et al., 1996.

\textsuperscript{22} The question wording for most of these variables is found in Table 1, Essay II. The question wording for the remaining variables are as follows. The first three variables in Table II are gauged by asking the respondent whether he or she thinks that abortion, divorce, or homosexuality can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between (on a scale from 1 to 10). \textit{Importance of free speech and more say in government, job, community} are measured by asking the respondent whether he or she thinks that these are more important goals than ‘making sure that the country has strong defense forces’, ‘a high level of economic growth’, or ‘trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful’. \textit{Teach child tolerance and respect}, finally, is measured by showing the respondent a list of ‘qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home’, and allowing them to choose up to five (World Values Survey, 2005).

\textsuperscript{23} See Table I and the adjacent discussion in Essay II. The first three ‘freedom items’ ask about the extent to which the respondent agrees that it is important to ‘seek to be myself rather than follow others’ (authenticity), ‘decide my goals in life by myself’ (autonomy), and ‘think up new ideas and be creative; do things one’s own way’ (self-realization). These items, I would argue, are theoretically much closer to the self-expression and autonomy that Inglehart speaks of than are any of his own measures. The other three ‘freedom items’ I use measure the extent to which the respondent does not agree that it is important ‘to always behave properly; to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong’ (non-conformism); the extent to which he or she thinks ‘greater respect for authority’ would not be a change for the better (insubordination); and the importance attributed to encouraging ‘independence’ as a quality...
Table II: A first test of the dimensionality of freedom values

Rotation component matrix from a principal component analysis
(Varimax rotation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pooled sample: N=9,825 listwise deletion</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>Factor 4</th>
<th>Factor 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justifiable: abortion</td>
<td>0.820</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td>0.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifiable: divorce</td>
<td>0.797</td>
<td>-0.024</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>0.105</td>
<td>0.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifiable: homosexuality</td>
<td>0.738</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.201</td>
<td>0.157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifiable: euthanasia</td>
<td>0.737</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>-0.042</td>
<td>0.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifiable: prostitution</td>
<td>0.670</td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td>-0.014</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifiable: suicide</td>
<td>0.597</td>
<td>0.170</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifiable: avoiding a fare on public transport</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td><strong>0.801</strong></td>
<td>-0.024</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifiable: claiming government benefits</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
<td><strong>0.778</strong></td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifiable: cheating on taxes</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td><strong>0.771</strong></td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>-0.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
<td><strong>0.771</strong></td>
<td>-0.065</td>
<td>0.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>-0.035</td>
<td><strong>0.762</strong></td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>-0.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-realization</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td><strong>0.520</strong></td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td>0.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-conformism</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>-0.066</td>
<td><strong>0.649</strong></td>
<td>-0.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td><strong>0.608</strong></td>
<td>-0.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insubordination</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td><strong>0.590</strong></td>
<td>0.237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of free speech</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td><strong>0.383</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.353</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach child tolerance and respect</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>-0.139</td>
<td>-0.022</td>
<td>-0.125</td>
<td><strong>0.651</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More say in government, job, community</td>
<td>-0.037</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>0.101</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td><strong>0.633</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The factors appear in order of explained variance. The factor extraction criterion was Eigenvalue > 1. Factor loadings above the standard cut-off point of 0.3 are presented in bold. The unrotated solution is available upon request but is much harder to interpret, as is usually the case before rotation (Kim and Mueller, 1978: 50). For descriptive data, see the appendix.

for children to learn at home (independence). These measures, I would argue, capture the kind of freedom of which Flanagan and Lee speak, namely that of extolling individual independence, non-conformism and anti-authoritarian ideals.
The important question that the kind of exploratory factor analysis presented in Table II may answer is: *Which variables belong to one and the same empirical dimension?* In other words, our main goal here is to find out which survey responses cluster together and to what extent. The logic behind this is that the more certain answers do correlate, the more we can assume that the responses to these different manifest questions in fact depend on how a respondent feels towards one more abstract variable – such as freedom, or democracy – the attitudes towards which we cannot measure directly, and which is therefore called a latent variable. The numbers in each column, the factor loadings, measure the strength of this assumed relationship between each manifest variable, i.e. how respondents have answered a particular survey item, and the common, latent variable that we imagine guides the respondents in their answers.

As can be seen from Table II, the dimensionality of values regarding freedom, democratic norms and permissiveness clearly differs in important ways from what previous research has concluded, based on its more inductive approach. The fact that the six italicised ‘freedom items’ load on factors that are separate from all the other variables (with the exception of free speech) clearly corroborates my objection to Inglehart and Flanagan. This result means that the way people react to moral permissiveness, non-compliance with legal norms, civic participation, or even tolerance, is simply not a valid indication of how they feel about individual freedom. These are all separate attitudinal dimensions; they are different issues in people’s mind, quite simply.

Admittedly, some of the factor structure we can see in the table may be due to battery effects, which stem from the fact that several questions are placed consecutively in the questionnaire, and the respondents therefore answer them in a similar way for no other reason than fatigue or convenience. This may partly explain the clustering of the first nine items.

Nevertheless, the results here are far from a mirror image of the questionnaire design. They thus appear to be able to tell us something important about the individual level structure of values regarding individual freedom. For example, Inglehart and his associates assume that valuing independence can be equated to valuing tolerance and respect (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 54-56). Table II, by contrast, indicates that even if we know that someone values independence, this does not allow us to predict how the same person will feel about teaching children tolerance and respect.

In sum, it is both theoretically dubious, and empirically erroneous, to assume that the more a person values individual freedom, the more likely she is also to be morally permissive, condone non-compliance with legal norms, and hold pro-democratic attitudes. Since these assumptions nevertheless tend to guide previous work on freedom in mass values, I suggest this field still lacks a satisfactory account of the individual level structure of valuing freedom, and the effects of this commitment on other attitudes.
The research gap

We have now seen that there are both theoretical and empirical reasons to engage in a careful and nuanced study of what I have called ideals of freedom. The previous section has shown that, despite the crucial role attributed to values regarding freedom in the literature on popular attitudes in affluent Western democracies, existing empirical research measures these values rather poorly – to the extent it does so at all.

This seems to stem from a more general predicament that haunts studies of mass values: the lack of theory, and thus the predominance of inductive work over the testing of theoretically informed hypotheses. My argument in the previous section was that this lack of theory has yielded a considerable validity gap between the theoretical concepts that scholars refer to, and the empirical measures they examine in practice. While they repeatedly tell us that self-expression and freedom values are important and on the rise, the scholars who have empirically analysed these values nevertheless leave us with too little knowledge of the structure and nature of popular support for individual freedom. Nor do their measures allow us to probe the empirical relationship between valuing positive or negative freedom, on the one hand, and holding certain political attitudes, on the other hand.24

As a first remedy to the problems in the empirical literature, I think it is important to first theoretically clarify what ideals of individual freedom we should expect people to value; and, secondly, what effects valuing these ideals could have on other attitudes. Before something can be studied in real life, we must have some theoretical notion of what this something is.

Moreover, the theoretical section suggested that it is no little matter what kind of liberty people value – positive or negative – especially if this liberty is prone to invite the conclusion that coercion is compatible with liberation. Recognising this seems to be especially important today, when arguments from freedom are invoked in debates regarding how the liberal state and society should handle an increasing cultural and religious diversity.

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24 This, finally, is not just a problem that haunts Inglehart and other scholars in political sociology. Much work in political or social psychology similarly assumes that valuing freedom can be measured by asking whether people accept adultery or tax cheating. See for example Rokeach, 1960; Triandis, Bontempo et al., 1988; Bontempo, 1993; Triandis, 1998; and Oyserman, Coon et al., 2002. The work of Shalom Schwartz provides an exception here. Nevertheless, he does not speak of freedom but self-direction, and sees it as a response to evolutionary problems rather than as a pre-defined theoretical issue (Schwartz, 1992). For a longer discussion of Schwartz, see Essay II.
Presenting the essays

The previous section argued that there is a considerable research gap regarding the more precise nature of contemporary ideals of individual freedom. The aim of my dissertation is to provide a first remedy to this gap, by outlining a better theoretical and empirical understanding of freedom ideals in contemporary mass values, as well as their attitudinal consequences.

The first of my essays contributes to a more refined theoretical analysis of freedom ideals by presenting a novel, psychological, interpretation of Berlin’s Two Concepts of Liberty. This essay also suggests previous research has neglected that Berlin was critical not only of enlightened ideals of positive liberty, but also of romantic ones, which might be even more widespread today. The second essay provides a more nuanced empirical understanding of contemporary ideals of freedom. Through statistical analysis of survey data, it demonstrates that Berlin’s negative-positive distinction does in fact hold also in popular opinion; and that the two dimensions have rather different effects on moral and legal permissiveness. The third essay, finally, scrutinises a recent example of disrespect in the name of liberty: the Danish cartoon controversy. This exercise delves deeper into the study of the disrespectful tendencies of romantic ideals of liberty, which Essay I showed to be neglected, and yet crucial according to Berlin.

The common core in all three studies is their analysis of popular ideals of liberty – which they address either theoretically (Essay I), quantitatively (Essay II) or qualitatively (Essay III). Each essay also examines the potential effects of valuing liberty. The first essay discusses its effects on coercion in the name of liberty, while the third essay focuses on its links to disrespect.

The second essay stands out since, in contrast to the others, it does not focus on either coercion or disrespect; or, for that matter, on any other effects of positive liberty that are as clearly disconcerting. This essay instead shows that valuing positive liberty does not lead to as much moral permissiveness as does valuing negative liberty; and in fact to slightly less approval of non-compliance to legal norms than does its negative counterpart. The reason for this focus is that both moral permissiveness and non-compliance to legal norms are of fundamental concern to the literature that this particular essay addresses: the debate between those who lament and those who welcome freedom values from the viewpoint of democratic civicness (Cf. Putnam, 2000; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005).

While the first two essays explicitly discuss Berlin’s positive-negative distinction, Essay III does not. The reason I have not explicitly connected this last discussion to Berlin’s critique of positive liberty is that my main goal in this essay is to distinguish between what we might call two types of positive liberty: the enlightened ideal of autonomy, and the romantic ideal of authentic self-expression. Thus, I believe it would only complicate the discussion unnecessarily to bring in the theoretically prior distinction between positive and negative liberty as well.
Essay I. The Inversion of Liberty. Isaiah Berlin and Coercion in the Name of Liberty

The first essay explores what has been called Berlin’s ‘inversion thesis’: his argument as to why positive ideals of liberty would be prone to excuse or even encourage coercion in the name of liberty.

To the extent that previous research has analysed this aspect of Berlin’s thought, it has focused mainly on the claim that positive liberty leads to tyranny in the name of freedom by logical steps. In their reading, Berlin’s concern was that, if we agree that freedom can be equated with the positive notion of rational self-mastery, then we must also agree that liberation can sometimes require coercion of the supposedly irrational, those who fail to master themselves, for the sake of their freedom. To this, many have objected that surely we may agree that freedom is rational self-mastery and at the same time deny the possibility that we could ever know what is rational for others better than they can for themselves. In other words, not all positive conceptions of liberty allow the monistic conclusion that our ends in life must all fit into a harmonious pattern in order to count as rational. Berlin, it is therefore often concluded, is simply too critical towards positive liberty.

My objection, however, is that Berlin’s concern was not limited to what positive liberty may logically allow for. He clearly states that positive liberty is more liable to lead to tyranny even when such a conclusion does not follow by ‘logically reputable steps’. George Crowder calls this Berlin’s ‘inversion thesis’, and acknowledges that Berlin portrays it as neither logical nor merely accidental. However, since not even Crowder has provided a satisfactory reconstruction of the nature and pattern of this inversion process, I try to remedy this in my essay.

The process of inversion that Berlin had in mind, I suggest, is best described as psychological. For Berlin, the danger of positive liberty was rooted in the treacherous power that he attributed to ideas and metaphors over our mind – a power that he believed could occasionally grow to be so strong as to render us immune against critical argument and reasoning. Berlin furthermore believed, I argue, that most human beings want to believe that there need to be no trade-offs between different values, that all ends coincide. In other words, he seems to have thought that there is a universal psychological tendency towards monism already to begin with, so to speak. His concern, therefore, was that, positive freedom paves the way for fooling ourselves that freedom harmonises with other values. Positive liberty, as opposed to negative, simply fails to remind us that when a person chooses what we think is irrational or simply wrong, this is nevertheless a free choice, and that if we interfere with this choice, we cannot maximise both freedom and the other value, but only sacrifice one value for another.

Positive liberty, in sum, allows us to conveniently forget that there are trade-offs between different values in life, and that liberty therefore often
comes at the cost of other values. This is what makes it psychologically risky, according to Berlin.

Contrary to what has been claimed by previous research, I also show that Berlin was especially sceptical towards two aspects of positive ideals of liberty. First, he criticises their focus on freedom from internal rather than external constraints to the self, because this allows us to say that we can liberate people from themselves, as it were. Secondly, and perhaps more surprisingly, he is also critical of their focus on the free formation of one’s preferences, rather than the freedom to enact one’s preferences. This is because he fears that too much focus on freedom of the soul, as we might call it, risks undermining our wish to change our political reality, to stand up against those who deprive us of freedom of action.

My reconstruction of Berlin’s inversion thesis also reveals, finally, that Berlin's warnings do not only apply to the enlightenment notion of liberation by reason, a popular target among contemporary political theorists concerned with repression in the name of liberty. According to Berlin, romantic ideals such as authenticity and individual self-realization are equally vulnerable to this inversion.

The main contribution of this study is to nuance our current understanding of Berlin’s negative-positive distinction, and his critique of positive liberty. By reconstructing Berlin’s inversion thesis, the essay provides a more elaborate psychological interpretation of Berlin than previous research offers – and also one that suggests he is more relevant today than previous accounts have recognised.

A potential limitation for this essay is the lack of a larger discussion of the interpretive principles involved in the reading of a historical thinker. A contextualist might object that Berlin’s warnings cannot be translated into a contemporary context at all (Skinner, 1969). Nevertheless, we can at least be certain that such an objection would not have been raised by Berlin himself. In spite of much critique from historians to the effect that he gave too little attention to context, he insisted that when studying historical thought, our main concern should be how to apply it to the problems of our own time (Berlin, 2000: 8; Crowder, 2004: 194).

Essay II. Freedom in Mass Values: Egocentric, Humanistic, or Both? Using Isaiah Berlin to Understand a Contemporary Debate

In contrast to the first essay, the second starts in the empirical debate regarding the spreading commitment to freedom in mass values. More specifically, it addresses the debate between those who put forward an ‘egocentric’ and those who prefer a ‘humanistic’ understanding of freedom values.26

26 These terms are used by Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 292. I readily admit that they are far from ideal for denoting the two sides in this debate, and even more problematic as labels for
In the first camp, we find scholars such as Robert Putnam, Scott C. Flanagan and Robert Bellah, who interpret the increased focus on valuing freedom as a rise in egocentrism, and a general relaxation of all social norms, including solidarity and rule abidance. On the other side, we find Ronald Inglehart, Christian Welzel and Russell Dalton, according to whom valuing freedom leads to less permissiveness of practices that ‘violate humanistic norms’; and to a stronger internalised sense of duty to the common good.

I suggest it is misleading to see this debate as one between different ‘readings’ of the same values, as is commonly done in existing research. Instead, I propose, the two sides appear to be talking of two very different notions of freedom values to begin with. While the pessimistic side speaks of what Berlin would call negative liberty, the optimistic side speaks of what he refers to as positive liberty. I also show that the empirical consequences that either side expects from freedom values resonate rather well with the empirical consequences that Berlin outlines; with the difference, of course, that Berlin is more critical of positive liberty than either side is in this debate.

The introduction of Berlin’s framework in the literature on mass values results not only in further theoretical clarity, but also in five new hypotheses. The main contribution of this essay lies in its test of these hypotheses, using survey data from ten affluent Western countries that were part of World Values Surveys 2005.

I first conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to test the main hypothesis: that positive and negative freedom values are indeed two distinct individual level dimensions – i.e. that people do not necessarily value one of these things because they value the other. It is worth noting that CFA differs from exploratory factor analysis, which is the main technique employed by previous research within the field. CFA allows us to test a certain, theoretically defined model; and it also allows the researcher to ‘control for’ battery effects, i.e. that certain survey items may cluster together only because they were asked consecutively. Exploratory factor analysis, by contrast, merely tries to minimise the variance in the data, without any theoretical preconception as to what dimensions one might find, and without any possibility of taking potential battery effects into consideration (Bollen, 1989). 27

The most important finding in Essay II is that positive and negative freedom values are indeed two different dimensions, as can be seen from the results of the confirmatory factor analysis. This finding is further corroborated by the fact that, just as hypothesised, the two dimensions appear to

negative and positive freedom values, respectively. However, by changing these terms, I believe I would only add to the confusion in the empirical scholarly discussion that I address in Essay II. Since one of my main goals in this essay is to clarify this debate, which is already conceptually and theoretically muddled, I have thus chosen to keep Inglehart’s terminology.

27 For an example of exploratory factor analysis, see Table II.
have different effects on moral permissiveness towards for example prostitution; as well as on the acceptance of tax cheating, and other types of non-compliance with legal norms. This is shown through OLS regression analyses that control for the impact of age, education and religiosity.\textsuperscript{28} In line with my hypotheses, these analyses show that valuing negative liberty leads a person to be much more morally permissive towards for example suicide; as well as more condoning of non-compliance with legal norms, such as tax cheating.

My expectations regarding the effects of positive liberty are in part contradicted, however. Contrary to my hypothesis, valuing positive liberty does not lead to less moral permissiveness. On the other hand, the effect of positive liberty is still considerably smaller than that of negative liberty. Finally, just as expected, valuing positive liberty has the opposite effect from valuing negative liberty on condoning non-compliance with legal norms. Thus, while negative liberty leads to more acceptance of illegal behaviour, positive liberty in fact leads to less. However, this result is tempered by the fact that the effect size is not particularly impressive in substantial terms.

One limitation in this essay is that, in order to make room for the empirical discussion, it can only treat Berlin’s theoretical framework in a much more simplified manner than in Essay I. This has to do with the inescapable trade-off involved in any project that combines a rather sophisticated theory with empirical data for the first time. For two literatures to be combined, the complexities of each must inevitably be simplified. Hopefully, however, this cost is compensated for by the innovative theoretical perspective and the novel empirical findings achieved by my combination of the two fields.

Another limitation is that I have not been able to use the ideal measures for my theoretical concepts. Since the only survey questions available were originally designed for other purposes than mine, they do not allow me to fully capture the concepts of positive and negative liberty. The ideal solution would of course be to design other measures. Having to leave such a major task aside for now, however, this essay instead tries to tackle the problem more modestly. In contrast to much previous research, which, as I have pointed out in this introduction, tends to ignore the issue of validity altogether, my essay at least includes a thorough discussion of both the problems and advantages of my measures.

\textsuperscript{28} I also estimated two structural equation models. In the published version of Essay II, these results were only briefly mentioned in note 20. The reader of this book, however, may also inspect these additional results in a novel appendix, which I have added to Essay II.
Essay III: Romantic Liberalism. An Alternative Perspective on Liberal Disrespect in the Muhammad Cartoons Controversy

The first two essays begin with the distinction between negative and positive ideals of liberty, and then discuss their potential consequences; for example, the possibility that valuing positive liberty leads to disrespect towards other people’s explicit wishes. The last essay starts at the opposite end: it examines a position that clearly defended, indeed celebrated, disrespect – and then works its way in the reversed direction to uncover the more specific kind of positive liberty ideals that were involved in defence of this stance.

The position I analyse is the one that was taken by Flemming Rose, previously editor for the culture section in *Jyllands-Posten*, one of Denmark’s largest newspapers. In 2005, the paper commissioned and published twelve cartoons of the Muslim prophet Muhammad, which famously sparked the so-called Danish cartoon controversy. Rose and many others claimed that a good liberal should ridicule religion, and thus that using one’s right to freedom of speech in disrespectful ways is not only within the legal limits of free expression, but in fact a morally valuable act in and of itself. By publishing the cartoons, in this view, *Jyllands-Posten* set a moral example.

The predominant understanding of the cartoon debate presents it as a case of what William Galston has termed ‘enlightenment liberalism’, a conception of liberalism that has recently come under attack. Enlightenment liberalism is characterised by taking the ultimate goal of liberal principles to be the furthering of a comprehensive ideal: autonomy, in the sense of critical self-reflection and self-direction. According to an enlightenment liberal, freedom of speech, for example, should be used in ways that promote the character ideal of autonomy. According to Galston, this intertwining of allegedly value neutral liberal policies with a certain sectarian conception of the good thus gives rise to attempts to make people ‘autonomous by illiberal means’, as Christian Joppke aptly formulates it (Galston, 1995; Galston, 2002: 15-27; Joppke, 2007: 16). This is also how Christian Rostbøll has recently suggested that we should understand the position that was taken by the most vehement defenders of the cartoon publication, including Flemming Rose (Rostbøll, 2009; Rostbøll, 2011).

My essay, however, challenges this interpretation. Rostbøll fails to recognise that those who defended the cartoons said little to suggest that they thought the cartoons would promote the moral ideal of autonomy as rational.

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29 The cartoons were the result of a request from Rose, who invited forty members of the Danish editorial cartoonists union to draw the Muslim prophet ‘as they saw him’ (Rose, 2005). The request elicited twelve cartoons, out of which the most famous portrayed Muhammad with a bomb inscribed with the Muslim confession of faith in his turban. Some of the other cartoons portrayed Muslims as suicide bombers and generally blood-thirsty; yet others were more neutral in content; and some even poked fun at the editors of *Jyllands-Posten*. For a longer background, see Essay III.

30 Also see Lomasky, 1987; King, 1999; Kukathas, 2007.
self-reflection. They simply urged Muslims to embrace the ‘enlightenment’ value of a separation between religion and state, and the right to freedom of speech. Thus, by enlightenment values, they only referred to political ideals, not comprehensive ideals, such as that of autonomous reflection.

This, however, does not mean that there were no ethical ideals invoked in this debate. Quite the contrary: as my essay goes on to show, such arguments were commonplace, but they invoked the value of dedicated, authentic self-expression, not of autonomous self-reflection.

The main contribution of this essay lies in developing the concept of romantic liberalism: a conception of liberalism that places at its heart the promotion of authentic self-expression, and that I argue is exemplified by Rose’s position. From the perspective of romantic liberalism, disrespect is not a mere side effect of trying to enlighten those who are supposedly in the dark, as it is for enlightenment liberals. Rather, disrespect is something to strive for; it is a sign of moral standing, since it shows that a person is doing her utmost to express her authentic feelings or opinions, and that she does not let herself be held back by the fact that doing so may hurt or anger someone else.

The conclusions of the last essay in this book contribute to two literatures. First, they suggest that, if we are to understand recent sources of disrespect in the name of liberty, we must recognise that enlightenment liberalism is rivalled by a strand of thought that is perhaps even more popular and aggressive, namely romantic liberalism. In this sense, the essay offers a closer examination of the romantic ideals of positive liberty that I discussed already in Essay I, when showing that Berlin believed these ideals to be just as treacherous as the ideal of autonomy.

Secondly, my conclusions also shed new light on our understanding of Rose, a key actor in the Danish cartoon controversy. One might perhaps even call him its protagonist. My scrutiny of Rose’s arguments provides the first attempt to understand and classify his position. It shows not only that he invokes romantic ideals of morality, but also that he does not, as has been assumed, frame the cartoon publication as a way of liberating Muslims. Instead, he frames it as a way of liberating non-Muslims from the restraint and self-censorship that he believes they have imposed upon themselves out of misguided respect for Muslims.

Strictly speaking, the conclusions from this essay are limited to the one actor I have analysed: Flemming Rose. In my concluding discussion, I nevertheless indicate the potential fruitfulness of romantic liberalism as a description for the position taken by others than Rose in the cartoon controversy, and indeed beyond it. Further research is of course needed to test if romantic liberalism is also present in other situations and similarly leads to the celebration of disrespect. Alternative cases of romantic liberalism might for example be found in discussions regarding the Muslim veil, school curricula and general education policies, intimate relationships, or prostitution.
However, in these discourses, as opposed to the one that I have analysed, arguments from romantic liberalism are likely to be more tangled up with other salient themes, for example the attitude one takes towards the state as opposed to the private sector, or regarding the religious-secular divide.

The reason that I chose to focus on the case of the Muhammad cartoons controversy was not only that I believe previous research, most notably the work done by Rostbøll, has misinterpreted the situation by erroneously linking the defence of the cartoons to enlightenment liberalism. I also believe that the discourse surrounding the Muhammad cartoons allows us to see the position of romantic liberalism more clearly than many other comparable discourses do; and clarity is crucial in the development of a concept such as romantic liberalism, a category that must be outlined carefully before it can be applied to other topics.

Conclusions and future research

My over-all aim in this dissertation has been to theoretically and empirically deepen and nuance our understanding of what it means to value freedom in contemporary public opinion, and what consequences this commitment may have on our attitudes towards diversity and permissiveness. Each of my three essays thus takes a step towards providing a more thorough understanding of these issues.

The first essay does so by theoretically disentangling how Berlin’s framework of positive and negative liberty might be relevant today; and by reconstructing the mechanism that Berlin expected to lead supporters of positive ideals of liberty to the conclusion that we can coerce others against their explicit wishes, and still insist that we are siding with freedom, not against it.

The second essay goes on to study Berlin’s distinction between positive and negative liberty empirically, by statistically analysing contemporary attitudes in public opinion. This shows that positive and negative liberty do indeed form two separate value dimensions in public opinion today, and that these two dimensions have different consequences for our moral permissiveness and rule abidance.

The third essay, finally, scrutinises the specific event of the Muhammad cartoons controversy, and thereby both theoretically and empirically analyses the links between romantic ideals of liberty, on the one hand, and disrespect towards a religious minority, on the other. The conclusions in this last essay reveal what Essay I only hinted at, namely that romantic ideals of liberty, such as dedicated and authentic self-expression, are likely to be at the root of contemporary instances of liberal disrespect in the name of liberty.
In what follows, I shall outline, first, the main scientific contributions of the essays taken together as a whole; and, secondly, a few guidelines for future research.

Empirical and theoretical contributions

First, and most importantly, the essays in this book contribute to our empirical knowledge of contemporary ideals of freedom in public opinion. Together, they do so by theoretically introducing, operationalising and empirically analysing Berlin’s negative-positive distinction in contemporary mass values; and, in the third article, Galston’s distinction between reformation and enlightenment liberalism.

One of the main conclusions from the three essays considered as a whole is that Berlin’s distinction between negative and positive liberty, and his warnings against the latter, are highly relevant to the empirical study of contemporary public opinion.

To my knowledge, previous research has never before tested whether positive and negative liberty can be distinguished in public opinion. Nor has it examined the empirical consequences of valuing either ideal. Indeed, as this introduction has tried to show, previous empirical research on mass values has mainly studied not what we can rightly call ideals of freedom, or freedom values, at all. Rather, it has measured what I have suggested are only the potential consequences of valuing liberty: sexual and moral permissiveness, for example.

My findings show that positive and negative liberty do indeed represent two dimensions of freedom values in public opinion, and that these dimensions affect permissiveness differently. They also shed new light on the neglected topic of romantic ideals of liberty. These conclusions yield a clearer picture both of the nature and the potential attitudinal consequences of valuing freedom today, as compared to what has been offered by previous empirical value studies.

Secondly, this dissertation also contributes to existing research regarding the intellectual legacy of Isaiah Berlin, and his contemporary relevance in particular. My conclusions in Essay I suggest that previous analyses of his thought have not fully recognised the psychological nature of his discussion of the two liberties, and especially of his warnings against positive liberty. This has led many to conclude that he exaggerated his case against positive liberty, since all ideals of positive liberty do not conceptually justify coercion in the name of liberty. In contrast, I suggest Berlin would have insisted that we be cautious against all ideals of positive liberty; because, quite independently of their logical implications, they may exercise a treacherous psychological power over our mind.

I also show that previous interpretations of Berlin’s thought have focused too one-sidedly on his warnings against enlightenment ideals of positive
liberty, at the cost of overlooking his warnings against its more romantic
versions. This neglected side of Berlin’s discussion might be of special rele-
vance today, as the findings from the Muhammad cartoons controversy in
my third essay suggest.

Third, my dissertation also puts forward an important addition to the bur-
geonegning literature that warns us against enlightenment liberalism. More spe-
cifically, I take issue with William Galston, who has argued that the main
source of moral arrogance in the name of liberty today is a conception of
liberalism that places the fostering of autonomy as rational self-reflection at
the heart of the liberal project (Galston, 1995; Galston, 2002). In contrast,
my conclusions regarding both Berlin (Essay I) and the Muhammad cartoons
controversy (Essay III) suggest that Galston neglects the problems that come
with what I call romantic liberalism. This conception of liberalism takes the
goal of liberal institutions to consist in fostering not enlightened, but roman-
tic ideals of liberty, such as authentic and dedicated self-expression.

As I suggest in Essay III, romantic liberalism is more likely than enlight-
enment liberalism to celebrate disrespect as virtuous in and of itself. It is
also, perhaps even more disconcertingly, more likely to support a kind of
‘liberal fundamentalism’ of dedication and uncompromising fervour; in con-
trast to the sober and rational public debate often emphasised by enlighten-
ment liberalism.

Political theory and political sociology combined:
a methodological contribution

This dissertation combines two seemingly disparate literatures within politi-
cal science: the empirical research of contemporary mass values, which is
traditionally pursued by political sociologists and psychologists; and the
more normative discussion regarding different ideals of liberty among politi-
cal theorists. Taken together, my essays thereby also make a fourth contribu-
tion: they show how political sociology and political theory can be combined
in order to enrich each other.

As this introductory chapter has tried to show, the empirical research of
freedom in mass values suffers from a lack of both theoretical clarity and
empirical nuance. Indeed, there is a long tradition within this field to assume
that mass attitudes are not particularly refined, and often incoherent (Con-
verse, 1964). My conclusions, however, suggest that in the case of freedom,
the opposite holds true: popular attitudes turn out to be much more nuanced
than previous research has acknowledged.

I owe this finding to the already existing theoretical discussions that I
have employed as analytical frameworks: most importantly, Berlin’s distinc-
tion between positive and negative liberty, but also Galston’s discussion
regarding reformation and enlightenment liberalism. This suggests that
scholars who study popular attitudes may sometimes underestimate their theoretical complexity. Perhaps future research will find that other theoretical discussions can similarly clarify empirical conundrums regarding public opinion, and salient themes in our culture. In sum, political theory is able to bring new clarity and crucial focus to the field of mass value studies.

On the other hand, the empirical study of mass values can also help political theory to specify, reveal and criticise ideals that are relevant and salient in our contemporary culture. By this, I do not of course mean that empirical findings provide a clear-cut answer to normative questions. When I claim that the study of popular opinion can enrich political theory, what I have in mind is the specific kind of political theory that Berlin encouraged, which is considerably more moderate in its ambition to change society than for example the project of John Rawls (Rawls, 1993).

According to Berlin, the main goal of political theory was negatively defined: to avoid evil, to say what we should not do, rather than to construct positively defined principles from which we can derive answers as to what kind of politics we should engage in. To paraphrase Judith Shklar, who has outlined a ‘liberalism of fear’ (Shklar, 1998), perhaps we might call this approach a ‘political theory of fear’.

From Berlin’s perspective, the primary task of the theorist is to expose the categories, concepts and metaphors that guide our thinking, and how they can be perverted into dangerous conclusions (Berlin, 1991: 29; Galipeau, 1994: 36; Crowder, 2004: 188). To not do this is to risk remaining at the mercy of ideas that, without the critical distance achieved by careful theoretical dissection, may grow too powerful for us to control (Berlin, 1997: 237). To neglect ideas that are salient in our culture might thus be politically dangerous, as Berlin suggests at the beginning of Two Concepts of Liberty:

Dangerous, because when ideas are neglected by those who ought to attend to them – that is to say, those who have been trained to critically think about ideas – they sometimes acquire an unchecked momentum and an irresistible power over multitudes of men that may grow too violent to be affected by rational criticism (Berlin, 2008b: 167).

It is difficult to interpret not only this passage, but also the surrounding discussion with which Berlin chooses to begin his famous essay, as anything other than an encouragement to theorists to pay more attention to political reality, in spite of its theoretical untidiness.

I therefore suggest that it is important that theorists analyse not just any ideas, but especially the ones that are popular in our own time. These ideas may require special attention in order for us to be able to achieve a critical

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31 Indeed, it has been suggested that Berlin’s ideological position is also best described as a liberalism of fear (Müller, 2008).
distance to them. By not exposing such ideas, we run the risk of accepting them as truths, as something that it would be unnatural to oppose.

This may for example be the case with romantic notions of liberty, such as self-expression and authenticity, which may seem as something that it is only natural for politics to promote. These notions may all too easily appear as ‘soft’, even therapeutic, truths about human nature; when in fact they are also comprehensive ideals that put forward one view of the good life towards which we should all strive.

For example, Inglehart and his associates at times seem to view the ideal of self-expression as the epitome of human development. This is because they rely on the much-criticised psychological theory of Abraham H. Maslow, who assumes that there is a universally valid human hierarchy of needs, in which self-expression takes the highest position (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005: 33, 139). My point, I should stress, is not that this is necessarily false. It is rather that, even if self-expression is an essential human need, it is also a popular and therefore powerful comprehensive ideal, a particular conception of the good in Rawlsian terms (Rawls, 1993: 9-13). We can only notice this, however, by following Berlin’s admonition to attend to the ideas that dominate ‘our own world’ (Berlin, 2008b: 168).

Avenues for future research

The previous section tried to show the benefits of the cross-disciplinary approach that I have chosen for this dissertation. There are also, however, a number of research gaps that follow from my choice to focus on freedom ideals from several angles, rather than one. In what follows, I consider how these limitations open up avenues for future research to explore.

One of the most important tasks for future research is to develop new measures, which are able to capture positive and negative liberty better than the ones that I have used, since the latter were not originally designed for this purpose. Perhaps, with more nuanced survey questions, it might even be possible to differentiate between different ideals of positive liberty.

Using such new measures, it would most probably be rewarding to further probe the effects of valuing positive and negative liberty on other attitudes and behaviour. This might shed new light on changing voting patterns, left/right positioning, and tolerance of various kinds.

Another aspect that I have not dealt with, but that would certainly be of great interest, represents the opposite angle: how can we explain the fact that some people value a certain kind of liberty more than others? Personality traits, class, age and gender might for example predict our positioning with regards to positive and negative liberty. For scholars of cultural value orientations, it might also be of interest to move beyond the analysis of individual differences, and examine cross-national differences in valuing positive and negative liberty.
It is also important not to overlook the benefits of qualitative data. Interviews would certainly complement the findings that I have presented on the basis of surveys. Interviews would allow us to ask about the mechanism that leads for example positive liberty to inversion; and they are likely to provide a richer understanding of whether or not it is true that the average person does not differentiate between political and comprehensive ideals when it comes to liberty, as I have to some extent assumed.\(^{32}\)

Moreover, my focus on the effects of valuing liberty on attitudes to diversity has led me to leave aside the topic of republican liberty, which has been called the ‘third’ concept of liberty (Pettit, 1997; Skinner, 2002). However, the finding that popular attitudes concerning freedom are more complex and multi-dimensional than is often assumed suggests that it might be possible to also find a third, republican, dimension of freedom values in public opinion.\(^{33}\)

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I would advise future research – both theoretical and empirical – to pay further attention to what I have called romantic liberalism. This concept did not initially form a part of my project, but turned out to be an essential part of my findings, and a potential trend that needs further consideration. While I only studied the case of the Muhammad cartoons controversy, there is reason to examine whether romantic liberty might also be at play in other situations.

Research from the United Kingdom and the United States for example shows that the average person displays what I would suggest is a rather romantic view towards political and moral deliberation. While standing up for, expressing and holding on to one’s beliefs was important for the respondents, they considered it an invasion of privacy to have to give reasons and arguments for their convictions. The respondents largely believed that even when done in a courteous manner, it was a violation of freedom of thought to try and argue for the objective truth of one’s own political or moral position. In other words, they saw it as problematic for anyone to try to convince them of another view through discussion. For them, a good discussion was characterised by open expression of everyone’s stand-point, without trying to reach agreement (Johnston Conover, Searing et al., 2001). This suggests that it would be of great interest to combine the analytical framework of romantic liberalism with further studies of how deliberation is understood in contemporary political culture.

Perhaps we may also find that it is not always enlightenment liberalism and its ideal of autonomy that is invoked in favour of tougher immigration tests, or veil bans; nor in arguments for the penalization of prostitution, pornography, or drugs. It is possible that a closer scrutiny of some of these discourses, in combination with the novel concept of romantic liberalism that I

\(^{32}\) See my discussion on pp. 17-18.

\(^{33}\) To my knowledge, there has only been one such attempt previously: Bean, 2001.
have outlined, will show that the values invoked in support of these prohibitions rather belong to the romantic tradition. Perhaps, for example, the liberty that is popularly perceived as clashing with the veil, or prostitution, is not always the enlightened liberty of autonomous reflection – but rather the romantic liberty of authentic self-expression and self-realization.
References


Skinner, Quentin. (1969) 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', History and Theory, 8: 3-53.


# Appendix

## Descriptive data for the variables in Table II

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<td>More say in government, job, community</td>
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<td>1</td>
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*Notes: The sample is the same as in Essay II, and includes Australia, Britain, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United States (World Values Survey, 2005)*
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Editor: The Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences

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