

Future of Europe



Gaining Insights Into the Gender Gap and Orientations of Young European Citizens: An Analysis of Longitudinal Glocalities Survey Data From Eight European Countries

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This report examines the perceptions, aspirations, and challenges faced by young Europeans, focusing on the widening gender gap and shifting value orientations. Based on comprehensive longitudinal Glocalities survey data from eight European countries, it reveals a growing divergence in values between young men and women, with young women increasingly embracing liberal and anti-patriarchal ideals, while young men lean towards traditional and conservative ideologies. This divergence poses a significant challenge to the conventional view of a uniformly progressive youth demographic. The study highlights the critical dimensions of hope versus despair and freedom versus control, which illuminate generational and gender-specific differences in (political) behavior. It uncovers a troubling trend of pessimism and societal dissatisfaction among young men aged 18–29, leading to decreased engagement, increased polarization, and the rise of right-wing populist movements. Young women have also been experiencing increasing despair, even more so than men. Economic and educational disparities further exacerbate these feelings, as structural changes in the global economy disproportionately impact young citizens, limiting job opportunities in traditional sectors. Despite these challenges, there is the potential for centrist parties to reclaim leadership by addressing generational divides, fostering inclusive narratives, and promoting trust in liberal democratic systems. By involving young people in substantive roles and by addressing their concerns, it is possible to reinforce European values and navigate the complexities of the future, while at the same time acknowledging the challenges and uncertainties that lie ahead.



Table of contents

Executive summary	5
Gender matters: the political orientation of young Europeans	6
Introduction and major findings	6
Recommendations	9
The challenge: an increasing gender gap in values	11
Developments in Europe in the last decade	13
Looking at age and gender combined	13
A widening gap between young men and young women	15
Relationship between education, emancipation and (lack of) hope	16
The intersection of age, gender and education	17
The national and global concerns of citizens	20
Citizens' concerns about issues in their country	20
Citizens' concerns about global issues	21
Understanding the factors driving social trends	23
Economic concerns are the main drivers of hope and despair	23
Mapping the social values landscape of European society	25
Younger citizens in relation to the rest of the society	25
Towards more resonant and resilient policies and leadership	26
Communicating policies through stories that connect	26
Considering citizens' life aspirations and worldviews	30
Providing leadership that motivates and resonates with citizens	31
Putting it all together	33
It is not only social divisions that must be acknowledged	33
Values-based communication to build connections with disillusioned citizens	33
Economic stability and growth remain at the forefront of citizens' minds	33
Facilitating and building upon the strengths of the younger generation	34
Blending different leadership styles with a clear vision	34
Building on the strength of civil society and social relationships	34
Overcoming divisions and strengthening the European way of life	34
Appendix: methodology	35
The Glocalities research programme	35
Explanation of the two-dimensional model	36
Bibliography	37
About the authors	40

Foreword

There is no politics without public service and no public service without people to serve. Being the party of the people of Europe, the European People's Party (EPP) must never be just a metaphor—rather it is a constant reminder that people are both the starting point and the goal of our political mission. This mission is anchored in a solid, enduring framework of values and principles. Through this ethical commitment, we engage in decision-making on behalf of the citizens we serve. With this conviction, we must consider the importance and relevance of the study *Gaining Insights Into the Gender Gap and Orientations of Young European Citizens: An Analysis of Longitudinal Glocalities Survey Data From Eight European Countries*.

Understanding the social and political dynamics shaping young Europeans is essential to building the future of Europe—a future we seek to uphold, grounded in democracy, freedom, economic progress, and the pursuit of both individual and collective fulfilment in the timeless quest for happiness.

This study provides a unique opportunity to deepen our understanding of the perceptions and expectations of the younger generations and the challenges they face. Its strategic relevance is undeniable, and I extend my gratitude to the authors and to the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies for their boldness and technical excellence in delivering this work.

At a time when political parties and their representatives must reconsider priorities and strategies, studies like this become indispensable. They help shape political agendas and guide public choices. The detailed examination of gender differences and political orientations among youth offers a solid foundation for informed policymaking—supporting initiatives that reflect the genuine needs and aspirations of our society.

Including the voices of young people in political discourse is fundamental to the sustainability of democracy and the European way of life. For today's youth, token consultation is no longer enough. Their demand to be part of decision-making processes is not just about fairness—it has become a vital condition for building a Europe that holds promise for the future.

The perceptions and expectations of this generation influence both our present and our future. Ignoring these voices would weaken the adaptability and resilience of our democratic institutions. Over the years, as young people have become increasingly active in our communities, the Youth of the EPP has not only amplified diverse youth perspectives within the EPP but has also advocated for and contributed to the very social and political changes highlighted in this study.

Readers may find some of the study's conclusions surprising:

- *The Gender Gap in Values*. While society continues to advance towards true equality and dignity for all, young women are increasingly embracing liberal and anti-patriarchal values. In contrast, young men—facing both a lack of clear expectations and uncertainty about their social roles—are

gradually returning to traditional values and conservative ideologies. These findings underscore that ‘youth’ does not refer to a single, homogeneous group but to a deeply diverse demographic where gendered value systems are increasingly diverging.

- *The Dichotomy Between Hope and Despair.* Many young people feel disconnected due to the absence of mainstream political solutions. Youth agendas are often shaped by vocal minority groups, while the majority remains silent or indifferent. As a result, young men (ages 18–29) are showing growing pessimism and social discontent—leading to political disengagement, increased polarization and the rise of right-wing populist movements.
- *Economic and Educational Factors.* Innovation and knowledge are central to modern societal and economic development. Yet, the gap is widening between those equipped to thrive in a knowledge-based economy and those left behind. Structural changes in the global economy have disproportionately affected young men, with diminishing opportunities in traditional sectors. Education systems have not adapted adequately, deepening feelings of exclusion and frustration.
- *The Rise of Populism.* The accelerating pace of global change, combined with the rising demands for skills and knowledge, has left many young people feeling out of place. For some, especially young men, this sense of alienation has driven them away from liberal values and towards populist narratives—offering alternative visions in stark contrast to a digital reality filled with unreachable promises.

One of the defining challenges of our time is also a generational one: the challenge of defence. How can Europe strengthen its defence by engaging young people in patriotic and meaningful roles related to security and military service? As we confront this and other urgent questions raised in the study, I invite readers to reflect seriously on its findings. Whether those reflections inspire resolve or concern, addressing these intergenerational challenges is vital.

This report does more than raise awareness—it is a vital call to action. It speaks directly to the political future of the EPP and the long-term viability of the European way of life we all seek to uphold. It emphasises the urgent need for centrist parties to lead the way: bridging generational divides, promoting inclusive narratives and rebuilding trust in liberal democratic institutions. In the absence of a compelling and reformist agenda from Europe’s democratic left, this responsibility falls on our political family.

Today, as always, we are ready to do the work. Serving the people is at the heart of who we are—it is in our DNA.

The analysis presented in this study not only illuminates the key issues facing today’s youth but also offers a strategic vision for strengthening the EPP’s commitment to a more just, inclusive and future-ready Europe. Through initiatives like this, we ensure that European values remain strong and continue to guide us towards a brighter tomorrow.

Lídia Pereira, Member of the European Parliament (Portugal) and Chairwoman of the Youth of the EPP

Executive summary

This report analyses longitudinal Glocalities survey data from eight European countries to explore the widening gender gap and shifting value orientations among younger European citizens. It examines how these trends impact political attitudes, societal engagement and the rise of populist movements. The study identifies two key dimensions—hope versus despair and freedom versus control—to better explain generational and gender-specific differences in political behaviour.

The key findings are the following:

1. *Gender gap in values.* A growing divide exists between young men and young women in Europe. Young women increasingly embrace liberal and anti-patriarchal values, while young men's attitudes are shifting in favour of traditional values and conservative ideologies. This trend challenges the conventional notion of a uniformly progressive youth.
2. *Hope and despair.* The younger generations, particularly men aged 18–29, are increasingly expressing pessimism and societal dissatisfaction. This disillusionment has led to declining political engagement, societal polarisation and the rise of right-wing populist movements.
3. *Economic and educational factors.* Structural changes in the global economy have disproportionately negatively impacted young men, leading to fewer job opportunities in industrial sectors. Education systems have also failed to address disparities. Both developments are further exacerbating feelings of being left behind.
4. *Rise of populism.* The alienation of young men from liberal values has created fertile ground for right-wing populist rhetoric, which offers alternative narratives and visions of society.

In contrast to other studies, our research used the psychological concept of archetypes and clustered the population into 12 types to better understand identity formation and political preferences. The results show significant differences between young men and women, as well as between younger generations and broader society.

The findings of the report underscore the need for centrist parties to reclaim leadership by addressing generational divides, fostering inclusive narratives and promoting trust in liberal democratic systems. If not addressed properly and in a timely manner, there is a high risk of the further alienation of young people from mainstream politics and the continued rise of extremist movements.

Gender matters: the political orientation of young Europeans

Introduction and major findings

It is only quite recently that the political orientation and voting behaviour of young people, in particular of young men, has received wider attention, both from political scientists and in public debate.¹ Psychologists and educational experts have been warning us for years about the dramatic challenges young people, and not only those in Western societies,² are facing—and the Covid-19 pandemic is only the most recent event to affect the younger generation.³ The political class has now been shaken awake by the outcomes at the ballot box.

Several studies have consistently found a predisposition toward pessimism and societal unhappiness among young people, particularly those aged 18 to 29. These attitudes have enormous ramifications for European political systems, as they are among the key causes of withdrawal from political/societal engagement, polarisation, and the rise of radical right- and left-wing anti-establishment movements.⁴ The major shift among young males towards voting for right-wing populist parties has contributed to this tendency. It has raised concerns that democracy is losing (a part of) a generation. Our study also shows that there is a significant gender difference between young women and men, which calls into question the traditional conception (and myth) of a left-leaning, progressive youth. Young women are still embracing liberal and anti-patriarchal values, while young males are increasingly adhering to traditional ones.

There are plenty of socio-economic explanations for this development and how it has transformed into shifts in political attitudes and voting behaviour.⁵ This study takes a different approach. It follows earlier research on global values changes that the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies published in cooperation with Glocalities International. We believe that analysing how citizens position themselves along various ‘values axes’ can allow us to predict their political behaviour quite reliably

¹ Examples for Germany include M. Calmbach et al., *Sinus Jugendstudie 2024*, Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung (2024); Shell, *Jugendstudie 2024* (2024); for an analysis of the situation in the US, see R. V. Reeves, *Of Boys and Men* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2022).

² *Economist*, ‘China’s Defeated Youth’, 17 August 2023.

³ P. Hefele, ‘Learning Loss and Educational Inequalities in Europe: How Is Europe Overcoming the Impact of the Pandemic’, in A. Klein and M. Sarma (eds.), *Education for Sustainable Development in Asia and Europe. A Comparative Perspective*, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (Singapore, 2023).

⁴ V. Emanuele and B. Marino, ‘Party System Ideological Polarisation in Western Europe: Data, Trends, Drivers, and Links With Other Key Party System Properties (1945–2021)’, *Political Research Exchange* 6/1 (2024).

⁵ For an overview, see T. Bale and C. R. Kaltwasser, *Riding the Populist Wave. Europe’s Mainstream Right in Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

over a longer period. This approach can also provide us with a direction for ‘political interventions’, as values not only play an important role in creating and communicating political narratives and visions, but also foster cohesion within societies.

In our analysis, we selected two major dimensions: (a) *hope and despair*, which represents how people see their individual and collective future; and (b) *freedom and control*, which covers various aspects of individual and social responsibility and ownership, political organisation and forms of participation. For both dimensions, methodologically reliable, long-term, cross-cultural and cross-regional data are available.⁶ In Europe, we looked at data from seven countries⁷ that can be considered important members of the EU in terms of political influence and their diversity of societal development and (party-)political systems.

In the past, dealing with gender-related issues has—for good reasons—focused on the (structural) disadvantages in society for girls and women. In recent years, attention has shifted towards the disadvantages for boys and young men in the education and employment systems.⁸ Recognising gender-specific issues and attitudes does not mean we should undo emancipation processes or return to traditional societies. But it is equally true that we can no longer ignore male-related problems for ideological reasons.

The intersection of age, gender, education level and employment (opportunities) is a strong explanatory element in identity-building, feelings of societal belonging, and motivation for active societal and political engagement. As this study shows, these dimensions of society are facing dramatic challenges and deteriorating in many aspects. The intergenerational gap, most significantly among males, is too large to be explained only through attitudinal changes during the lifetime. Several subjective and objective factors have created a less favourable environment for the development of young men. At the same time, political and economic changes have opened up new opportunities for women.⁹

Structural changes in the global economy have led to massive losses in job opportunities for less-qualified industrial employees, in particular men.¹⁰ The decisive factor has been the relative development of opportunities for women amidst this loss of positions for men, which has caused a strong sense of being left behind and a loss of hope among young men. This feeling of decline and despair is much less significant, yet not completely absent, among younger women. The older generation has

⁶ See the Appendix.

⁷ Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain.

⁸ P. Zimbardo and N. Coulombe, ‘Young Men and Society: We Will Only Get out What We Put in’, *Institute for Family Studies*, 21 February 2021; UNESCO, ‘Boys’ Disengagement From Education’ (2022).

⁹ It is important to note that girls and women still face dramatic disadvantages in terms of participation in education and equal payment, and making improvements in these areas requires continuous attention. See OECD, *Equity and Inclusion in Education* (2024).

¹⁰ For the US, see K. Harris, ‘Forty Years of Falling Manufacturing Employment’, *Employment & Unemployment* 9/16 (2020); for France, see L. Demus, ‘The Decline in Industrial Employment in France Between 1980 and 2007 – Scope and Main Determinants: An Assessment’, *Économie et Statistique* 438-439-440 (2011).

coped much better with these massive transformations, which is indicative of the crucial mental and material resources, as well as the structural advantages, they have accumulated over their lifetimes.

The gender difference gains political importance when we add the second dimension of *freedom versus control*, which also has a strong cultural aspect. This dimension assesses the various modes of coping with challenges and how this translates into political preferences. Despite all the difficulties in society today, such as housing or permanent labour contracts, young women still tend to embrace the emancipatory path and long for more openness and freedom. By contrast, young men seek stronger traditional values and are looking to the role models of the past.¹¹ At this point, right-wing populist rhetoric steps in, offering an alternative explanation for and vision of society.

Asking survey respondents for political or even party preferences provides only limited insights and predictions about mid- and long-term political orientation and is therefore rarely used in international comparative studies. Instead, for the second part of our study, we used a different method and, based on their responses, have measured the appeal of 12 archetypes.¹² An important strain of twentieth-century psychology strongly influenced our approach but has rarely been used to analyse political phenomena.¹³ However, we saw its unexploited potential not only for explaining gender- and generation-related behaviour, but also for offering recommendations for policymakers and their advisers. This methodology allowed us to see the significant differences between young women and young men, as well as those between the younger generation and wider society in terms of self-identification. Neither political communication strategies nor political leadership should ignore this landscape of diverse identities. The multidimensional challenges our political and socio-economic systems are facing—both domestically and in the highly competitive global environment—are largely perceived through these identities and shape the individual and collective response.

Based on our findings on archetypes, we also draw some conclusions about the kind of (democratic) political leadership that is needed to reinstate trust in our liberal political systems and open up new visions for the younger generation. Effective political leadership not only requires a specific personality, but is intrinsically linked to political narratives which explain the need for changes and motivate individual and collective action. It is apparent that the established parties in Western democracies have left a void space in terms of combining strong leadership and uniting narratives. This explains, to a large extent, the rise of right-wing populist forces, which have made a lot of effort to present themselves as alternatives in terms of both political leadership and ‘anti-elite’ narratives.

Strong leadership and comprehensive narratives are not, per se, inconsistent with liberal and democratic political systems. However, it is the responsibility of moderate, centrist parties to regain the space that has been left to extremists and to fight for the integration of all segments of society and, in this

¹¹ However, the majority of young men do not want to completely undo the emancipation processes. This is a ‘point of intervention’ for moderate conservative, centrist forces. See recommendations in Section 2.2.

¹² *Glocalities*, ‘Our Research Methodology’ (2025).

¹³ See Section 7.1.

way, legitimise liberal democracies. These parties were the ones in post-war Europe whose ‘grand narratives’, notwithstanding all the political disagreements, laid the groundwork for an extremely long period of political peace and economic prosperity. Failing to maintain these narratives will only lead to the further distancing of society, particularly the younger generation, from the current political and economic systems, thereby nourishing the continued growth of extremist movements and destabilising open and free societies.

Recommendations

Address the economic concerns of the younger generation

The deteriorating economic situation largely, but not entirely, explains the decline in hope, particularly among the younger generation. In addition to improving the overall conditions for economic recovery and entrepreneurship, the specific difficulties faced by young women and young men require considerably more focused and gender-specific responses.¹⁴

Bridge the education gap

The problems with the employment market are also the consequences of structural flaws in the education system. The level of education and the disparity between highly educated and less-educated people is a second crucial factor determining political attitudes and how susceptible people are to populist narratives. Young men, particularly, require a far more customised approach to education.

Engage young men and tap into their motivations

The feeling of no longer being a part of society, as well as having a lack of direction, is common among the younger generation. Politics and society must develop frameworks and programmes expressly geared to reconnect with people, and with young men in particular, to solve their issues and tap into their motivation in order to prevent them from turning to more radical political alternatives.

Promote gender and intergenerational equality

While it is important to take young men’s unique issues more seriously, other structural inequities, such as economic disparities based on gender or age, also require attention. The reasons for the overall decline in having a positive attitude with regard to the future transcend generational boundaries and can only be addressed collectively.

¹⁴ There are some very successful initiatives on the local and regional levels. A few noteworthy examples are the Youth Employment Partnership in Bavaria, Germany; Garanzia Giovani in Italy; Plan de Capacitación y Empleo in Spain; and Mission Locale in France.

Foster openness and egalitarianism

Parts of the younger generation are shifting their political views in favour of right-wing populism, but this does not necessarily imply a desire to revert to conventional or even reactionary societal models. There is still a widespread openness among genders and generations to alternative life philosophies. However, this openness can only be maintained by reducing income disparities and fostering a more cohesive society.

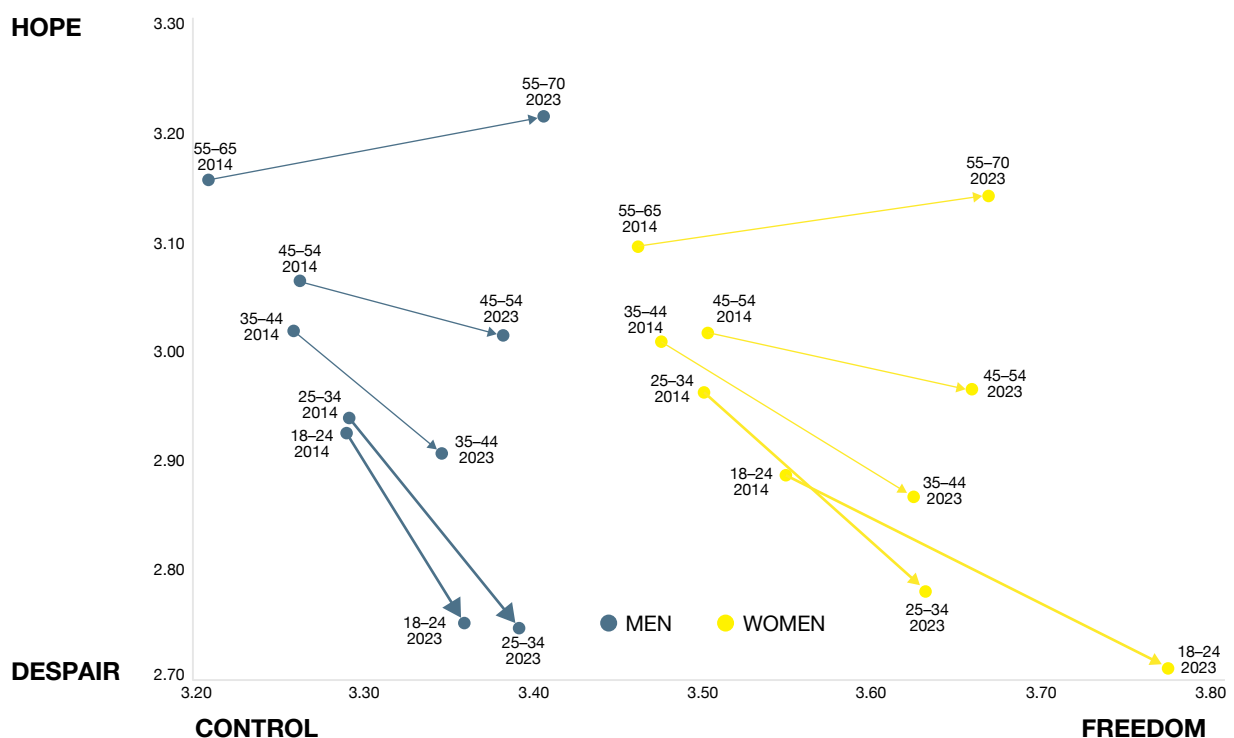
Raise awareness of democratic leadership

To fight the withdrawal of the younger generation, and particularly young men, from politics and societal engagement as a whole, democratic leaders not only have to stand for democratic values, but also have to 'connect' by embodying thoughts and behaviours that resonate deeply with the expectations of and need for vision among young people. Fulfilling this need must not be left to authoritarian leaders and extremist parties.

The challenge: an increasing gender gap in values

A longitudinal analysis between 2014 and 2023 by Glocalities¹⁵—based on over 300,000 completed surveys in 20 countries around the world—revealed a growing divide between young men and young women in terms of value orientation. Young women have significantly strengthened their embrace of liberal and anti-patriarchal values over the last decade, while young men have not followed this trend (see Figure 1). This indicates a growing gender gap between young women and young men.

Figure 1 Value polarisation of gender



Source: Glocalities database from 2014 and 2023.

Note: The graph shows the development of attitudes among different age groups for men and women on our two-dimensional control-freedom/despair-hope model, using data from 2014 and 2023. See the methodology section for an explanation of the model.

The findings show a gradual shift towards more liberal values among all citizens. However, this movement is the smallest among young men. In 2014 older men (aged 55–65) were the most conservative, and younger men (aged 18–24) were significantly more liberal. Almost 10 years later, young men have become less liberal than older men. Despite general progress towards liberal values,

¹⁵ M. Lampert and P. Papadongonas, *Polarization Extends Into Gender via Young Adults Who Lose Hope*, Glocalities (2024).

the pace of this shift among young men during the past decade has been the slowest of all the groups. On the part of women, the overall shift towards liberal values is stronger, most significantly among young women.

Looking into the dimension of hope–despair (y-axis), a general trend towards hopelessness and societal discontent can be seen across younger and middle-aged people, with it being strongest among both young men and young women (18–24). Only people above 55 have become more hopeful and content with society.

These feelings of hopelessness, societal disillusionment and, sometimes, rebellion against liberal values are fertile ground for the rise of radical-right (and, to a lesser degree, radical-left) anti-establishment parties. The stagnation in the shift of young men towards liberal values, or even their alienation from them, resonates with the positions of radical-right movements in many countries. These movements claim to provide explanations for this development and promise to deliver solutions for these disillusioned segments of the population—unlike the established mainstream parties.

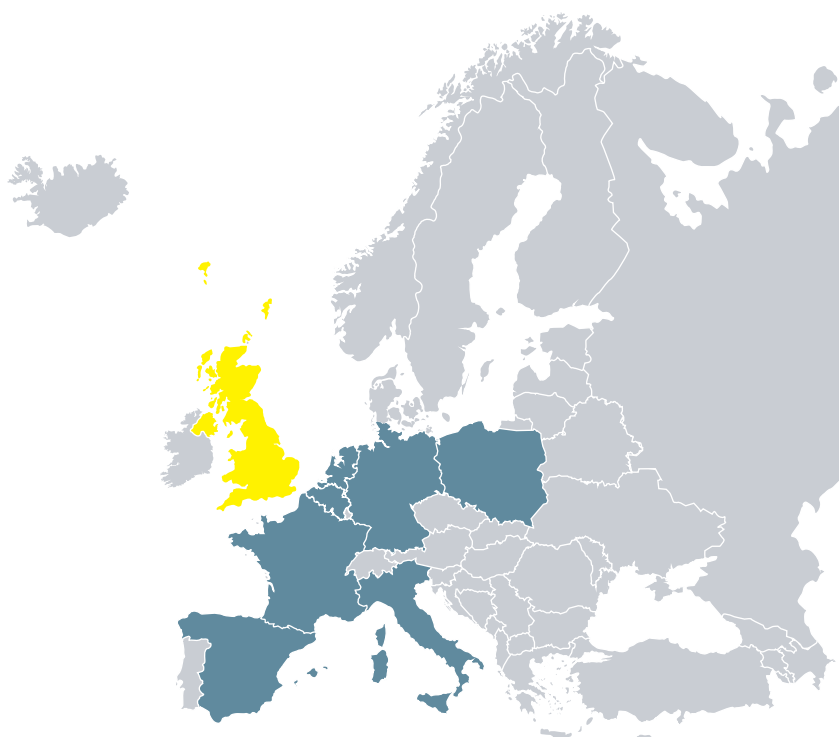
In the following sections, we examine how this global tendency has played out in several European nations, with a focus on younger citizens, before drawing out some lessons for future policymaking.

Developments in Europe in the last decade

Looking at age and gender combined

We zoomed in on seven EU member states¹⁶ and the UK to examine whether similar trends can be seen in Europe, too.¹⁷

Figure 2 Country coverage of this study



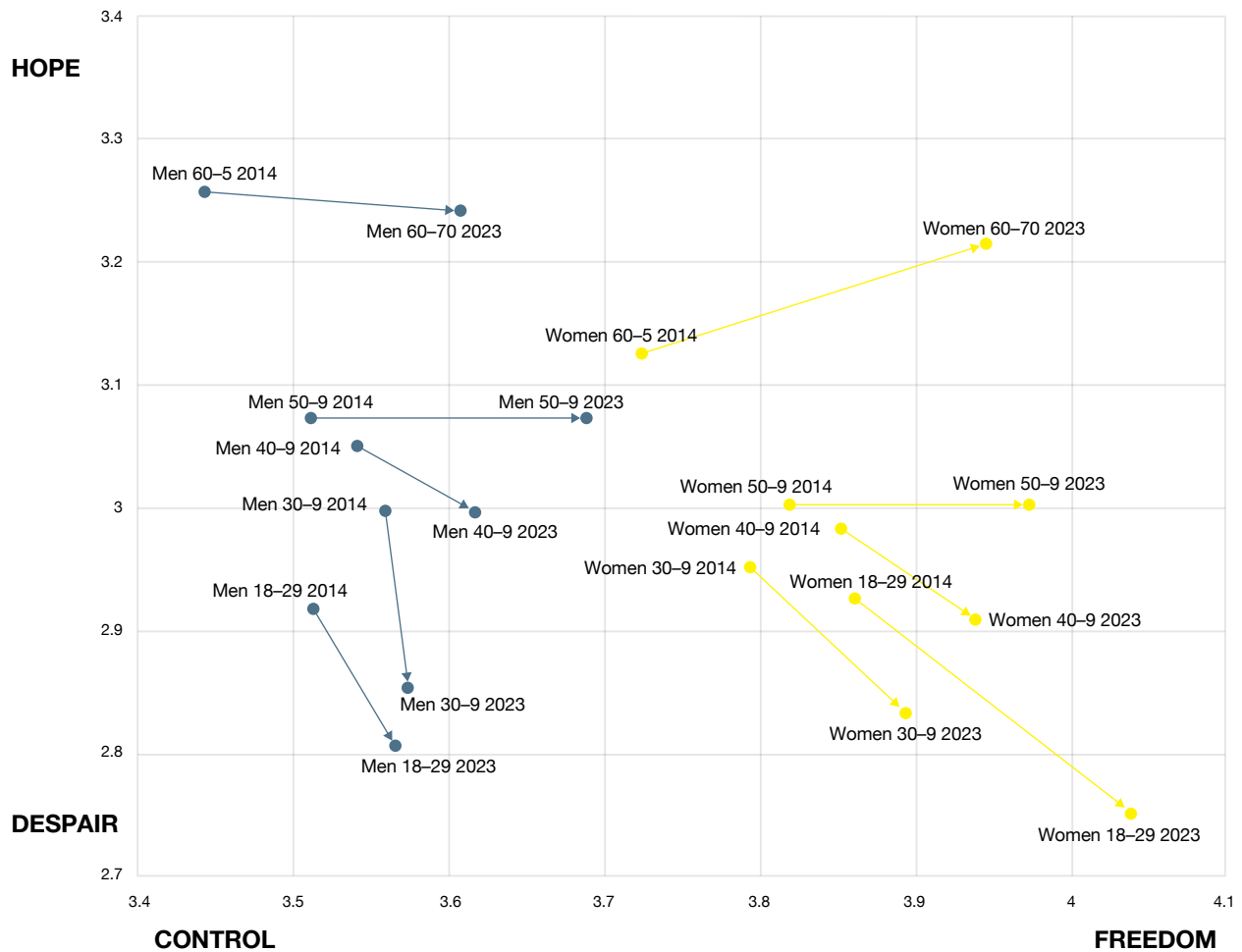
The following figure illustrates the trends among the selected age groups.¹⁸

¹⁶ Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain.

¹⁷ We made some modifications to the age groupings to optimise the sample size compared to the worldwide trend study. The following age ranges constitute solid samples that result in citizen groups of sufficient sizes that are also distinct: 18–29, 30–9, 40–9, 50–9, 60–5/70 years. The age range of 18–29 has replaced the previously used range of 18–24 years and has the added advantage that it allows country-specific analyses. This was necessary as we are now focusing on fewer countries, while at the same time aim to draw specific conclusions about younger citizens.

¹⁸ Based on the modified age ranges used.

Figure 3 Developments in seven EU member states and the UK (2014 and 2023)



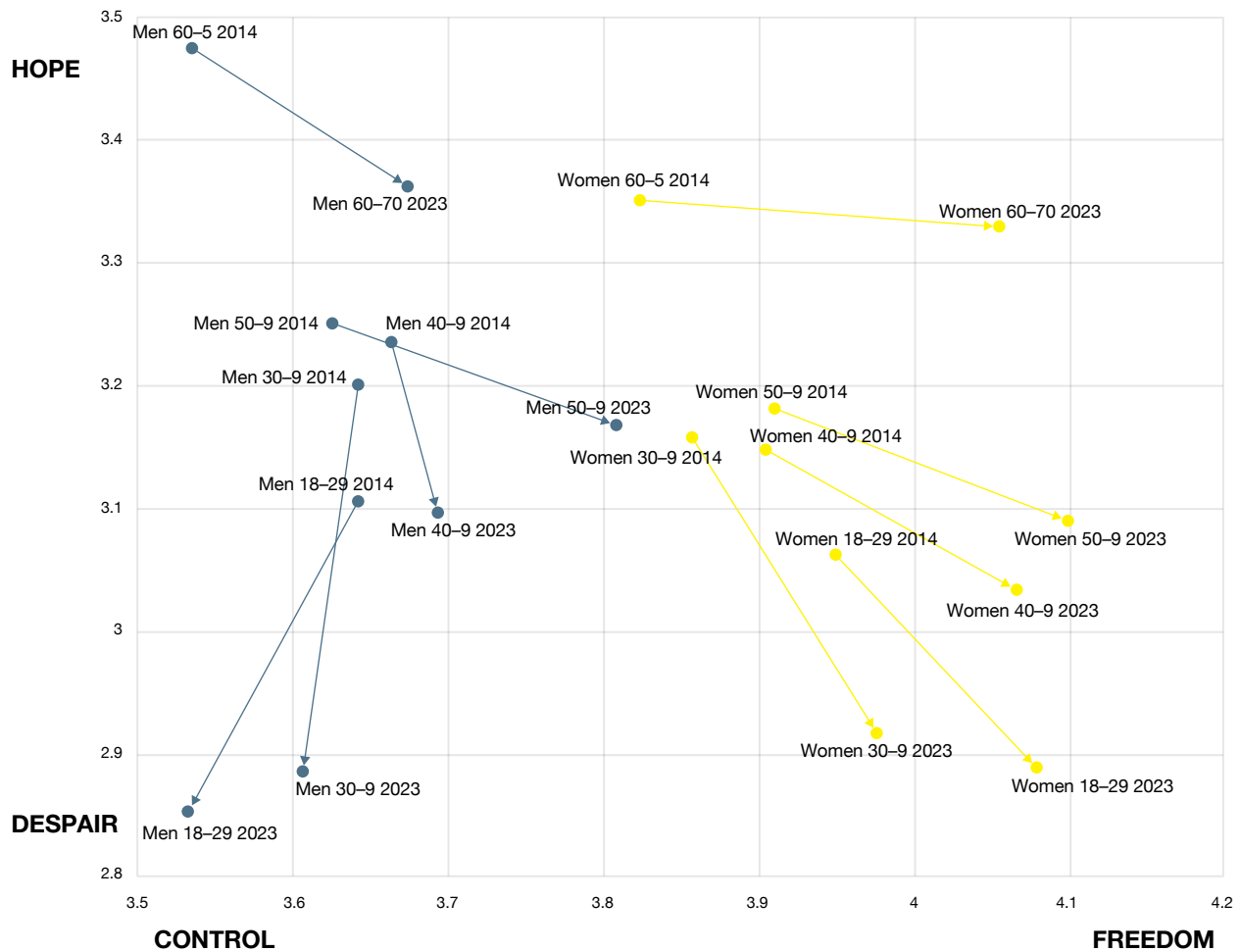
Source: Glocalities database from 2014 and 2023.

Note: A comparison of attitudes for the various age groups for men and women in the two-dimensional control–freedom and despair–hope model in 2014 and 2023. The graph shows that tendencies at the European level are comparable to those at the global level, with some subtle variances.

Overall, men and women in Europe are more freedom-oriented than their counterparts globally, as liberal-thinking citizen segments are more prevalent in Europe, especially in Western and Southern Europe.

Men in Europe, however, appear somewhat less hopeful about the future compared to their counterparts on the global 20-country level. We note that globally the oldest cohort has become slightly more optimistic, but that this trend has not been followed by their European counterparts. While older women showed consistent hope and demand for freedom, among older men in Europe, we see a slight loss of hope. Among younger men, the pessimistic trend is especially visible in Western Europe, where younger men are not only less hopeful in 2023, but have also clearly moved towards more control in the two-dimensional model.

Figure 4 Trends in Western Europe



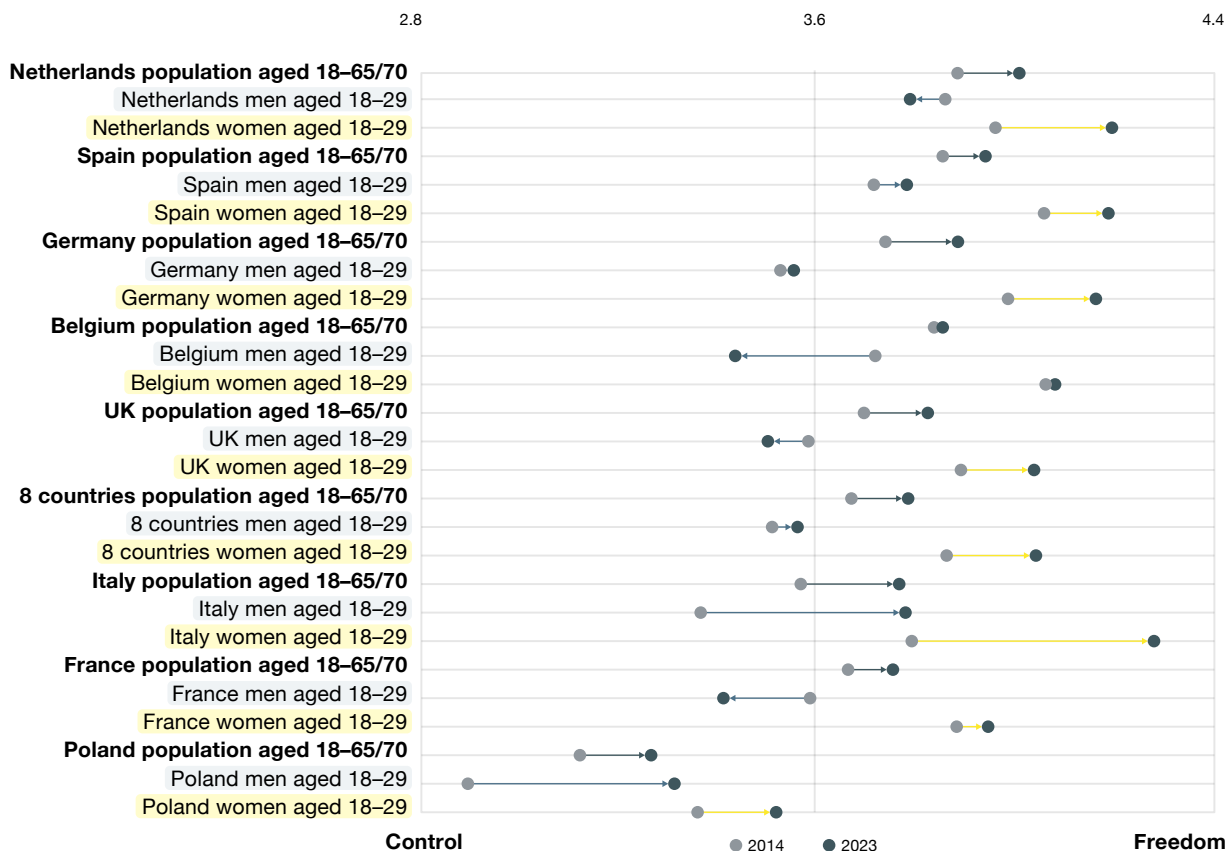
Source: Glocalities database from 2014 and 2023.

Note: A comparison of attitudes among the various age groups in men and women in the two-dimensional control–freedom and despair–hope model in 2014 and 2023, in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK.

A widening gap between young men and young women

It is noteworthy that in the eight European countries studied, younger men (aged 18–29) are currently embracing conservative norms more than older men (aged 60–70). In contrast, younger women in Europe are increasingly emancipating themselves. The difference between young men and young women in Europe is expanding, which is in line with the global trend. There are, however, regional variances, as shown in the following figure.

Figure 5 Trend developments by country on the control–freedom spectrum



Source: Glocalities database from 2014 and 2023.

Note: A comparison of the evolution of attitudes by age group for young men, young women and the general population on the control–freedom axis.

The statistics reveal several simultaneous developments. All countries are moving towards freedom. Eastern European countries, such as Poland, remain towards the control end of the scale because of their culturally conservative society. Western European countries, however, are well ahead of the curve when it comes to emancipatory values. Regardless of the country, women continue to be much more free-spirited than men.

Younger men in various countries, particularly those in Western Europe (Belgium, France, the Netherlands and the UK), have begun to tilt towards a desire for more control, contradicting the emancipatory trends noticed in recent decades. At the same time, young women are continuing their journey towards more freedom-oriented values. As a result, with the exception of Italy and Poland, the difference between younger men and women has widened in most countries.

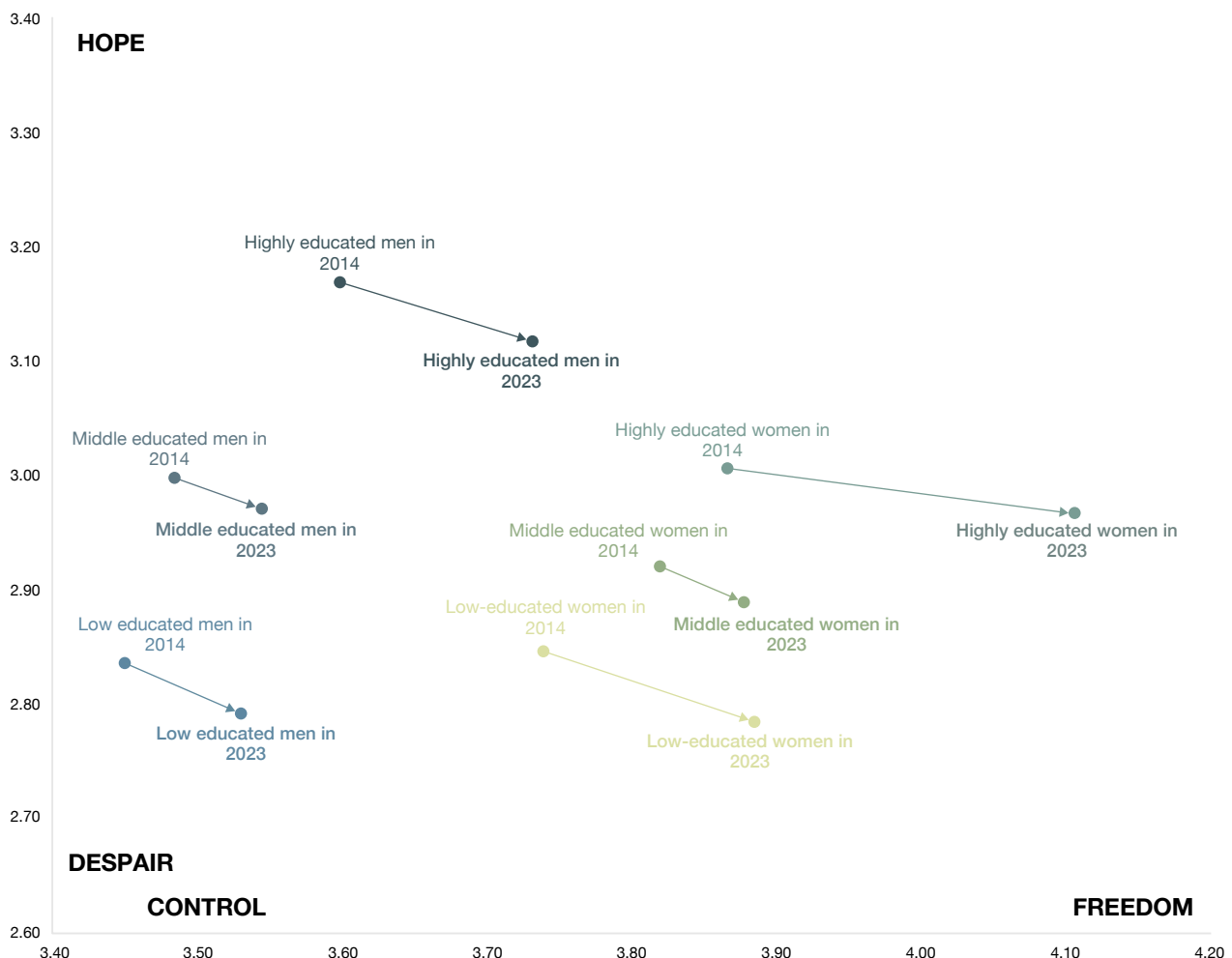
Relationship between education, emancipation and (lack of) hope

Education plays a critical role in establishing values and political orientations. The above analysis of age and gender differences has demonstrated the growing gender imbalance among young

individuals. When we mix gender and degree of education, we see further significant variations between citizens.

Education level significantly correlates with how positively people think about their future. A majority of highly educated men and slightly fewer highly educated women express more hope, compared to those with intermediate or low levels of education. However, not a single group has become more hopeful in 2023. Another interesting finding is that highly educated people, particularly women, are much more likely to adopt liberal ideas (freedom) than the average member of the public.

Figure 6 The effect of education on value orientation



Source: Glocalities database from 2014 and 2023.

The intersection of age, gender and education

In the next step, we looked at citizens from the perspective of age, gender and education combined. This analysis brings a few additional details to light. Highly educated men aged 60–70 are much more hopeful on average than men of all other ages and education levels. The same applies to highly educated women aged 60–70, but to a lesser extent compared to their male counterparts.

Younger men and women with low levels of education (ages 18–39) rank particularly poorly on the despair–hope axis.

Figure 7 Effects of education on value orientation by country

Europe 7 EU Countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain) and the United Kingdom		
	Control (1) - Freedom (5)	Despair (1) - Hope (5)
Less educated men aged 18–29 in 2014	3,27	2,70
Less educated women aged 18–29 in 2014	3,53	2,91
Middle-educated men aged 18–29 in 2014	3,57	2,99
Middle-educated women aged 18–29 in 2014	3,46	2,75
Highly educated men aged 18–29 in 2014	3,53	2,91
Highly educated women aged 18–29 in 2014	3,61	3,01
Less educated men aged 30–39 in 2014	3,51	2,80
Less educated women aged 30–39 in 2014	3,47	3,03
Middle-educated men aged 30–39 in 2014	3,64	3,20
Middle-educated women aged 30–39 in 2014	3,52	2,83
Highly educated men aged 30–39 in 2014	3,43	3,04
Highly educated women aged 30–39 in 2014	3,62	3,30
Less educated men aged 40–49 in 2014	3,43	3,15
Less educated women aged 40–49 in 2014	3,43	3,18
Middle-educated men aged 40–49 in 2014	3,48	3,44
Middle-educated women aged 40–49 in 2014	3,69	2,74
Highly educated men aged 40–49 in 2014	3,85	2,82
Highly educated women aged 40–49 in 2014	3,91	3,05
Less educated men aged 50–59 in 2014	3,66	2,77
Less educated women aged 50–59 in 2014	3,78	2,87
Middle-educated men aged 50–59 in 2014	3,85	3,07
Middle-educated women aged 50–59 in 2014	3,79	2,74
Highly educated men aged 50–59 in 2014	3,85	2,97
Highly educated women aged 50–59 in 2014	3,89	3,13
Less educated men aged 60–70 in 2014	3,76	2,91
Less educated women aged 60–70 in 2014	3,83	2,95
Middle-educated men aged 60–70 in 2014	3,85	3,16
Middle-educated women aged 60–70 in 2014	3,75	3,09
Highly educated men aged 60–70 in 2014	3,71	3,05
Highly educated women aged 60–70 in 2014	3,73	3,27
8 countries in 2014	3,67	3,01

	Control (1) - Freedom (5)	Despair (1) - Hope (5)
Less educated men aged 18–29 in 2023	3,44	2,62
Less educated women aged 18–29 in 2023	3,54	2,83
Middle-educated men aged 18–29 in 2023	3,64	2,85
Middle-educated women aged 18–29 in 2023	3,40	2,58
Highly educated men aged 18–29 in 2023	3,48	2,82
Highly educated women aged 18–29 in 2023	3,70	2,97
Less educated men aged 30–39 in 2023	3,49	2,71
Less educated women aged 30–39 in 2023	3,55	2,93
Middle-educated men aged 30–39 in 2023	3,75	3,19
Middle-educated women aged 30–39 in 2023	3,75	2,85
Highly educated men aged 30–39 in 2023	3,58	3,03
Highly educated women aged 30–39 in 2023	3,81	3,30
Less educated men aged 40–49 in 2023	3,42	3,04
Less educated women aged 40–49 in 2023	3,53	3,14
Middle-educated men aged 40–49 in 2023	3,77	3,43
Middle-educated women aged 40–49 in 2023	3,90	2,41
Highly educated men aged 40–49 in 2023	3,97	2,69
Highly educated women aged 40–49 in 2023	4,16	2,90
Less educated men aged 50–59 in 2023	3,79	2,62
Less educated women aged 50–59 in 2023	3,74	2,72
Middle-educated men aged 50–59 in 2023	4,09	3,03
Middle-educated women aged 50–59 in 2023	3,88	2,73
Highly educated men aged 50–59 in 2023	3,85	2,86
Highly educated women aged 50–59 in 2023	4,09	3,07
Less educated men aged 60–70 in 2023	3,93	2,80
Less educated women aged 60–70 in 2023	3,93	2,99
Middle-educated men aged 60–70 in 2023	4,09	3,20
Middle-educated women aged 60–70 in 2023	3,88	3,14
Highly educated men aged 60–70 in 2023	3,88	3,09
Highly educated women aged 60–70 in 2023	4,16	3,48
8 countries in 2023	3,78	2,97

What first lessons can we draw from these results? Policymakers are frequently well-educated and older. In terms of the dimensions control–freedom and despair–hope, they frequently live and function in a form of ‘values bubble’ that is more liberal and typically far more optimistic about the future than many other population groups in society. This raises the risk of blind spots in their worldviews and policymaking, as politicians’ attitudes towards life, information sources and media consumption differ from those of other segments of the public, particularly those who are younger and less educated.

It is therefore no surprise that populist movements have grown in popularity among younger males who are dissatisfied with 'the establishment'. Donald Trump's rising support among younger, disillusioned men in the US is a prime example. Other instances include the support for the Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland) in Germany and the National Rally (Rassemblement National) in France.¹⁹ These political forces have identified young men as a significant part of their electorates, and have the potential to exploit the blind spots of more liberal ('mainstream') policymakers and leaders.

The national and global concerns of citizens

Deeply ingrained values reveal a great deal about how people perceive the world, what they are worried about and what they value in life. Political parties and leaders must take these critical factors seriously in order to develop policies that respond to citizens' concerns and confront societal division constructively. In this section, we start by examining the issues of concern in Europe and around the world.

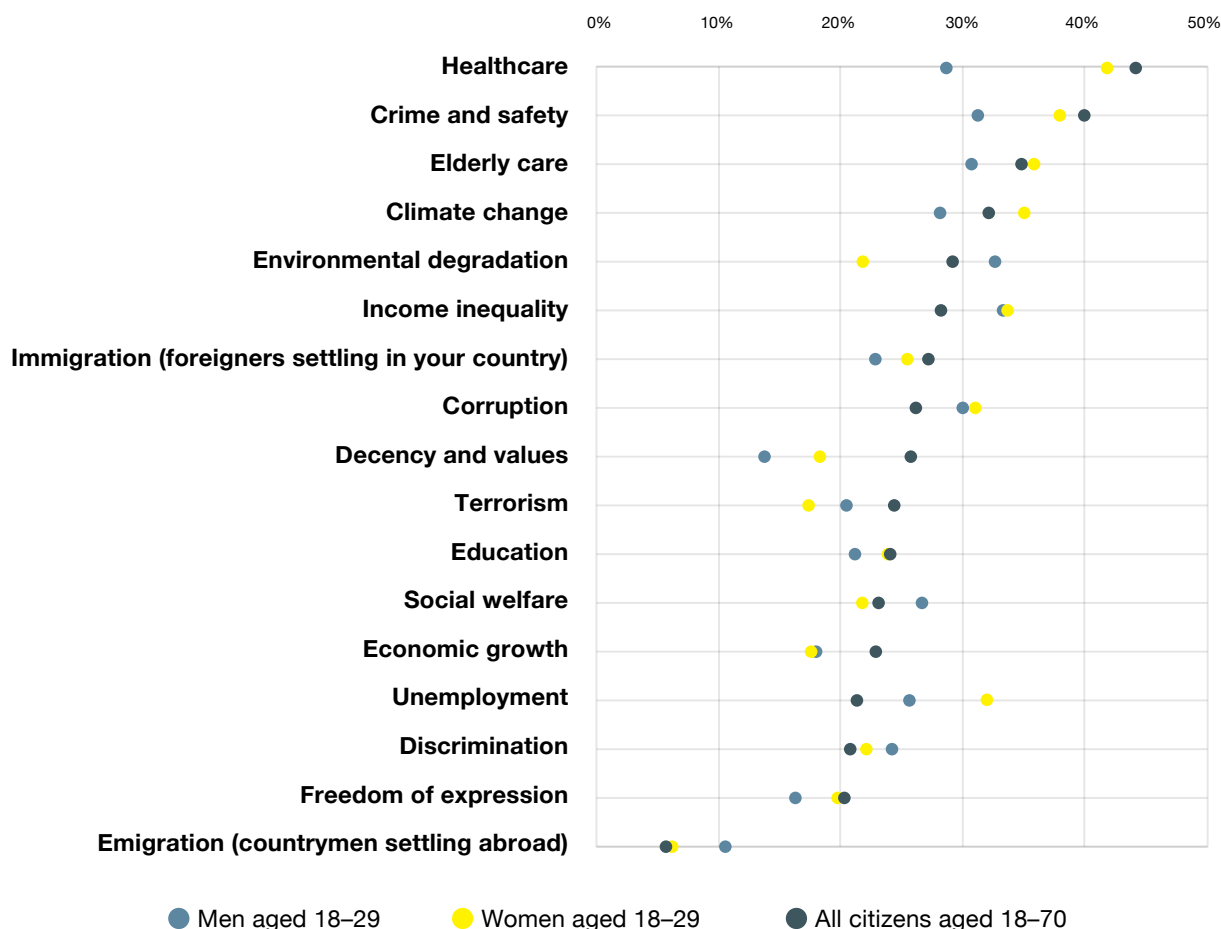
Citizens' concerns about issues in their country

As illustrated in Figure 8, citizens prioritise healthcare and safety, followed by elderly care, the effects of climate change, environmental issues, the economy and immigration. For younger males, healthcare, safety, elderly care and climate change are not as important. Younger women are more worried about income inequality and unemployment. One explanation for this difference is the likely persistent inequalities relating to work (the 'gender pay gap'²⁰) in most countries. Younger women also appear more concerned about climate change.

¹⁹ K. Scott, 'The "Lost Boys" of Gen Z: How Trump Won the Hearts of Alienated Young Men', *The Conversation*, 11 November 2024; C. Gélis and K. Tower, 'How Marine Le Pen Managed to Gain Ground With Youth Voters – and Why Her Success Isn't Being Replicated by the US Right', *The Conversation*, 3 May 2022; *Spiegel*, 'Wahlen in Sachsen und Thüringen: Viele Jungwähler sehen AfD laut Forscher nicht als rechtsextrem', 3 September 2024.

²⁰ International Labour Organization, 'The Gender Pay Gap' (2024).

Figure 8 Major concerns for European citizens (%)



Source: Glocalities database from 2014 and 2023.

Citizens' concerns about global issues

Climate change, environmental difficulties, poverty and inequality are among the most-often expressed concerns in the world among all age groups. However, young men are less concerned about environmental and gender issues. In contrast, they place a higher priority on concerns about state oppression, online disinformation and polarisation than is the norm. Young women are especially concerned about gender equality, mental health and minority discrimination. Both young men and young women are more concerned than the overall society about mental health and discrimination.

Figure 9 Issues of concern worldwide (% of citizens concerned)



Source: Glocalities database from 2014 and 2023.

Understanding the factors driving social trends

The previous sections have highlighted the various societal divides related to hope and the aspiration for freedom in Europe: between men and women and among citizens of varying ages and education levels, to name just a few. These societal trends, in combination with specific concerns mentioned in the last chapter, are the consequences of deeply ingrained beliefs and worldviews and the tensions caused by the changing socio-economic and cultural landscape. In this section, we focus on the 2023 data to discover some potential elements for better understanding these developments.

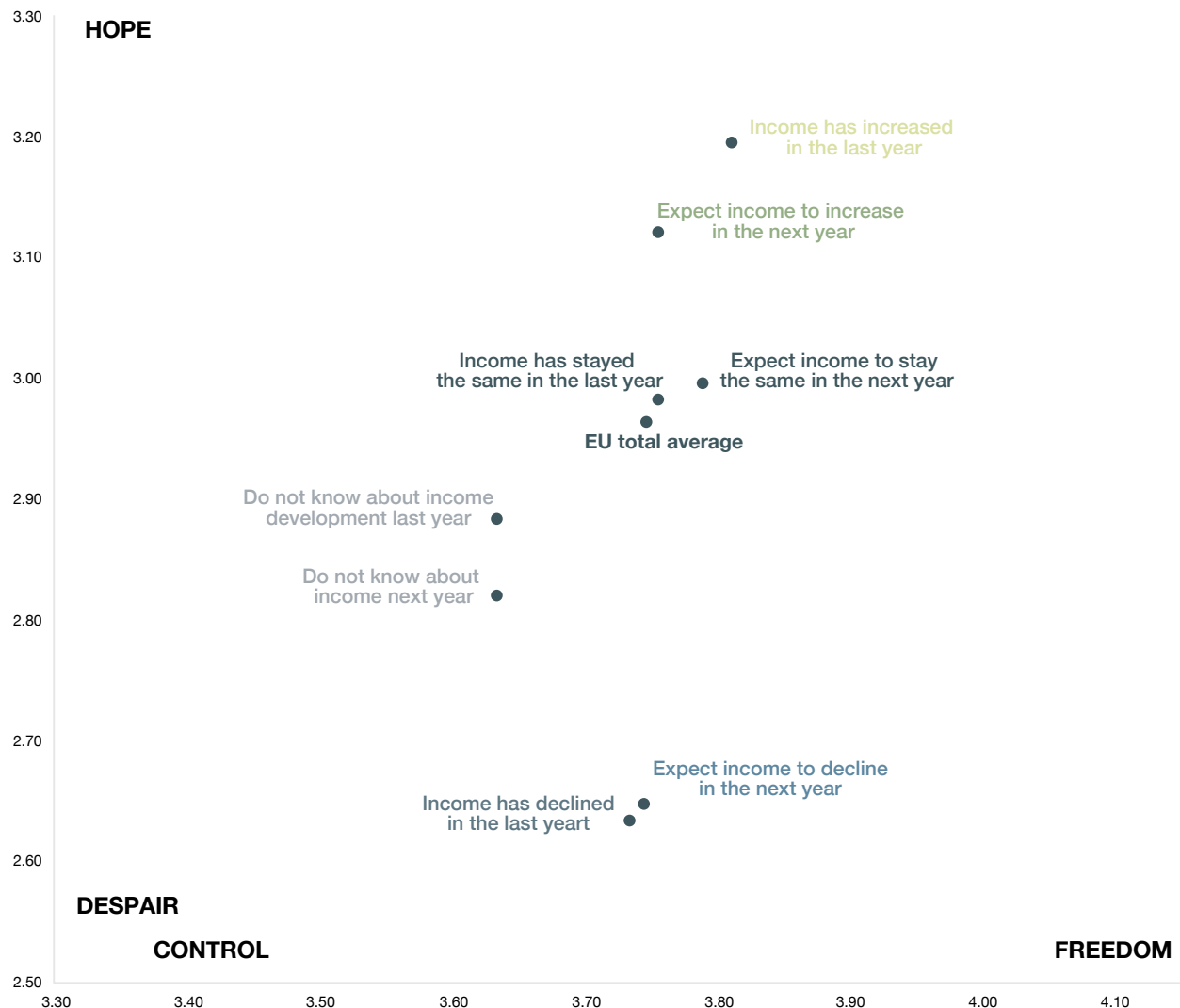
Economic concerns are the main drivers of hope and despair

A Europe-wide study by the Wilfried Martens Centre and Glocalities in 2023²¹ revealed that the economy and the cost of living were the most pressing concerns and priorities for citizens. Economic policy is at the top of the political agenda, and parties that promise to improve people's daily lives tend to do well in polls and elections. The recent US political success of Donald Trump, who focused his campaign on tax cuts and strengthening the economy, exemplifies how crucial economic issues are to individuals.

We looked at two variables: *income development* in the past year and *income expectations* for the next year. The results show no major differences between the subgroups along the axis of control–freedom, which implies that economic experiences have little influence on where on the control–freedom dimension a citizen is positioned. However, the positions are closely related to sentiments of despair or hope. People whose income increased in the previous year or who expect their income to rise in the coming year are far more optimistic than the rest of the population. By contrast, those who have seen or anticipate a fall in income are substantially less optimistic.

²¹ M. Lampert, P. Papadongonas and F. Reho, *Middle-Class Concerns and European Challenges: A Data-Driven Study From a Centre–Right Perspective*, Martens Centre (Brussels, 2023).

Figure 10 Income development and expectations



Source: Glocalities database from 2023.

Note: Positions plotted on the two-dimensional control–freedom and despair–hope model for citizens with differing income developments and expectations.

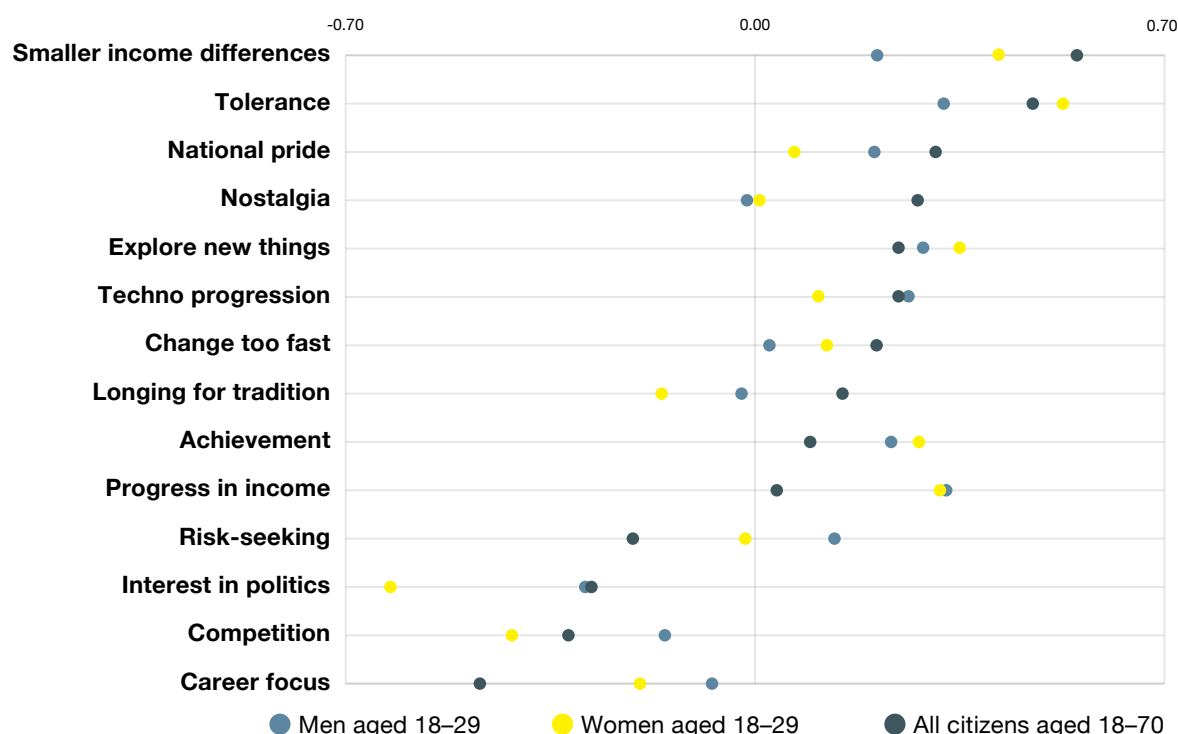
Younger citizens, men and highly educated citizens are, in general, more likely to report an income increase in the past year or have a positive expectation of one for next year. This partly has to do with phases of life and career development. Financial aspects may contribute to younger citizens' (especially young women's) shift towards despair, but there are definitely other factors at play too.

To understand these other factors, it is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the worldviews of younger men and women. This makes it easier to craft policies that they can relate to.

Mapping the social values landscape of European society

We looked at prominent social values in European society as a whole²² and integrated the positions of younger men and women in the same selection, as shown in the following figure. Most citizens indicate support for reducing income differences in society, accept people with different lifestyles and are open to experiencing new things. These orientations suggest a general tendency towards egalitarianism, openness and a desire for new experiences across the board. All groups also believe in progress through technology, although this belief is slightly stronger among young men and the general population compared to young women.

Figure 11 Selection of values ‘mapping’ a wide spectrum of lifestyles



Source: Glocalities database from 2023.

Note: Comparison between the general population (18–70 years) and young men and young women aged 18–29. The scale is expressed in standard scores.

Younger citizens in relation to the rest of the society

‘Liberal’ values are widely cherished in European societies. However, young men and young women sometimes have differing views on things in comparison to the European average.

²² As represented by citizens aged 18–70 in 8 European countries.

They are less likely than the general population to believe that life used to be easier or that things change too frequently and quickly these days. They consider traditional values less important. At the same time, they place a higher value on setting challenging goals and earning more than the average. In comparison to the general public, their satisfaction is more determined by their career objectives. They are also looking for more kicks and thrills. The individual's life stage mostly determines where the preference lies among these options.

Among younger men (18–29), we observe a moderate level of national pride and a very positive outlook with regard to setting challenging goals and being performance-driven. They are less likely than the general public to believe that life in the past was easier. Rather, they are focused on the future, and their desire to increase their income is especially strong. Young men are also more inclined to seek excitement and thrills. Lastly, they have an average interest in politics and demonstrate a slight preference for competition over collaboration.

Younger women (18–29) are less accepting of wealth disparities and are more open to diverse life philosophies than young males and the broader population. They also have lower levels of national pride than the rest of the population and are even less inclined than young men to believe that life used to be easier. They moderately long for kicks and thrills, set tough goals for themselves and wish to increase their income. However, they are significantly less interested in politics. They prefer collaboration over rivalry, unlike other parts of society.

Towards more resonant and resilient policies and leadership

The previous sections have analysed the landscape of citizens' perceptions and concerns. Policymakers trying to react to these findings and concerns often find themselves confronted with a lack of responsiveness from their voters and wonder why more radical or populist parties succeed in attracting, for example, large swathes of young voters. It is clear that there is a *missing link between perception and action*. To close this gap, we introduce the concept of archetypes. Correctly translated for the world of politics, this approach has a lot of potential to provide innovative and useful insights and to deliver entry points for better communication.

Communicating policies through stories that connect

'All the most powerful ideas in history go back to archetypes', the famous psychiatrist Carl Jung explained in his seminal book, *The Structure of the Psyche*.²³ Archetypes are models of people,

²³ C. G. Jung, G. Adler and R. F. C. Hull, *Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 9 (Part 1) Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 213.

behaviours or personalities rooted in the collective memory. They form the basis for the storylines in films, books and most types of communication. In political communication, archetypes help policymakers align with citizens' priorities and express themselves in ways that tap into the universal feelings and instincts of people. A better understanding and leveraging of archetypes could significantly enhance the effectiveness of policies by ensuring that they resonate more deeply with fundamental human needs.

There are 12 universal archetypes that are applicable to such communications, which are outlined in Table 1.²⁴

Inspired by the work of Carl Jung, Robert Moore,²⁵ Carol Pearson²⁶ and Carolyn Myss,²⁷ we visualised the following 12 main archetypes and measured the extent to which they resonated with citizens in the international survey.

Table 1 Archetypes

Archetype	Dimensions/qualities
Caregiver	Compassion – Caring – Generosity – Warmth
Creator	Inventiveness – Imagination – Creativity – Self-expression
Everyman	Friendship – Conformity – Equality – Togetherness
Explorer	Unlimited – Challenge – Curiosity – Adventure
Hero	Energetic – Active – Perseverance – Courage
Innocent	Safety – Purity – Optimism – Faith
Jester	Funny – Sly – Playful – Pleasure
Lover	Passion – Beauty – Romance – Love
Magician	Transformation – Personal power – Making dreams come true – Creating solutions
Rebel	Freedom – Independence – Rebellious – Recalcitrant
Ruler	Order – Responsibility – Progress – Control
Sage	Wisdom – Intelligence – Well-balanced – Connected

²⁴ R. K. Papadopoulos, *The Handbook of Jungian Psychology* (London: Routledge, 2012).

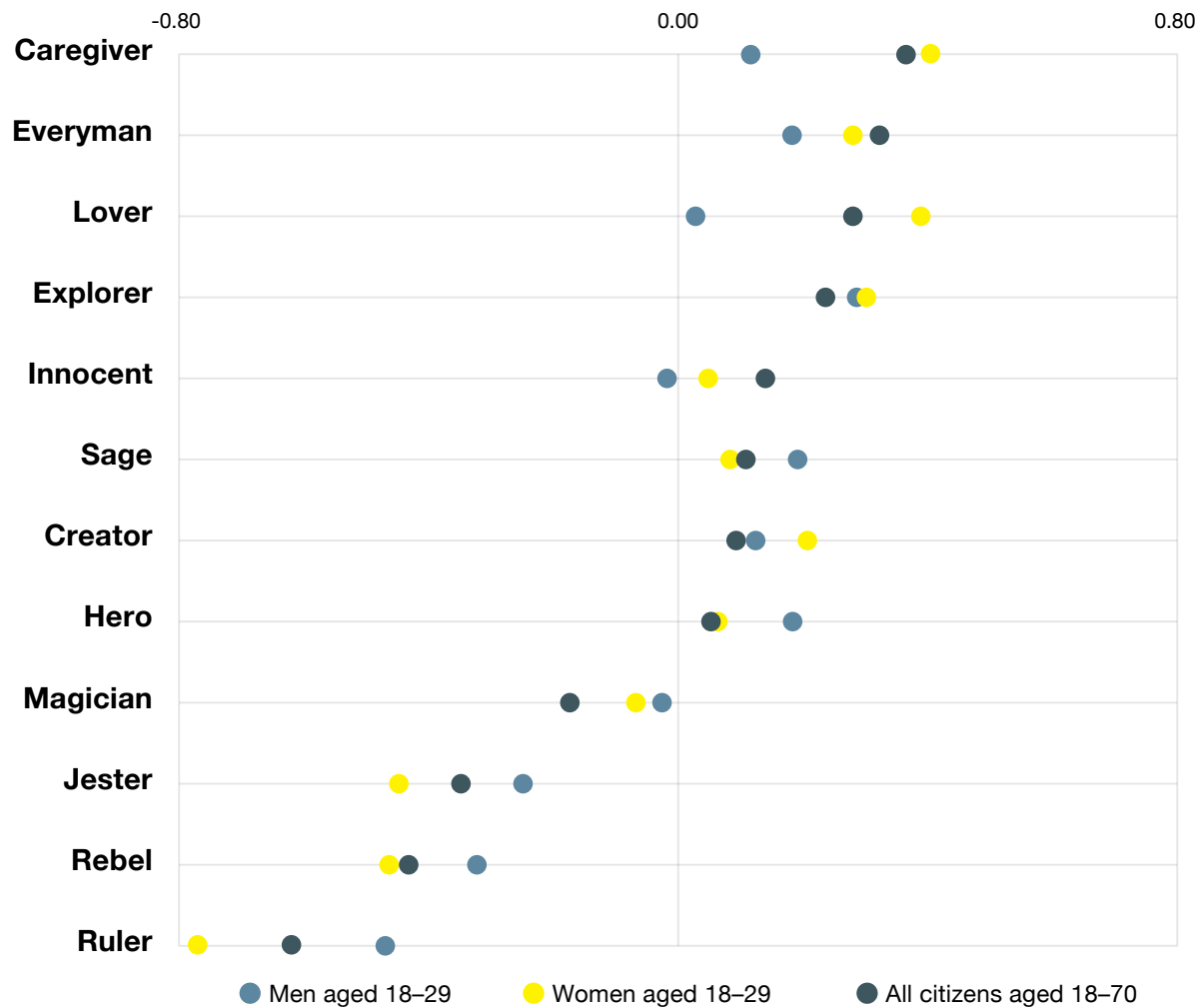
²⁵ R. L. Moore and D. Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1990).

²⁶ C. S. Pearson, *The Hero Within: Six Archetypes We Live by* (San Francisco: Harper, 1986); C. S. Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within: Twelve Archetypes to Help Us Find Ourselves and Transform Our World* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991).

²⁷ C. Myss, *Sacred Contracts: Awakening Your Divine Potential* (New York: Harmony, 2001).

Figure 12 shows the various archetypes that resonate with Europeans and younger men and women in particular.

Figure 12 The appeal of archetypes to citizens, with a focus on younger men and women



Source: Glocalities database from 2023.

Note: Scale expressed using standard scores (z-scores²⁸).

There are four primary archetypes—Caregiver, Everyman, Lover and Explorer—which address essential elements that are crucial for creating policies that connect with citizens on a deeper, community-centred level.

²⁸ A z-score is a way to describe a data point's position relative to the mean (average) of a group of data points. It tells us how many standard deviations a particular data point is from the mean. Z-scores are useful because they allow comparisons of data points from different distributions or scales. They standardise the data, making it easier to understand and compare.

The *Caregiver* archetype addresses the need for compassion, care and emotional support, fostering a sense of safety and nurturing. Policies that resonate with this archetype focus on social welfare, healthcare and community support systems, ensuring that citizens feel protected and cared for.

The *Everyman* archetype emphasises belonging, equality and togetherness, fulfilling the human desire for social connection and acceptance. Policies that promote inclusivity, equal opportunities and community engagement resonate effectively with this archetype, fostering a sense of unity and collective identity.

The *Lover* archetype taps into the need for passion, beauty and romantic love, appealing to our longing for deep emotional and aesthetic experiences. Policies that support the arts, cultural initiatives, meeting new people, networking and personal well-being harness this archetype, enriching the emotional and cultural fabric of society.

The *Explorer* is also a common archetype. In policymaking, it translates into a focus on fostering innovation, setting ambitious goals, promoting critical thinking and encouraging new experiences. These policies support research, startups, education reforms, cultural exchanges and infrastructure that boost creativity, challenge boundaries, and cultivate curiosity and adventure.

When establishing policies for young people, specific archetypes that are more likely to resonate with them must be considered. This section describes how subgroups from various parts of society tend to resonate more closely with certain archetypes. There is a considerable degree of variation among these groups. However, understanding these broader tendencies allows us to better understand the gender gap that has emerged over the previous decade.

For younger men, the *Hero* archetype is particularly compelling. Policies that emphasise the themes of energy, action, perseverance and courage by highlighting examples and stories of overcoming challenges, taking bold steps, and achieving goals through determination and courage can inspire young men. This approach taps into their desire for adventure, self-improvement and making a significant impact, fulfilling their need for purpose and recognition. The *Sage* archetype also has above average appeal among young men. The *Sage* symbolises that knowledge is power, an idea which resonates with younger men's ambitious mindset.²⁹

For younger women, the *Lover* and *Creator* archetypes are especially appealing. Policies that emphasise and encourage themes of inventiveness, imagination, creativity, self-expression, passion, beauty, romance and love can resonate deeply with young women. Encouraging their creative pursuits and self-expression through support for artistic endeavours and opportunities for personal growth can nurture their need for emotional depth and the pursuit of aesthetics and love in their lives.

²⁹ We would like to emphasise that these archetypes also resonate with young women. However, the differences between the genders in terms of preferences are significant.

Both young men and young women identify strongly with the *Magician* archetype. Policies that emphasise themes such as transformation, personal power, realising ambitions and developing solutions can effectively engage these groups. Highlighting their potential to effect change and achieve their aspirations through innovative thinking and self-empowerment can inspire young men and young women to harness their personal power and make a significant impact on their world.

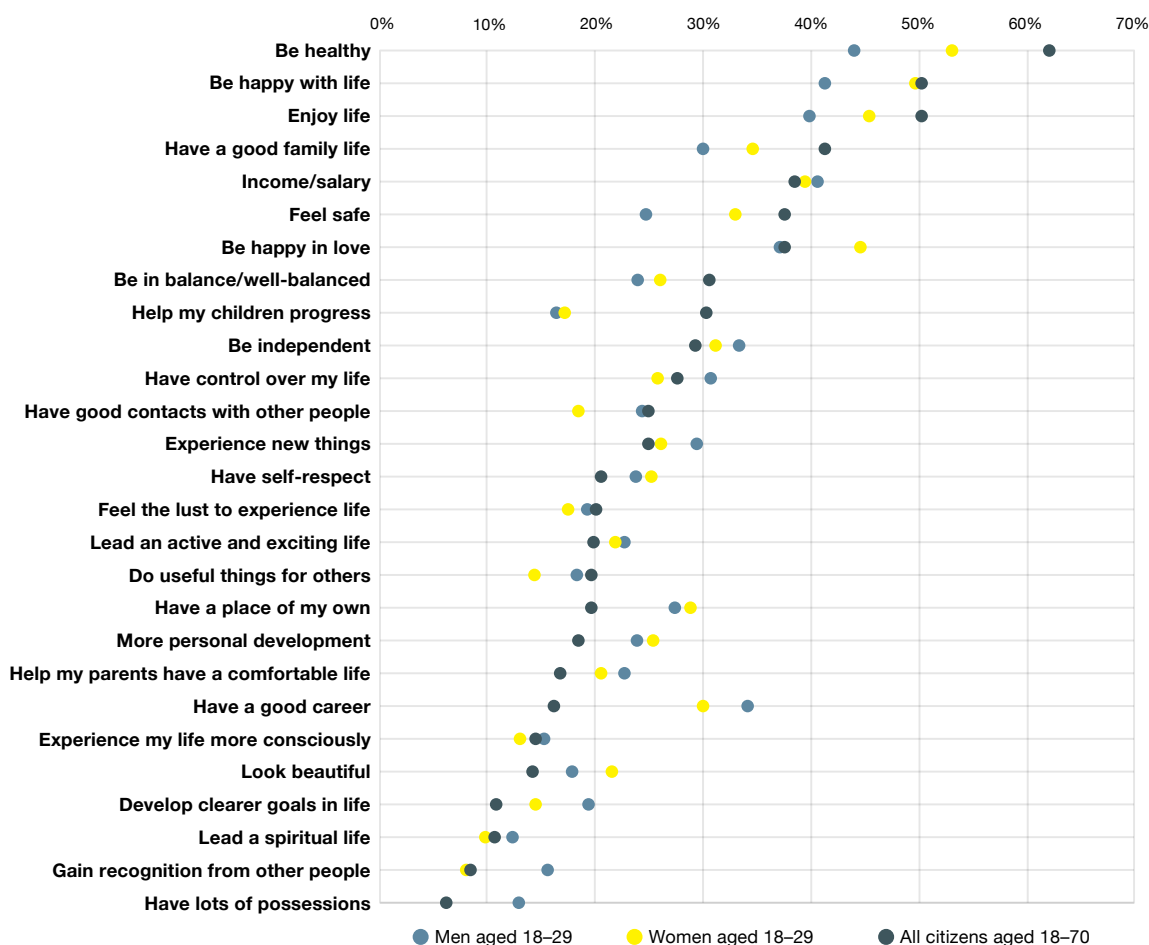
These archetypes could be incorporated into narratives and positive examples for dealing with economic, sociological, technological and cultural difficulties, resulting in more relevant and resonant policies. Such policies would satisfy fundamental human needs such as security, belonging and emotional fulfilment, while also taking into account younger individuals' specific aspirations, talents and motivations. This more complex approach would not only meet young men's and young women's practical needs but also connect with them emotionally and mentally. It could pave the way for a more engaged and supportive society while also removing potential blind spots in policymaking and communication.

Considering citizens' life aspirations and worldviews

It is critical to evaluate deeply rooted values. However, long-term communication and policy initiatives must also consider future aims and aspirations. We therefore asked citizens which parts of their lives they wanted to positively alter over the next five years.

People's core objectives are generally focused on being healthy, happy and enjoying life, all of which are universally valued. Additional aspects for young men include independence, control over their lives, new experiences, acknowledgement from others and the accumulation of possessions. These aspirations indicate a strong desire for autonomy, adventure, social approval and material success, as well as a wish for personal freedom and achievement. Young women, by contrast, place a higher-than-average value on happiness in love, reflecting a strong desire for fulfilment and emotional connection. Despite these gender-specific objectives, the desires of both young men and young women overlap significantly in terms of achieving personal progress and independence, and having a happy and active life, along with being devoted to family and their careers. They also share some other goals, including having good self-esteem, leading an active and fascinating life, owning a home, pursuing personal growth, assisting their parents in maintaining a comfortable lifestyle and having rewarding work. These common goals emphasise the balanced pursuit of achieving good self-esteem and enjoying dynamic living, independence, ongoing progress, familial responsibilities and professional achievement.

Figure 13 Life aspirations in comparative perspective (%)



Source: Glocalities database from 2023.

Providing leadership that motivates and resonates with citizens

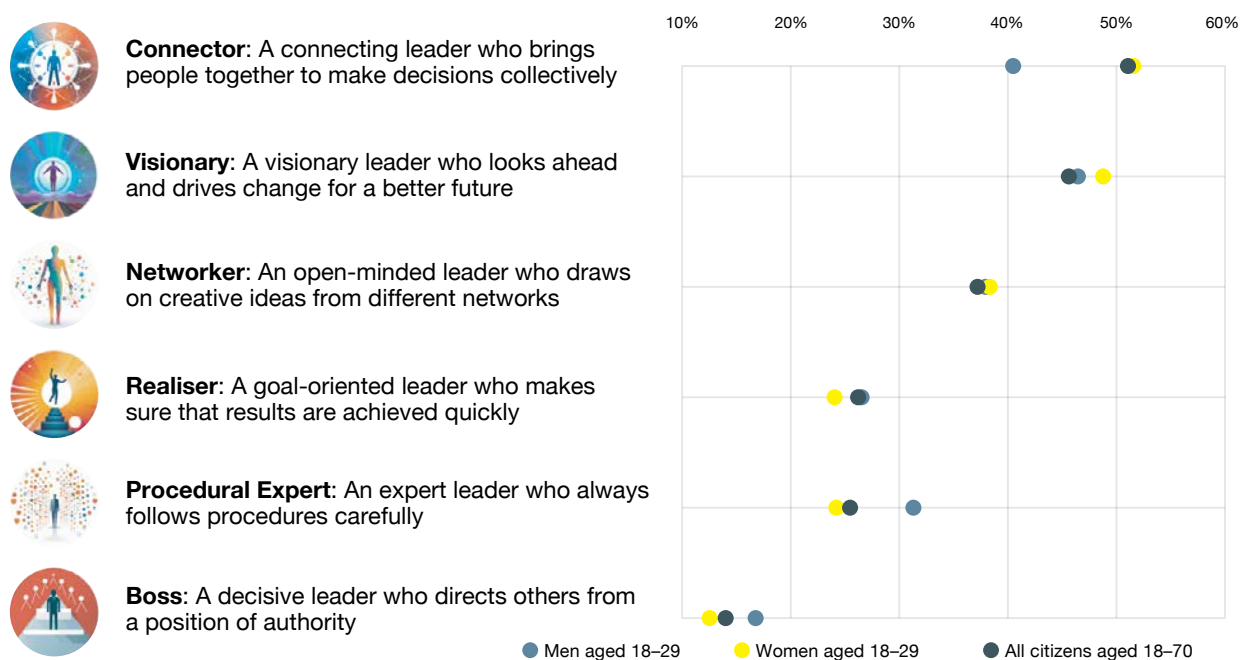
The goals of young men and young women, these groups being the most at risk of alienation from politics, illustrate the importance of effective leadership that can help them flourish. Delivering positive change requires leaders who are able to balance the desire for new solutions with avoiding (unnecessary) conflict and polarisation. However, leaders are often less aware of their leadership style and its accompanying strengths and weaknesses. If leaders were more aware of leadership styles, they could be much more effective in achieving their goals and ideals.

Given the complexity of the challenges and the wide range of expectations on the part of the citizens, multiple leadership styles are, in fact, needed to drive and consolidate change.³⁰ A situational mix of leadership styles is much more productive than polarisation and conflict. Glocalities has developed

³⁰ For more details about applying leadership styles, see Glocalities, *Harnessing Solar Power* (2023), 15–18, which describes how leaders can drive the transition to clean energy.

and tested a typology of different types of leadership based on a literature study. The typology was first developed in 2013 with a focus on public governance. When applied in practice, it became clear that the typology is also useful as a framework for leadership development and driving change in general. Figure 14 offers an overview of six prominent leadership styles.

Figure 14 Appeal of various leadership styles among citizens



Note: Respondents were asked to select the two types of leaders that they have the most trust in.

Source: Glocalities database from 2023.

Among these leadership styles, the *Connector* and the *Visionary* are the most popular overall. A *Connector* excels at bringing people together to make collective decisions, fostering collaboration and unity. A *Visionary* focuses on looking ahead and driving change for a better future, inspiring others with a clear and compelling vision. These styles resonate broadly, especially with citizens who value inclusivity and forward-thinking.

Young men, however, have a higher preference for the *Procedural Expert*. This finding supports the preceding one about the *Sage* archetype's increased attractiveness. A *Procedural Expert* follows protocols meticulously and has a vast knowledge base, ensuring that actions are informed and reliable. This preference implies that young men value leaders who exhibit competence, dependability and a solid grounding in their subject, in addition to the more general appeal of connection and vision. This combination of leadership styles demonstrates a desire for both innovative advancement and dependable knowledge. Among young women, we cannot see any significant difference in preference from the general population.

Putting it all together

The previous sections have provided some major building blocks to better understand the growing split between young men and young women against the backdrop of an increasing sense of pessimism and societal unhappiness among younger citizens. This development constitutes a significant threat to the stability of European societies and liberal democratic systems. Policymakers bear a major responsibility for bridging these social and economic divides. While continuing to promote gender equality, society and politicians must pay much more attention to the problems of young men, who feel left behind and unheard, as well as having acute economic needs.

It is not only social divisions that must be acknowledged

To avoid not only inter-gender but also intergenerational conflicts, activities to promote discussion and mutual understanding among the various demographic groups are critical to reducing polarisation and fostering a more cohesive society. Policymakers need to understand cultural and generational differences and develop the ability to effectively employ moral reframing in order to resonate with citizens. During this process, policymakers should be considerably more conscious of potential blind spots, especially those resulting from their own socio-economic and educational backgrounds and worldviews.

Values-based communication to build connections with disillusioned citizens

Effective policymaking, leadership and communication are critical to reconnecting with younger citizens. Policymakers should embody and build narratives that reflect citizens' sincerely held values and goals. For younger males, this includes emphasising themes such as energy, activity, ambition, perseverance and courage. For young women, the emphasis should be on creativity, emotional connections and gender equality. Policymakers should build meaningful connections with citizens and meet critical human needs by appealing to universal archetypes such as the *Caregiver* and *Everyman*, as well as the specific archetypes that resonate more closely with young men and young women.

Economic stability and growth remain at the forefront of citizens' minds

Economic circumstances have a big impact on people's feelings of hope or despair. Policymakers should focus on reforms to economic policies that boost income opportunities, particularly for young people, and prevent greater inequality in European societies. By supporting economic stability and progress, policymakers can help to relieve financial constraints and develop a more hopeful and positive outlook among young citizens.

Facilitating and building upon the strengths of the younger generation

To effectively communicate with young men and prevent them from falling victim to radical political forces, it is critical to help them thrive by aligning with their ambitions and ideals. This includes recognising their concerns and reasons for seeking control, addressing their aspirations for personal growth and demonstrating inspiring (democratic) leadership that takes a proactive approach. When interacting with young women, policy should not move away from their objectives and ideals. Instead, it should support their ongoing journey towards emancipatory principles and listen to and address their concerns about inequalities as part of a human-centred leadership. Both approaches emphasise the importance of understanding and supporting the individual aspirations and problems that young men and young women are confronting in order to create an environment in which they can all prosper and provide meaningful contributions to society.

Blending different leadership styles with a clear vision

Policymakers should use leadership styles that include vision, connection and expertise. Leaders who succeed in uniting people and encouraging collaboration are especially effective. Visionary leaders who provide others with a clear and compelling vision for the future are also highly valued. Furthermore, young men seek expert leaders who are competent and reliable. Policymakers could effectively engage with younger citizens and establish trust by blending and embodying the various leadership styles and attributes as needed in different situations.

Building on the strength of civil society and social relationships

Family values and honest relationships remain important to many citizens. Earlier research³¹ has shown that people put a lot of trust in the ability of civil society to solve pressing problems. Policymakers should create and promote policies that encourage strong (familial) relationships, long-term commitments and community spirit. Such policies include family-friendly workplace rules, childcare assistance and measures to promote a work–life balance.

Overcoming divisions and strengthening the European way of life

Policymakers have a pivotal role to play in addressing the social, economic and environmental challenges Europe is facing and its specific model of an open, liberal society. They must bridge social divides, enhance educational opportunities, promote economic stability and opportunities, and align with citizens' values. Adopting inclusive and forward-thinking leadership styles will strengthen policymakers' ability to resonate with citizens and effectively fight polarisation. Through these efforts, they can uphold their commitment to a prosperous, fair and sustainable Europe.

³¹ M. Hooghe and D. Stolle, 'Trust in Civil Society: The Case of European Countries', *Comparative Political Studies* 36/4 (2003).

Appendix: methodology

The Glocalities research programme

The Glocalities research programme is a pioneering global initiative designed to delve into the values, motivations and lifestyle preferences of people across different cultures.

The first wave of the Glocalities survey was completed in 2014 in 20 countries; since then Glocalities has expanded the number of countries its studies cover to 63. Between 2014 and 2023 Glocalities conducted a total of 315,808 surveys, with respondents from 20 different countries, representing at least 58% of the global population and 80% of the global economy. By comparing values indicators among people in the 20 countries that have been included in all fieldwork waves (in 2014, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2023), Glocalities has the unique means and data to track and reveal the recent changes that are shaping our global society in a very granular way. Glocalities survey fieldwork is always conducted between January and April through the online research panels of Dynata and Kantar, two agencies specialised in international fieldwork. On average, the 20 countries that were included in this trend analysis have an Internet penetration of approximately 85%.

Quotas are set beforehand, and the datasets are weighted according to national census data. Each country has an equal weight in the total dataset when conducting international analyses. The survey samples are representative of the populations of 18 to 70 year olds with respect to age, gender, region and education. In waves 1 (2014) and 2 (2016), the age range covered by the survey was 18 to 65 years old; the later ones have covered individuals aged 18 to 70 years old.

In this study, we used data from the 2014 and 2023 samples to analyse trends in our two-dimensional control–freedom/despair–hope model. Data from 2023 have been used to further understand citizen audiences in terms of select variables (issues of concern, life aspirations, appealing archetypes etc.). Table 2 shows the sample size per country per measurement.

Table 2 Country sample sizes

Country	Sample size	
	2014	2023
Belgium	1,913	2,291
France	1,881	2,233
Germany	2,120	2,248
Italy	2,624	2,102
Netherlands	1,976	1,817
Poland	2,221	2,157
Spain	2,510	2,141
UK	2,361	2,164

Explanation of the two-dimensional model

The graphs produced for this paper are a combination of two fundamental Glocalities dimensions:

1. The *control–freedom* dimension (x-axis) is based on a set of strongly differentiated value indicators assessed by responses to statements supporting either patriarchy or emancipative values. These include views on gender role flexibility, same-sex marriage and unmarried couples cohabiting. The scores represent the average score on a five-point Likert scale ranging from one (totally disagree) to five (totally agree). This axis is part of the cross-cultural super dimension that Glocalities previously researched in cooperation with the late Professor Ronald Inglehart, Founding President of the World Values Survey.³² It is a strong predictor for voting for (radical) right/conservative rather than (radical) left/liberal parties.
2. The *despair–hope* dimension (y-axis) is based on key indicators of feeling let down by society and of pessimism and disillusionment about the future. This dimension also influences whether people vote in elections or not.

³² See *World Values Survey*, 'Welcome to the World Values Survey Site', homepage.

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