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EU cultural policy and audience perspectives: how cultural value orientations are related to media usage and country context

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ABSTRACT

This article studies how people across Europe think about cultural value, including cultural heritage, and how this is related to their media usage. Drawing on data from the Eurobarometer in October 2017, which were designed with EU cultural policy goals in mind, we examine which cultural value orientations are most prevalent among citizens in European Union countries, and how these are related to their use of legacy news media and online media, their trust in professional journalists and social networks, and the media system their country belongs to. Our findings show three distinct types of cultural value orientation among Europeans: valuing cultural heritage, valuing cultural exchange, and skepticism towards European culture. These orientations map onto two out of three pillars of EU policy goals. While individual media usage and trust are important predictors of these orientations, we find limited effects of media systems, including market shares of public broadcasters.

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Cultural value orientations; European cultural policy; Europe; media systems; media usage; trust

Introduction

After decades of European countries seemingly growing closer together, the European project is now facing a crisis as a result of economic problems and socio-cultural tensions. The United Kingdom is leaving the European Union, conflicts on financial crises have not been resolved (e.g. Greece), and emerging populist movements in various countries (e.g. Poland, Hungary) divide public opinion. For a long time, Europe propagated culture as a common ground that enabled countries to unite and to overcome differences. Belief in common cultural symbols can provide the fuel for 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983), and studies have, in the recent past, shown the existence of a European identity among European citizens, even if existing next to national or local identities (e.g. Pichler 2008; Harrison and Bruter 2015). While it is no certainty that a shared cultural heritage and a historically grown relatedness render a resource for cohesion and solidarity, this conception seems to underlie both many academic theorizations (e.g. Sassatelli 2002; Lädesmäki 2012) and policy incentives from the last decades.[1]

It is therefore relevant to examine whether the goals put forward in European cultural policy have taken root among European citizens, indicated by the cultural value orientations they display. This paper examines how Europeans in the EU[2] – in the current political climate – view the symbolic and socio-economic value of European culture. Our first research question is: which patterns of cultural value orientation can we distinguish among Europeans? We use Eurobarometer survey data from 2017 which were designed to probe the opinions of EU citizens regarding the main goals of

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European cultural policy: perceived importance of European heritage, perceived socio-economic benefits of European heritage (or absence thereof), viewpoints regarding the place of European culture in the world, and the importance of cultural diversity and cultural exchange.

Besides mapping current value orientations, our paper aims to offer an explanation of these orientations, advancing on previous literature in at least two ways. First, we focus on explaining how Europeans *think* about European culture, using a comparative methodology that takes into account differences in demographics and size. Although various studies have shown cross-national differences in cultural participation (Falk and Katz-Gerro 2016; Katz-Gerro and Lopez-Sintas 2013) and cosmopolitan orientations (Pichler 2008; Verboord 2017), there is – to the best of our knowledge – no comparative research done that focuses on perceptions of culture or cultural value orientations from an EU policy perspective.

Second, we strengthen the socio-economic explanatory framework – often the core in analyses of cultural practices – by adding a media perspective to the explanatory model, focusing on individuals' media use and country-specific media system features. The mediated and politicized aspect of culture has received relatively little attention in studies of cultural practices (e.g. Prieur and Savage 2013), despite the observation that the everyday world is increasingly constructed in and through media (Couldry and Hepp 2017). Some scholars have conceived this overall trend as 'mediatization', a process whereby culture, society and everyday life to an increasing degree become dependent on the media and their logic (Hjarvard 2013). More concretely, we argue that various media types and media systems (Hallin and Mancini 2004) carry different amounts and types of culture implying that media users are exposed to different contents. Consequently, we examine how Europeans' orientations are associated with the media types that citizens use (legacy or traditional media versus online media), the trust they put in various types of sources of information (professional journalists versus online social networks), and – as a more structural confinement – the media system of the country they live in, which can be more or less commercialized and digitalized. Our second research question is: how can we explain value-orientation patterns of Europeans in terms of their media use and the media systems of their countries?

Cultural value orientations among European citizens

Cultural value cannot be determined in an absolute way, as it comprises a form of belief that certain expressions are more symbolically potent than others – a belief which depends on human activity and group consensus (Bourdieu 1984). Cultural expressions rely on the support of individuals, who, through concerted or institutionalized efforts, attempt to convince others of their worth. This 'symbolic production' is always situated in a particular societal context which is bound to differ across locations and time periods (DiMaggio 1987; Janssen, Verboord, and Kuipers 2011). What is more, at the individual level, cultural value comprises more than knowledge and behaviors, as it is also embedded in more expressive and identity-sensitive modes of engagement (Walmsley 2018). Not only does this imply the permanent element of change in what is valued in a certain society, it also emphasizes the potential of conflict between orientations and the difficulty of designing policy aims for diverse populations (Johanson, Glow, and Kershaw 2014).

Ostensibly in line with this recognition, the European cultural policy framework in recent years offered a multiplural versatile perspective on cultural value, which can be summarized as follows: 'The 2015–18 Work Plan focused on accessible and inclusive culture, cultural heritage, cultural and creative sectors (creative economy and innovation), promotion of cultural diversity, culture in EU external relations and mobility'.[3] These objectives bear traces of symbolic, societal and socio-economic ambitions concerning outcomes. It is beyond the scope of this article to reconstruct how European cultural policy is formed or to be understood in close detail (but see Sassatelli 2002; Gordon 2010), nor is it our aim to critically assess this policy through scrutinizing the underlying assumptions and taking political stances (see Gray 2015; Belfiore 2020). Given our objective to study audience perceptions, we are interested in the interlocking of policy and audience research:

we want to offer a brief review of how the diversity of value orientations has been studied from a cultural audience perspective in the previous research. We have identified three dominant research strands whose influence can be observed in the general European cultural policy framework.

Cultural value from the 'high-brow' or legitimate culture perspective

The first research tradition regarding cultural audiences concerns the study of cultural practices or cultural participation. Research has shown that there is a strong social stratification of cultural taste: individuals from higher social classes and with higher levels of education tend to participate more often in 'legitimate' culture – the cultural expressions considered worthwhile by institutional agents such as educators, cultural journalists, policymakers, and other 'experts' (e.g. Bourdieu 1984; Bennett et al. 2009; Katz-Gerro and Lopez-Sintas 2013). Yet, declining participation in 'highbrow' culture, declining belief in cultural authorities, commercialization of cultural production, and increasing citizen emancipation have started to erode the 'highbrow culture' model (Janssen, Verboord, and Kuipers 2011; Purhonen et al. 2019). Across Europe, cultural participation has become more 'omnivorous', as few people only participate in 'highbrow' culture, and different notions of what counts as valuable culture emerged (e.g. Katz-Gerro and Lopez-Sintas 2013; Purhonen, Gronow, and Rahkonen 2010; Prieur and Savage 2013). This does not mean that the social stratification of cultural taste, and the link between culture and structural power, has disappeared; being omnivorous can also be seen as a new form of distinction. Still, the notion of 'legitimate' culture is – for the sake of inclusivity – increasingly contested in society, particularly if it concerns the allocation of public funding (e.g. Belfiore 2020). Cultural democratization and cultural diversity have become more important notions on the cultural policy agenda (Bonet and Négrier 2018). Of all possible types of cultural expressions, the European cultural policy framework, quoted above, mostly emphasizes European cultural *heritage*, which is broadly defined, and explicitly refers to both 'highbrow' and 'popular' cultural forms.

Identity perspective

The strategic emphasis on heritage is also related to a second research strand: the study of cultural identities or broader value orientations. Sociological research has highlighted how general social value orientations – such as religious norms, women rights, etc., – tend to be clustered in countries in such a way that political and historical constellations and structuring living conditions, such as accessibility to (free) media, appear to shape the dominant mindsets of individuals living in the same context (Norris and Inglehart 2009). In relation to European cultural policy, the notion of cultural identity has generally been employed much more loosely, however (e.g. Sassatelli 2002). This is also the case for the 2015–28 strategic framework. A reoccurring trope is how Europeans define themselves in terms of citizenship – as national citizens, European citizens, or even citizens of the world (Lädesmäki 2012). The literature on cosmopolitanism has contributed to insights into this question: a small but significant part of the European population combines identification with the national context and with the European identity (Pichler 2008; Verboord 2017). While it is mainly the higher educated who display such diversity in attachment, engagement with symbolic practices, such as cultural consumption or media usage, can stimulate wider identifications (Verboord 2017; Hanquinet and Savage 2018). Systematic research on how individuals feel about European heritage and the value of European culture is more scarce.

Socio-economic perspective

The third pillar of EU cultural policy concerns the (socio-)economic spill-over effects of culture. While these issues have received more and more academic attention in the past decades, this was – as far as we know – often not from an audience perspective. Culture is strongly associated with creativity

and innovation, which can spur economic growth. Particularly Richard Florida's (2002) book on *The Rise of the Creative Class* stimulated many local but also regional governments to examine how their area could profit from creative (cultural) entrepreneurs. To a large degree, this has been more a policy project rather than a collaborative enterprise in which audiences have been consulted (see Andersson, Andersson, and Mellander 2011). Another increasingly important socio-economic dimension concerns cultural tourism. Culture attracts audiences from elsewhere (tourists), generating income for locals (Falk and Hagsten 2017), but also generating negative externalities (e.g. overcrowded city centers). Perceptions of citizens have received attention in recent years (e.g. Lemmi et al. 2018), but, as far as we know, not often in a comparative design.

In sum, we argue that cultural value orientations can represent various facets of audience engagement with culture, as anchored in the core of the European cultural policy framework. Yet we also signal that audience studies have mainly focused on cultural consumption – either by highbrow/popular axis or the consumption of non-national (Katz-Gerro 2017) versus domestic content (Bekhuis et al. 2013). What is missing is an integrated study of audience perspectives in which the prevalence of various types of value orientations that EU cultural policy aims for are compared.

Explaining value orientations: the role of media

Media increasingly shape cultural identities and value orientations of citizens: They represent important providers and gatekeepers of information (e.g. Norris and Inglehart 2009; Perse 2008), have become ubiquitous in people's everyday life, and increasingly serve as platforms for citizens to voice their cultural opinions and tastes (e.g. Couldry and Hepp 2017).

Given the cross-national nature of our study, we draw on comparative media research on two levels: 1) media systems on the structural level and 2) how media are used and trusted on the individual level. More specifically, we look to Hallin and Mancini's media systemic models (2004, 2012) and comparative media research that has tested and developed these models during the past decade. Originally, Hallin and Mancini (2004) conceptualized three models of Western media systems: the 'polarized-pluralist' model (e.g. France, Italy, Spain), the 'democratic-corporatist' model (e.g. Germany, Netherlands), and the 'liberal' model (e.g. UK, USA). In a European context, these models have been fine-tuned by the suggestion of distinct Nordic (Brüggemann et al. 2014) and Central and Eastern European models (Herrero et al. 2017). Key media systemic dimensions include the structure of the media market and the role of state intervention, i.e. *the role of public broadcasters versus commercially driven media*. Of importance in our context is especially the degree to which public broadcasters and national newspapers are able to reach citizens with cultural information.

While media systems address structural constellations of journalistic cultures, policies and markets within country contexts, individuals, obviously, have the agency to shape their own media diets, particularly in the digital age. For that reason, we have added, first, *the impact of digitalization* to our study, i.e., the extent to which individuals consult more or less institutionalized media in the hybrid media landscape (Chadwick 2017; Mattoni and Ceccobelli 2018; Nielsen and Schrøder 2014) and, second, the *trust* that individuals have in various media sources that bring information and news (e.g. Fletcher and Park 2017). Thus, our starting point is twofold: we consider *both* the country-specific media context – focusing on the role of public broadcasters and national newspapers – *and* the individual context, more specifically the comparison between legacy media and online media, and the role of trust in different media and information sources.

Broadcasting systems and newspaper circulation

Public broadcasters and newspapers have traditionally been the main carriers of information on 'high-brow' culture in the European context (Gripsrud and Weibull 2010). Comparative research has

shown, for example, that European newspapers have increased the coverage of arts and culture since the mid-20th century and widened their cultural outlook (e.g. Janssen, Verboord, and Kuipers 2011). But we also see national differences within the European context, as Nordic newspapers give more priority to arts and culture compared to Southern European ones (Purhonen et al. 2019). Furthermore, a comparative study between the histories of public broadcasters in five European countries shows that public broadcasting was often given the task to provide citizens access to (national) culture (Brevini 2013, 54–81). Data from the Worlds of Journalism Study also show that cultural journalists more often work in public or state-owned media than journalists covering other topical domains (Hovden and Kristensen 2018, 8). Similarly, research has shown that the Nordic media model, grounded in a welfare approach, sustains a portfolio of public service media with a special national responsibility to culture (Kristensen and Riegert 2017). The rise of commercial broadcasters, on the other hand, is often associated with different emphases, such as entertainment and popular culture. On this basis, we, therefore, formulate the first hypothesis:

H1: In countries with a media system oriented towards public broadcasting, appreciation of cultural value and heritage will be larger.

Also, media system theory has outlined how countries differ significantly in the extent to which newspapers reach a broad range of the public or mainly selected niche- or elite audiences. Comparative research has shown that levels of news consumption in general, and newspaper reading in particular, are higher in the Nordic and democratic-corporatist media systems than in the liberal and polarized-plural model (Melián and Wu 2017). Our second hypothesis reads:

H2: In countries with a higher newspaper circulation, appreciation of cultural value and heritage will be larger.

Digitalization and trust

While a key dimension in Hallin and Mancini's work concerned the role of legacy media in the public information supply, digital, non-institutionalized media play a key role in people's media repertoires in today's hybrid media system (Chadwick 2017). On the one hand, numerous comparative studies have shown that social media, such as Facebook, have become increasingly important in Europeans' news consumption, especially among younger audiences (Newman *et al*. 2019, 13). On the other hand, we see inequalities in internet access and digital media usage across media systems, e.g. between countries representing the Nordic media model compared to countries representing the polarized-plural model (see also Ragnedda and Muschert 2013). Furthermore, studies underscore the continued importance of legacy media, such as television and newspapers, since newer online media are often used in tandem with rather than supplanting legacy news media (Hasebrink et al. 2015). Importantly, consumption of more legitimate media outlets is still associated with higher levels of cultural capital (Lindell 2018).

For the shaping of cultural value orientations, it is important to reiterate the different degrees of institutionalization that are associated with these media types (Verboord 2014). Whereas newspapers, and to a lesser degree television, have a strong connection with the institutions that legitimize cultural value (Janssen, Verboord, and Kuipers 2011), this link is more lose in digital, online media. We therefore hypothesize that:

H3: Appreciation of cultural value and heritage by individuals will be associated (a) positively with usage of legacy news media (television, radio, newspapers) and (b) negatively with online media (internet, social media).

An aspect that has more recently been added to comparative media audience research is the issue of trust. In the changed media ecology and high-choice media market, the position and authority of news media as important information providers have come under pressure. Similar to other societal institutions, such as religion, politics and academia, the authority of media institutions and professional journalists is in decline (e.g. Carlson 2017). Still, in the case of cultural journalism and criticism, audiences consider institutionalized critics and journalists highly trustworthy, as they are associated with cultural authority, expertise and capital, compared to, e.g., non-professionals publishing online (Kristensen and From 2015, 2020). Furthermore, trust in institutionalized news media has weakened with varied intensity across countries and systems with differing media supply. Overall, people express more trust in quality news brands with a long history (e.g. public service broadcasters and print media) compared to digital-born platforms and social media. The use of such legacy media may stimulate trust in media systems (e.g. Newman 2019; Schranz, Schneider, and Eisenegger 2018). However, in the digital media landscape, people with low trust in the news media tend to consult other sources than mainstream media (Fletcher and Park 2017). Trust in sources may shape cultural value orientations as it taps into the question of where information is coming from, and, as such, more directly asks what constitutes cultural authority. More concretely, we expect:

H4: Appreciation of cultural value and heritage by individuals will be associated (a) positively with trust in experts and journalists, and (b) negatively with trust in online social networks.

Methodology

To answer our research questions, we use survey data on European citizens collected in September and October 2017 in the Eurobarometer 88.1 survey. The Eurobarometer survey program aims to monitor the opinions of citizens of EU countries and exists since 1974, using approximately 1000 face-to-face interviews per country. Samples are representative for country populations. Whereas the regular editions focus on political and economic affairs in the EU, special editions cover other aspects of social life in Europe. The 88.1 survey used here contained a large section on media usage, media trust, and cultural attitudes, which makes it suitable for the current study. Due to their small size and limited data on media systems, we left Malta and Luxembourg out of the analyses. The results represent 26 EU countries[4] and include 26,880 respondents.

Measurements

Cultural value orientations

The survey contained in total 16 statements on culture which covered the three dimensions discussed above, albeit with some limitations. The first questions collected five statements regarding symbolic aspects of cultural heritage, in particular feelings of pride (e.g. 'You feel pride in a historical monument or site, work of art or tradition from a European country other than your own'). The second group of five statements probed the perceptions regarding certain socio-economic aspects of heritage (e.g. 'Europe's cultural heritage or cultural heritage-related activities create jobs in the EU'; 'The number of tourists visiting certain areas represents a threat to Europe's cultural heritage'). Note, however, some statements are less clearly linked to the socio-economic perspective (e.g. holiday destinations, allocation of budget) and no statements are presented on other economic aspects of EU culture (such as creative entrepreneurs), limiting the scope of the study. Next, six statements followed with a focus on identity elements and potential societal impacts. These statements concerned, for example, whether there is a common European culture, and how respondents assess the impact of culture and cultural exchange. An overview of all statements follows in Table 1. Note that the survey gave a broad definition of cultural heritage, including monuments, works of art, films, books but also intangible things like skills, rituals and festive events. Respondents could answer

Table 1. Factor analysis statements on European culture.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Living close to places related to Europe's cultural heritage can improve people's quality of life	**.70**	.19	.07
Living close to places related to Europe's cultural heritage can give people a sense of belonging to Europe	**.69**	.24	.06
You feel pride in a historical monument or site, work of art, or tradition (e.g. crafts, festivals, music, dance, etc.) from your region or from [own country]	**.70**	.15	−.05
You feel pride in a historical monument or site, work of art, or tradition (e.g. crafts, festivals, music, dance, etc.) from a European country other than [own country]	**.74**	.13	.04
Europe's cultural heritage should be taught at schools, as it tells us about our history and culture	**.54**	.34	−.19
The number of tourists visiting certain areas represents a threat to Europe's cultural heritage	.26	−.18	**.58**
Europe's cultural heritage is more for visitors from outside the EU than for EU citizens	.10	−.10	**.73**
Europe's cultural heritage or cultural heritage-related activities create jobs in the EU	**.48**	.40	.01
The presence of cultural heritage can have an influence on your holiday destination	**.57**	.21	.07
Public authorities should allocate more resources to Europe's cultural heritage	**.56**	.34	.06
There is no common European culture because European countries are too different from one another	−.16	.14	**.62**
It's the diversity of European culture that sets it apart and gives it its particular value	.21	**.66**	−.05
Through globalization, European culture will become more dynamic and widespread in the world	.20	**.58**	.21
There is no specific European culture, only a global western culture which is, for example, the same in Europe and the US	−.06	.09	**.74**
Culture and cultural exchange should have a very important place in the EU, so that citizens from different member states can learn more from each other and feel more European	.32	**.73**	−.08
Culture and cultural exchange can play an important role in developing greater understanding and tolerance in the world, even when there are conflicts or tensions	.29	**.72**	−.07
Eigenvalues	4.863	1.935	1.105
% explained variance	30.40	12.09	6.91
Cronbach's alpha	.828	.718	.611

Source: Eurobarometer 88_1. Note: the answer categories of all items used in the analysis run from *Totally disagree/Corresponds very badly* to *Totally agree/Corresponds very well*. Varimax rotation. KMO =.884 and Bartlett's test of Sphericity is significant (<.000), implying FA is adequate.
Coefficients in bold are used in calculation variables.

to these statements in four answering categories, originally ordered from positive to negative, but which we recoded into the reverse (*totally disagree, disagree, agree, totally agree* (for the first two collections), or *[corresponds] very badly, fairly badly, fairly well, very well [to what you think personally*]) (for the third and fourth collections)). For all statements, respondents could choose the answer *don't know* (DK). These answers were considered missing values.[5]

Media variables

The survey asked about five different, broad types of media usage: *watching television (both on a TV set or via the Internet), listening to the radio, reading the written press, using the Internet*, and *using online social networks*. For every media type, the answering categories ran from 0 (never) to 5 ((almost) every day). If respondents indicated that they had no access to the medium, they were added to the category *never*. A factor analysis (available at request) showed that there are two, overall types of media usage: *legacy media usage* (including television, radio and written press) and *online media* (Internet and social networks). New variables were created by calculating the mean scores for these two factors. For the sake of interpretation, the variables were recoded between 0 and 1.

To probe the degree of trust that people have in various sources of information, we rely on a question that asks – for a list of ten institutional agents – which sources of information respondents trust most, firstly and secondly. Based on an explorative factor analysis, and combining every positive answer, we distinguished the following categories: *experts and journalists* (combines these verbatim items from questionnaire), *bloggers and influential people on social network sites* (verbatim), and *political agents* (combines: politicians, government, European

institutions). Note that this latter variable is merely a control variable.[6] These are modeled as dummy variables.

Demographics

Age is coded in absolute years, divided by 10. Sex is coded as female. Educational level is measured in number of years that someone followed education. Social class is measured as a self-perceived assessment, and respondents could indicate, if they thought they belonged to *working class, lower middle class, middle class, upper middle class*, and *higher class*.

To make sure that the influence of media cannot be attributed to time or financial restraints, we add some more control variables. We used the question on whether respondents had difficulty in paying the bills last years, which had three answer categories: *most of the time, from time to time, almost never/never*. We also consider the possibility that living in more densely populated areas can be related to cultural interest (either because individuals move there because of the culture, or because the available culture sparks their interest). The questionnaire asks individuals whether they live in a rural area or village, in a small or medium-sized town, or in a large town/city.

Finally, we control for several political factors. Besides trust in political agents (see above), we consider that political interest and political orientation may affect orientations. Political interest is measured by taking the mean score of three variables that indicated the extent to which individuals discuss political matters: local, national, and European. For all three, respondents could answer *never, occasionally*, or *frequently*. The total score is recoded between 0 and 1. Political orientation is measured on a scale from 1 (most left-wing) to 10 (most right-wing).

Country characteristics

We include the average newspaper (paid-for and free dailies) circulation divided by adult population size (copies per 1000), as reported in the *World Press Trends 2017* report. The market share for public broadcasters is based on data from the European Audiovisual Observatory as provided in the report *The internationalisation of TV audience markets in Europe* (2019), which contains data on 2017.[7]

In our models, we employ the following control variables: the population size of a country (data from the World Bank database), the degree of globalization (via KOF Globalization Index 2017), the government expenditure on culture per country (%GDP) retrieved from Eurostat, and the degree of income inequality in a country via the Gini coefficient. The latter is a measure of statistical dispersion intended to represent the income or wealth distribution of a nation's residents and is the most commonly used measurement of inequality. A higher score means more inequality.

Analytical strategy

To inductively find which cultural value orientations can be distinguished in Europe, we use factor analysis. The explanatory analyses are conducted via multilevel analysis because of the nested structure of our data (27,881 respondents in 28 countries). Multilevel analysis allows for more correct estimation of standard errors in data that are nested (Hox 2010).

Results

To assess which values European individuals hold with regards to European culture in broader sense and cultural heritage in particular, we conducted a factor analysis of 16 statements included in the survey. Using Kaiser's Criterion, three factors were found with an eigenvalue of more than 1.

Table 1 presents the results of the factor analysis. Factor 1 can be summarized as the perceived importance of Europe's cultural heritage. It combines items that indicate feeling proud about cultural objects with items that express a belief in the positive socio-economic impact of culture. Note that this pride refers both to regional/national and European culture. We label this factor *value to cultural heritage*. Factor 2 represents the belief in European culture and cultural exchange. Here, we see large factor loadings from items that indicate a positive view on diversity and cultural exchange and also

see a uniting effect of European culture. We label this factor *value to cultural exchange*. Finally, factor 3 combines a negative interpretation of the impact of cultural heritage with a disbelief in the existence of European culture. We therefore label this factor *skepticism towards European culture*. Thus, we find traces of the 'legitimate culture perspective' and the 'identity perspective' in the outcomes. The 'socio-economical perspective' seems to be folded into the other two, although this might be the consequence of the limited set of measurements. At the same time, an explicitly antagonistic perspective emerges as a separate third factor among the European value orientations.

How are these value orientations distributed across Europe? We present three graphs that show the mean predicted values for the countries under study, each time compared to a different country characteristic. Predicted values imply that we hold other individual background characteristics constant. Figure 1 shows how valuing cultural heritage (factor 1) is related to the market share of public broadcasters. Overall, we see a weak positive trend: it appears that countries with a large share of public broadcasters attribute on average more value to cultural heritage. Except for democratic-corporatist countries (in particular Northern European countries) which are mostly situated in the upper left corner, the correlation with media system types is not obviously clear. Figure 2 plots valuing cultural exchange (factor 2) with the average newspaper circulation. We see similar trends as in Figure 1. Again, there is a moderate positive relationship – countries with higher circulation appear to attribute more value to cultural exchange – and Northern European countries have, on average, the highest scores. Finally, Figure 3 shows how skepticism (factor 3) and the mean trust in journalists/experts per country are related. Skepticism is least often found in countries with a democratic corporate signature (particularly Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands), which are also the countries with the highest degree of trust in experts and journalists. Similar to the other figures, it is difficult to make out clear trends for the other media system types. Both for post-communist and polarized pluralist types, we see differences between individual countries.

Table 2 presents multilevel regression analyses of the three cultural value orientations. Inspection of the intraclass correlation coefficients for the three dependent variables shows that most of the variance is situated at the individual level (ICC is 3.1% for CVH; 2.6% for VCE; 10.9% for Skepticism).

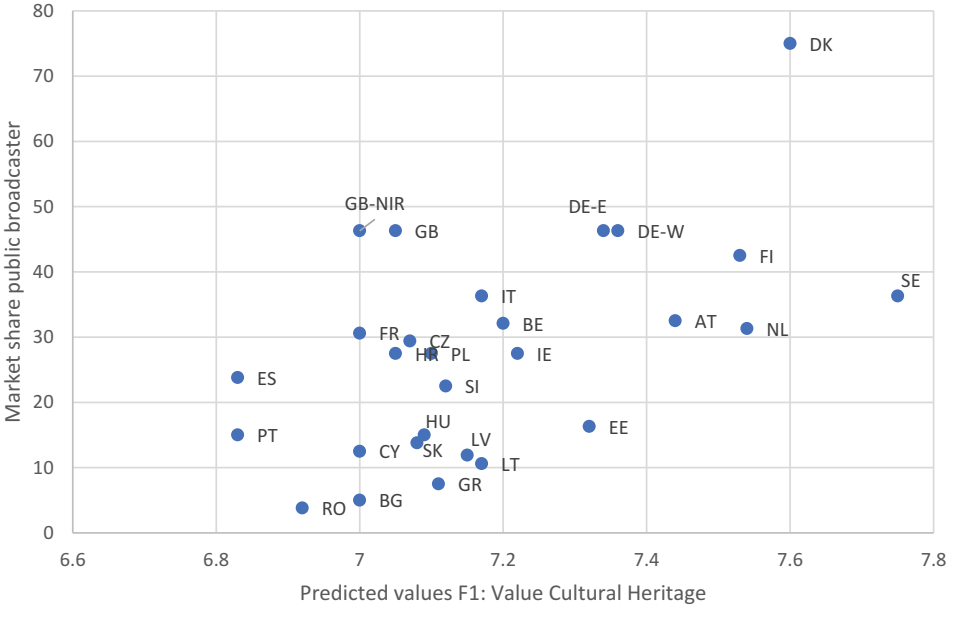

Figure 1. Market share public broadcasters and average value cultural heritage (by country). Note: predicted values based upon the variables in model 1b. Pearson correlation =.547, p =.003.

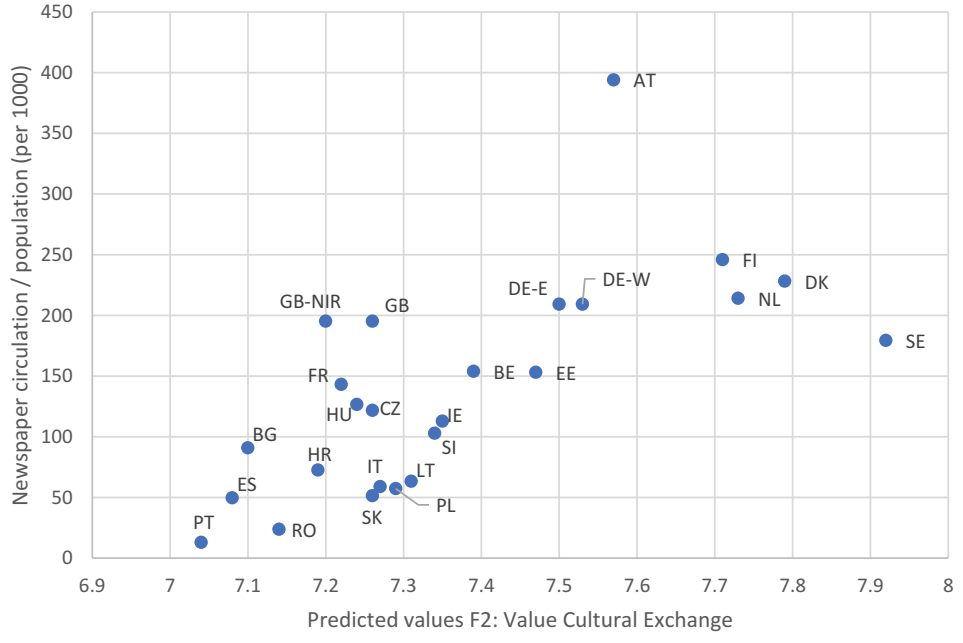

Figure 2. Newspaper circulation/population and average value cultural exchange (by country). Note: predicted values based upon the variables in model 2b. Pearson correlation =.701, p =.000.

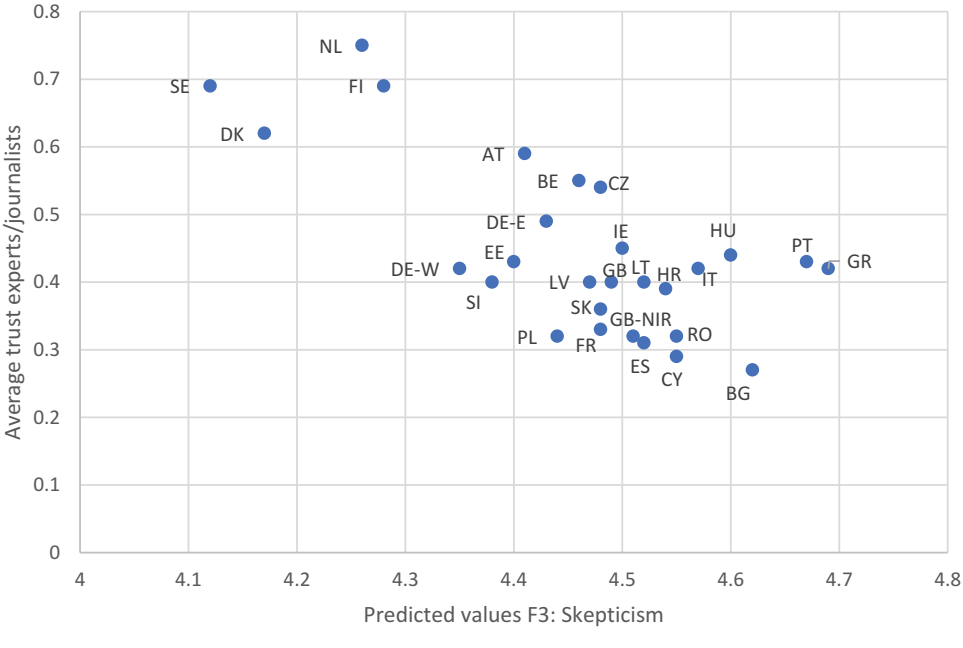

Figure 3. Average trust experts/journalists and average skepticism (by country). Note: predicted values based upon the variables in model 3b. Pearson correlation = −.708, p =.000.

Three random intercept models are presented for each dependent variable: first a model with the media usage variables (and demographic controls), then the trust variables (and political orientation controls), and finally a model that adds country-level characteristics. The explanatory models of the

Table 2. Multilevel regression analysis of cultural value orientations in 26 European countries.

	Value Cultural Heritage (0–10)			Value Cultural Exchange (0–10)			Skepticism (0–10)		
	1a	1B	1 c	2a	2b	2 c	3a	3b	3 c
Intercept	4.876***	4.780***	6.024***	5.167***	5.319***	2.847***	5.727 ***	5.399 ***	5.744 ***
Age/10	.049 ***	.040 ***	.040 ***	.051 ***	.048 ***	.047 ***	−.028 *	−.026 *	−.026 *
Female (0/1)	.177 ***	.248 ***	.246 ***	.118 ***	.154 ***	.154 ***	−.121 ***	−.136 ***	−.136 ***
Educational level (in years)	.061 ***	.039 ***	.039 ***	.062 ***	.045 ***	.045 ***	−.070 ***	−.062 ***	−.062 ***
Social class (0–4)	.132 ***	.075 ***	.073 ***	.097 ***	.060 ***	.061 ***	−.001	−.001	−.001
Relative income (0/1/2)	.064 **	.054 *	.064 **	.183 ***	.174 ***	.179 ***	−.170 ***	−.168 ***	−.166 ***
Usage online media (0–1)	.419 ***	.310 ***	.314 ***	.305 ***	.254 ***	.251 ***	−.196 **	−.177 **	−.177 **
Usage legacy media (0–1)	1.086***	.774 ***	.780 ***	.853 ***	.616 ***	.620 ***	−.020	.054	.156
Trust source: experts/journalists (0/1)		.307 ***	.307 ***		.300 ***	.300 ***		−.137 ***	−.136 ***
Trust source: online social networks (0/1)		.267 ***	.263 ***		.058	.057		.007	.007
Trust source: political agents (0/1)		.300 ***	.301 ***		.291 ***	.293 ***		.149 ***	.149 ***
Political interest (0–1)		.543 ***	.542 ***		.338 ***	.338 ***		−.139 ***	−.139 ***
Political orientation to the right (0–10)		−.017 **	−.017 **		−.056***	−.056***		.059 ***	.059 ***
Country characteristics									
Population size			−.004 ~			.002			−.001
Gini			.072 ***			.081 **			n.i.
Government expenditure culture %GDP			.317			.386			.176
Globalization index			−.040 *			n.i.			n.i.
Market share public broadcasters			.010 *			−.003			n.i.
Av. circulation newspapers/pop (per1000)			−.004***			−.002 *			−.003 ~
Variance individual	3.304***	3.157***	3.157***	3.200***	3.104***	3.104***	4.663 ***	4.633***	4.633 ***
Variance country	.220 **	.238 **	.030 *	.181 **	.198 **	.047 **	.640 **	.611 **	.490 **
−2 Log Likelihood	80,411.3	79,504.6	79,467.9	79,769.2	79,166.7	79,139.4	87,289.4	87,159.6	87,156.6

Source: Eurobarometer 88_1. Maximum Likelihood Estimation. Results are weighted using weight w23 in dataset.

Significance: ~ = p <.10 * = p <.05 ** p <.01 *** p <.001. Notes: All models controlled for Size location. In model 2b and 2 c some country control variables are not included (n.i.) since they did not lead to significantly better fitting models.

first two orientations show strong similarities, particularly with regard to individual factors. Both *value to cultural heritage* and *value to cultural exchange* tend to be larger amongst older persons, women, the higher educated, persons from higher social classes, persons with more income, politically interested, persons leaning more to the politically left, and those who trust politicians.

We find positive regression effects of usage of both legacy media and online media. Clearly, using legacy media is associated with higher levels of these value orientations, as the coefficients are much larger than for using online media. This is in line with the notion that legacy media traditionally pay considerable attention to legitimate culture (as most cultural heritage can be labeled as such). The trust variables are also relevant. Trusting experts is associated with more value to both cultural heritage and cultural exchange. Trusting social media mainly matters for valuing cultural heritage.

The third type of value orientation – being skeptical about European culture – should be understood very differently. Males, the young, the lower educated, the less affluent, the less politically interested, and more right-wing leaning persons are more likely to adhere to this orientation. Media usage only has a limited association with this value orientation: individuals who more often use online media appear less skeptical ($\beta = -.177$, $p < .01$). Trust in experts means less skepticism, and trust in social media has no clear relationship.

Finally, we look at the regression effects of country-level variables (models 1 c, 2 c, 3 c). We only find one small significant regression effect for the television system: a larger market share of public broadcasters is positively related with value orientations that emphasize heritage. Countries with higher levels of newspaper circulation per capita show significantly lower value for cultural heritage and for cultural exchange. The findings from model 3 c show that skepticism is most difficult to explain at the country level. Most country-level variables are not significant; only a borderline negative effect of newspaper circulation is found.

Finally, although entered as control variable, remarkable effects are found for the Gini index, which is positively related to both valuing cultural heritage ($\beta = .072$, $p < .001$) and valuing cultural exchange ($\beta = .081$, $p < .01$). This implies that in more unequal countries generally more value is attributed. Moreover, taking into account this and other structural factors may be the reason why the pattern of Figure 2 was not found in the multivariate analyses.

Conclusions and discussion

This article studied how people across Europe think about cultural value, more generally, and cultural heritage, more specifically. Drawing on data from the Eurobarometer in October 2017 which were designed with EU cultural policy goals in mind, we examined which cultural value orientations are currently most prevalent in European Union countries, and what role media usage play in the dispersion of these values.

We find three distinct types of cultural value orientation: valuing cultural heritage (e.g. being proud), valuing cultural exchange (e.g. being positive about diversity), and skepticism (e.g. not believing in one European culture). The emergence of the first two orientations seems to accord with the policy aims to propagate European cultural heritage and to create a stronger European identity. It does not necessarily imply the success of the policy – citizens can adhere to these value orientations in various degrees – but the average scores are, at least for most countries (see Figures 1 and 2), relatively encouraging. However, the third value orientation suggests that there is also a category of disengaged, who takes a negative stance towards the idea of Europe and a common culture.

Our explanatory analyses focused on the role of media and examined whether legacy media (at the country and individual level) and trust in experts and journalists (individual level) are positively related to appreciating cultural value and heritage. The first hypothesis was only partially confirmed: market share of public broadcasters only shows a positive association with factor 1, valuing cultural heritage. Hypothesis 2 must be rejected: adhering value to heritage and exchange tends to be lower in countries with higher newspaper circulation. While it is true that in these countries, skepticism also

seems somewhat lower, this result was barely significant. Hypothesis 3a is corroborated, but hypothesis 3b is not: both using legacy media and online media are positively associated with the appreciation of cultural value and heritage. Finally, hypothesis 4a is corroborated, but hypothesis 4b is not: individuals who signal trust in experts and journalists indeed express higher value levels, but trust in online social networks is positively associated with valuing cultural heritage, and not related to the other factors.

What conclusions can we draw from these results? First of all, online media usage does not hamper positive cultural value orientations, although the association with legacy media still appears to be stronger. This implies that EU cultural policymakers should seek a mix of media for promoting European culture, acknowledging the hybrid media ecology. Second, the degree to which individuals trust experts and journalists also matters. Regardless of how often people use legacy and online media, they are more positive if they trust these agents as sources of information. Thus, trust in professional journalists and experts remains important for creating cultural value orientations which are positive and geared toward the European agenda. Third, media system theory only offers a limited explanation for cultural value orientations. Descriptive analyses at the country level show clear relationships between cultural value and public broadcasters and newspaper circulation (Figures 1–3), but most of these relationships disappear, or become negative, when modeled at the individual level.

On average, people from countries with a democratic-corporatist media system (Scandinavian countries, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Austria) are most supportive of cultural heritage, and least skeptical (taking into account differences in background characteristics). But the multilevel analyses show that there are large differences between individuals and suggests that this positive take on cultural value should be attributed to the individual level, rather than to a positive context. Of course, it is possible that some of our country-level variables pick up other aspects that countries have in common. The negative effect of newspaper circulation should perhaps be interpreted in a more general fashion: more newspapers may indicate more critical citizens and thus a lower baseline for valuing culture and heritage.

A remarkable outcome is that of the Gini coefficient. For two factors, the significant effect suggests that cultural value orientations are more positive (value to heritage, value to cultural exchange), if there is more inequality (not less). This may point to DiMaggio's (1987) theoretical idea that cultural classification systems are likely to contain stronger barriers between highbrow and popular culture in societies that are more socially stratified. In these contexts, cultural authority is more concentrated (DiMaggio 1987, 447), which would provide more fertile ground to appreciate legitimate culture, such as heritage. In the European context, this concerns mostly East-European and South-European countries, as well as the UK and Ireland. Countries in Scandinavia and Western and Central Europe are more egalitarian, perhaps implying that cultural value is more dependent on individual resources than on what society proposes as standard.

Some limitations need to be mentioned. First of all, we were dependent on the available information in the Eurobarometer, which is not highly detailed for media-related behavior (e.g. which types of print media do people read?) and for the socio-economic perspective of EU policy. This implies that some questions remain unanswered. Also, the questions measuring cultural value are pre-defined and therefore limited. This accords with the goals of this paper to examine how Europeans conceive culture as constructed in recent policy efforts. But with an eye on building future frameworks that truly resonate with EU citizens, we would recommend that more open, fully inductive ways of probing perceptions of cultural value in the EU are developed, which also move beyond heritage.

In sum, the findings suggest that cultural value orientations of EU citizens map onto two out of three pillars of EU policy goals (symbolic value, which includes also socio-economic value, and societal value). Yet there is a third perspective that emphasizes lack of belief in European culture. Obviously, alternative orientations may go undetected because of the used methodology. The results also point to the importance of taking media use into account when studying how cultural value orientations in a European context take shape. Further research is needed at the country level,

however, to explain in more detail how structural factors (media system, cultural classification system, inequality levels) interact with cultural value orientations.

Notes

1. www.ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework_en.
2. From here on, we use 'Europeans' when we refer to EU citizens.
3. https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework_en#targetText=The%202,019%2D22%20Work%20Plan,creative%20professionals%20and%20European%20content.
4. But note that Eurobarometer has separate country codes for Germany East, and Northern Ireland.
5. Additional analyses in which these answers were treated as 'neutral' produced very similar outcomes.
6. Hanitzsch, Van Dalen and Steindl (2018, 19) in fact point to the *trust-nexus* of politics and the news media, i.e. 'the idea that trust in the news media is tied to the way publics look at political institutions'.
7. We also conducted analyses in which countries were classified in four types of media systems, following Hallin and Mancini (2004) and later developments: liberal, democratic corporatist, polarized pluralist, and post-communist (and an additional fifth category of the Nordic model). However, analyses in which we included those types led to worst fitting statistical models.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in GESIS Eurobarometer Data Service at https://www.gesis.org/eurobarometer-data-service/search-data-access/data-access, reference number ZA6925.

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