The divided continent:

Understanding Europe's social landscape in 2020 and beyond

Sophia Gaston

European Policy Centre

11 February 2020

Table of contents

Author biography

Sophia Gaston is an Academic Visiting Research Fellow at the European Policy Centre. She is a social and political researcher who conducts international projects on public opinion, specialising in both qualitative fieldwork and quantitative analysis. Sophia's work is especially focused on social and political change, populism, the media and democracy, with a focus on threats to governance in Western nations. She is Director of the British Foreign Policy Group, an independent think tank focusing on advancing knowledge and debate around Britain's international affairs, and a Research Fellow in the Institute for Global Affairs at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Disclaimer & acknowledgements

Methodology

Report data

The YouGov survey fieldwork dates were 2-8 February 2019, and the sample size was a minimum of 1,000 respondents in each of the 13 EU member states studied within this project: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain and the Netherlands. Altogether, they represent 75% of the membership of the European Parliament.

Where pan-European data is discussed, this reflects averages across the 13 member states studied as part of this project. Rounding is taken to the closest whole decimal point.
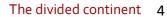
A number of the findings discussed within the report have been drawn from the composite data of a series of related thematic questions. The list of questions that formed the basis of these data points can be found in the report's Appendix. All figures in this report are based on the data collected in the survey and were produced and generated by this author.

Thematic focus

The design of the survey and the analysis of its findings have been approached through three distinct themes: nostalgia, intergenerational and gender battlegrounds, and support for democracy. These have been chosen to reflect three of the most crucial social trends shaping national EU political environments: challenging the supremacy of traditional centre-left and -right parties, precipitating the formation of new parties and movements, and the rise of anti-establishment campaigning and rhetoric. The manifestation of these three frames will critically affect the functioning of the EU and also the stability and security of liberal democratic governance in each of its member states.

Moreover, while common trends are evident from a pan-European perspective, these three themes also provide a useful lens through which to appreciate the inconsistent expression of social developments within and between member states. They remind us that although there can be a 'European story', for example in the pervasive distribution of nostalgic sentiments, at the same time, the driving forces behind such trends and their likely influences on policymaking are deeply esoteric to particular national contexts.

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that although the findings of certain questions have been separated between the themes, there is often a degree of overlap between the issues at stake. There are, for example, clear distinctions between ages and genders in the issues of nostalgia and democratic support, too. Moreover, nostalgic sentiments are clearly encouraged by a multiplicity of social, economic and cultural factors. For this reason, the three chapters of this publication are presented as a singular report, and the development of policy

recommendations and principles for governance has been undertaken as a single task, spanning the full scope of the challenges addressed in the survey as a whole.

Executive summary

The political upheaval and dysfunction of recent years have focused political minds on better understanding the volatility underpinning European electorates. Interest in public opinion research has soared, yet it can be difficult to draw the findings of such surveys and focus groups into something meaningful and cohesive, from which genuine insights can be drawn. It is pertinent that policymakers at both the national and EU institutional levels grasp a clear and incisive idea of what is taking place culturally, socially and politically in EU member states, and that these tea leaves can be interpreted and harnessed to produce responsive, targeted policies.

This research analysis report sets out the findings of a major survey conducted across 13 EU member states (i.e. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands), which were selected to provide a representative snapshot of the bloc as a whole. This survey was expansive in its scope and unique in its focus on social and cultural issues, as well as politics, leadership and economic security. The data is interpreted through three distinct themes, each of which is likely to play a critical role in Europe's 'mood music' over its coming parliamentary term: nostalgia, intergenerational conflict and democratic legitimacy. These themes have become the subject of much amateur punditry, although institutional understanding of their complex nature is often shallow. Therefore, this paper seeks to shine a more evidenced-based contextual light around their formation and nuances of application.

Chapter 1 considers the theme of nostalgia as a lens through which to explore dissatisfaction with the contemporary social, economic and political settlement. Chapter 2 examines the roles that gender and age play in the formation of public opinion in Europe, focusing particularly on the burgeoning intergenerational and gender-based conflicts brewing across social and political issues. Chapter 3 captures the inconsistent support for democracy across EU member states and interrogates citizens' preferences for different styles of consensus-driven and more authoritarian forms of leadership. To conclude, reflections on the practical lessons of these trends and their consequences for national and EU-level institutions and political leaders are offered in the report's final chapter, "Recommendations for Governance".

With the EU's new parliamentary term set in place, it is incumbent on both national governments and EU institutions to consider how a long-term understanding of public opinion – beyond the daily churn of political polls – can be more cohesively integrated into policy planning. The EU has emerged from one of the most politically challenging periods of its history, and if it is to move forward with a renewed sense of purpose, it must learn from its past shortcomings and consider how to reinstate citizens at the heart of its mission. This report seeks to assist policymakers, journalists, civil society and all those who hold a stake in the future health and strength of the Union and its democratic foundations to appreciate the nature and scale of the challenges that lie ahead. And, in doing so, to highlight where best to focus attention and resources in the future.

Introduction

The political upheaval and dysfunction of recent years have incited political minds to understand better the volatility underpinning European electorates. Interest in public opinion research has soared, yet it can be difficult to draw the findings of such surveys and focus groups into something meaningful and cohesive, from which genuine insights can be drawn. It is pertinent that policymakers at both the national and EU institutional levels grasp a clear and incisive idea of what is taking place culturally, socially and politically in EU member states, and that these tea leaves can be interpreted and harnessed to produce responsive, targeted policies.

In this research analysis report, the author sets out the findings of a major survey conducted across 13 EU member states (i.e. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands), which were selected to provide a representative snapshot of the bloc as a whole. This survey was expansive in its scope and unique in its focus on social and cultural issues, as well as politics, leadership and economic security. The data is interpreted through three distinct themes, each of which is likely to play a critical role in Europe's 'mood music' over the coming parliamentary term: nostalgia, intergenerational conflict and democratic legitimacy. These themes have become the subject of much amateur punditry, although institutional understanding of their complex nature is often shallow. Therefore, this paper seeks to shine a more evidenced-based contextual light around their formation and nuances of application.

Chapter 1 considers the theme of nostalgia as a lens through which to explore dissatisfaction with the contemporary social, economic and political settlement. Chapter 2 examines the roles that gender and age play in the formation of public opinion in Europe, focusing particularly on the burgeoning intergenerational and gender-based conflicts brewing across social and political issues. Chapter 3 captures the inconsistent support for democracy across EU member states and interrogates citizens' preferences for different styles of consensus-driven and more authoritarian forms of leadership. To conclude, reflections on the practical lessons of these trends and their consequences for national and EU-level institutions and political leaders are offered in the report's final chapter, "Recommendations for Governance".

It is self-evident that EU member states are deeply diverse and carry esoteric social, economic and political histories which bear consequences for citizens' views, preferences and priorities today. A high degree of regional consistency is visible for some issues (e.g. between former communist states) while unexpected alignments can emerge around demographic characteristics. It is therefore important to emphasise from the outset that, despite some clear trends around certain social issues, each member state must be considered utterly distinct and independent. And even where it is warranted to speak of a 'European story' – for example, on the pervasive nature of nostalgia across the continent – we must acknowledge that the root causes and specific manifestations of these trends are profoundly unique.

We can conclude from this report, however, that Europe stands at a crossroads between a liberal and connected future that is championed by younger generations and often female citizens, in more prosperous and culturally diverse member states; and a more nationalistic and conservative pathway that is ardently defended by the older generations, in more economically insecure and culturally homogenous member states.

One clear intersection between these two dynamic forces, which have been so distinctly active in the emergence of insurgent parties and movements across the political spectrum in Europe, is the fact that it is often older Europeans and those in the most socially conservative states who are more protective of the EU project, our traditional conception of representative democracy and leadership styles that emphasise compromise over ideology. It is prudent, therefore, to resist the temptation to polarise Europe into a clearly defined, binary battleground, and to recognise that the anti-establishment forces rattling Brussels' cage are by no means certain to evaporate with the political agency of the baby boom generation.

As the EU's new political term begins, it is incumbent on both national governments and EU institutions to consider how a long-term understanding of public opinion – beyond the daily churn of political polls – can be more cohesively integrated into policy planning. The EU has emerged from one of the most politically challenging periods of its history, and if it is to move forward with a renewed sense of purpose, it must learn from its past shortcomings and consider how to reinstate citizens at the heart of its mission. This report seeks to assist policymakers, journalists, civil society and all those who hold a stake in the future health and strength of the Union and its democratic foundations to appreciate the nature and scale of the challenges that lie ahead. And, in doing so, to highlight where best to focus attention and resources in the future.

Chapter 1. Nostalgia

1.1. Introduction

Nostalgia has emerged as one of the most prominent themes in European political life over recent years, as it has come to play a disproportionate role in Western societies as a whole. It speaks to the deep-seated tensions within nation states undergoing significant demographic and cultural shifts, while technological change and globalisation promote increasingly unavoidable conflicts around their political and economic settlements.

In many ways, it is not surprising that European politics has become imbued with the discourse of nostalgia. The EU has long traded on a promise of positive growth; an inherently optimistic project which argues that collectivism and integration is the best basis on which to guarantee shared prosperity. A number of significant events have challenged citizens' belief in this ambition and fostered fertile ground for nationalist movements that are embedded in a nostalgic vision of the sovereign past. The EU now struggles to maintain momentum behind its future-oriented strategic approach, as citizens find recognition amongst new insurgent parties for their abstract longing towards a more secure and familiar time.

While nostalgic narratives on both the Left and the Right can feel utterly endemic in European politics, nostalgic sentiments are not evenly distributed across the European population. Previous public opinion surveys, for example, have indicated that the most nostalgic Europeans tend to be older, male and unemployed; feel economically precarious; identify as 'working class'; have low levels of education; and reside in rural and other non-urban areas.[1]

A substantial body of research emphasises that nostalgia is also most likely to find a foothold amongst populations that have experienced economic disruption and/or social upheaval. In many of the post-communist states, the propensity for nostalgia remains heavily related to the perception of having suffered economic hardship as a result of the transition away from communist and socialist governments. Those who feel they 'lost out' as a result of the formation of a new political and economic settlement are considerably more likely to feel compelled to regard former systems in a benign light overall and desire their reinstatement.[2]

In Western Europe, the financial crisis appears to have played a similar role in focusing citizens' minds on inequalities and injustices, precipitating a more fertile ground from nostalgic impulses.[3] Scholars have indeed emphasised the inextricable relationship between globalisation and nostalgia since the early 1990s, with the challenges generated by a dual process of compression and interconnectivity bearing distinct psychological consequences for citizens.[4]

Nostalgia is clearly a powerful social and political force, yet proves particularly difficult for traditional political parties to challenge effectively. Grounded as it is in the psychological and emotional, nostalgia tends to operate within the dimension of perceptions rather than of empirical, objective facts. It is also a deeply complex, multifaceted expression of a range of lived experiences and more abstract fears and anxieties.[5] As scholars have sought to understand why post-communist nostalgia continues to persist in Eastern European member states that have benefited, by all economic accounts, from their independence, they have come to discover the role that perceptions of financial well-being and broader, more diffuse feelings of security have played in the construction of comparative memory.[6]

It is helpful to consider nostalgia in a political context as both a deeply personal phenomenon as well as a group expression of belonging and conception of the nation. This kind of collective national nostalgia pertains heavily to the notion of 'in' and 'out' groups, emphasising an exclusive understanding of citizenship contained within social memory.[7] There is a degree to which nostalgia feels particularly existential to the EU and its founding idea of a closely linked community of nations, in large part because nostalgia is inherently connected to the concept of 'home' and therefore the 'homeland' – an inseparable relationship that explains the synergy between nostalgic political narratives and debates about border control and citizenship.[8]

Both native populations and diasporic communities identify with the notion of 'home' as a grounding and securitising force, extending the persuasive pull of nostalgia both within and outside of national borders. Some degree of the critical nature of the challenge nostalgia poses to future-oriented political life can be found in the proliferating language of citizens who feel like "strangers in their own land",[9] compelling the desire to return to an age where they felt as if they had a greater stake in their country's identity. This phenomenon refers to the notion of those who feel alienated by social change – particularly, the mediation of language and behaviour,

and the increasing rights and representation of both women and minorities – and seek a reactive reinstatement of the social conditions, structures and hierarchies of the past.

The construction, manifestation and activation of European nostalgia are deeply esoteric to specific national contexts, meaning that the widespread incidence of nostalgia cannot be attributed to any singular antecedent. Even within nations, deeply polarised political tribes find uneasy consensus in their fetishising of another time. As political scientist Ivan Krastev writes, "Europe's paradox is that Europeans are united in their belief that the world was better yesterday, but they are divided as to when the golden age was."[10] While conservatives may pine for a deeper sense of security and more ethnically and religiously homogenous populations, progressives lament the straining of welfare states and slowing of the expansion of social liberalism, too.

The depth and breadth to which nostalgia has seeped into European society should be a source of deep concern to EU institutions. While it is important to listen carefully and empathetically to the genuine concerns that may underpin nostalgic sentiments, it is also clear that it bears a relationship to insidious, reactive forces that seek to unravel the nascent social advancements that have been integral to the improvement of the lives of millions of Europeans. Moreover, with pressing issues such as climate change, population ageing and automation looming on the horizon, nostalgia's capacity to suck the political oxygen away from future planning bears significant consequences for Europe's ability to take meaningful action.

The first step required of both national and EU-level policymakers is to better appreciate the scale and nature of the issue at hand. In this study, we have sought to capture the tremendous diversity of nostalgia's manifestations within and across 13 EU member states while also highlighting the areas of consistency and convergence in the salience of nostalgia across various demographic groups.

1.2. Key findings
Nostalgia and perceptions of declining communities are deeply embedded in contemporary European society and must therefore be taken seriously as political phenomena.

- 44% of Europeans across the 13 member states believe that the quality of life in their country has declined throughout their lifetimes, while 29% believe it has improved and 27% believe it has stayed the same.
- Estonia is the only country where a majority of citizens (65%) believe that life has improved in their country, while majorities in Bulgaria (50%), France (70%), Greece (75%), Italy (62%) and Spain (54%) all believe that the quality of life has declined in their country.

The economic liberalisation of the post-communist experience in Central and Eastern Europe is generally recognised in the citizens' optimism. In contrast, the short- and medium-term effects of the 2008 financial crisis and ensuing eurozone crisis are clearly visible in the nostalgic attitudes of Southern Europe.

- 42% of Europeans believe employment opportunities, jobs and the labour market have declined, 32% believe they have improved, and 26.5% believe they have stayed the same throughout their lifetimes.
- Majorities in Poland (59%) and Estonia (53%) recognise the economic advantages of their country's post-communist life. Interestingly, citizens of Denmark also cite economic improvement. Deeply pessimistic, however, are the Greeks (79%), Italians and Spanish (both 71%) and the French (65%), whose more recent experiences since the economic crisis appear to have left a strong impression.

Nostalgia is mediated not only by economic concerns, as citizens are also perceptive of shifts in the status of their communities, and national strength and influence.

- 44% of Europeans believe that the strength of communities in their country has declined throughout their lifetimes, while only 19.5% believe it has improved.
- 39% of Europeans believe that their country's status on the world stage has declined throughout their lifetimes, 33% believe it has stayed the same, and 27.5% believe it has improved.
- Again, the only country where a majority of the population believes that their country's status has improved is Estonia (70%) – a complete outlier, with Germany the second most likely, at just 33%. The four countries where national decline is a major conviction include France (61%), Greece (66%), Italy
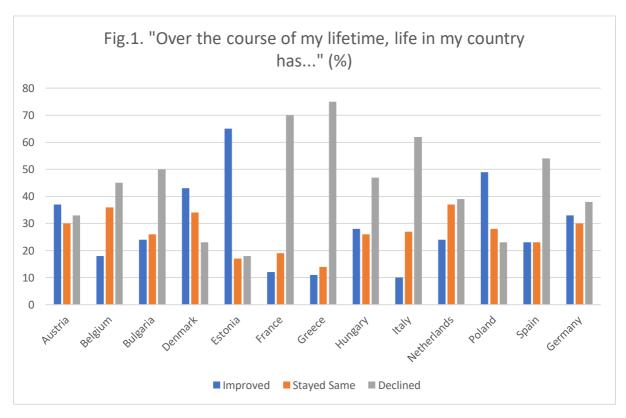
(61%) and Hungary (50%). Only 9% of Italians and 10% of the French believe that their countries' standing has improved.

Nostalgia is not evenly dispersed within the member states and appears highly correlated with age, socioeconomic status and gender. It is also deeply aligned with the emergence of new populist, authoritarian and anti-feminist movements.

- Demographically, the most nostalgic Europeans tend on average to be those with lower levels of education, those residing outside of major urban areas and the unemployed. Distinctively from other surveys, we find that women appear to be somewhat more nostalgic than men across these 13 countries as a whole.

- Those who harbour populist, authoritarian and sexist instincts are more likely to be nostalgic than other Europeans due to a direct relationship between these ideologies and nostalgic discourses, and also the correlation between certain demographic traits (i.e. age) and an increased predisposition to said ideologies discourses. The perception of being on the 'winning' or 'losing' side of contemporary politics also plays a strong role in the formation of nostalgia.

1.3. Survey analysis

On average, across the 13 member states examined as part of this project, 44% of citizens believe that the quality of life in their country has declined throughout their lifetimes, while 29% believe it has improved and 27% believe it has stayed the same. These averages mask the tremendous disparities in responses between member states. Estonia is the only country where a majority of citizens (65%) believe that the quality of life has improved in their country, while majorities in Bulgaria (50%), France (70%), Greece (75%), Italy (62%) and Spain (54%) believe that it has declined in their respective countries (see Figure 1).

Fig.1. "Over the course of my lifetime, life in my country has..." (%)

Estonians clearly recognise the economic success their nation has enjoyed since the end of the Soviet Union. One of the earliest adopters of deregulation and privatisation, its leaders championed a digital economy that has created job opportunities and raised standards of living.[11] Their post-communist counterparts in Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria are less convinced by their trajectories over recent decades, however, with only around a quarter of Hungarians and Bulgarians believing that their quality of life has improved. Their relative negativity emphasises the role that unfulfilled economic and social ambitions – once a beacon of hope in the early 1990s –
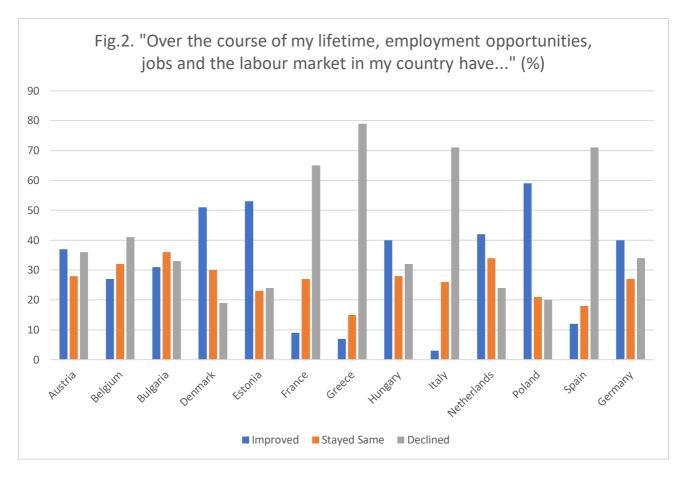
play in cultivating a sense of personal and national pessimism. Political scandals and persistent corruption have utterly consumed recent Bulgarian politics, and with incursions to democratic freedoms rife (i.e. its appalling record on media freedoms), the result is a nation struggling to consolidate as a functioning democracy.[12]

Nevertheless, in these member states, we can also see the politicisation of nostalgia as a tool of control and the consolidation of power – not just in the framework of campaigning, but also in governance. In both Hungary and Poland, right-wing populist leaders have evoked the past as a means of conjuring a vision of the country steeped in nationalist exclusionary principles, challenging the seeming inevitability of social liberalism that was becoming normalised in other European nations.[13] Encouraging citizens to feel that they are facing profound, existential threats from modernity has become an embedded aspect of political life in these countries and an ongoing source of legitimacy for their leaders.[14] In such an environment, it is not surprising that citizens continue to express nostalgic impulses while also supporting the parties who should – in a traditional understanding of political contracts – be held accountable for painting a brighter future.

Diverse experiences both within and between member states are fuelling nostalgia. Looking across the 13 member states as a whole, it is interesting to note the multifaceted ways in which nostalgia and perceptions of declining communities manifest most acutely – with unique centres of prominent nostalgic sentiment evident in a number of EU regions. Despite their profoundly distinct historical and political contexts, a number of factors do, however, unite them. Notably, all have experienced economic hardship in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis and eurozone crisis, and in each country, a political force advocating nostalgic messages has gained significant influence and attention. Previous research has demonstrated the toxicity of the combination of economic, social and political anxieties in terms of providing fertile ground for the germination of nostalgic narratives.[15] It is now well established that the instability wrought in the aftermath of the 2008 economic shock held significant consequences for citizens' trust in institutions, their innate sense of security and precipitated concerns around the contributory contract at the heart of the political-economic model.[16]

More Europeans recognise improvements in their country's economic conditions than in any other area of national life, yet their pessimism still trumps their optimism. On balance, Europeans are more likely to acknowledge an improvement in their country's economic conditions than in any other area, with 32% acknowledging an upward trajectory in employment opportunities, jobs and the labour market throughout their lifetimes. However, a greater proportion (42%) are still disappointed economically, recognising a decline in these areas, and 26.5% believe that they have remained static. Majorities in Poland (59%) and Estonia (53%) recognise the economic advantages of their country's post-communist life. Interestingly, citizens of Denmark also cite economic improvement. Deeply pessimistic, however, are the Greeks (79%), Italians, Spaniards (both 71%) and French (65%), whose more recent experiences since the economic crisis appear to have left a strong impression (see Figure 2).
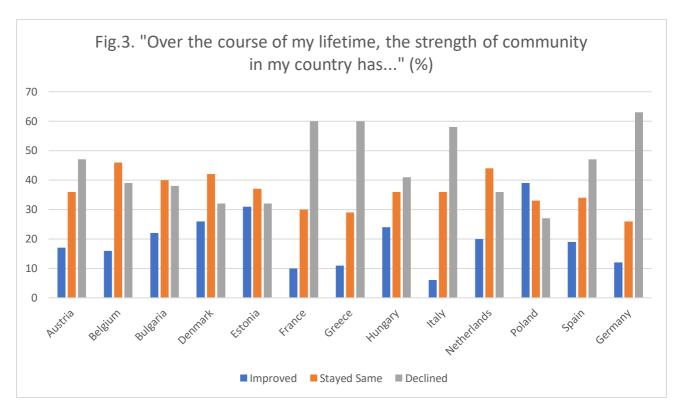
Fig.2. "Over the course of my lifetime, employment opportunities, jobs and the labour market in my country have..." (%)

Europeans are particularly perceptive to decline in the strength of communities. A perception of declining communities appears to be especially important in the proliferation of nostalgic sentiments amongst both advanced Western democracies and emerging post-communist economies. Overall, at 44%, the same percentage of Europeans believe that the strength of communities in their country has declined throughout their lifetimes as those who recognise decline more generally. However, at just 19.5%, the average of those who recognise growth and improvement in this area in their countries is markedly lower than those optimistic overall.

What are citizens communicating when they express concerns about declining communities? This powerful nostalgic impulse speaks to a less tangible (and perhaps measurable) phenomenon than, for example, concerns about lost economic opportunities. Focus groups conducted by the author for other research projects tend to suggest that a number of factors are in play, including changing lifestyles and social interactions as a result of the rise of digital media, gentrification and the changing social fabric of neighbourhoods, the diversification of demographics and formation of new communities of identity, and the shift to a more 'individualised' social culture.

Theories of community decline have most prominently been advanced in the American context by the political scientist Robert Putnam,[17] who also identified the role that the erosion of traditional civic membership structures played in fostering less socially connected communities. Undoubtedly, the consequences of the tremendous degree of social, economic and political change over recent decades have manifested in similar ways in many parts of Europe, and have perhaps been further exacerbated through certain issues like population decline, youth emigration and the asymmetrical effects of hyper-urbanisation.[18]

Fig.3. "Over the course of my lifetime, the strength of community in my country has..." (%)

Nostalgia is not only embedded in personal experience but a more abstract sense of national decline, too. Despite being a very personal and social human phenomenon, contemporary nostalgia also appears to be deeply connected to the conception of the health of the nation and its relative standing and influence in the world. As such, we can see that an average of 39% of Europeans believe that their country's status on the world stage has declined throughout their lifetimes, with 33% believing it has stayed the same and 27.5% that it has improved. Again, the only country where a majority of the population believes their country's status has improved is Estonia (70%) – a complete outlier, with Germany the second most likely at just 33%. The four countries where the perception of national decline is a prominent preoccupation include France (61%), Greece (66%), Italy (61%) and Hungary (50%). Only 9% of Italians and 10% of the French believe that their country's standing has improved (see Figure 4).

Fig.4. "Over the course of my lifetime, the status of my country in the world has..." (%)

Narratives regarding the decline of particular nations such as France, and the Union more generally, have been pervasive throughout the media and in political debates across recent years.[19] While concerns around national decline may appear abstract, they tap into citizens' anxieties regarding political agency, economic security and the social contract built around the promise of enduring growth, and that every generation will experience higher standards of living.

1.3.1.   National demographic findings

A number of strong demographic trends can be observed within this data-set across European member states. Some appear to defy received wisdom and therefore warrant further investigation.

Women are consistently more nostalgic than men. Overall, it is clear that women in our survey are more nostalgic and perceptive of decline than men. In Austria, for example, the gap between the proportion of men and women who perceive an improvement in their country throughout their lifetimes is 12 percentage points (44% of men to 32% of women), and in Hungary, it stands at 15 percentage points (37% to 20%) and 10 percentage points in Poland (54% to 44% of women). In Denmark, where a small majority of the population believes in the fact that the quality of life in their country has improved throughout their lifetime, the gender gap stands at 6 percentage points (46% to 40%). In Bulgaria, however, men are slightly more likely to perceive decline than women, although the gender gap stands at just 2 percentage points (51% to 49%).

As previously discussed, many other recent surveys have found men to hold greater nostalgic impulses than women. This is generally interpreted as a manifestation of their disproportionate conservatism, contemporary feelings of disenfranchisement with the economic settlement, and discomfort at the trajectory of social liberalism.[20] It follows a kind of logic that those who have not suffered the most but personally benefited the least from the advancements made over recent decades to expand rights and representation to women and minorities could develop feelings of frustration and resentment if they do not recognise a dividend from these developments. Exploring nostalgia amongst women, however, is a somewhat more complex exercise, which compels us to examine the relationship between women and conservatism more generally.

Scholars have noted that women's memory is a deeply under-explored phenomenon in academia, particularly in the context of nostalgia, and this may indeed reflect the multifarious concurrent positions being negotiated in women's psychologies due to the recognition of the repressive nature of the past.[21] In this context, nostalgia, which should provide comfort and a sense of 'home', also requires women to either suspend a degree of their

understanding of the relative lack of freedoms and independence that were experienced in the past or to simultaneously recognise both advantages and disadvantages in a more complicated manner than men.

As literary scholar Gayle Greene wrote in her pioneering examination of women and memory in 1991, "Though from one perspective, women might seem to have more incentives than men to be nostalgic – deprived of outlets in the present, they live more in the past, which is why they are the keepers of diaries, journals, family records, and photograph albums – from another perspective, women have little to be nostalgic about, for the good old days when the grass was greener and young people knew their place was also the time when women knew their place, and it is not a place to which most women want to return."[22]

In some contexts, however, most notably in Scandinavia, women's equality has become embedded in the construction of the 'modern nation'. In Sweden, for example, women's hard-won freedoms are presented as under threat from the 'retrograde illiberalism' of diverse cultures and religious faiths.[23] Consequently, the defence of women's emancipation becomes inextricably linked to a conception of nationhood and belonging, and the presentation of women's rights as 'established' implies that feminism takes on an inherently conservative quality that 'must be defended'.

Women's propensity for nostalgia also relates strongly to their unique economic and social roles, their enhanced connection to communities through their heightened civic involvement, and the specific financial stresses they face due to structural inequalities. For example, women are considerably more likely than men to be exposed to financial deprivation, undertake unpaid work, provide care to the elderly and act as single parents – roles and responsibilities that often arise throughout women's lives without choice or agency.[24] Understandably, women may therefore be inclined to feel a sense of dissatisfaction with their pathways in life; a sense of unfulfilled ambition.

Women play a strong role in the formation and upkeep of communities through their enhanced voluntary participation in social and health sectors[25] (in part, related to their lower rates of economic participation, traditional conceptions of gender roles in communities and their family responsibilities) and are therefore perhaps especially sensitive to any perceptions of community decline. Moreover, women's over-representation in precarious employment means that they are also more attuned to economic instability and were especially vulnerable in the aftermath of the financial crisis.[26] It is important to note the particular relationship women hold to the welfare state; as the primary beneficiary of welfare payments, they are most likely to be personally protective of welfare distribution and therefore conscious of any perceived incursions to its sustainability. Given the important relationship between the welfare state and the conception of the health of the nation,[27] women are therefore more likely to link these anxieties to a broader sense of national decline.

Age is also an important factor in shaping nostalgic sentiment, yet is not expressed across the member states consistently. The general assumption is that nostalgia increases exponentially with age. This appears to be the case in post-communist countries such as Bulgaria, where the over-65s are 24 percentage points more nostalgic or likely to perceive decline than Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and Generation Z members (1997 onwards). In Denmark, the situation is reversed, with over-65s the most likely to recognise an improvement in the quality of life over their lifetimes at 59%, to just 29% of 18 to 29-year-olds; and in Estonia – the most positive country overall – where over-65s are 23 percentage points more likely to report improvements than the youngest generation.

In other countries, our survey does broadly correspond to the theory of nostalgia increasing with age, although with one crucial caveat: in countries as diverse as France, Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece and Belgium, the most nostalgic or disappointed Europeans are in fact aged between 45 to 64 years, with those aged 65 years and over less nostalgic than their younger counterparts. It is possible that the former experienced a considerable period of peace and prosperity in their younger lives, so their nostalgia reflects a sense of disappointment and a perceived decline in the subsequent years. Their parents' generation, who grew up during times of civil war and fascism or in the aftermath of the Second World War, consider contemporary life a relatively benign existence. For those under 65, however, without these harrowing memories of conflict, perhaps the present period feels comparatively disappointing to the rosy memories they hold of their youth.

Citizens' education levels and employment status shape their nostalgic attitudes. Throughout our survey, those with low levels of education are consistently most likely to express nostalgic sentiments. The gap between

low and high levels of education is 14 percentage points in Austria (38% to just 24%) and rises to a dramatic 27 percentage points (46% to 19%) in the Netherlands. Some unusual exceptions to this rule exist, such as in Bulgaria and Poland, where those with high levels of education are more nostalgic than their less-educated counterparts. This likely reflects the mass expansion of tertiary education – much of which would be considered of poor quality compared to European standards – during and following the Soviet era, distorting the relationship between age and higher education.[28]
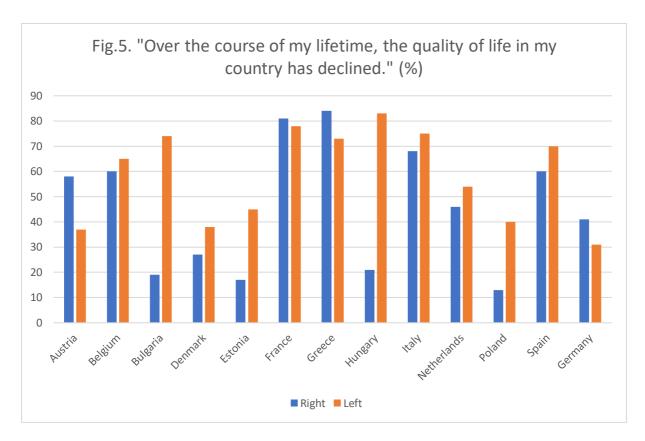
In other countries, such as Italy, those with 'medium' levels of education are somewhat more nostalgic than those with both high and low qualifications, perhaps capturing the particularly prevalent incidence of nostalgia amongst semi-skilled manual workers who feel they have lost some of the security of the eras predating the periods of Western deindustrialisation and the rise of globalisation.[29]

Unemployed Europeans are also dramatically more nostalgic or attuned to decline than those in any employment, and more nostalgic than their retired counterparts. The exception is Estonia, where 62% of the unemployed believe that the standards of living have improved throughout their lifetimes. By contrast, in Greece, the economic disruption has been so profound that even 75% of those employed full-time believe that their country is in a state of decline. A decade after the 2008 financial crisis, the spectre of the crippling austerity that Greece endured following the European Union bailouts it received continues to haunt the national psychology.[30]

The close relationship between citizens' political alignment and their nostalgia reflects national power dynamics. Considering political alignment, the demography of nostalgia varies tremendously between countries, reflecting the settlement of 'winners' and 'losers' in both short- and longer-term political agency and representation. In Austria, for example, 58% of those who identify with the Right is nostalgic or perceptive of decline, compared to an average of 33% across the country as a whole (see Figure 5). We can deduce that this captures the strength of salience of nostalgia as a political force in Austria and its right-wing coalition government and the fact that this government is not seen to have sufficiently mitigated the perceived decline in various aspects of Austrian society since they have come to power.

In Bulgaria, only 19% of those on the Right are nostalgic or pessimistic, compared to 74% of those on the Left. In Hungary, only 21% of those on the Right are nostalgic, compared to a staggering 83% of those on the Left (see Figure 5). The relationship between nostalgia and political groupings in these countries demonstrates the powerful 'activation' role that political leaders hold in the salience of nostalgia, with their conservative governments fulfilling their constituents' ambitions sufficiently and securitising them to displace nostalgia towards the group outside of the levers of power.

Fig.5. "Over the course of my lifetime, the quality of life in my country has declined." (%)

In Estonia, all political groups are positive about their country's trajectory – except for those who self-identify as being on the Left, who are markedly more negative. 86% of those on the centre-right believe that their country has improved over their lifetime, compared to just 19% on the Left. In Belgium, however, citizens on both the Left and Right are considerably more nostalgic than those in the centre. This centre-ground phenomenon was replicated amongst many of the other non-communist countries in the survey sample. One exception is Germany, where those on the centre-right are the most likely to be nostalgic – and markedly so, compared to those who place themselves at the centre and the Right. This perhaps reflects the weak position of the centre-right governing party, the Christian Democratic Union of Germany, which has been challenged immensely since its leader, Chancellor Angela Merkel, decided to open Germany's borders during the 2015-16 migration crisis.
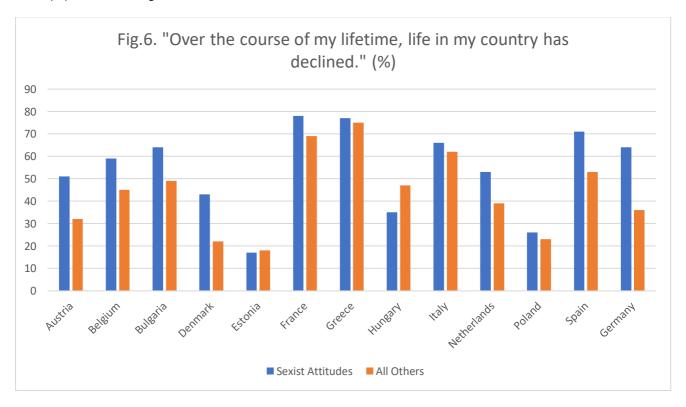
Citizens who regularly attend church appear to be less nostalgic than non-attenders. In a number of member states, those who report never to attend church are more nostalgic or attuned to perceptions of national decline than those who report to attend church regularly. In France, churchgoers are almost 20 percentage points less likely to see their country in a state of decline – at 52%, compared to 71% of non-churchgoers. In the Netherlands, the nostalgia gap rises to 22 percentage points and in Hungary, to a very substantial 23 percentage points. These findings are curious in light of the age profile of religious practitioners in Europe, who tend to be older, more socially conservative and nationalist[31] – the very profile most commonly associated with nostalgic sentiments. However, they may speak to two other broader social phenomena more closely observed in other Western countries: the tendency amongst the religious to be more optimistic and hopeful;[32] and the disproportionate religiosity of ethnic minorities,[33] who are also more likely to be optimistic.[34]

Nostalgia is less pronounced amongst residents of urban areas which have benefited from higher levels of growth and connectivity. Geography also appears to play an important role in the construction of nostalgia and perceptions of declining communities. Broadly, those in large urban areas, which are more cosmopolitan by nature, appear to be less nostalgic than those living in towns or villages. In Bulgaria, those who live in rural areas are found to be the most nostalgic or disappointed, at 54%, compared to just 27% of those living in suburban areas. The situation is similar in Spain, where 73% of rural residents are nostalgic, compared to 42% of those living in the suburbs. In Italy, a marked distinction between those living in major urban (53% nostalgic), rural (63%) and small city (68%) locations is visible. In Poland, it is also those living in small cities who tend to be the most nostalgic.

The relationship between geography and nostalgia reflects in part the demographic make-up of different places, with the young tending to congregate in large cities and rural areas generally housing older populations. It also captures the trend that has taken place throughout the globalised age of urbanisation, with the lion's share of economic and social development and the bulk of the in-flow of goods, capital and people, clustering through agglomeration in urban areas – meaning that these cities are more prosperous, diverse and internationally connected.[35] Meanwhile, many of the areas outside of these cities and the suburbs that surround them suffered profound economic degradation during the deindustrialisation of the 1980s and 90s, and have subsequently felt deprived of purpose and political representation.[36] For residents of such communities, the feeling of having been 'left behind' is a powerful sensation that contributes to a broader perception of individual, local and national decline.

Nostalgia is highly linked to populist, authoritarian and sexist attitudes. In most countries, citizens who scored highly on measures of sexism and populist and anti-establishment tendencies were also more likely to be nostalgic or to perceive decline (see Appendix). In Austria, for example, those with sexist views were almost twice as likely (51% to 32% of those who do not) to be nostalgic, and those with populist views were also almost 20 percentage points (40% to 21%) than other Austrians to be nostalgic. The situation is mirrored in the Netherlands, where 52% of citizens with populist views are nostalgic, compared to 30% of other Dutch citizens, and in France, where an astonishing 81% of those with anti-establishment views are nostalgic, compared to 58% of other French citizens. In Germany, 64% of those with sexist views are nostalgic, compared to 36% of the rest of the population (see Figure 6).

Fig.6. "Over the course of my lifetime, life in my country has declined." (%)

The relationship between these ideologies and worldviews, and nostalgia, is partly forged in a shared antipathy towards the direction of social change, but also likely reflects some similarities in their demographic profiles (i.e. age, education, socioeconomic status). The correlation between nostalgia and authoritarianism, however, is revealed to be more complicated. In some countries such as Belgium, those who scored highly on our authoritarian register were more likely to be nostalgic, and in others, they were no more likely to be nostalgic than other citizens.

In Bulgaria, where those who self-identify as on the Left of the political spectrum are more nostalgic than the Right, we also observe that those who are more authoritarian in their instincts are in fact somewhat less nostalgic or perceptive of decline than the rest of the population. Similarly, in Hungary, only 23% of those who scored highest on the authoritarian scale see the country in a state of decline, compared to 0.5% of the rest of the population. The relatively low share of expressed nostalgia amongst authoritarians in Hungary, who are

more inclined to support the current leadership, likely reflects their sense of having their values and issues of importance satisfactorily 'serviced' by their government.

1.4. Conclusions

Having been effectively harnessed as a strategic tool of political campaigning and governance, it is certain that nostalgia will continue to play a strong role in the culture of European political life throughout the next five years of the Commission's term. The European Parliament elections in May 2019 saw populist parties – the most explicit champions of a nostalgic discourse – solidify and consolidate their presence in the EU, ensuring that not only their democratic messages of restoring national sovereignty but also their agitations on cultural diversity and feminism will continue to be represented. Moreover, European populations remain deeply divided about the best economic and social pathways for their countries, and hence the compulsion to look to the past – so often conceived in hindsight as more stable and secure – for solutions will endure.

Nonetheless, it is by no means certain that the nostalgic vision for Europe will ultimately prevail, especially when so many tremendous challenges compelling future-oriented responses lie on its doorstep. Reminiscent of the conflict and tensions of the 1960s, the pervasive dissemination of nostalgia as both a cultural and political force across Europe is being increasingly confronted by a robust, mobilising and increasingly organised movement for social change, catalysing particularly around environmental action and the defence of feminism and other liberal values. These counter-movements are being led by Europe's younger citizens, unshackled by a vision of Europe's past or its unrealised ambitions, and with a clear sense of purpose and mission behind their activism. Ahead of the European elections, teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg spoke directly to Europe's youth and compelled them to "vote for the future living conditions of humankind."[37]

To counter the persuasive reach and impact of nostalgic narratives, these burgeoning movements must find resonance and support amongst political actors with the capacity to deliver. National and EU-level politicians must grasp the urgency of the mission and begin to shift the conversation towards proactive policymaking. Open, diverse and inclusive conversations on how best to address climate change, population ageing, social integration and automation must be initiated – and it is the responsibility of political leaders to detoxify these issues and convince citizens that they can be addressed in a positive way. For example, if citizens are only ever to hear that automation will lead to robots taking their jobs, it is understandable that they will become fearful and anxious about their economic future. Not every social or economic development will provide even dividends across populations, but in simultaneously securitising and fostering optimism, the sense of existential fear driving citizens' insecurities can be mediated.

Chapter 2. Intergenerational and gender battlegrounds: The economy, immigration and 'the Nation'

2.1. Introduction

Since the emergence of the European welfare state in the aftermath of the Second World War, European societies have been forged on a number of social and political contracts. At the heart of these is the principle of the intergenerational contract. Like a traditional family structure, the older population cares for the younger through the provision of childcare, education and early health, until the baton is eventually handed over and the children come of age as workers and begin to acquire their own capital. Their parents and grandparents retire, and they become the caregivers and supporters of their elders' retirements through their contributions to the pension system. There was a natural flow to this cycle, which is evident in its endurance. Over recent years, however, several key developments have come to challenge the premise upon which this exchange is based.

The 2008 global financial crisis bore a disproportionate impact on the job prospects of the young.[38] The cost of housing in urban areas, where work is more plentiful, has increased prohibitively.[39] As populations have begun to age rapidly, the age at which pensions can be accessed has begun to rise.[40] Each of these has had a profound impact on how younger generations perceive their relationship to both the state and their fellow citizens. Millennials and members of Generation Z do not carry the inherent belief of previous generations that their contributions today will be returned tomorrow, which lays shaky foundations for relations between them and their elders.

The intergenerational anguish is not simply economic but also deeply cultural. The young and the old possess utterly distinct attitudes towards social liberalism, nationalism, governance, cultural values and traditions. Age has become one of the most powerful predictive factors in the rise of nostalgia, sexism and anti-immigration sentiment. It is closely linked to the propensity to vote for populist parties – although in some countries, older voters are distinctly more populist, and in others, more moderate.[41] Besides education, age was one of the strongest determinants of voting behaviour in the UK's Brexit referendum in June 2016.[42] The media is dominated by battles in the new culture wars, with baby boomers – once radicals themselves – fighting to uphold the status quo they created, and the younger generations struggling to assert their agency on issues they believe will define their future.

Much of the commentary around the dissatisfaction of older generational groups has taken place under the framing of understanding 'the left behinds'. 'Left behind' is a term that encompasses both social and economic grievances, and a much broader and more diffuse sense of democratic alienation. It began to gain momentum in the political lexicon after 2014 when academics Rob Ford and Matthew Goodwin studied the 'left behind' voters fuelling the rise of the UK Independence Party. "These voters are on the wrong side of social change, are struggling on stagnant incomes, feel threatened by the way their communities and country are changing, and are furious at an established politics that appears not to understand or even care about their concerns," they wrote.[43] Indeed, it is true that feeling out of step or under-represented by contemporary politics or the social and economic settlement is not limited to 'left behind' voters. Nonetheless, the implicit inference with this terminology captures a sense of society moving forward in an exclusive manner.

Nonetheless, it is also difficult to ignore the fact that over recent decades, the political views of young Europeans have often been deprioritised in favour of the older generations, in part due to the increased voting turnaround amongst older citizens.[44] The growing political agency of the younger generations, however, is beginning to challenge this approach. During the recent *Spitzenkandidat* process, the concerns of youth voters became a concerted focus, with the Maastricht Debate designed for and by young people around their most burning issues: sustainability, the digital revolution and Europe's future. This nascent interest in the opinions of the young is a promising step, but the public conversation on inequalities of access and opportunity must not further entrench the growing tensions between generations in a binary construction of 'winners' and 'losers.'

While there are clear trends to be observed amongst Western European nations, they do not necessarily manifest in the same patterns throughout the rest of the Union. In some member states, for example, it is the young who are driving anti-establishment momentum and calling for the overthrow of traditional institutions and markets; elsewhere, the dissatisfaction is being driven by older citizens, who recall the promises made by earlier politicians of continual growth and advancement. What is clear is that social and economic anxieties are widespread across all generations, and the conflict between them has the potential to significantly undermine stable and secure governance.

Below, we set out the findings of our survey across three major battleground areas for these new areas of intergenerational and gender-based conflicts and competition: the economy, immigration and 'the Nation'. The findings are presented firstly as a 'bird's eye' snapshot of public opinion on these crucial issues across and within member states, and then as an analysis focusing particularly on the frames of age and gender. It is important to examine gender as a driving demographic force behind social attitudes because women's economic emancipation has coincided so closely with the lived experiences of the two youngest generations. It is therefore difficult to separate the issues of intergenerational conflict from the advancements in social liberalism; the battleground for so much of the antagonism between the young and the old.

While fascinating distinctions can be observed on these issues between member states (e.g. an East-West divide on overall attitudes to immigration), it is evident that gender and generational divides are the principal drivers of polarisation *within* member states, and that these issues often contribute to polarisation *between* member states as well. These relationships confirm the critical and pressing need to understand the forces of intergenerational and gender conflicts as the basis of obstacles to national unity and EU solidarity.

2.2. Key findings

Many of the areas of greatest polarisation both within and between member states – such as economic inequality, immigration and national values – **are most clearly expressed within significant gaps of public opinion between the younger and older generations, and men and women.** For example:

- Women and older Europeans are most sensitive to economic inequality and insecurity.
- Younger Europeans in the west, north and south are more likely to be positive towards immigration and value multiculturalism, while it is the older generations in Central and Eastern Europe who are the most supportive of diversity.
- Older Europeans are more nationalistic than younger Europeans, and women are more likely to value the preservation of national traditions than men.

2.2.1. The economy

While overall, Europeans are more pessimistic than optimistic about economic conditions in their country and are especially concerned about rising inequality, it is women and older Europeans who are most sensitive to issues of economic fragility.

- Overall, 30% of Europeans in the 13 surveyed member states describe their nation's economic conditions as 'poor', a further 36% describe them as 'only fair', 31% describe them as 'good', and just 3% describe them as 'excellent'.
- 70% of Europeans agree that economic inequality is growing in their country.
- Women are broadly more likely to feel pessimistic about both economic inequality and economic conditions. Older Europeans are more likely to feel as though they are being 'left behind' than their younger counterparts.

2.2.2. Immigration

Concerns about immigration are widespread across all member states and demographics, although they are most saliently concentrated in Central and Eastern Europe.

- Overall, a fifth of all European citizens in the 13 member states hold a 'very negative' view of immigration, and the same proportion holds a 'very negative' view of Islam and Islamic migration specifically. Concerns around the effects of immigration on public safety, national unity and national culture are widely experienced.
- The states most hostile towards immigration are Hungary and Poland, and the least hostile are Germany, Denmark and Spain.
- 40% of citizens either 'strongly' or 'somewhat agree' that their country 'would be stronger' if all immigration were halted. These opinions are most pronounced in Hungary and Bulgaria.

In the west, north and south of Europe, younger Europeans are more tolerant and pluralistic while in Central and Eastern Europe, older Europeans are more tolerant and pluralistic.

- On average, younger Europeans are more tolerant and pluralistic than older Europeans, who appear especially agitated regarding the issue of social integration of Muslim communities.
- However, a striking East-West divide is in play. In Western and more established member states, older citizens are the most likely to hold negative views towards immigrants, while in the Eastern and newer states, it is the young who are most hostile towards immigration.
- Nevertheless, an average of 15% of Europeans strongly agree that 'immigrants are human beings, and it is our moral duty in Germany to help them' and a further 30% somewhat agree, with just 12% in strong disagreement. The most consistently ardent defenders of a moral position towards migrants are the young.

2.2.3. The Nation

The EU project has not dented patriotic feeling in Europe, and national attachments remain more profound for most citizens than their European identity.

- Nationalistic and patriotic feelings remain high in Europe. Overall, an average of 37% of European citizens describes themselves as 'very proud' of their nation and a further 40% as 'quite proud', compared to 18% who are 'not very proud' and just 5% who are 'not at all proud'.
- Older Europeans consistently possess the highest levels of national pride, with younger Europeans clearly showing less patriotism. Men are also found to be more likely to express national pride than women.
- Europe has been successful in cultivating a shared identity, but it remains a largely secondary identity to the principle framework of self-recognition compared to the nation. Overall, 60% of citizens identify with their nationality first, and European second. A further 20% identify solely within their national environment and do not consider themselves as European. Only 8% identify as European first, and a further 4% as European solely.
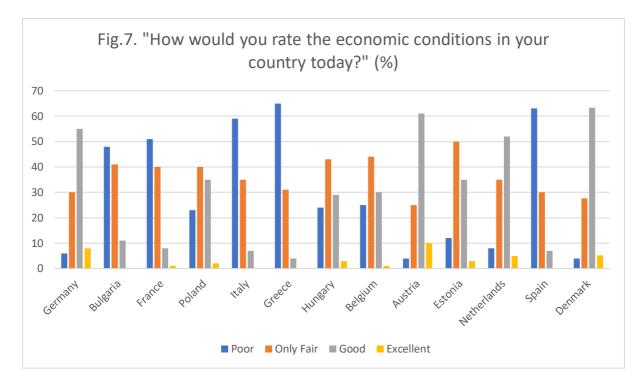
Europeans are concerned about fragmentation within their countries and desire a greater sense of 'unity'.

- Three-quarters of Europeans either agree 'strongly' or 'somewhat' that their nations should be more unified, with older Europeans the most likely to believe this.
- Similarly, an average of 69% of Europeans says it is 'very important' for them to live in a country where its traditions are upheld and respected, although this figure does capture the disproportionate level of agreement by the older generations.
- This opinion is strongest in Eastern European member states, where such topics are central in national political debates; and weakest in states with looser historical national identities, such as Spain. Women are more likely to favour the preservation of culture and traditions than men.

2.3. Battleground 1: The economy

Overall, 30% of Europeans describe their nation's economic conditions as 'poor', a further 36% describe them as 'only fair', 31% describe them as 'good', and only 3% describe them as 'excellent'.

Fig.7. "How would you rate the economic conditions in your country today?" (%)

Legend: Poor, Only Fair, Good, Excellent

N.B. Figures include composite data points.

Older Europeans are generally more pessimistic about economic conditions than the younger. In some member states, such as Germany, perspectives on the economy do not appear to be influenced by gender nor age. In others, however, quite significant disparities of opinion can be observed. In Bulgaria, for instance, those aged 65 years and older are 20 percentage points more likely to consider the country's economic conditions as 'poor'. In the Netherlands, 48% of those over 45 years are pessimistic about their economy, compared to 30% of under-30s. In France, Poland and Italy, somewhat smaller but still considerable gaps in perspective exist between the generations. In Greece, the gap reaches 8 percentage points. However, the proportion of those who perceive economic hardship across all generational groups (substantial majorities) is considerably higher than in most other member states.

Older people may be more sensitive to perceiving poor economic conditions, due to both their increased psychological propensity for nostalgia and also their lack of agency in the labour market and workforce. This implies that they are subject to enduring economic instabilities without the capacity for flexibility held by the younger generations. It is certainly true, however, that much of the intergenerational conflict brewing in contemporary Europe pertains, in fact, to the disproportionate level of capital and assets held by the older generations who benefited from rising house prices, compared to the younger generations who came of age in the aftermath of the financial crisis. In the three decades since the late 1970s, homeownership rates among young working-age adults fell by a quarter in France; nearly half in Denmark, Germany, Spain and the UK; and almost two-thirds in Italy.[45]

As ever, perceptions of decline are complex and reflect the manifestation of a range of both real and imagined conditions. For example, the sense of poor conditions could indeed capture the older generations' anxieties on behalf of their children and grandchildren, and their frustration over the apparent erosion of the traditional social mobility contract, which promised that every generation would be better off than the one before. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has found that in many European countries, social mobility between generations is extremely low, with socioeconomic factors playing an outsized role in determining vocational outcomes and future wealth accumulation.[46]

Nonetheless, some unique circumstances around age can be observed in a number of member states. In Hungary, it is the younger generation who are most economically dissatisfied, with 29% of under-30s perceiving 'poor' conditions, compared to 19% of those 65 years and older. The situation is also mirrored in Spain and Denmark, where the oldest citizens are the most optimistic about their economy. We can only hypothesise that

older Europeans in these countries feel relatively secure in their welfare settlement, with the dissatisfaction of the young enduring in the aftermath of the financial crisis. In Belgium, it is older Generation Xers and the younger baby boomers who are most negative about the economy – 14 percentage points more likely to believe the economic environment is suffering than their older counterparts.

Women are more sensitive to economic fragility than men. In Italy, Spain and France, women are more likely to perceive their country's economic conditions as 'poor' than men. In France, for example, the gap between the sexes is 10 percentage points (55% of women to 45% of men). Even in Estonia and Denmark, where economic optimism is much higher across the board, women are 10 percentage points more likely than men to describe the national economic performance as 'only fair'. As discussed in Chapter 1, this disparity may well capture the enhanced exposure of women to the sustainability of state finances due to their increased likelihood to receive benefit payments; their greater role in raising children and acting as family carers, and bearing the associated costs; and their disproportionate likelihood to undertake social and health volunteering roles in their communities.
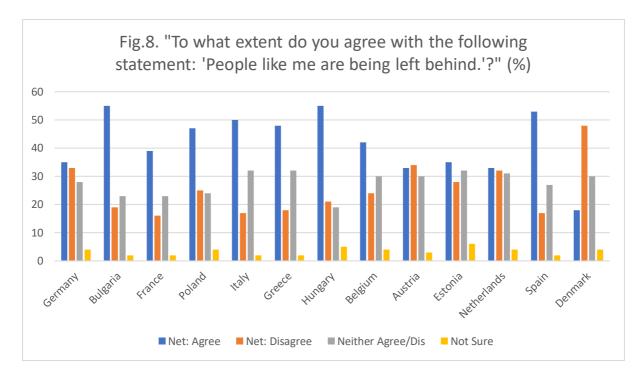
Powerful gender and generational distinctions around the issue of economic inequality also appear to be in play in shaping public opinion in Europe. Overall, an average of 70% of Europeans in the 13 member states studied agree that economic inequality is growing in their country. Yet, in countries as diverse as Belgium, Bulgaria, France and Italy, women are more likely than men to 'strongly agree' that economic inequality is increasing in their countries. In Estonia, the gap between men and women stands at almost 10 percentage points.

This reflects the structural inequalities that persist between women and men's financial status, with women consistently more likely to earn less, have fewer assets, and consequently be more exposed to economic shocks and downward adjustments to welfare policies.[47] In Poland, however, our survey reveals that men are more likely than women to believe that economic inequality is growing in their country. This may stem from a sense of powerlessness and disappointed ambitions, as young Poles with poor employment prospects who have not emigrated elsewhere in Europe display high levels of economic resentment.[48]

Older Europeans are more concerned about economic inequality than their younger counterparts. Consistently, however, across the vast majority member states, older people are much more likely to be concerned about economic inequality. Even in Germany, where economic pessimism is more muted, 82% of citizens 65 years and over 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agree that economic inequality is increasing, compared to 58% of those under 30. The situation in Poland is similar, with 84% of older Poles agreeing, compared to 51% of the younger generation. Meanwhile, in Greece, an astonishing 90% of older Greeks believe economic inequality is increasing, compared to a still-substantial 63% of the young. In Bulgaria, too, the strength of feeling is especially pronounced, with 70% of those aged 65 years and over 'strongly' agreeing that economic inequality is increasing.

Curiously, in France, Denmark and Austria, it is those aged 45 to 64 years who are the most attuned to economic inequality. In Hungary, despite the younger generation being the most pessimistic about the economy overall, it is also the older generation who are the most sensitive to inequality, with 42% strongly agreeing that inequality is increasing. The relationship between age and concern regarding economic inequality likely reflects a sense of hyper-consciousness amongst older citizens that welfare states are currently under pressure, and, for those themselves approaching or experiencing retirement, anxieties that their retirement may not be adequately financed. In this sense, their concerns may reflect an abstract sense that the economic trajectory of their country has borne costs, but also a deeply personal feeling of vulnerability in the globalised economic world order.

Fig.8. "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: 'People like me are being left behind.'?" (%)

Net: Agree ■ Net: Disagree ■ Neither Agree/Dis ■ Not Sure

N.B. Net figures include composite data points.

Older Europeans are also more likely to feel 'left behind', carrying higher levels of disappointment in their personal and national trajectories. In Germany, the generational differences between those who 'strongly agree' that they are being 'left behind' are modest at around 5 percentage points. However, they rise to 9 percentage points in France, 11 percentage points in Bulgaria, 13 percentage points in Italy, 15 percentage points in Spain and reach 17 percentage points in Greece. In Poland, the distinctions are most profound when those who both 'strongly' and 'somewhat' agree are combined, capturing 54% of under-30s, compared to 84% of those aged 65 years and over. In Belgium, Denmark and Austria, it is those aged 45 to 64 who are most likely to report feeling 'left behind' – and in these countries, it is this age bracket who are generally more hostile about economic and democratic conditions.

In most member states, no significant gender disparities can be observed on this issue. Two exceptions, however, are Poland and Italy. In Poland, women are 11 percentage points more likely to agree that 'people like them' are being 'left behind' – perhaps reflecting some of the gendered nature of the public policy debates in the country, such as those around abortion and other areas of women's rights.[49] In Italy, women are somewhat more likely than men to feel that they are being 'left behind', although men are in turn more likely to 'strongly agree' that they are being left behind – suggesting a small but perhaps more potent force of feeling residing amongst Italian men on this issue.
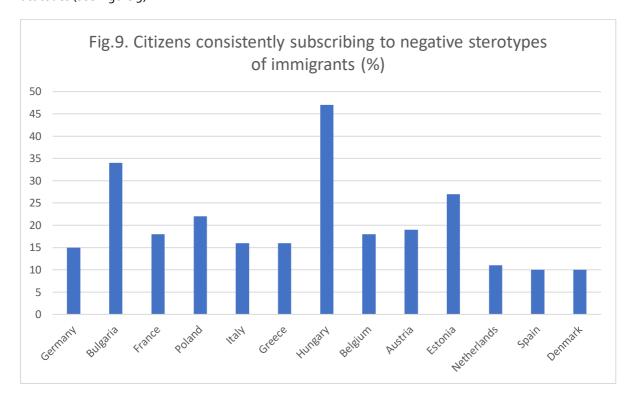
2.4. Battleground 2: Immigration and Islam
Younger Europeans are generally more tolerant and pluralistic – except in Central and Eastern Europe. Profound differences can be observed between the generations on the issue of immigration amongst all member states, and particularly regarding Islam and its compatibility with European values and 'modern life'. In general, they follow a pattern of younger Europeans being more tolerant and pluralistic than older Europeans, who appear especially agitated regarding the issue of social integration of Muslim communities. Overall, we can see that a fifth of all respondents hold a 'very negative' view of Islam, and the same proportion hold a 'very negative' view of immigration in general. Across the board, a high degree of anxiety, mistrust and intolerance is clearly present, with more diffuse concerns about immigration both widespread and deeply held.

The most negative member states towards Muslim immigration are Hungary and Poland, where 37% and 30% of the population respectively hold a 'very negative' view. The most positive are Germans, Bulgarians and Danes, where only around 15% of the population holds this negative attitude. When asked about their attitudes towards immigrants in general, the same countries demonstrated outsized animosity. In Hungary, there is greater animosity towards immigrants as a cohesive group, at 47%, while in Poland, for example, immigration

as a whole is held in less negative regard than Muslim migrants specifically. Spaniards and Danes are the most positive and least overtly hostile towards immigrants in general, with only around 10% holding very negative attitudes (see Figure 9).

Fig.9. Citizens consistently subscribing to negative sterotypes of immigrants (%)

N.B. This graph represents the compound results of four questions that asked respondents to rate, whether immigrants are hardworking/trustworthy/intelligent/peaceful or lazy/untrustworthy/unintelligent/violent on a scale of 0 to 10. Those who scored 7.5 on the compound scale are described as the 'most hostile citizens', and are separated from 'all others'.

Turning to the demographic nuances within member states, we can see that two distinct age patterns play out across the East-West geographical divide. In Germany, only 7% of under-30s have a very negative view of immigrants, compared to 15% of those aged 65 years and older. The gap is similar in Italy, where 11% of under-30s are very hostile to immigration, compared to 19% of their older counterparts. The dynamics appear fundamentally distinct in the post-communist countries. In Poland, for example, only 5% of those aged 65 and older hold strong anti-immigrant views, yet almost a third of under-30s (29%) do. And in Hungary, half of all under-30s are hostile towards migrants. In Austria, Estonia and Bulgaria, it is those aged 44 to 64 who are most negative towards immigrants, with an astonishing 41% of this age bracket in Bulgaria feeling 'highly negative'.

While gender disparities are less pronounced in their attitudes towards immigrants more generally, in Estonia, it is women who are more hostile than men. In all other countries, both men and women share similar views.
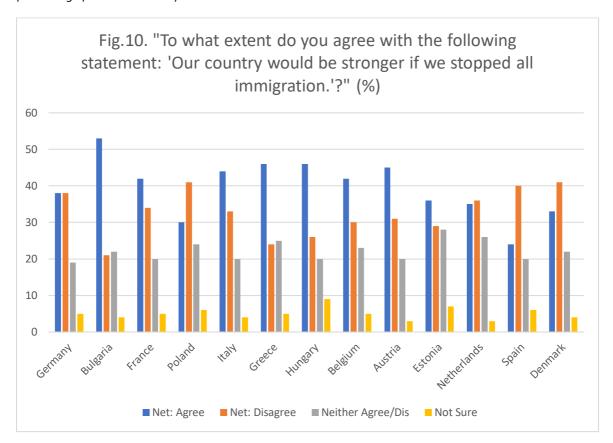
Concerns about immigration's impact on communities and society are widespread. When asked specific questions about the impact of immigration on communities and society, all age groups and genders are consistently more likely to report negative views – although the previous patterns of generational differences broadly stand. Across all 13 member states, an average of 45% of citizens either 'strongly' or 'somewhat agree' that immigration poses a threat to public safety, with only 14% strongly disagreeing with this statement.

With 38% of citizens in strong agreement, Hungary is distinctly activated on this issue. Nonetheless, there is evidently a widespread yet hesitant sense of discomfort around the relationship between immigration and public safety across the continent. Even in liberal Germany, 31% of those under 30 years believe that immigrants pose a threat to public safety, rising to 44% of those aged 65 years and over, and peaking at 51% of those aged 45 to 54. Reflecting the long tail of the Cologne attacks in December 2015,[50] the heightened anxieties in Germany exceed the salience of public opinion on this issue in France.

National immigration debates play a strong role in shaping individual attitudes. Generationally, Poland stands as an anomaly, with its youngest generation most agitated on this issue of safety and immigration. Almost half (49%) of under-30s agree that immigrants threaten public safety, compared to just 15% of those aged 65 years and over. It is unclear as to exactly why the youngest Polish generation consistently reveals itself to be the most hostile to immigration, particularly as this generation's high levels of mobility to more ethnically diverse areas throughout Europe[51] mean that the 'contact theory' explanation does not necessarily apply.

As ever, despite the broader trends, some specific generational distinctions are worth highlighting. In Spain, those aged 30 to 44 are 10 percentage points more likely than younger Spaniards to see immigration as a public safety issue, and in Denmark, those aged 45 to 64 are 16 percentage points more likely than younger Danes to feel this way. These variations likely capture the evolution of public debates around immigration over time in these member states. Gender also plays a particular role in the formation of views in some member states. Reflecting previous research around the male tendency to take a tougher line on issues of crime and justice,[52] in Bulgaria, France, Denmark, Spain, the Netherlands and especially Greece, men appear to be more concerned about the relationship between migration and public safety than women. In Italy, however, women are 11 percentage points more likely to be concerned than men.

Fig.10. "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: 'Our country would be stronger if we stopped all immigration.'?" (%)

N.B. Net figures include composite data points.

Even extreme proposals against immigration attract support across the EU. In response to an extreme statement – 'our country would be stronger if we stopped all immigration' –, the generational differences continue to manifest, although it is also worth noting the relatively pervasive agreement with this proposal from diverse groups in European societies. Overall, across the 13 member states, around 40% of citizens either 'strongly' or 'somewhat agree' that their country would be stronger if all immigration were halted, with the strength of feeling most pronounced in Hungary and Bulgaria.

Hence, while older Germans are much more likely to agree with the statement, almost a quarter of its under-30s also agree. In France and Greece, the proportion of under-30s in supporting a closed borders policy rises to 31%. Considering the broader context of public opinion on immigration in these countries, it is not surprising that the strength of feeling on this issue is once again stronger than in Western EU member states; although in Poland, we see 46% of under-30s in favour of ceasing all immigration, compared to just 10% of those aged 65

and older. In Austria and Hungary, it is those aged 30-44 years who are most supportive of closing borders, with 58% of this age bracket in Austria, and almost half (49%) of this age bracket in Hungary, in agreement that ceasing immigration would strengthen their nations.

At 33%, citizens in Spain are distinct outliers in their relatively emphatic rejection of this statement, demonstrating themselves to be 10 to 15 percentage points more pro-immigration than their European counterparts. Turning to gender, it clearly plays an important role in Greece, Spain, the Netherlands and Bulgaria, where male citizens are much more likely to strongly agree with this statement than women.

Polarisation and fragmentation mean strong pro-immigration forces also exist. These figures capturing the clearly widespread concerns held by European citizens are substantial, but it is important to remember that they may only tell one side of the story. The high degree of polarisation on social issues means an acute strength of feeling in defence of cultural pluralism and humane migration policies can also be observed. Overall, an average of 15% of Europeans strongly agree that 'immigrants are human beings, and it is our moral duty in Germany to help them' and a further 30% somewhat agree, compared to 12% in strong disagreement.

The most consistently ardent defenders of a moral position towards migrants are the young. In Germany, 27% of those under 30 strongly agree with this statement – twice as many as in any other generational bracket. In Greece, the percentage of under-30s strongly agreeing with the statement rises to 28%, 29% in France and Austria, 30% in Italy and 33% in Spain. At the same time, only 1% of those aged 65 years and over in Estonia strongly agree.

In Poland and Bulgaria, however, only half or a third as many young citizens respectively subscribe to this argument – a reminder of the asymmetrical nature of the generational landscape in Europe. In both Spain and Hungary, it is the youngest *and* oldest citizens who are most likely to accept a moral responsibility towards migrants, with the working-age population in the middle the least receptive. Gender does not appear to play a particularly significant role on this question, with the profound exceptions of Denmark, and especially Spain, where women are 13 percentage points more likely to agree that they carry a strong moral responsibility towards migrants.

Older generations are most hostile to Islam and Islamic migration, except in the East. Turning to the Islamic faith in particular, in France and Italy, the older generations are around 5 percentage points more hostile towards Muslim citizens. In Greece, the gap rises to 9 percentage points (16% of under-30s, compared to 25% of 65-and-overs), and 11 percentage points in Hungary and Belgium. In Austria and Spain, the older generations are more than three times as likely to hold very negative views about Muslim communities. Even in Germany, which does appear more tolerant generally towards Muslim communities, 16% of older citizens can be described as highly negative towards Muslims, compared to just 6% of under-30s.

In Bulgaria, the situation is reversed, with a quarter of under-30s highly intolerant towards Muslims, compared to just 10% of 45 to 64-year-olds and 15% of 65-and-overs. The situation is even more extreme in Poland, where 35% of under-30s can be classified as extremely hostile towards Muslims, compared to 16% of those aged 65 and over. While in Bulgaria, the differences between generations around threat perception levels are quite muted, in Poland, 47% of under-30s regard Islam as a 'threat' to the nation, compared to 29% of older Poles. In Denmark and Spain, men are clearly more hostile towards Muslim populations than women, while in Hungary, women are 5 percentage points more likely to be negative.

On this issue of the 'threat' presented by Islam, the generational differences in France become more acute, with 23% of under-30s believing that Islam is a threat to France, compared to 68% of those aged 65 years and over. Similar proportions also see Islam and French secularism as ultimately irreconcilable. The figures are mirrored in other member states, including Belgium, Austria, Spain and Italy, where 27% of under-30s agree that Islam is a threat, compared to 55% of older Italians, and only a quarter believe Islam is incompatible with Italian values, compared to 64% of older Italians.

In Belgium, the generational gap on the perceived incompatibility between Islam and national values is significant, with 27% of under-30s in agreement, compared to 68% of those aged 65 years and older. Similar trends can be seen in other Western member states, such as Spain, where 19% of under-30s see Islam as an irreconcilable threat, compared to 54% of older Spaniards. In terms of gender, men in Denmark and Spain are
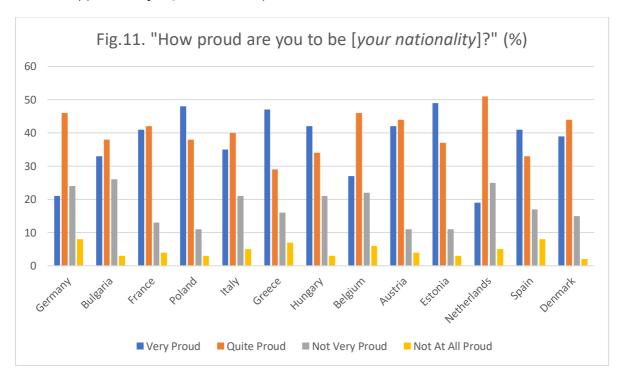
much more likely to strongly agree that Islam is not compatible with their national values, while in Austria and (as previously discussed) Greece, it is women who are more likely to express strong negative opinions.

Despite Germany's relative overall tolerance towards Muslim communities, the perception of threat amongst its people towards the Islamic faith as a whole is also incredibly heightened. 30% of under-30s believe that Islam poses a threat to Germany, which is doubled to 63% for older Germans. This distinction between communities and individuals, and their faith likely reflects the pervasive influence of anxieties about Islamist terrorism, which have continued to cast a spectre over citizens in recent years. Nonetheless, reflecting the broader incidence of political fragmentation at play in Germany, it appears that the country's countermovement on this issue is considerably more robust than in other European countries, with 44% of under-30s, and even a quarter of those aged 65 years and older, actively disagreeing that Islam poses a 'threat' to their nation.

Gender clearly influences views on Islam, but not consistently. The gender dimensions of this issue are more heterogeneous than those on age. In Poland, Estonia, the Netherlands, Spain and Denmark, men are more likely than women to perceive Islam as a national threat. In Austria, Belgium and Hungary, it is women who are more concerned. In Greece, while the older generations are clearly more concerned than the younger generations, it is also women who are distinctly threatened by Islam than men (55% to 45%). Women are also more likely to believe that 'the gap between Greek values and Islam is too great to be bridged'. This may stem from the perception of Islam as an anti-feminist faith; and the conflation of contemporary concerns about its authoritarian Muslim-majority neighbour, Turkey, and Greece's historical oppressor, the Ottoman Empire.[53]

2.5. Battleground 3: The Nation

Patriotism remains strong in the EU, especially amongst older citizens and men. Our survey reveals that nationalistic and patriotic feeling in Europe remains high. Overall, an average of 37% of European citizens describes themselves as 'very proud' of their nation and a further 40% as 'quite proud', compared to 18% who are 'not very proud' and just 5% who are 'not proud at all'.

Fig.11. "How proud are you to be [*your nationality*]?" (%)

N.B. Figures include composite data points.

The Europeans who consistently possess the highest levels of national pride are the older generations, with younger Europeans clearly showing less patriotism. In Germany, 16% of under-30s describe themselves as 'very proud' to be German, while 28% of those aged 65 years and older express emphatic pride. Similar chasms between the younger and older generations can be observed in Italy and Greece. In Austria, the gap between under-30s and older generations is considerably larger, with around a quarter (27%) of under-30s reporting a

strong sense of national pride, compared to half of those aged 65 years and older. In Spain and Estonia, the generational gap is even larger.

Yet, as ever, each member state offers its own unique results. In France, under-30s are more patriotic than their immediately older generational counterparts. In Poland, those aged 45 to 64 are 14 percentage points more likely than those aged 65 years and older to be very proud of being Polish. In the Netherlands, the young are somewhat more patriotic than any other generational cohort, and in Bulgaria, no meaningful distinctions can be observed between generations.

In many member states, such as Greece, Spain and Hungary, men appear to be more likely to express a strong feeling of national pride. In France, men are more likely to say they are 'very proud' to be French than women (44% to 38%). In Italy, Belgium and Poland, the gap between men and women stretches to 10 percentage points. Only in Austria are women marginally more likely than men to say they are patriotic. The relationship between nationalism, patriotism and gender is complex, but an established line of scholarship asserts that the growing consciousness of citizenship and the subsequent privileging of the public over the private space have played a strong role in the construction of women's relatively diminished relationship to the state.[54]
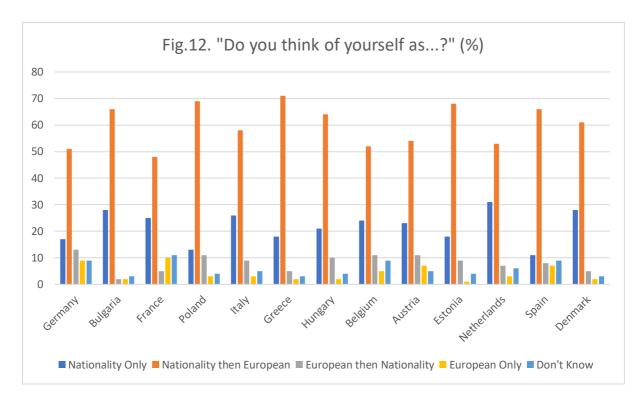
Identities within Europe are complex and evolving, but national identities are strongest. Our survey emphasises the complexity of modern European identities. In some member states, the national identity is the most established; in others, it is more common for citizens to express a balanced sense of identity between the national and European domains. Significant differences can also be observed between both generations and genders, without any clear patterns on a pan-European level. As such, it is difficult to draw any concrete conclusions about the trajectory of European and national identities, except to say that it remains a hugely contested area.

Overall, 60% of citizens in the 13 member states identify with their nationality first, and European identity second. A further 20% identify solely with their national environment and do not consider themselves European. Only 8% identify as European first, and a further 4% solely identify as European, without any national identity consciousness. These findings indicate that Europe has been successful in cultivating a shared identity, but it remains an identity largely secondary to the principle framework of self-recognition with the nation.

Greece and Poland have the largest group of citizens across all generations who identify with their nationality first and European identity second (see Figure 12). The situation is similar in Bulgaria, although here a significant proportion (34%) of those aged 65 years and older identify solely as Bulgarian. The situation is reversed in Poland, where only 2% of older citizens report identifying solely as Polish, compared to almost a quarter (22%) of under-30s. Here, 65-and-overs are almost twice as likely to see themselves as European first and Polish second. A similar situation is evident in Greece, where older citizens are the least likely to hold a singularly Greek identity, and in both Estonia and Hungary. European identity is constituted by a wide range of personal and abstract factors and it is clear that there is a strong generational dimension, related closely to both individual lived experiences and the political environment at crucial points of citizens' lives.
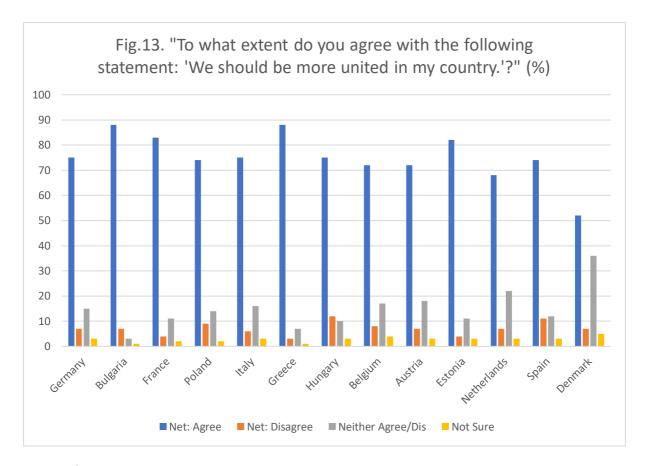
Fig.12. "Do you think of yourself as...?" (%)

No definitive age patterns can be observed in the adoption of European identities. In Belgium, it is those aged 30 to 44 who are most inclined to identify solely with their national identity. In Austria, it is those aged 45 to 64 years of age. Younger Europeans are the most likely to express a preferential European identity across the board, although the proportion of them does not exceed a fifth of the generational cohort. In Spain, it is those aged 65 years and over who are most likely to hold a singularly European identity.

Women are more likely to identify solely with their nation than men, perhaps because they are less able to access European mobility. In Germany, Bulgaria, Italy, Greece and Hungary, women are more likely than men to identify solely with their national identity. In Denmark, women are 12 percentage points more inclined to hold a sole Danish identity. Just as some women may feel excluded from the power of nationalism due to the structural barriers to their civic participation, they may also feel excluded from experiencing a European identity for similar reasons. It has been noted that in some national contexts particularly, the capacity for women to be autonomously mobile throughout the European community is severely limited, especially in some national contexts.[55]

All Europeans think that their country should be more unified, and older citizens especially so. One of the few survey questions that provided a clear, consistent pattern across all of the 13 member states, is whether citizens believe that their nation should be more unified or not. Overall, an average of 41% of Europeans strongly believes that the people of their country should come together more, with a further 34.5% somewhat agreeing – meaning that three-quarters of European citizens long for greater unity. It is certainly true that, on this question, older Europeans were systematically more likely to express a wish for unity than their younger counterparts, and that observable differences in the strength of feeling on this issue can nonetheless be acknowledged between European member states.

Fig.13. "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: 'We should be more united in my country.'?" (%)

N.B. Net figures include composite data points.

For example, in Germany, a quarter of under-30s strongly favour greater unity, compared to 36% of those aged 65 and over. In France, 37% of under-30s strongly believe the country would benefit from being more unified, compared to half of older citizens. In Greece, 44% of under-30s champion unity, yet so do 79% of citizens aged 65 years and over. In Bulgaria, while the difference between the generations is similar, citizens who strongly agree with this statement overall are more than double that of those in Germany. In the vast majority of member states, no clear differences are evident between genders. The exceptions are Estonia and Poland, in which men are 10 percentage points more likely to favour greater national unity than women (35% of men to 45% of women).

Fig.14. "It is very important to me to live in a country where people respect its traditions." (%)

N.B. Figures include composite data points.

Women and older Europeans are highly concerned about maintaining national traditions: the issue relating to respecting national values, culture and history also displays a very clear-cut generational influence in play, with older Europeans consistently more likely to report that it is personally important to them to live in a country 'where people respect traditions'. Overall, an average of 69% of the Europeans surveyed reported that this was 'very important' to them. Yet, within member states, some groups are vastly more inclined to have strong feelings. In Germany, 71% of those aged 65 years and older 'strongly agree' with this statement, to 45% of those under 30 years of age. In France, 85% of older citizens 'strongly agree', compared to 44% of under-30s. One of the largest gaps between generations can be seen in Belgium, where 37% of the under-30s value the maintenance of traditions, compared to 80% of older citizens.

Once again, in some countries, the entire strength of feeling is much more intense and evenly distributed – a phenomenon that appears to be especially acute in Eastern Europe. In Bulgaria, 78% of young people and 87% of older Bulgarians this statement as 'very important'. Spain has the smallest proportion of support from any age cohort, with only 16% of under-30s considering this to be very important to them. The issue of the 'loose' nature of Spanish national identity has been the subject of much discussion and is thought to pertain to both a reaction to the legacy of the Franco era, its overt authoritarian nationalism, and the strong regional identities and their protection within the Spanish Constitution.[56]

Women also appear to particularly value national traditions being maintained. In Germany, they are 9 percentage points more likely than men to say this is 'very important' to them (67% to 58%), as in Austria. In Bulgaria, they are 8 percentage points; Estonia and the Netherlands, 6 percentage points; and Denmark, Belgium and Greece, 5 percentage points more likely to strongly support this. Women's disproportionate relationship to national traditions may stem from their closer historical relationship to family and the social dimensions of community, and the emphasis placed on these institutions regarding the maintenance and transmission of familial and cultural traditions.

2.6. Conclusions

The intensity of feeling behind contemporary generational debates suggests that Europe is on the cusp of experiencing a degree of competition and conflict that has not been seen since the civil rights era of the 1960s. The areas of dispute speak to some of the most emotive and important areas of not only social but also economic policy in Europe today – and both sides are gaining momentum in their communication and

mobilisation. It is therefore likely that these points of contention will further metastasise over the EU's forthcoming parliamentary term.

It is evident from these findings that younger and older citizens are increasingly perceiving the state of their nation and the social and economic policies that underpin its conditions in entirely distinct terms. Older Europeans are considerably more likely to feel economically insecure, perceive high levels of economic inequality and feel 'left behind' by economic settlement than younger Europeans. Except for the post-communist member states, they are also more likely to hold concerns about immigration and particularly Muslim immigration, and its impact on communities and public safety than their more pluralistic younger counterparts. Finally, we observe that older Europeans are more patriotic and considerably more inclined to feel protective over national values and traditions than the young.

The gender divisions coalescing around social and economic issues are also increasingly significant. Our survey data shows, for example, that women are more likely to experience higher levels of economic anxiety than men and value the preservation of national traditions, and are less likely to hold strong attachments to European identities. In other areas of this report, where 'hostile sexism' is studied as a compound of public opinion variables, we can see that men's attitudes towards gender equality also correlate strongly with the propensity to perceive national decline, to be mistrustful of national parliaments, to eschew democratic ideals and to feel unrepresented by their political system.

Unquestionably, each of these issues plays a considerable role in national political dynamics and the dynamics within the Union as a whole. It is therefore important to understand the complex and asymmetrical forces – whether it be in terms of age or gender – that inform the nature of the overall trends. This will help us to appreciate the need for potential policy responses to be targeted to groups that demand it the most.

Neutralising the burgeoning conflict between generations is critical for Europe's social stability. Otherwise, the contract which has functioned as a crucial underpinning of our modern liberal democracies risks being fundamentally challenged. A degree of mutual respect must be established; one which moves beyond crude depictions of a selfish, nihilistic older generation and hedonistic, whimsical youths.

The issue of climate change – which this survey did not cover, though it has been extensively explored via the Eurobarometer[57] – presents a particularly important test for these relations. It is difficult to conceive of another issue where the defiant intransigence of one generation (in this case, older) could bear such a disproportionately negative impact on another. And yet, so too will automation provide a crucial junction for the intergenerational contract in the near future (i.e. optimistic youths, conditioned to flexibility and adaptation, must evolve their sympathies towards the understandable fears of the older generations). Politicians must play a crucial role in mediating these processes of empathy and understanding, and better communicating the valuable part that each generation plays in the social fabric of their nation and the European project.

Chapter 3. Democracy: Enduring support?

3.1. Introduction

The health of European democracy is deeply entwined with the health of the Union itself. However, both of these conversations are increasingly discussed in binary terms, brushing over the multiplicity of experience between member states. While democratic backsliding is clearly evident across the board in countries such as Hungary and Poland, participation in elections is recovering after a long downward trajectory, civic action (e.g. protests) have increased, and new online communities and initiatives are being initiated.[58] There is room for optimism. Nonetheless, it is also true that the question of democratic functioning and efficacy encompasses a myriad of dimensions, made even more complex in the EU due to the interaction of domestic and supranational political systems.

On one level, the democratic performance of the Union could be considered. There are three commonly understood channels through which citizens are represented within the EU's democratic processes: through their direct votes in the European Parliamentary elections, indirectly through their national political leaders in the European Council, and through their voting behaviour in national parliamentary elections and their engagement with other ad hoc dialogues and debates. Encompassed within these three different channels are a range of participatory (i.e. on behalf of the citizen) and protective functions (i.e. on behalf of the institution).[59] The effectiveness of these processes and the democratic legitimacy of the EU as a whole have long been discussed in assessments of the EU's democratic inputs (i.e. citizens' interactions with its institutions) and outputs (i.e. policy outcomes and their effects on citizens), and more recently, *throughputs*, or the systems of governance through which both inputs and outputs pass.[60]

The democratic limitations of supranational governance have been extensively debated throughout the EU's history, and it is broadly agreed – and indeed, acknowledged by the European Commission itself[61] – that there is considerable room for improvement in citizens' visibility of and relationship to EU institutions. It is argued that enhancing the proximity that European citizens both feel and experience towards this league of nations will help to foster a more cohesive sense of community and strengthen the perceived and realised legitimacy and functioning of the Union as a project. However, it is reasonable to expect that some citizens will never consider a supranational system of government to be 'truly democratic', due to the reality that citizens will necessarily be represented in every meaningful sense through the proxy of their national governments.[62]

When asked to evaluate the value of the EU to their lives, citizens generally identify its economic opportunities and capacity to serve as a global actor. However, they also frequently mention its values – particularly, its emphasis on upholding democracy and the rule of law within member states.[63] Trust in national democracies varies tremendously cross Europe, reflecting both the ongoing scourge of corruption as well as the perception of the declining efficacy of governance.[64] Trust has been particularly affected by the 2008 financial crisis,[65] which appears to have further splintered and polarised member states between those which did or did not experience economic recovery, and the nature of that recovery.[66] However, trust in national governments also reflects a range of less tangible phenomena, including citizens' anxieties about the pace and nature of social change, and the responsiveness of their elected officials to these concerns.[67]

Finally, we can also explore citizens' attitudes to democracy as a concept itself, and their belief in its supremacy as a system of governance – which likely encapsulates views across a number of different levels of government. When attitudes of citizens and elites are compared, it is clear that twice as many foreign policy experts emphatically support representative democracy as a system of government, compared to just 37% of citizens who are more likely to harbour more modest levels of support. In turn, citizens are twice as likely to regard direct democracy as a favourable system of governance than foreign policy experts.[68]

Nonetheless, the European Social Survey[69] has found that citizens tend to make heavy demands of their representative democracies, valuing not just procedural but also social aspects of democracy, and often considering them to be indivisible. The hierarchy that citizens ascribe towards democratic elements clearly places equality under the law and free and fair elections at the heart of the shared understanding of European democracy.

In this report, the multifarious dimensions of European democracy – not only citizens' attitudes towards the EU but also their national parliaments – are examined. Views on democracy as a form of governance, assessments

of various leadership styles, and both actual and conceptualised degrees of engagement with their national institutions are also studied.

3.2. Key findings
Half of the EU electorate does not participate in EU elections, with women, youth and those without further education especially disinclined to vote.

- Overall, a slight majority of the surveyed Europeans (50.5%) indicated that they would definitely vote in the May 2019 European elections. 21% declared they 'probably' would vote, 13% that they would 'maybe' vote, and a further 11% that they either would 'probably not' or 'definitely not' vote. The actual turnout across all member states in May stood at 50.62%.
- The definite intention to vote was highest in Denmark, at 64%, Belgium and Greece. In Belgium, where voting is compulsory, 88.47% of citizens eventually turned out to cast their vote in the May elections, while in Denmark it was 66% – one of the highest levels on record. By contrast, both Greeks and Italians ultimately overestimated their likelihood to vote, with only 58.7% and 54.5% reaching the ballot box respectively.
- The highest percentage of citizens declaring they definitively would not vote was found in France, at 11% – twice as high as other member states.
- Women were much less likely than men to be certain that they would vote in the EU Parliamentary elections, as were younger Europeans and those with lower levels of education.

Only around a third of Europeans support democratic principles consistently – and support is weakest amongst the newest democracies in Eastern Europe.

- Only 37% of Europeans consistently backed democratic principles, compared to 63% who were inconsistent in their support. Consistent support for democracy was most prevalent in Denmark (68%), Austria (57%) and Germany (56%); and weakest in post-communist Poland (19%) and Bulgaria (just 15%).

Individual demographic characteristics play a strong role in engendering support for democracy as a style of governance.

- Those most likely to consistently support democratic principles are older, male and highly educated.
- Europeans harbouring strong authoritarian predispositions and sexist attitudes were generally much less likely to support democracy, and those who identify with populist and anti-establishment views were the most likely to support democracy.

Support for democracy appears to have become increasingly partisan.

Those who place themselves on the centre-left of the political spectrum are the most likely to support democracy consistently, while those on the right are the least consistently supportive.

Trust in national and EU parliaments is relatively poor but not entirely absent and is shaped by contemporary experience. Those who trust national parliaments are more likely to trust the European Parliament.

- A quarter of the surveyed Europeans declare that they have 'no trust at all' in their national parliaments, with 16.5% leaning towards a lack of trust, a further quarter leaning towards trust, and just 16% expressing high levels of trust.
- Trust is highest in Germany and Austria, where a quarter of the population has 'very high' levels of trust, in stark comparison to Bulgaria and Greece, where just a fraction (3% to 4%) do.
- In Greece, more than twice as many citizens consistently express trust in democracy than in their national parliament.
- The proportion of Europeans who trust their respective national parliaments is similar as those who trust the European Parliament, indicating that citizens can be divided between those who trust institutions and those who do not more clearly, than distinguishing between those who trust national and EU institutions.

Europeans appear to value compromise, consensus-building and support for human rights in their leaders, despite many voting for parties and candidates who do not promote these.

- The majority appear to be attracted to leaders who make compromises – 27% of citizens say they would be 'much more likely' to vote for a candidate who was prepared to make compromises, with a further 40% 'somewhat more likely' to do so. By comparison, 18% say they would be 'somewhat less likely' to vote for such a candidate, and 8.2% are actively less likely to do so.
- Spaniards are the most likely to find appeal in political compromise, followed by Germans and Estonians. The least enamoured with compromise are Greeks and Italians.
- Europeans are very supportive of leaders standing up for human rights, with a majority (54%) reporting that they would be 'much more likely' to vote for a candidate who stood up for human rights, and a further 30% saying they would be 'somewhat more likely'. Only around 10% of the population finds this unappealing.
- Once again, Spaniards are the most supportive of this style of leadership, with an astonishing 73% of the population saying they would be 'much more likely' to support human rights-focused candidates, with strong support also evident amongst Bulgarians and Greeks.
- Europeans also strongly support the prospect of leaders being consultative around different points of view. 40% indicated that they would be 'much more likely' to support leaders with this approach, a further 40% said they would be 'somewhat more likely', and 14% found this approach objectionable.
- Again, Spaniards lead the pack in terms of their support for leaders seeking alternative points of view, followed by the Bulgarians and Hungarians. The least supportive of this approach were the Belgians and Austrians.

There are mixed views on the Article 7 process and economic sanctions, but clearly a greater level of support than outright objection.

- When asked their view on the notion of economic sanctions being imposed upon EU member states in response to democratic backsliding, Europeans clearly hold mixed opinions on this contentious issue. Nonetheless, they tend to lean towards support, with around 50% strongly or somewhat supporting it and only 15% actively opposed.
- Support is strongest in Germany, Bulgaria and Spain and weakest in France and Italy.

Only around a quarter of Europeans feel empowered in their national politics, although this reflects 'protest cultures' and current political rhetoric.

- When asked to assess their levels of democratic empowerment, only 27% of Europeans strongly or somewhat agreed that they could make a difference in the functioning of their national government, and 35% disagreed.
- Empowerment is highest in France, where 40% of citizens agree that they can make a difference in their national politics, followed by Spain and Italy (34%). Empowerment is markedly lowest in Hungary, where more than a third (35%) of the population strongly disagrees that they can make a difference, followed by Bulgaria and Germany.
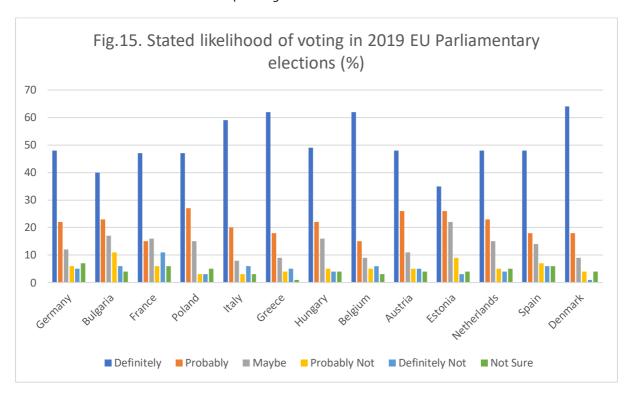
3.3. Survey analysis

3.3.1. Likelihood to vote: Parliamentary elections

Only half of the European electorate engages with EU elections. Overall, a slight majority of the surveyed Europeans (50.5%) indicated that they would definitely be voting in the European elections held in May 2019. A further 21% declared that they 'probably' would vote, 13.3% that they would 'maybe' vote, and a further 10.6% that they either would 'probably not' or 'definitely not' vote. While our collection of 13 member states cannot be empirically extrapolated to be considered representative of the EU population as a whole, the proportion of the population intending to vote in these member states was incredibly similar to the actual voting behaviour in the elections as a whole, which stood at 50.62%.

Belgium, which has compulsory voting, has the highest voting participation figures. The member states with the highest definite intention to vote were Denmark (64%), Belgium and Greece (62%), then Italy (59%). The member state with the highest percentage of citizens declaring that they 'definitively' would not vote was

France (11%) – around double that of most of the other member states (see Figure 15). In Belgium, 88.47% of citizens eventually turned out to cast their vote in the May elections, while in Denmark it was 66% – one of the highest levels on record. By contrast, both Greeks and Italians ultimately overestimated their likelihood to vote, with only 58.7% and 54.5% respectively reaching the ballot box. Belgium's disproportionately high turnout reflects the fact that voting is compulsory, with citizens facing fines if they do not exercise their democratic right.[70] Both Greece and Italy have been in a state of near-constant upheaval over the past decade with exceptionally high political disillusionment in both member states, which manifested perhaps in citizens' reticence to focus their attentions on expressing their democratic voice.

Fig.15. Stated likelihood of voting in 2019 EU Parliamentary elections (%)

Women are considerably less likely than men to vote in the EU elections – significant differences could be observed between genders in the vast majority of member states regarding the likelihood to vote in the then-forthcoming European elections in May 2019. In Germany, men were 10 percentage points (53% to 43%) more likely to report that they would vote in the elections, with similar gaps in Bulgaria, Italy and France. In Poland, the gender gap around voting intention stood at a staggering 17 percentage points, with just 38% of women likely to vote, compared to 55% of men.

Women's relative reticence to engage in this most fundamental expression of democratic rights appears to be related to their dramatic under-representation in political offices (especially in terms of local politics), their tendency to have to bear larger loads of familial caring responsibilities and insecure working conditions that could hamper their physical capacity to vote, and also their relatively low levels of self-described political knowledge and interest in political issues.[71] Each of these reflects the long-term legacy of much broader societal structures which have constrained women's capacity to act as fully engaged, represented and empowered citizens to the same extent as men.

Older Europeans are more inclined to vote than younger Europeans. Age also remains an important factor in shaping voting behaviour. In Germany, 38% of those aged under 30 years intended to vote, compared to 65% of those aged over 65 years. A similar generational gap is observed in Poland. In France, the gulf between the young and the older is even greater, with less than a quarter (23%) of the youngest generation signalling their intention to vote, compared to 68% of those over 65 years.

It is clear that there is a feeling of democratic deficit amongst the younger generations, and their willingness to engage with existing political systems likely reflects their cynicism and mistrust of traditional institutions.[72] It is also certainly the case that the more transient lifestyles of the young – living in university towns and cities,

moving to pursue work opportunities – mean, in a practical sense, that they are less likely to be embedded in the communities in which they would cast their vote.

Education plays a strong role in shaping citizens' democratic engagement. By examining the socioeconomic dimensions of voting behaviour, it is evident that education plays a significant role in determining citizens' engagement with this foundational democratic right and principle. For example, in Germany, those with higher levels of education are 20 percentage points (61%) more likely than those with low levels of education (41%) to indicate that they intended to vote in the May 2019 elections.

The education gap around voting varies in size: from 9 percentage points in Italy and Hungary, 5 percentage points in Austria, and just 3 percentage points in the Netherlands; to 11 percentage points in Bulgaria, 12 percentage points in Greece, 14 percentage points in Poland and Denmark, 19 percentage points in Belgium, as high as 21 percentage points in Spain, and a staggering 27 percentage points in Estonia. France is the only member state where no socioeconomic distinctions can be observed around political engagement, as its citizens are generally less engaged than other Europeans across all social classes.

Extensive academic research and post-election analysis have identified that those with lower levels of education and socioeconomic standards of living are generally more likely to feel that they are not adequately represented within the political system and that their vote is, therefore, less valuable than those whose interests are 'better served'.[73] This in turn can manifest in their lower levels of turnout in elections across a variety of levels of political office across Europe.[74]

Citizens turn out to vote when they believe their vote may make a difference. Aside from those who are generally more likely to consistently turn out to vote (e.g. older Europeans, those with higher levels of education), those indicating their intention to vote in the May 2019 elections were also more likely to support parties or policies that they felt required their support and/or would represent them – perhaps to a degree that they had not in previous elections.

This is encapsulated in the relationship between citizens' intention to vote and their political affiliations; and also in the over-representation of groups predisposed to certain characteristics, worldviews and values promoted by various parties during the elections (e.g. authoritarianism, sexism, populism). In Spain, for example, feminist and anti-feminist backlash movements were both deeply active ahead of the elections, with the far-right Vox party specifically advocating that women's rights had 'gone too far'.[75] Spaniards who consistently demonstrate receptiveness to sexist viewpoints were 13 percentage points more likely to express an intention to vote.
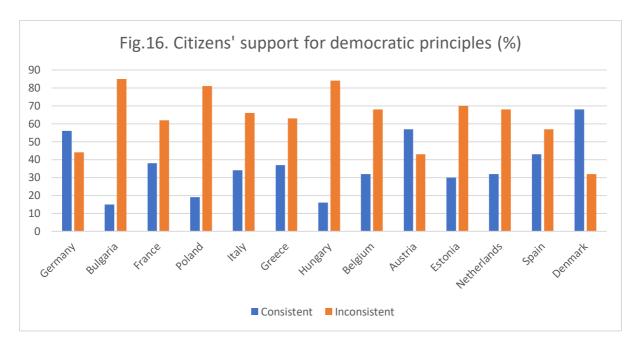
It can, therefore, be concluded that the nature and focus of national debate and the perception of parties, issues and movements that are both ascending or being threatened plays an important role in shaping citizens' engagement with European parliamentary elections.

3.3.2. Support for democracy
Our analysis sought to identify citizens who consistently displayed support for democracy across a range of measures, and those whose support was conditional and inconsistent (see Appendix).

Only around a third of European citizens consistently support democracy. Overall, an average of only 36.7% of the surveyed Europeans was likely to back democratic principles consistently, compared to 63.3% who were inconsistent in their support. Consistent support was most prevalent in Denmark (68%), Austria (57%) and Germany (56%), and weakest in post-communist Poland (19%) and Bulgaria (15%). These findings demonstrate that there can be no complacency towards the future of democracy as the pre-eminent system of governance in Europe, with publics expressing deeply mixed degrees of support. Member states with relatively strong economies and long-established democracies are the most likely to have convinced their citizens of democracy's benefits, while those who have come more recently to democracy are more sceptical of its dividends (see Figure 16).

Fig.16. Citizens' support for democratic principles (%)

Legend: ■ Consistent ■ Inconsistent

Older and more educated Europeans are much more likely to support democratic principles consistently. A very clear generational divide appears across all of the member states, with older Europeans firmly supportive of democracy in all its commonly understood forms and younger Europeans broadly more sceptical and cynical towards democracy. In Germany, 47% of under-30s are consistently supportive of democracy, compared to 64% of 65-and-over. In Denmark, the gap between the youngest and oldest adult generations rises to almost 30 percentage points. In Bulgaria, just 6% of under-30s consistently support democracy, and while their older counterparts are more than four times as likely to do so, still only a quarter of 65s-and-overs declare consistent support. Aside from other post-communist member states, consistent support for democracy is also particularly low in the Netherlands, with 16% of under-30s and only a third of those aged 65 years and over consistently supportive.

Education also plays a strong role in determining support for democracy as a system of governance. In Denmark, 79% of those with high levels of education consistently support democracy, compared to 53% of those with low levels of education. Similar gaps can be observed in all member states besides Austria, although they are especially prominent in Germany, France, Belgium and Greece.

Men are more likely to support democracy than women, who may feel they have benefited less from this style of governance. In France, 34% of women are consistently supportive, compared to 42% of men. In Poland, just 15% of women consistently subscribe to democratic ideals, compared to 23% of men. In Italy, the gap between men and women stands at 9 percentage points. In Bulgaria, however, a truly astonishing distinction exists between the sexes – only 15% of women express consistent support for democracy, compared to more than half (51%) of men. This suggests that women do not feel that democracy represents their interests as it does for their male counterparts, thus reflecting the country's patriarchal structure, inconsistent record on protecting women's legal rights and freedoms and failures to institutionally challenge violence against women.[76]

Support for democracy appears to be increasingly partisan, with citizens who self-identify on the centre-left the most supportive and those on the right the least supportive. Looking specifically at the dynamics in Western and Southern European countries, there is a clear and consistent relationship between political affiliations and ideologies, and support for democracy. Across all of the 13 member states, those who place themselves on the centre-left of the political spectrum are the most outwardly supportive of democracy, followed by those on the left. Their support for democracy contrasts sharply with their counterparts on the centre-right, and especially with those who place themselves on the right of politics, who are much less enthusiastic about democracy. A telling example of this phenomenon is France, where almost 60% of those on the centre-left are consistently supportive of democracy, compared to 35% of those on the centre-right and just 15% of those on the right. These findings are worrying because they suggest that democratic support has
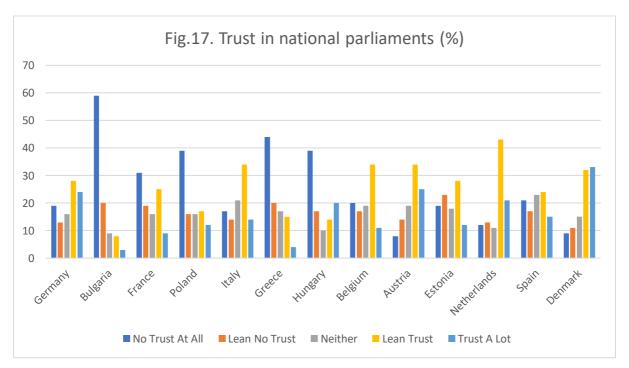
become partisan and that there is a risk that right-wing leaders and parties may not feel adequately compelled to advocate for nor defend democracy and its institutions.

Europeans expressing authoritarian and sexist attitudes are less supportive of democratic principles than other citizens. However, many populist voters are in fact *more* supportive. Regarding how support for democracy connects with other predispositions and worldviews around social and political issues, relationships between authoritarianism, sexism and support for democracy can be observed. In Germany, only a third of those who scored highly on authoritarian measures are consistently supportive of democracy, compared to 57% of the rest of the population. In Austria, 37% of those who harbour sexist attitudes subscribe to democratic ideals, compared to 59% of the rest of the population. In some member states, similar correlations could be observed between support for populism and a lack of support for democracy, while in others these were more positively related.

It is generally considered received wisdom that those who support populist and, therefore, anti-establishment parties are more likely to support the undermining of democratic conventions. These findings reinforce the complexity of populist expressions, however (i.e. a populist vote as a symbol of democratic agency or the reinstatement of a more direct form of democracy), and the diversity of populist parties' messaging across Europe, including 'democratic populist' parties in Italy and Spain.

3.3.3. Trust in national parliaments

Europe is experiencing a significant trust deficit. Overall, an average of a quarter (25.9%) of the surveyed Europeans declare that they have 'no trust at all' in their national parliaments, with 16.5% leaning towards a lack of trust, a further quarter (25.8%) opting for trust and just 15.6% expressing high levels of trust. High levels of trust are most obvious in Germany and Austria, where a quarter of the population assess their trust in their parliament to this degree. This compares starkly to Bulgaria and Greece, where just a fraction describes themselves as having high levels of trust (3% and 4% respectively; see Figure 17). These findings indicate that trust in democracy and trust in national parliaments are connected but can also be distinct. In Greece, for example, more than twice as many citizens consistently express trust in democracy than they do in their national parliament.

Fig.17. Trust in national parliaments (%)

Citizens who are less supportive of democracy are less likely to trust parliaments. It is also evident that citizens' trust in their national parliament is deeply related to the contemporary political dynamics of the day. Nonetheless, there is also a profound degree of mistrust to be observed amongst segments of the population, matching those who are less consistently supportive of democracy. Broadly, these tend to be those who have lower levels of education, are unemployed and support populist parties and anti-establishment principles. There

is also a clear correlation between those harbouring sexist attitudes and those who carry low levels of trust in their national parliament.

For example, in Germany, a third of those with low levels of education have no trust at all in the *Bundestag*, compared to just 14% of the highly educated. Considering the role of employment, we find that 41% of unemployed Germans report having no trust in their parliament, compared to 19% of those in full-time careers. In Spain, those with low levels of education are 11 percentage points more likely to report having no trust whatsoever in their parliament, with similar gaps observed between those who hold populist ideologies and sexist attitudes and other citizens. In Austria, employment status appears to have the greatest bearing on levels of trust, with the unemployed more than three times likely than any other citizens to report an absence of trust in their political institutions.

Trust in parliament is deeply related to both political affiliation and contemporary political dynamics. Considerably more volatile, however, are the relationships between political affiliation, age and geography; and trust. There are clear patterns between the contemporaneous governments and attitudes towards parliament of member states like France, where left-wing voters are the least trusting and those centre-left are the most trusting. In Poland, 89% of those on the left report having no trust at all in the parliament, while 37% of right-wing voters declare to have extremely high levels of trust. Elsewhere, however, complicated forces appear to be in play. In Germany, it is those who place themselves firmly on the right of the political spectrum who have the highest levels of trust in parliament, while those on the left and the centre-right are the least trusting. This unusual picture in Germany could reflect a feeling that, despite not currently being in office, the Right is in its political ascendancy and/or their political interests are being captured in a manner that is unprecedented as of late.

Neither age nor gender plays a consistent role in shaping trust in national parliaments. In Spain, trust is relatively low across the board for all generations. However, older Spaniards are the most inclined to be very trusting of their parliament. The same is true in Poland and Denmark, where those aged 65 years and older are twice as likely (48% to 25%) to be trusting of their parliament than under-30s. In Estonia, however, the young are more than three times as likely to be trusting of their national parliament as their older counterparts. This may capture the optimism felt amongst Estonia's younger generation, as their country is transforming into a digital nation and experiencing an upward trajectory in the growth of related jobs and industries.[77]

Across all of the surveyed member states, gender did not appear to play a particularly dynamic role in the formation of trust – with a few somewhat notable exceptions. In Greece, men are 6 percentage points less likely than women to express that they have no trust whatsoever in their national parliament, while in Poland, men are a substantial 10 percentage points more likely not to trust their national parliament at all.

Turning to geography, no systematic trends can be discerned from the survey results. In Italy, it is those living in rural areas who are the most trusting; while in Germany, those who live in urban cities are more trusting; and in Bulgaria, those who live in suburban areas are most trusting, and is around 30 percentage points less likely than other citizens to report an absence of trust. Regular church-goers also appear to be more trusting of their political system – in France, 34% of those who never attend church report having absolutely no trust in their national parliament, compared to 17% of those who attend regularly. This suggests that the geographical dimensions of trust are unique to their national contexts.
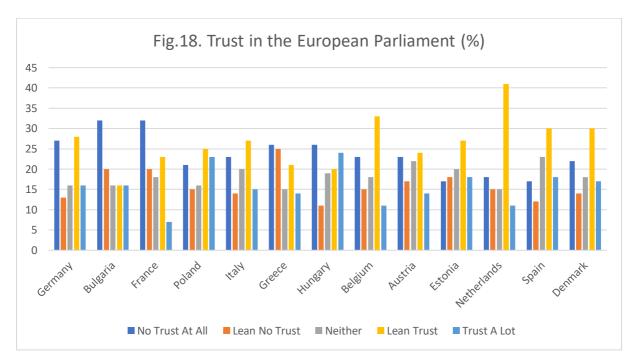
3.3.4. Trust in the European Parliament
Citizens who trust their national parliaments are more likely to trust the European Parliament. A similar proportion of citizens who expressed support for their national parliaments also convey the same degree of trust in the European Parliament, suggesting a close relationship between two areas of trust that are often considered to be quite distinct. The average proportion of citizens with no trust at all in the Parliament is 23.6%, with a further 16% leaning towards an absence of trust, while on the other side, 26.5% of citizens lean towards trust and 15.7% express high levels of trust. One conclusion that could be drawn from these figures is that Europe is now divided between those who instinctively do and do not trust democratic institutions per se. Another is that given the proportion of citizens who emphatically trust is significantly smaller than those who emphatically do not, the strength of feeling *against* the European Parliament carries a stronger degree of salience than the feeling in its favour. This trend reflects one of the most striking lessons of the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union, in which the relative ambivalence citizens carried in their

attitudes towards the EU was put to the test against a much more emotionally powerful message of national sovereignty.[78]

Some member states with antagonistic relationships towards the EU have high levels of trust in EU institutions, reminding us that populations are not homogenous and why it is important to distinguish between their leaders and citizens. Overall, the member states that express the highest levels of trust in the Union are Spain and the Netherlands, where 52% and 48% of the population respectively either strongly or lean towards trust. However, it is also important to note the ardent degree of feeling in Poland and Hungary, where around a quarter of each population says they trust the European Parliament 'a lot' – more than in any other member state (see Figure 18). This can appear curious, due to the antagonistic relationship between the leadership of these countries and the EU institutions, where the former have been accused of democratic backsliding and undergoing Article 7 processes. The schism between these two realities, however, reflect the multiplicity of factors influencing public opinion on the EU, especially in the member states who are net beneficiaries and where the indisputable economic advantages of membership are pitted against more polarising social and political considerations.[79]

Turning to the most distrustful member states, we can observe that almost a third (32%) of Bulgarian and French citizens report having 'no trust at all' in the European Parliament, and the proportion of German citizens distrustful of the EU stands at more than a quarter (27%; see Figure 18). The extent of this trust deficit reflects the presence of effectively populist and Eurosceptic political leaders and acquiescent media environments, which have campaigned to explicitly position the Union as endemically corrupt and fundamentally undemocratic.[80]

Fig.18. Trust in the European Parliament (%)

Citizens on the right of the political spectrum are less likely to trust the European Parliament. On many dimensions, similar dynamics appear to play out in the question of citizens' trust in the European Parliament, as when they report their trust levels towards their national parliaments. Political affiliation is the one clear distinction, with right-wing voters consistently declaring low levels of trust, while at a national level these relationships have been more complex. Meanwhile, France is one clear exception to this trend, where half of all right- *and* left-wing voters report to have no trust at all in the European Parliament.

Age does not play a consistent role in shaping trust in the European Parliament, but gender is more significant in shaping attitudes towards the EU than national institutions. Considering the relationship between trust and age, there is no obvious pan-European rulebook. In many member states, Euroscepticism clearly resides with the older population who knew life before the modern, highly integrated EU and remain sceptical as to its dividends. For example, older Germans are twice as likely as under-30s (28% to 15%) to have no trust in the European Parliament, and in the Netherlands, under-30s are 10 percentage points more likely to

express high levels of trust. Elsewhere, as in Austria, Spain and Denmark, younger Europeans who take continental peace for granted are less convinced by the relevance of the EU project to their globalised lives. In France, it is those aged 45 to 64 years of age who are the most mistrustful of the EU.

Gender does appear to play some degree of a role in determining levels of trust at the European level. In Germany, men are 7 percentage points more likely to report having no trust at all in the European Parliament, and a similar gap can be observed in France and Denmark. Nonetheless, as with trust in national parliaments, gender does not present as a major determinant in shaping public opinion, compared to other demographic characteristics.

Geographical and employment-related demographics are important in some member states, but not consistently across the board. As in the case of the national-level trust, employment status plays a significant role in determining attitudes in some member states: in Germany, France and Austria, the unemployed are at least twice as likely to report a complete absence of trust in the European Parliament as those in full- or part-time employment. However, in other member states such as Bulgaria, Italy and Greece, those in full-time employment were the most likely to have no trust at all. This suggests that trust and economic security are not necessarily (deeply) related and that other factors (e.g. political partisanship, social capital, optimism) may be more consequential to the formation of trust.
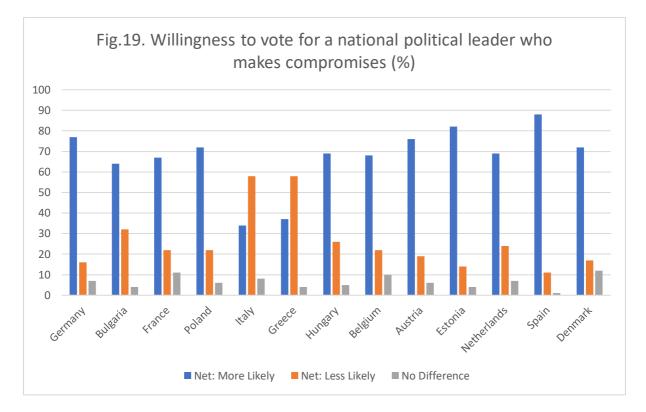
Only two member states show any substantive geographical distinctions. In France, those living in rural areas are almost twice as likely (at 38%) to report not trusting the European Parliament at all, compared to those living in urban areas (22%). In Belgium, a gap of around 10 percentage points is also evident. The inconsistency in the relationship between geography and trust is, to some degree, perplexing, since previous research has determined that geography can play an important 'proxy' role in representing a range of socioeconomic factors (including social and economic inequality) that *do* tend to contribute towards citizens' trust in established institutions.[81] Nonetheless, other research also demonstrates that Euroscepticism is most closely aligned to citizens' values and sociocultural frameworks, and therefore while communities of values may also stand as physical communities, they may also not pertain in any way to their residential location.[82]

Citizens on the right of the political spectrum are considerably more Eurosceptic, with such voters in Poland, Italy, Hungary, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands all somewhat or extremely more likely to report a complete absence of trust in the European Parliament. In Greece, Estonia, Spain and Denmark, it is left-wing voters who are the least enamoured with the Union as their Euroscepticism tends to stem from a perception of democratic illegitimacy and concerns about the consequences of free and open markets on local industries and communities within member states.[83] These findings suggest a high degree of correlation between contemporary political dynamics and trust in the EU, which can all-too-often find itself the scapegoat for national discontent.

Citizens who hold sexist and/or populist attitudes are less trusting in the European Parliament. Considering other psychological and sociological profiles, trust in the Parliament does appear to be correlated to some degree with both sexism and populism. In Germany, the relationship is particularly pronounced: those with highly established sexist views are 40 percentage points more likely than the rest of the German population to report having no trust in the European Parliament at all, while those with firm populist views are 30 percentage points more likely than other citizens. Similar distinctions can be observed in France, Spain and Belgium, while in other member states (particularly the ex-communist states), the gaps are significant but less dramatic.

3.3.5. Leadership styles: Compromise

Fig.19. Willingness to vote for a national political leader who makes compromises (%)

N.B. Net figures include composite data points.

Overall, Europeans appear to value compromise in political leadership. Overall, an average of 27.4% of citizens says they would be 'much more likely' to vote for a candidate who was prepared to make compromises, with a further 40% 'somewhat more likely'. By comparison, 18% say they would be 'somewhat less likely' to vote for such a candidate, and 8.2% are actively less likely to do so. Spaniards are the most likely to find appeal in political compromise, with 62% of the population reporting it is a highly motivating factor in shaping their voting decisions, followed by 32% of Poles and 30% of Estonians. A quarter of Greeks and Italians view compromise in a negative light and are disinclined to vote for candidates who project this intent.

Nonetheless, 'compromise' holds differing levels of appeal in differing political environments. Citizens appear to be divided on the merits of consensus-building within their national parliaments. This presumably reflects the very specific nature of political environments, with frustrations building amongst citizens who feel that nothing is 'getting done' and that their political systems are being run by leaders who do not represent their views or the full spectrum of views in society. The responses to this question are necessarily multifarious and it is difficult to draw any specific conclusions, other than to assert that it surprisingly appears that citizens interpret this question quite distinctively from those regarding authoritarian and populist ideologies.
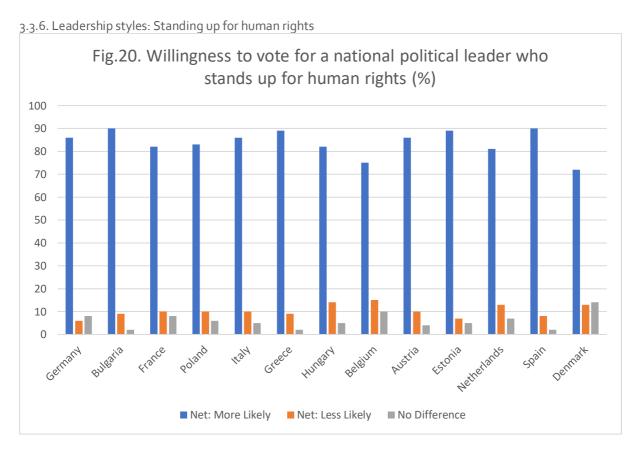
No consistent patterns can be observed regarding the role of age or political affiliation in shaping the appeal of compromise. In Germany and the Netherlands, older citizens are more likely to favour consensus politics than their younger counterparts; while in Bulgaria, the young are more likely to vote for leaders who pledge to make compromises. The generational gap is especially pronounced in Spain, where support for compromise is high overall, with 45% of under-30s 'much more likely' to vote for consensus politicians compared to 73% of those aged 65 years and over. In Italy, few citizens appear to be attracted to the idea of making political compromises at all – just 7% of Italians say they would be 'very much more likely' to vote for leaders who build consensus, compared to around a quarter of the French and a third of Germans.

Considering political affiliations, results related to the nature of contemporary political dynamics are wide and diverse. For example, in Bulgaria, left-wing voters are 15 percentage points (40%) more inclined than those on the right (25%) to state that they would be much more likely to support a consensus-driven politician. In Spain, right-wing voters are more than 20 percentage points (79%) more likely than those on the left (58%) to strongly favour candidates who make political compromises.

Education appears to play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards consensus politics, but gender does not – although in Austria, women are 8 percentage points more likely to be strongly in favour of consensus politics than their male counterparts. Those with higher levels of education broadly tend to favour compromises in politics – in Germany, for example, those with higher education are almost twice as likely (28%) to say they would be much more likely to vote for leaders seeking consensus than those with low levels of education (15%). No discernible differences are observed in some member states (e.g. Belgium) and indeed, in Estonia, those with higher levels of education are more sceptical of compromises in politics than those with lower education.

Curiously, citizens who align with authoritarian and populist ideas appear more inclined to support compromises. It would be fair to assume that those supportive of both populist and authoritarian principles would be less inclined to favour consensus-driven governance, given that these ideologies are so often based around the idea of an absolutist conception of politics. However, our survey suggests that, against expectations, in many member states, they appear to be more inclined to support leaders who make compromises. In France, citizens who display populist attitudes are twice as likely as the rest of the population to say they are 'very much more likely' to support these consensus-building leaders. These confounding findings suggest that further research in this area is necessary, although they may also reflect the fact that 'compromise' is viewed in vastly different terms in different national contexts.

3.3.6. Leadership styles: Standing up for human rights

Fig.20. Willingness to vote for a national political leader who stands up for human rights (%)

N.B. Net figures include composite data points.

Europeans appear to highly favour leaders who 'stand up for human rights', although, as ever, it is not clear as to how they interpret what (and for whom) 'human rights' encompasses. Europeans also appear to particularly support the concept of human rights, with a majority (54%) reporting that they would be 'much more likely' to vote for a candidate who stood up for human rights, and a further 30% stating that they would be 'somewhat more likely'. Only around 10% of the population would be dissuaded from supporting a political leader who made this a part of their platform. Once again, Spaniards are the most supportive of this style of leadership, with an astonishing 73% of the population saying they would be 'much more likely' to support human rights-focused candidates. They are followed by Bulgarians (69%) and Greeks (68%). No significant differences are evident between member states with regards to the proportion of citizens who reject the political salience of human rights, all on similar levels of around 10%.

In around half of the member states, women are considerably more supportive of human rights and their defence by politicians. In around half of the studied countries, no discernible trends around gender can be observed. However, in those where gender does play a role, women are consistently more supportive of a human rights agenda than men. In Germany, women are 9 percentage points more likely to say they are considerably more motivated to vote for leaders who stand up for human rights than men. In Spain, the gap stretches to 11 percentage points; Bulgaria, 12 percentage points; 15 percentage points in Austria; and Estonia, 19 percentage points. From this strong relationship, it can be inferred that women recognise that their own hard-won rights and representation falls within the context of a broader battle to defend and extend human rights more generally. Moreover, women's ongoing struggle for equality encourages them to be more sensitive and attuned to the human rights deficiencies experienced by other groups in European society.
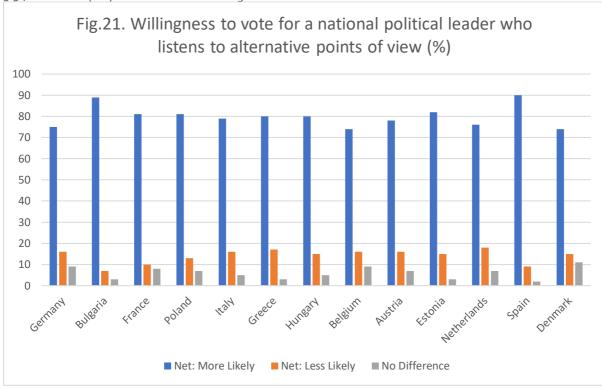
Age and employment play strong yet inconsistent roles in shaping human rights support. The former plays a mixed role in the formation of attitudes to the issue of human rights, as it is deeply correlated with both the support and rejection of this style of leadership in some member states. However, the relationship does not consistently manifest in any particular age group at the pan-European level. For example, older Germans are 13 percentage points (68% to 55%) more likely to be drawn to leaders prioritising human rights, as are older Hungarians with 18 percentage points (68% to 50%). In France, those aged 30 to 44 are an anomaly as at least 10 percentage points display less support for human rights than the other age groups. In Italy, under-30s are almost 20 percentage points more likely (63% to 45%) than those aged 65 years and older, to be drawn to leaders who stand up for human rights.

In Belgium, those with higher levels of education are almost 20 percentage points more likely to say that they would be much more inclined to vote for leaders who stand up for human rights than those with lower levels, while in Estonia, the situation is reversed. Full-time workers in Germany are around 10 to 20 percentage points less likely than part-time workers, students and the retired to favour leaders who stand up for human rights, likely capturing the relative over-representation of women in these categories. In Spain, part-time workers are 15 percentage points more likely than full-time workers (83% to 68%) to strongly support human rights. In the Netherlands, Austria and Hungary, the unemployed are the most likely of all to prioritise human rights when voting.

Left-wing voters are most supportive of leaders prioritising human rights, once again. For example, Germans who place themselves on the left of the political spectrum are 28 percentage points more likely than those who place themselves on the right to identify strongly with the issue of human rights. A similar gap can be observed in Bulgaria, where an astonishing 92% of left-wing citizens say that they would be 'very much more likely' to vote for candidates who prioritise this. In France, the gap between the Left and the Right stands at more than 40 percentage points, and peaks at almost 50 percentage points in Italy and Austria.

Regular church-goers are less likely to support leaders who stand up for human rights. The survey data highlights an interesting observation regarding the connection between church attendance and support for human rights. In France, Poland and Italy – all with strong Catholic traditions, regular church-goers are in fact *less* likely than those who never practise religion to prioritise human rights in political choices. In other member states, the difference between those who do and do not regularly attend church is minimal, suggesting that as a contemporary cause, human rights are entirely divorced from religion and promote a more secular message of citizenship and empowerment instead.

Citizens with strong authoritarian and sexist mindsets are much less supportive of human rights, while those who support populist governance are often more so. It is palpably clear that Europeans who demonstrate high levels of authoritarian and sexist principles are much less likely than other citizens to feel positively towards human rights. In Germany, only a third (35%) of citizens who displayed high levels authoritarian attitudes indicate they would be much more likely to vote for human rights-focused candidates, compared to 57% of the broader population. A similar distinction is evident in Italy. In Austria, those harbouring sexist attitudes are, perhaps unsurprisingly, 23 percentage points less inclined to support candidates promoting human rights emphatically. Though the results regarding citizens with populist inclinations are more confounding on this issue, they likely reflect the heterogeneity amongst 'populist' supporters and voters in Europe – not only across the political spectrum but also in terms of their social, cultural, political and economic viewpoints. In this respect, there may be another, more powerful motivation compelling them towards support for human rights than their populist world-views.

3.3.7. Leadership styles: Consensus-building

Fig.21. Willingness to vote for a national political leader who listens to alternative points of view (%)

Legend: Net: More Likely | Net: Less Likely | No Difference

N.B. Net figures include composite data points.

Europeans favour consensus-building leadership, where politicians seek out alternative points of view. Europeans also appear to be very supportive of the notion of leaders being consultative within their political environments, to draw out and consider contrasting points of view. 40% of the surveyed European citizens indicated that they would be 'much more likely' to support leaders with this characteristic, and a further 40% that they would be 'somewhat more likely', with 14% finding this approach objectionable. Again, Spaniards lead the pack in terms of their support for leaders seeking alternative points of view, with 61% of the population finding this highly desirable, followed by 58% of Bulgarians and 52% of Hungarians. At 31% each, Belgians and Austrians are the least likely to feel compelled by this approach.

Women are somewhat more inclined to support a consensus-building approach to leadership. In Bulgaria, Spain and Greece, women are 9 percentage points more likely to say they would be strongly inclined to vote for a political leader who championed different points of view; they are also 6 percentage points more likely in Austria, 5 percentage points in Germany and 4 percentage points in Poland. In other member states, no gender distinctions can be observed, except in France where men are 4 percentage points more likely to favour leaders who seek out compromises; and the Netherlands, 8 percentage points.

Education is highly correlated with support for consensus-building and compromise, with more educated citizens considerably more inclined to regard leaders who seek out alternative viewpoints in a favourable light. In Denmark, those with high levels of education were twice as likely to report that they would be much more likely to vote for leaders who listen to different points of view (33% to 17%). In Germany, the gap is 10 percentage points, 11 percentage points in Spain, 13 percentage points in Bulgaria, and 15 percentage points in Poland and the Netherlands. The consistency of the relationship with education suggests two important findings: firstly, that national education systems build knowledge and understanding of constructive forms of governance; and secondly, that citizens most vulnerable to political disengagement do not tend to recognise personal dividends from the steady incrementalism of compromise politics.

Once again, left-wing voters are more supportive of consensus-building than their fellow citizens. Political ideologies are relevant to citizens' perception of such leadership qualities: citizens who identify with the Left are considerably more likely to favour leaders who seek out alternative points of view, suggesting that this is an
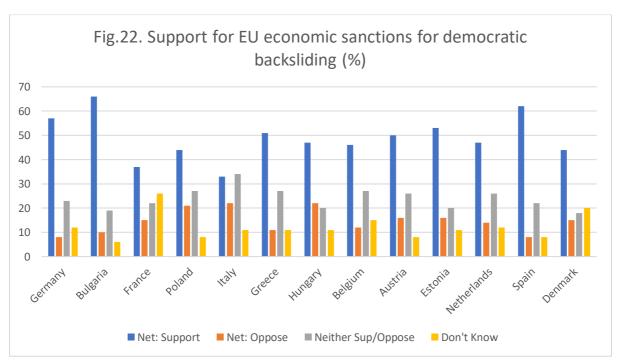
essential characteristic of the European Left. Danes who place themselves on the left of the political spectrum are 20 percentage points more likely than those on the right to say that listening to different points of view would shape their voting behaviour (43% to 23%), with a similar partisan gap in Austria, Spain, Hungary, Bulgaria, France, Poland and Germany. In Greece, this gap climbs to a staggering 33 percentage points, indicating that consensus-building and more authoritarian styles of leadership are deeply embedded in the distinct divisions between national political tribes.

3.3.8. A proposal for EU economic sanctions to address democratic backsliding

Our survey asked citizens to consider their opinion on a European Parliament draft proposal on freezing EU payments and infrastructure investments in member states whose national governments were found to be undermining democracy, weakening the independence of national judiciaries and the rule of law, or failing to cooperate with the investigation of political and government corruption. Respondents were clearly made to understand that all member states, including their own, could be liable for these sanctions.

Our question reflects debates that have been taking place in the EU regarding a number of member states whose populist and/or authoritarian governments have begun to challenge many of the core tenets of liberal democracy. This includes eroding the independence of judiciary systems and academia, undermining the capacity of opposition parties to form and mobilise, and constraining the freedom of the media to hold public officials to account. In both Hungary and Poland, where the situation is particularly acute,[84] Article 7 has now been triggered – a process which seeks to repudiate and challenge member states that are seen to be violating the fundamental principles of the Union.[85] In other countries, particularly the more recent member states (e.g. Bulgaria, Romania), endemic corruption continues to hamper the democratic and economic advancements that should have been supported throughout the EU accession process.[86] Given that political efforts to shame and publicly condemn these member states have proven ineffectual so far, the prospects of economic sanctions are now being considered.[87]

Europeans lean towards supporting economic sanctions towards members states who backslide on democratic principles, though they also clearly hold mixed opinions on this contentious issue. Overall, an average of 23% of citizens across the 13 member states 'strongly support' this initiative and a further 25.5% 'somewhat support' it – meaning that around half of all citizens are favourable towards the idea. This is an especially notable finding, given that three of the countries currently under the spotlight in this very debate – Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria – are featured in this survey, representing almost a quarter of the entire survey audience. And yet, only 7% somewhat oppose the proposal and 8% strongly oppose it, totalling 15% of EU citizens overall. Around 12% say they are unsure of their position, and a considerable segment of the population (24%) say they are indifferent.

Fig.22. Support for EU economic sanctions for democratic backsliding (%)

■ Net: Support ■ Net: Oppose ■ Neither Sup/Oppose ■ Don't Know

N.B. Net figures include composite data points.

Support is strongest in Germany, Bulgaria and Spain, and weakest in France and Italy. Germans are the most likely to 'strongly' support this proposal, at 39%, followed by Bulgarians at 38%, and the Spanish at 34%. Relatively high proportions of support are also evident in Greece and Estonia, although they are more likely to 'somewhat' support the proposal. Support is markedly weakest in both France and Italy, where only a third of the population favours these measures, compared to around a half or two-thirds elsewhere. In Poland and Hungary, 44% and 47% of citizens respectively either 'strongly' or 'somewhat support' the proposal. However, the percentage of citizens strongly opposing the proposal is also greatest in these countries: 17% in Hungary and 13% in Poland.

Older citizens are much more likely to support economic sanctions than their younger counterparts. In Germany, those aged 65 years and older are twice as likely (51% to 25%) to strongly support the proposal; in the Netherlands, three times as likely; and in Greece, four times. In Poland, older citizens are more than twice as likely (34%) to strongly support the proposal, compared to just 15% of young Poles. In Bulgaria, a smaller but still significant gulf is observed, with 42% of older citizens strongly favouring the proposal, compared to 29% of under-30s – a similar chasm as observed in Hungary, Austria, Spain and Belgium. In France, support is consistently low across all age groups, while in Italy, it is the young who are relatively more likely (9 percentage points) to support the proposal than their decidedly antipathetic elders.

The disproportionately high level of support towards this proposal amongst older Europeans likely stems from their consciousness of the formation of the Union as a project and its ongoing importance as a community of nations in maintaining peace and a degree of consistency in pan-European values. While young Europeans may support the intentions of the EU and their country's own membership, they may be less convinced of the value of its authority over what is perceived to be their national affairs.

Men, and those with higher levels of education, are also much more inclined to support sanctions against EU member states than women and those without further education. Gender is clearly a significant determining factor in this issue. In Germany, women are considerably less likely to strongly support the proposal than men (i.e. a percentage gap of 16 points). However, this is almost entirely captured in the higher proportion of women expressing uncertainty and a lack of knowledge on the issue. The same situation occurs in Italy, Belgium, Estonia, the Netherlands, Denmark and Hungary, which also demonstrate large gender gaps. In Denmark, a third of all female citizens are unsure about the issue. In Greece, however, the very large gender gulf in ardent support manifest in women's ambivalence towards the issue, as they are much more likely to say that they neither support nor oppose the proposal. While marked, these findings are not especially surprising – across a range of social and political issues, women are often captured in surveys as significantly less decisive than men, and are much more inclined not to take a definitive position, particularly when the issue in question is considered to be complex.[88]

Turning to education, we can see that overall there is a high degree of support for these proposals amongst those with higher studies than those with only secondary levels of education and below. In Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Bulgaria, France, Austria, Italy, Belgium and Spain, those with high levels of education are around 10 percentage points more likely to strongly support the proposal than those with low levels of education. In Denmark, the education gap on this issue is extremely significant, with just 14% of those with low levels of education supporting the proposal, compared to a third of those with high levels. In the Netherlands and France, those with low levels of education are twice as likely to be unsure about their view on this issue, and in Denmark and Belgium, they are three times as likely to be uncertain.

In all member states except for Greece, support for sanctions is highest amongst those on the left of the political spectrum and weakest on the right. In Germany and Belgium, voters who place themselves on the left are around 10 percentage points more likely to strongly support the proposal than those on the right, who are in turn around 10 percentage points more likely to strongly oppose it. In Italy, where support is comparatively low across the board, the gap between the Left and the Right stands at 18 percentage points. In Hungary, Poland and Austria, the partisan gap is very significant, with left-wing voters around twice as likely to strongly support the proposal (42% to 19% in Hungary, 47% to 26% in Austria, 42% to just 13% in Poland). Greece is the only member state where more citizens on the right of the political spectrum strongly support this proposal (35%), compared to 25% of those on the left. The reticence amongst right-wing Europeans towards the Article 7

proposal is understandable, given that the governments being pursued by the EU under this legislation are affiliated with this side of the political spectrum. Greeks, however, associate the fiercest, and ultimately unsuccessful, battles they have witnessed in recent history between their national government and the EU as having been led by those on the Left. As such, the Right is more inclined to favour such interventions as a means of distinguishing themselves.

Surprisingly, a relationship between authoritarian and populist inclinations and the support or rejection of economic sanctions is not discernible, despite Article 7 having been triggered to address issues caused by this style of leadership. Considering the role that authoritarian predispositions and populist inclinations might play in this issue, Spain and Austria are the only two member states where any significant relationship can be observed between those with authoritarian dispositions and their reduced likelihood to support this proposal strongly. In other member states, no meaningful correlation is evident.
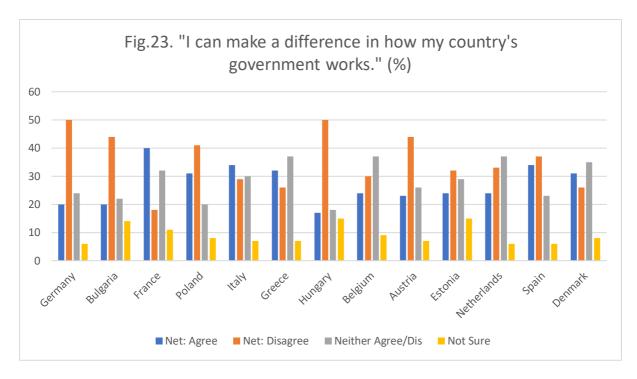
The relationship with populism is even more curious. Denmark conforms to expectations, with citizens harbouring populist views 11 percentage points less likely than other citizens to support the proposal. In Spain, Austria, Belgium and Poland, however, those who subscribe to populist principles are in fact *more* inclined to strongly support the proposal than other citizens. In Hungary and Bulgaria, citizens with populist views are almost twice as likely to strongly support the proposal as non-populists. These findings can appear confusing: is Article 7 not designed to curb the activities of leaders who seek to undermine established rules and conventions? It can be hypothesised that once again, the views of populist voters on this issue are complicated by the diversity of this group, many of whom do not necessarily support the right-wing populist parties that have fallen especially foul of Brussels, even if they do identify failings amongst the established political classes.

3.3.9. Democratic empowerment
More Europeans feel disempowered than empowered in their political systems. Citizens were asked to assess their levels of democratic empowerment by considering whether or not they felt they could make a difference in the functioning of their national government. The findings on this question reveal a relatively significant empowerment deficit within the member states, with just 7% of citizens strongly agreeing overall that they have a stake in national politics. While 27% of citizens either strongly or somewhat agree that they are empowered, 35% either somewhat or strongly disagree. Just as tellingly, a sizeable proportion of citizens (28%) are ambivalent, and a further 9% are unsure as to whether they hold political agency.

Empowerment is highest in countries with strong civic protest cultures and weakest in the newest democracies. Empowerment is highest in France, where 14% of citizens 'strongly agree' that they can make a difference in their national politics; in Spain at 12%; and in Greece at 11%. Each of these countries has seen substantial degrees of public protest and even unrest over recent years and boasts a vibrant culture of activism, protests and civic mobilisation. On the other side of the coin, empowerment is markedly lowest in Hungary, where more than a third (35%) of the population 'strongly disagrees' that they can make a difference, followed by 30% of Bulgarians and 25% of Germans. In Estonia, Hungary and Bulgaria – all post-communist states –, around 15% of citizens are unsure as to whether they hold political agency or not, which is around two or even three times higher than in other EU member states (see Figure 23). This suggests that democratic empowerment may take several generations to become embodied and fully experienced.

Fig.23. "I can make a difference in how my country's government works." (%)

N.B. Net figures include composite data points.

Individual perceptions of democratic empowerment appear to be highly mediated by a range of demographic factors. While the percentage of citizens with strong feelings of empowerment are low across the board, some consistent characteristics can be observed amongst those who are most likely to strongly disagree that they hold political agency.

The least empowered citizens are those with lower levels of education. In Denmark, Austria, France and Spain, older citizens are around 10 percentage points more likely to agree that they are empowered in their national political system. In Estonia and Bulgaria, however, it is the young who are most inclined to express a strong sense of agency to make a difference in the functioning of their government. In Germany, those with low levels of education are more than twice as likely (38% to 17%) than those with high levels of education to disagree strongly. In Hungary, however, it is those with the highest levels of education who are most likely to strongly disagree, thereby reflecting the relationship between education and political ideologies in this member state.

Contemporary political narratives of disempowerment and a corrupt elite shape citizens' belief in their own democratic agency. Contemporary political dynamics appear to play the most pivotal role in shaping perspectives on this subject. In Germany, where the far-right Alternative für Deutschland party has effectively championed a narrative of disempowerment which led to a considerable degree of electoral success,[89] those on the right of the political spectrum are more than twice as likely to strongly reject the notion that they can make a difference in the functioning of the German government. In Bulgaria, by contrast, 40% of those on the left strongly disagree with the suggestion that they hold political agency, compared to 18% of those on the right; and in Hungary, 52% of those on the left strongly disagree, compared to 29% of those on the right.

In Denmark where, at the time of the survey, the Social Democratic Party was in the ascendancy of the 2019 national elections it would go on to win,[90] left-wing voters were twice as likely to feel politically empowered than those on the right. In Greece, not a single survey respondent on the left of the political spectrum reported feeling a strong sense of empowerment, compared to 17% of those on the right. This likely reflects the profound disillusionment that left-wing voters felt towards their government after years of compromised power and ahead of the elections that would see the populist governing party swept from office.[91]

Authoritarianism, hostile sexism and populism are all closely linked to feelings of disempowerment and a lack of representation in democratic politics. Considering the relationship between democratic empowerment and hard-wired ideological viewpoints, some quite significant correlations are identifiable. In

Germany, citizens who demonstrate high levels of authoritarian attitudes are 11 percentage points more likely to strongly disagree that they can make a difference in their political system, and those with populist and anti-establishment viewpoints are 21 percentage points more likely to feel strongly disempowered. Moreover, those who exhibit tendencies towards hostile sexism are more than twice as likely, at 45% to 23% of the rest of the population, to feel strongly disempowered. Similar dynamics are displayed in Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and Denmark. This confirms a distinct and meaningful relationship between authoritarianism, hostile sexism and populism, and the diffuse political dysfunction and anti-establishment energy that are sweeping across Europe.

3.4. Conclusions

The picture painted by the findings of this research is one of deeply mixed fortunes for the democratic project at the heart of the Union. On the one hand, enthusiasm for consensus-driven forms of leadership rather than authoritarian approaches is evident, as is widespread interest in defending human rights. On the other hand, consistent support for democratic principles has eroded, democratic empowerment is at anaemic levels, trust in institutions is weak and large swathes of the EU population continue to disengage from the most crucial democratic act – voting in parliamentary elections.

Moreover, once we delve into the national and demographic distinctions beneath these overall averages, quite significant disparities of democratic engagement and functioning between and within member states becomes clear. The fact that women, younger Europeans and those with lower levels of education are reticent to engage in voting should alarm policymakers who seek to build an inclusive Union that speaks to the needs and interests of all voters. Previous research has demonstrated, for example, how citizens' voting activity builds habitual behaviour, whereby disengagement can become increasingly embedded.[92] Furthermore, support for democratic principles in less established democracies remains extremely vulnerable compared to the longer-standing democracies. The environment is clearly fragile, and there are certainly no political conventions that can be taken for granted as intrinsically enduring.

The merits and indeed the very definition of democracy have been deeply contested in the political upheaval of recent years. It feels as though we are standing on a precipice where the very architecture of our liberal democracies could begin to erode, perhaps even irretrievably. Given that it is the older generations who are most consistent in their support for democracy as a form of governance, there is an urgency to consider how policymakers in Brussels can make a more convincing argument for the future of representative democracy, while also taking seriously the evident need for reforms in areas such as transparency. In other words, to ensure that any evolution of the functioning and structure of the EU as a model and enforcer of democratic legitimacy is both inclusive and empowering, without undermining the security and stability offered by the historical parliamentary and consensus-driven approach. Treading this line is a delicate balance and will not be without its challenges. The EU will only ever be as strong as the foundations of democracy upon which it rests, and therefore, for those who fundamentally believe in the project, action is not a choice but a responsibility.

Recommendations for governance

Based on the findings of this survey, ten possible responses and principles for governance are set out, directed towards both EU institutions and national political leaders.

1. **European leaders must seriously consider the threat that nostalgia poses to our policymaking and political environments.**

As awareness of the social salience of nostalgic narratives has grown amongst political parties, leaders from all sides of the political spectrum in a wide variety of member states have sought to harness their emotive potential during election campaigns. In a national context, leaders should be aware of the dangers of indulging such a powerful evocation of the past to the capacity to build support and consent towards addressing future challenges. European institutions that are vulnerable to a perception of 'crisis politics' should also consider their role in promoting forward-looking agendas, to ensure that the EU can anticipate emerging obstacles to governance and effectively deploy its collective strength towards regional and global issues.

2. **Citizens' propensity for nostalgia lies in their dissatisfaction with contemporary social, economic and political settlements.**

Traditional politicians will find it difficult to forge compelling messages about their policy agendas or restore degraded levels of trust without addressing the sources of citizens' dissatisfaction in the present. As our survey demonstrates, concerns are spread across a number of different policy areas (e.g. the trajectory of the economy and job opportunities, the state of communities, the global standing of the nation), but they also come together in a powerful, more diffuse sense of dissatisfaction and alienation.

Simply forging ahead without acknowledging that the policy approaches of the past – whether on globalisation, migration policy or restrictions to the franchise of national welfare states, for example – have borne winners and losers will only entrench the sense that politicians have become divorced from the reality of ordinary people's lives. This is not simply a matter of 'communicating policies more effectively', but being open to considering that the received wisdom of the past, the settlements it created and the promises it offered must be revisited.

Moreover, our survey finds distinct demographic characteristics that correlate with a higher propensity for nostalgic sentiments. Particularly those with lower levels of education, the unemployed and those living outside of major urban areas are clearly less convinced that the architects of our multicultural and globalised societies are sufficiently inclusive and responsive to their needs. In the first instance, these patterns indicate that policy and political levers should especially target citizens and communities at risk of alienation and disengagement from the contemporary economic and social settlement, in the manner of the state providing a more robust 'safety net' to the power of market forces. More broadly, policymakers must take seriously the risks to governance posed by encouraging and permitting social change at a pace and of a nature, which can only command a deeply polarised degree of consent.

3. **The global financial crisis has left a profound impact on the capacity of citizens to trust their political system to deliver benefits in the future.**

Our survey makes clear that citizens of member states that were particularly exposed to the 2008 financial crisis continue to be the most vulnerable to nostalgic impulses. These findings underscore the 'long tail' of the crisis, both in terms of its impact on individual and collective economic securities, as well as its substantive influence on citizens' trust in the model on which national growth and prosperity had been predicated. Furthermore, citizens are especially concerned about the degree of economic inequality, which they perceive to have metabolised in the aftermath of the financial crisis – especially women, who appear to stand on the frontline of economic fragility.

Politicians must consider the lessons of the crisis, and not only through the lens of the need for structural changes (e.g. increasing robust regulatory environments) but also in terms of what its consequences reveal about the responsibility of governments to educate citizens on the trade-offs underpinning our models of economic growth and the irreversibly interconnected nature of the global economy. With the fourth industrial revolution at Europe's doorstep, another significant transition lies ahead, bearing uneven opportunities and challenges across segments of the population still reeling from the disruption wrought from the financial crisis.

Policymakers must heed their knowledge of the grave democratic implications of poor change management and stand on the frontline of anticipating and proactively managing the disruption that this new wave of technological and economic upheaval will necessarily inspire.

4. **Economic liberalisation has been successful in stoking optimism, security and prosperity when it has been accompanied by effective governance.**

Estonia repeatedly stands out in our survey as a beacon of what can be achieved – politically, economically and socially – when nations find a distinct competitive advantage in the global economy and successfully organise their government to help fulfil their ambitions. Its successes in delivering widespread relative prosperity are clearly visible, as are the important consequences this holds for citizens' levels of trust, optimism and social cohesion.

5. **Politicians should consider how to tackle social segregation and encourage communities to thrive.**

European citizens are very perceptive to shifts in their communities, and our survey confirms the relationship between the belief in community decline and broader dissatisfaction with contemporary politics. Previous research also indicates that in fact, this particular concern about communities captures a multifaceted spectrum of issues, including elderly social isolation, anxieties about technology and growing cultural and socioeconomic segregation. Many of these issues not only reflect the changes in how people live, work and create families, but can also stem from the consequences of misguided or careless policymaking – in particular, a lack of consideration for the deeply intertwined relationship between industry and community, and a dearth of investment in managing transitions to a more globalised economy. Politicians must ensure that the importance of 'place' becomes a more central aspect of their policy consciousness and that greater investments are made to facilitate social integration within and between communities.

Citizens' concerns about community also extend to the nation: our survey indicates that Europeans – and particularly older citizens – are anxious about social polarisation and seek a greater sense of unity and shared purpose. There is a clear opportunity for politicians who can resist the temptation to foster competition and conflict between social groups to lead national and European conversations about shared values, purpose and identity in a modern world. Our survey suggests that the expression of a civic-based form of patriotism should form part of this narrative, with citizens' enduring identification with their nations harnessed inclusively rather than be presented as a binary choice between xenophobic nationalism and a pluralistic European future.

6. **Intergenerational conflict is likely to reach a fever pitch over the coming years, so politicians must consider how to create more balanced policy environments.**

Over recent decades, policymaking has become too focused on the needs and interests of the older generations and those able to accrue capital assets such as housing and pension funds. There is an urgent need to redistribute the balance of citizens' political power in Europe by ensuring that both national and EU-level policymakers take seriously the concerns of the younger generations, and redress the deep generational imbalances in access to many of the foundational building blocks of our societies. The issues of climate change and housing ownership are likely to stand as particularly significant battlegrounds in the short- and medium-term.

This process of redistribution will understandably be fraught with conflict as older citizens grow anxious that their own preferences and needs are being made secondary; however, moving forward, it is simply unsustainable for such imbalances in political agency and representation to exist. Nonetheless, politicians must of course also ensure that in seeking to restore the intergenerational contract, they do not contribute to further social and political isolation amongst vulnerable older populations, which are already sensitive to economic inequality and feel 'left behind'.

7. **EU politicians must acknowledge that cultural anxieties about immigration are widespread and that there is no singular story on immigration sentiment.**

Our survey underscores the degree to which concerns about immigration and its cultural and practical implications are deeply entrenched across Europe. Moreover, that there is no singular demographic group

across the EU that as a whole specifically represents the apex of immigration anxieties: while older Europeans in Western and Northern Europe are the most hostile to immigration, it is the younger generations in Eastern and Central Europe which hold the highest levels of concern. As such, immigration anxieties cannot be dismissed as a niche preoccupation, nor can any particular demographic be depicted as especially intransigent in their views on a political level. The heterogeneous nature of immigration concern compels a complex range of responses across both the policymaking and political arenas in order to securitise citizens and rebuild their trust in governments' capacity to lead on this policy area.

8. **Politicians must convince all of their voters that the latter's voices matter in a representative democracy.**

While optimism can be drawn from this research regarding the relatively resilient support for democracy in Europe, it is deeply inconsistent both within and between member states. Many citizens are disenchanted with representative democracy and remain unconvinced that their voices can make a difference. Politicians should be especially concerned at how this disenfranchisement manifests in voter turnouts, with women and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds especially dissuaded about their political efficacy.

Policymakers must urgently consider the full suite of positions, responses and agendas that is offered to their electorates, and how they can coalesce to present a feeling of alienation towards certain demographic groups. Moreover, focused attention should be directed towards the ways in which women, minorities and those without further education are represented within the political class.

More broadly, it is clear that representative democracy is currently under siege from a powerful populist movement taking hold of Europe, purporting to address citizens' feelings of disengagement through the more 'responsive' systems of direct democracy. In more fragile and/or recent democracies, our survey demonstrates that citizens remain sceptical of its supremacy as a political model. In order for representative democracy – the basis of our liberal democratic model, seeded in the West and exported to the world – to endure such an environment, citizens must be convinced that it provides sufficient scope for accountability, transparency and receptiveness.

It is also evident from our survey that many of the tenets of liberal democracy are increasingly becoming politicised in a partisan manner. Politicians who feel frustrated with the functioning of national democracies and the EU more generally should seek to promote reforms rather than challenge conventions and norms that served as critical underpinnings and safeguards for decades, or even centuries. They should also take guidance in the lesson learnt from our survey results: citizens across all of the surveyed member states value the principles of compromise, consensus-building and human rights, and a number of them would feel especially compelled to support candidates who emphasise these qualities in their election platforms.

9. **EU leaders and national leaders should help to support trust in one another's democratic institutions.**

The combative approach of some national leaders towards the EU creates a temptation for the EU, in turn, to also regard national leaders as obstacles to their success. This symbiotic cycle of blame may provide short-term benefits to any side at a particular time, but it also threatens, in the longer term, to erode citizens' trust in both levels of institutions.

Our survey reveals that Europe is increasingly divided between 'the trusting' and 'the untrusting', with those who trust national parliaments to also likely trust the European Parliament and vice versa. This close relationship suggests that EU leaders who are concerned with the anaemic levels of trust in their institutions should consider how they can support national leaders to cultivate and uphold trust in their respective parliaments, courts and other major democratic institutions.

10. **The EU should help to foster active civil society environments in member states.**

When asked about the degree to which they feel their voice can make a difference in their national political environments, citizens of countries with diverse and active civil society groups and lively traditions of peaceful protest were more likely to recognise a strong sense of political agency. While the EU has come to recognise

that civil society is important to a nation's democratic health and functioning, this suggests that it also has a direct impact on citizens, thus providing the essential 'connective tissue' to fostering political engagement.

Appendix

A number of the findings discussed within the report have been drawn from the composite data of a series of related thematic questions. Statements were randomised when presented to the respondents.

1. Hostile sexism

The following statements concern women, men and their contemporary social relationships. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

- *Many women are actually seeking special favours, such as hiring policies that advantage them over men, under the guise of asking for 'equality'.*
- *Women are too easily offended.*
- *Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.*
- *When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.*

2. Authoritarianism

Although there are a number of qualities that people feel children should have, every person thinks that some qualities are more important than others. Below are pairs of desirable qualities. For each pair, please indicate which quality you think is more important for a child to have.

- *Independence v. Respect for elders*
- *Good manners v. Curiosity*
- *Self-reliance v. Obedience*
- *Being considerate v. Being well-behaved*

3. Populism

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- *The members of the [NAME OF COUNTRY'S PARLIAMENT] need to follow the will of the people.*
- *The people should have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums.*
- *The people should be consulted whenever important decisions are taken.*
- *The differences between the people and the elites are much greater than the differences between ordinary people.*
- *Members of the [NAME OF COUNTRY'S PARLIAMENT] very quickly lose touch with the people.*
- *Ordinary people in my country pull together.*
- *Ordinary people in my country share the same values and interests.*

4. Democracy

Various types of political systems will be described. For each one, please indicate whether you believe that this system is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing your country.

- *Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with the [NAME OF COUNTRY'S PARLIAMENT] and general elections.*
- *Having the army rule [NAME OF COUNTRY].*
- *Having a democratic political system in [NAME OF COUNTRY].*

How important is it to you to live in a country …?
- *that is governed democratically;*
- *that has a free press;*
- *where people respect [NAME OF COUNTRY'S] traditions;*
- *with a free and independent judicial system.*

Which of these statements comes closest to your view?
- *Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.*
- *In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable.*
- *For someone like me, it does not matter what kind of government we have.*

Endnotes

[1] De Vries, Catherine E. and Isabell Hoffmann (2018), "The Power of the Past: How Nostalgia Shapes European Public Opinion", Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung.

[2] Okulicz-Kozaryn, Adam (2014), "Winners and Losers in Transition: Preferences for Redistribution and Nostalgia for Communism in Eastern Europe", *Kyklos*, Volume 67, Issue 3, pp.447-461.

[3] For a comparative explanation of the impact of the financial crisis on economic optimism, see Stokes, Bruce (2018), "A Decade After the Financial Crisis, Economic Confidence Rebounds in Many Countries", Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center.

[4] See e.g. the seminal works of Robertson, Roland (1992), Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture, SAGE Publications; Harvey, David (1990), The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change, Blackwell Publishers; Castles, Stephen (2000), *Ethnicity and Globalization*, SAGE Publications.

[5] Kenny, Michael (2017), "Back to the populist future?: Understanding nostalgia in contemporary ideological discourse", *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Volume 22, Issue 3, Part II, pp.256-273.

[6] Matejova, Miriam (2018), "Why was 'communism better'? Rethinking inequality and the communist nostalgia in Central Europe", *Journal of Comparative Politics*, Volume 11, Number 1, pp.66-83.

[7] Smeekes, Anouk (2015), "National nostalgia: A group-based emotion that benefits the in-group but hampers intergroup relations", *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Volume 49, pp.54-67.

[8] Duyvendak, Jan Willem (2011), *The Politics of Home: Belonging and nostalgia in Western Europe and the US*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

[9] Hochschild, Arlie R. (2016), *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and mourning on the American Right*, New York: The New Press.

[10] Krastev, Ivan, "What Do Europeans Really Want?", *The New York Times*, 01 May 2019.

[11] Kingsley, Patrick, "How tiny Estonia stepped out of USSR's shadow to become an internet titan", *The Guardian*, 15 April 2012.

[12] Zankina, Emiliana and Boris Gurov (2018), "Nations in Transit: Bulgaria Country Profile", Freedom House; *Reporters Without Borders*, "Bulgaria" (accessed November 2019).

[13] See e.g. Traub, James, "The Regression of Viktor Orban", *Foreign Affairs*, 31 October 2015; Pinkham, Sophie, "No Direction Home", *The New Republic*, 03 May 2018.

[14] Hann, Chris (2015), "Why postimperial trumps postsocialist: Crying back the national past in Hungary" in Olivia Angé and David Berliner (eds.), *Anthropology and Nostalgia*, Berghahn Books, pp.96-123; Kürti, László (2016), "Nomadism and Nostalgia in Hungary" in Palmberger Monika and Jelena Tošić (eds.), *Memories on the Move: Experiencing mobility, rethinking the past*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, London.

[15] Gaston, Sophia (2018), "At Home in One's Past: Nostalgia as a Cultural and Political Force in Britain, France and Germany", London: Demos.

[16] See e.g. European Commission (2013), Eurobarometer: Effects of the Economic and Financial Crisis on Public Opinion.

[17] See e.g. Putnam, Robert D. (2000), *Bowling Alone: The collapse and revival of American commu*nity. New York: Simon & Schuster.

[18] Fihel, Agnieszka and Marek Okólski (2019), "Population decline in the post-communist countries of the European Union", *Population and Societies*, Volume 567; Hospers, Gert-Jan and Nol Reverda (2015), *Managing population decline in Europe's urban and rural areas*, Springer; Krastev, Ivan, "3 Versions of Europe Are Collapsing at the Same Time", *Foreign Policy*, 10 July 2018.

[19] Waters, Sarah (2013), "The 2008 Economic Crisis and the French Narrative of National Decline: Une causalité diabolique", Modern & Contemporary France, Volume 21, Issue 3, pp.335-354.

[20] Gidron, Noam and Peter A. Hall (2017), "Populism as a Problem of Social Integration", Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 01 September 2017.

[21] McDermott, Sinead (2002), "Memory, Nostalgia, and Gender in A Thousand Acres", *Signs*, Volume 28, Number 1, pp.389-407.

[22] Greene, Gayle (1991), "Feminist Fiction and the Uses of Memory" in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Volume 16, Number 1, p.296.

[23] Liinason, Mia and Clara Marlijn Meijer (2018), "Challenging constructions of nationhood and nostalgia: Exploring the role of gender, race and age in struggles for women's rights in Scandinavia", *Women's History Review*, Volume 27, Issue 5, pp.729-753.

[24] See e.g. Shelton, Beth Anne (2006), "Gender and Unpaid Work" in Janet Saltzman Chafetz (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*, Boston: Springer, pp.375-390; Begley, Emer and Suzanne Cahill (2003), "Carers: Why women?", *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, Volume 92, Number 366, pp.162-171.

[25] The most comprehensive data is collected in the UK by the National Council of Volunteering Organisations; see *National Council of Volunteering Organisations*, "What are the demographics of volunteers?" (accessed November 2019). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development also measures volunteering internationally, including across Europe, via the Gallup World Poll; see *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*, "Women are catching up to men in volunteering, and they engage in more altruistic voluntary activities" (accessed November 2019).

26 Gálvez-Muñoz, Lina; Paula Rodríguez-Modroño and Tindara Addabbo (2013), "The impact of European Union austerity policy on women's work in Southern Europe," Modena: University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. Mendoza, Ronald U. (2011), "Crises and inequality: Lessons from the global food, fuel, financial and economic crises of 2008-10", *Global Policy*, Volume 2, pp.259-271. United Nations (2009). '2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development', DESA: Department of Economic and Social Affairs. European Women's Lobby (2012), "The price of austerity – The impact on women's rights and gender equality in Europe", Brussels.

27 Johnston, Richard; Keith Banting; Will Kymlicka and Stuart Soroka (2010), "National Identity and Support for the Welfare State", *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Volume 43, Number 2, pp.349-377.

28 Smolentseva, Anna (2012), "Access to Higher Education in the Post-Communist States: Between Soviet Legacy and Global Challenges", Salzburg Global Seminars, Salzburg, 02-07 October 2012.

29 See e.g. van Neuss, Leif (2016), "The Economic Forces Behind Deindustrialization: An Empirical Investigation", Liège: University of Liège; Lee, Cheol-Sung, "International Migration, Deindustrialization and Union Decline in 16 Affluent OECD Countries, 1962-1997", *Social Forces*, Volume 84, Issue 1, pp.71-88; Sabatino, Michele (2016), "The de-industrialization process in South Italy and the new industrial policies in Europe", Louvain-la-Neuve: European Regional Science Association.

30 Kitsantonis, Niki, "Greece, 10 Years Into Economic Crisis, Counts the Cost to Mental Health", *The New York Times*, 03 February 2019.

31 Sahgal, Neha, "10 key findings about religion in Western Europe", *Pew Research Center*, 29 May 2018.

32 Assari, Shervin (2013), "Race and Ethnicity, Religion Involvement, Church-based Social Support and Subjective Health in United States: A Case of Moderated Mediation", *International Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Volume 4, Number 2, pp.208-217.

33 See e.g. Sobolewska, Maria, "Religion and politics among ethnic minorities in Britain", *British Religion in Numbers*, 01 June 2011.

34 Berman, Russel, "As White Americans Give Up on the American Dream, Blacks and Hispanics Embrace It", *The Atlantic*, 04 September 2015; Rosentiel, Tom; "The Optimistic Immigrant", *Pew Research Center*, 30 May 2006.

35 Scott, Allen J. (2001), "Globalization and the Rise of City-regions", *European Planning Studies*, Volume 9, Issue 7, pp.813-826.

36 Wishlade, Fiona (2019), "The rise of populism, regional disparities and the regional policy response", Glasgow: European Policies Research Centre; Rachman, Gideon, "Urban-rural splits have become the great global divider", *Financial Times*, 30 July 2018.

37 Grün, Gianna-Karina, "How young voters matter in European Parliament elections", *Deutsche Welle*, 23 May 2019.

38 Sironi, Maria (2018), "Economic Conditions of Young Adults Before and After the Great Recession", *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, Volume 39, Issue 1, pp.103-116.

39 Beioley, Kate, "European city living gets less affordable", *Financial Times*, 30 May 2019. See also Filandri, Marianna and Sonia Bertolini (2016), "Young people and home ownership in Europe", *International Journal of Housing Policy*, Volume 16, Issue 2, pp.144-164. For a more data-oriented perspective, see Eurostat (2018), "Young people – housing conditions".

40 Finnish Centre for Pensions, "Retirement ages in different countries", 16 May 2019.

41 *The Economist*, "Why are happy people voting for angry parties?", 11 July 2019.

42 Alabrese, Eleonora; Sascha O. Becker; Thiemo Fetzer and Dennis Novy (2019), "Who voted for Brexit? Individual and regional data combined", *European Journal of Political Economy*, Volume 56, pp.132-150.

43 Ford, Robert and Matthew Goodwin, "White face, blue collar, grey hair: the 'left behind' voters only Ukip understands", *The Guardian*, 05 March 2014.

44 Goerres, Achim (2007), "Why are Older People More Likely to Vote? The Impact of Ageing on Electoral Turnout in Europe", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Volume 9, Issue 1, pp.90-121.

45 Fuller, Gregory W.; Alison Johnston and Aidan Regan (2020), "Housing prices and wealth inequality in Western Europe", *West European Politics*, Volume 43, Issue 2, pp.297-320.

46 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010), "A Family Affair: Intergenerational Social Mobility across OECD Countries" in *Economic Policy Reforms: Going for Growth 2010*, Paris, Pt.II, Ch.5.

47 Bennett, Fran (2008), "Distribution within the household" in Richard Berthoud and Francesca Zantomio (eds.), *Measuring Poverty: Seven key issues*, Colchester: Institute for Social & Economic Research, Ch.6. Hills, John; Mike Brewer; Stephen Jenkins; Ruth Lister; Ruth Lipton; Stephan Machin; Colin Mills; Tariq Modood; Teresa Rees and Sheila Riddell (2010), "An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK: Report of the National Equality Panel", London: National Equality Panel; Perrons, Diane (2015), "Gendering the inequality debate", *Gender & Development*, Volume 23, Issue 2, pp.207-222. Elson, Diane and Nilufer Cagatay (2000), "The Social Content of Macroeconomic Policies", *World Development*, Volume 28, Issue 7, pp.1347-1364. Sigle-Rushton, Wendy and Jane Waldfogel (2007), "Motherhood and Women's Earnings in Anglo-American, Continental European, and Nordic Countries", *Feminist Economics*, Volume 13, Issue 2, pp.55-91.

48 Leszczynski, Adam, "It's a bad time to be young and Polish", *The Guardian*, 31 May 2011.

49 Roache, Madeline, "Poland Is Trying to Make Abortion Dangerous, Illegal, and Impossible", *Foreign Policy*, 08 January 2019.

50 *BBC News*, "Germany shocked by Cologne New Year gang assaults on women", 05 January 2016.

51 Glorius, Birgit; Izabela Grabowska-Lusińska and Aimee Kuvik (2013, eds.), *Mobility in transition: Migration patterns after EU enlargement*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

52 Leclerc, Chloe; Anta Niang and Marie-Chloé Duval (2018), "Understanding the Relationship Between Public Opinion and Experience With the Criminal Justice System", *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, Volume 30, Issue 3, pp.473-492. Hough, Mike; Ben Bradford; Jonathon Jackson and Julian R. Roberts (2013), "Attitudes to sentencing and trust in justice: exploring trends from the crime survey for England and Wales", London: Ministry of Justice.

53 Speed, Madeleine, "The battle to build a mosque in Athens", *Financial Times*, 01 February 2019.

54 See e.g. Peterson, V. Spike and Anne Sisson Runyan (1999), *Global Gender Issues* (2nd edition), Boulder: Westview Press. A useful summary of the relevant literature can be found in Kaufman, Joyce P. and Kristen P. Williams (2011), "Nationalism, Citizenship, and Gender", Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies.

55 Marchetti, Sabrina and Ruba Salih (2015), "Gender and Mobility across Southern and Eastern European Borders: 'Double Standards' and the Ambiguities of European Neighbourhood Policy", Rome: Istituto Affari Internazionali.

56 Martínez-Herrera, Enric and Thomas Jeffrey Miley (2010), "The constitution and the politics of national identity in Spain", *Nations and Nationalism*, Volume 16, Issue 1, pp.6-30; Medrano, Juan Díez and Paula Gutiérrez (2001), "Nested identities: National and European identity in Spain", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 24, Issue 5, pp.753-778; Paloma Aguilar and Carsten Humlebaek (2002), "Collective Memory and National Identity in the Spanish Democracy: The Legacies of Francoism and the Civil War", *History & Memory*, Volume 14, Number 1-2, pp.121-164.

57 European Commission (2019), Special Eurobarometer 490: Climate Change.

58 Youngs, Richard and Sarah Manney, "Recession and Renewal in European Democracy", Carnegie Europe, 26 February 2018.

59 Bellamy, Richard and Dario Castiglione (2013), "Three models of democracy, political community and representation in the EU", *Journal of European Public Policy*, Volume 20, Number 2, pp.206-223.

60 Schmidt, Vivien A. (2013), "Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union Revisited: Input, Output *and* 'Throughput'", *Political Studies*, Volume 61, Issue 1, pp.2-22.

61 See e.g. *European Commission*, "6 Commission priorities for 2019-24" (accessed 16 January 2020).

62 Hix, Simon, "Is the EU really run by unelected bureaucrats?", *Democratic Audit*, 23 June 2016.

63 Dennison, Susi; Mark Leonard and Adam Lury (2019), "What Europeans really feel: The battle for the political system", European Council on Foreign Relations.

64 Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina (2015), "Public Integrity and Trust in Europe", The Hague: Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.

65 Algan, Yann; Sergei Guriev; Elias Papaioannou and Evgenia Passari (2017), "The European Trust Crisis and the Rise of Populism", *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, Fall 2017, pp.309-400.

66 Foster, Chase and Jeffry Frieden (2017), "Crisis of Trust: Socio-economic determinants of Europeans' confidence in government", *European Union Politics*, Volume 18, Issue 4, pp.511-535.

67 Stewart, Katherine; Talitha Dubow; Joanna Hofman and Christian Van Stolk (2016), *Social change and public engagement with policy and evidence*, Cambridge: RAND Corporation.

68 Simmons, Katie; Laura Silver and Courtney Johnson (2017), "Transatlantic Dialogues: In Europe and North America, Publics More Supportive Than Experts of Direct Democracy", Washington DC: Pew Research Center.

69 European Social Survey (2014), "Europeans' Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy: Topline Results from Round 6 of the European Social Survey", London.

70 Pilet, Jean-Benoit (2007), "Choosing compulsory voting in Belgium: strategy and ideas combined", Colchester: European Consortium for Political Research.

71 Nielsen, Nikolaj, "The Gender Gap at EU Elections", *VoxEurope*, 25 March 2019. See also Public Opinion Monitoring Unit (2014), Post-Election Survey 2014. European Elections 2014: Socio-demographic Annex, Brussels: European Commission.

72 Chevalier, Tom (2019), "Political trust, young people and institutions in Europe. A multilevel analysis", *International Journal of Social Welfare*, Volume 28, Issue 4, pp.418-430.

73 See e.g. Henn, Matt and Nick Foard (2014), "Social differentiation in young people's political participation: The impact of social and educational factors on youth political engagement in Britain", *Journal of Youth Studies*, Volume 17, Issue 3, pp.360-380; Parvin, Phil (2018), "Democracy Without Participation: A New Politics for a Disengaged Era", *Res Publica*, Volume 24, Issue 1, pp.31-52.

74 Gallego, Aina (2009), "Where Else Does Turnout Decline Come From? Education, Age, Generation and Period Effects in Three European Countries", *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Volume 32, Issue 1, pp.23-44. Campante Filipe. R and Davin Chor (2012), "Schooling, Political Participation, and the Economy", *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, Volume 94, Number 4, pp.841-859. Nevitte, Neil; André Blais; Elisabeth Gidengil and Richard Nadeau (2009), "Socio-economic Status and Non-Voting" in Hans-Dieter Klingemann (ed.), *The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Ch.4.

75 Beatley, Meaghan, "Betting on Anti-feminism as a Winning Political Strategy", *The Atlantic*, 24 April 2019.

76 See e.g. Margolis, Hillary, "Speak Out to Protect Bulgaria's Women", Human Rights Watch, 10 October 2018.

77 See European Commission (2019), Digital Economy and Society Index Report 2019. See also Schulze, Elizabeth, "How a tiny country bordering Russia became one of the most tech-savvy societies in the world", *CNBC News*, 08 February 2019.

78 Menon, Anand and John-Paul Salter (2016), "Brexit: initial reflections", *International Affairs*, Volume 92, Issue 6, pp.1297-1318.

79 Grosse, Tomasz G. (2019), "What's With the EU? Considerations After 15 Years of Polish Membership", Warsaw: Warsaw Institute.

80 Galpin, Charlotte and Hans-Jörg Trenz (2019), "Converging towards Euroscepticism? Negativity in news coverage during the 2014 European Parliament elections in Germany and the UK", *European Politics and Society*, Volume 20, Issue 3, pp.260-276.

81 Goubin, Silke (2018), "Economic inequality, perceived responsiveness and political trust", *Acta Politica*, Volume 53, Issue 1, pp.1-38; Solt, Frederick (2008), "Economic Inequality and Democratic Political Engagement", *American Journal of Political Science*, Volume 52, Number 1, pp.48-60; Binelli, Chiara and Matthew Loveless (2014), "The Urban-Rural Divide: Perceptions of Inequality in Central and Eastern Europe", Waterloo, CA: Rimini Centre for Economic Analysis.

82 Schoene, Matthew (2019), "European disintegration? Euroscepticism and Europe's rural/urban divide", *European Politics and Society*, Volume 20, Issue 3, pp.348-364.

83 van Elsas, Erika J.; Armen Hakhverdian and Wouter van der Brug (2016), "United against a common foe? The nature and origins of Euroscepticism among left-wing and right-wing citizens", *West European Politics*, Volume 39, Issue 6, pp.1181-120. Halikiopoulou, Daphne; Kyriaki Nanou and Sofia Vasilopoulou (2012), "The paradox of nationalism: The common denominator of radical right and radical left Euroscepticism", *European Journal of Political Research*, Volume 51, Issue 4, pp.504-539. Meijers, Maurits J. (2017), "Radical Right and Radical Left Euroscepticism: A Dynamic Phenomenon", Berlin: Jacques Delors Institut.

84 See e.g. Enyedi, Zsolt (2018), "Democratic Backsliding and Academic Freedom in Hungary", *Perspectives on Politics*, Volume 16, Issue 4, pp.1067-1074; Krekó, Péter and Zsolt Enyedi (2018), "Explaining Eastern Europe: Orbán's Laboratory of Illiberalism", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 29; Issue 3, pp.39-51; Sedelmeier, Ulrich (2014), "Anchoring Democracy from Above? The European Union and Democratic Backsliding in Hungary and Romania after Accession", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 52, Issue 1, pp.105-121; Przybylski, Wojciech (2018), "Explaining Eastern Europe: Can Poland's Backsliding Be Stopped?", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 29, Issue 3, pp.52-64.

85 European Commission (2019), The EU's Rule of Law toolbox. See also Kochenov, Dimitry and Laurent Pech (2016), "Better Late than Never? On the European Commission's Rule of Law Framework and its First Activation", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 54, Issue 5, pp.1062-1074.

86 Levitz, Philip and Grigore Pop-Eleches (2010), "Monitoring, Money and Migrants: Countering Post-Accession Backsliding in Bulgaria and Romania", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Volume 62, Number 3, pp.461-479; Krastev, Ivan (2016), "What's wrong with East-Central Europe? Liberalism's failure to deliver", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 27, Issue 1, pp.35-38.

87 Halmai, Gábor (2018), "The possibility and desirability of economic sanction: Rule of law conditionality requirements against illiberal EU Member States", San Domenico di Fiesole: European University Institute.

88 Young, Rebekah (2012), "Don't Know Responses in Survey Research", Doctor of Philosophy, State College: Pennsylvania State University.

89 Decker, Franck (2016), "The 'Alternative for Germany': Factors Behind its Emergence and Profile of a New Right-wing Populist Party", *German Politics and Society*, Volume 34, Issue 2, pp.1-16; Olsen, Jonathon (2018), "The Left Party and the AFD: Populist Competitors in Eastern Germany", *German Politics and Society*, Volume 36, Issue 1, pp.70-83; Hansen, Michael A. and Jonathon Olsen (2019), "Flesh of the Same Flesh: A Study of Voters for the Alternative for Germany (AfD) in the 2017 Federal Election", *German Politics*, Volume 28, Issue 1, pp.1-19.

90 Henley, Jon (2019), "Centre-left Social Democrats victorious in Denmark elections", *The Guardian*, 05 June 2019.

91 Pelagidis, Theodore, "Greek elections: The first defeat of populism in Europe?", The Brookings Institute, 10 July 2019.

92 Franklin, Mark N. (2004), *Voter turnout and the dynamics of electoral competition in established democracies since 1945*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.