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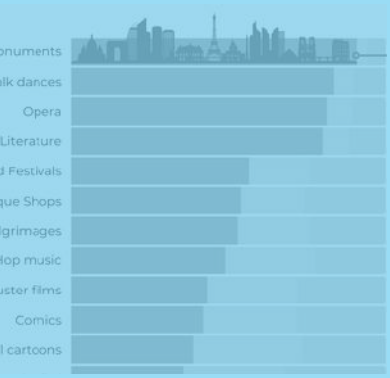
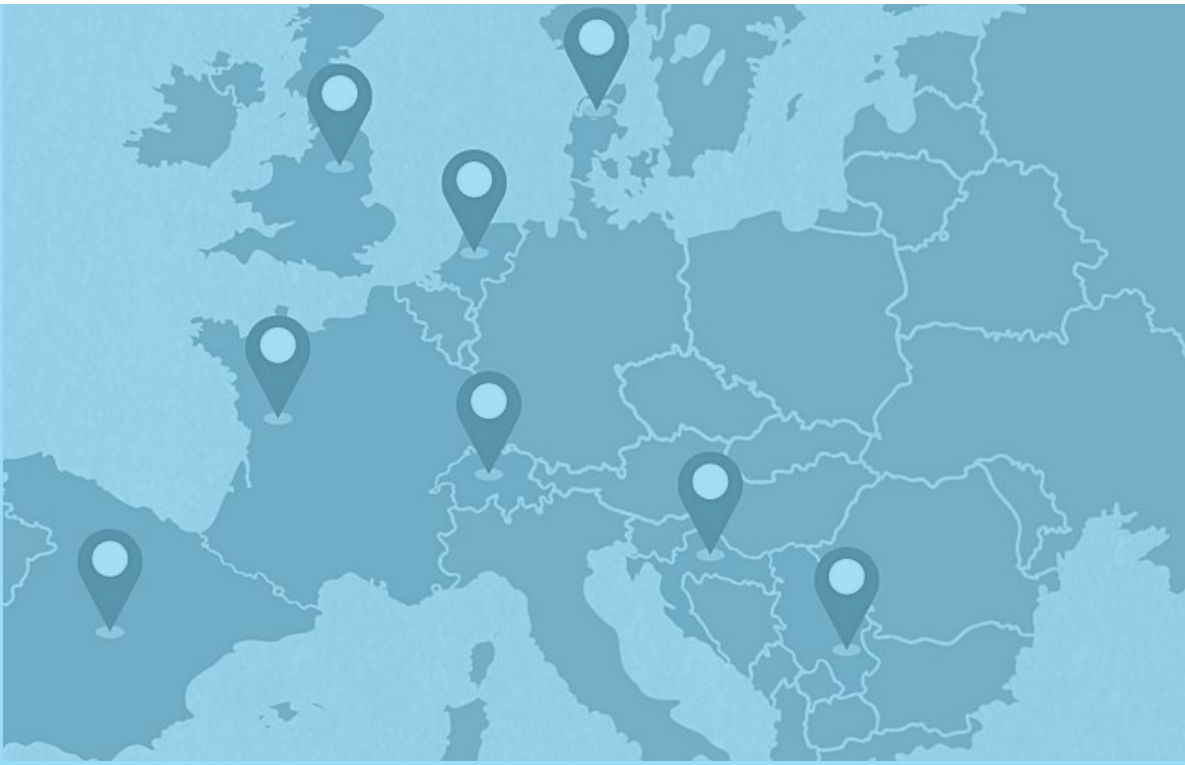
EUROPEAN INVENTORY
OF CULTURAL VALUES





What does culture mean to Europeans?

D3.1 Report on the diverse notions of culture

AUGUST 2022

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EUROPEAN INVENTORY OF SOCIETAL VALUES OF CULTURE AS BASIS FOR INCLUSIVE CULTURAL POLICIES

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A Report on the Diverse Notions of Culture

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What does culture mean to Europeans?

Mapping the multiplicity of understandings of culture within and across European societies

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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview on the diversity of the notions of culture among people in present-day Europe. It adopts a "bottom-up" perspective to the conceptions and understandings of culture, which means that instead of starting from some pre-defined notions, it presents an inductive and exploratory investigation into the notions of culture held by people in and across different European sociodemographic groups and geographical locations. The report opens with a brief discussion of the diverse conceptions of culture, the current "cultural abundance" and how the manifold societal megatrends in Europe and the western world since the latter part of the 20th century have affected both the cultural environment in which we live, and the conceptual "baggage" associated with the term culture. The empirical parts that follow are based on wide-ranging and nationally representative survey datasets collected by INVENT in 2021 in its nine countries: Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK.

The first empirical part analyses an open-ended question, in which the respondents could freely define in their own words which meanings they associate with "culture". The analysis utilizes topic modelling to create distinct clusters for the major meanings attached to the culture concept, after which it is inspected how those clusters are distributed according to major sociodemographic divisions – such as age, gender, household size, place of residence, education, income, migrant background, and religion – as well as how they are associated with other politico-cultural factors and attitudes, in and across the nine countries. The second empirical part analyses a structured survey question including a list of twenty items (of cultural objects, places, and practices) and asking whether the respondents see each of them as belonging to culture, not belonging to culture or whether they remained ambivalent. Using Latent Class Analysis, distinct clusters of different understandings of culture are, again, constructed and then analysed according to several sociodemographic variables in the nine countries. Thus, both empirical parts proceed rather similarly but are based on different ways of measuring the meanings attached to culture, which enables comparing the results and asking to what degree the methodologies used matter in capturing the meanings of culture.

The results demonstrate the persistence of the relevance of the classical distinction between the narrow ("culture as arts") and the broad ("culture as ways of life") notions of culture, yet, at the same time, they show that the distinction does not fully capture how people in today's Europe understand the concept. The topic modelling in the first empirical part, based on the content of open-ended answers, reveals five distinct understandings of culture: culture as 1) cultivation, as 2) arts, as 3) institutional, as 4) group characteristic, and as 5) social custom. The Latent Class Analysis in the second empirical part, in turn, disentangles these five major understandings, based on the level of breadth and ambiguity of the respondents' views of what counts as culture and what does not; these are the 1) traditional cautious, 2) broad cautious, 3) broad distinct, 4) exclusive determinate, and 5) inclusive exhaustive understandings of culture. Both ways of measuring the diverse notions of culture were capable of showing that different understandings are statistically significantly associated with sociodemographic divisions, besides also being associated with several socio-political attitudes. However, these associations were stronger in the case of clusters produced by Latent Class Analysis than topic modelling. Nevertheless, the results unambiguously show that the traditional hypothesis of the narrow and exclusive understandings of culture being more typical to upper-status groups rather than lower-status groups does not hold anymore in present-day Europe. In contrast, the narrow understandings are associated with lower-status groups, while the upper-status groups embrace broad notions of culture. The report closes by a discussion section, which provides a summary of the findings, reflects on the methodological and comparative issues behind the findings, and suggests new avenues for future research.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Why study diverse notions of culture? Why now?

The concept of culture is notoriously multifaceted: scholars have debated at least for some 250 years about its definition and significance (see e.g. Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Williams, 1981; Fornäs, 2017). A classical distinction revolves between the hierarchical and universalistic notion of culture in its narrowest meaning as the "high arts" and the wide and relativistic notion of culture as a "whole way of life". This well-known conceptual polysemy (Williams, 1976: 87) – in which the distinction between the narrow and the wide understanding of culture plays a key role but is only one manifestation of it – continues to be a problem particularly for cultural policy because different actors tend to understand and use the concept in different ways. Often, the goals of cultural policy seem to be set with a broad concept of culture in mind, while the cultural policy actions are guided by much more narrower understandings (Belfiore, 2009; Gray, 2015). Already this ambiguity in the meaning of the concept of culture and its apparent relevance for cultural policy gives the first reason to investigate how *people themselves* understand the concept of culture.

Overall, there is a lack of systematic, empirical knowledge about the "bottom-up" understandings of culture by people from different social positions and localities. Instead, the debates on the meanings of culture have been dominated by various *a priori* conceptualizations by theorists (see Fornäs, 2017). Unfortunately, this is also the case in the otherwise often so sophisticated and ever-expanding field of the sociology of culture. Following the principles of naturalistic inquiry – where it is essential to know how things are done and understood in practice and *de facto* rather than at the level of ideals or in theory (Spector, 2012) –, systematic research into people's understandings of culture would examine how ordinary people from various locations understand the meaning of the defining concept of the field, or even "one of contemporary sociology's foundational notions" (Lizardo, 2016: 99). Nevertheless, such systematic research is largely still missing.

The INVENT project, and this report on its own behalf, aims to help filling this gap through a comprehensive investigation of ordinary citizens' understandings of culture. This is particularly important in today's "culturally abundant" (Wright, 2015) and thoroughly mediatized (Hepp, 2013) world, where the concept of culture is more ubiquitous than ever. Indeed, culture can be seen as one of the most crucial concepts for people's socio-political imaginary with which they can reflect, paraphrasing C. Wright Mill's (1959) famous maxim, their own place and identity against broader social groups, divisions, and even historical structures (see also Williams, 1958). This aim is at the heart of the general objectives of INVENT, namely, to identify multiple and possibly contradictory concepts of culture in various social groups, and to develop a better understanding of how these multiple concepts of culture are related to broader social and political values and attitudes.

Knowing how people understand the concept of culture may open important perspectives not only to contemporary culture with all of its hierarchies and inequalities, but also to the broader patterning of lifestyles where cultural, social and political elements are intertwined together (e.g. DellaPosta et al., 2015; Sivonen & Purhonen, 2021; Heikkilä et al., 2022). It could well be possible that divergent notions of culture are at the background of different socio-political conflicts and tensions. Take, for instance, some of the most pressing political issues of today, such as climate change or minority rights. Both can be perceived very differently depending on how much they, as "political" issues, are seen also as cultural in their nature. For instance, whether climate change is viewed as an issue that has mainly to do with nature, technology, and perhaps economy, or whether it is also considered as a cultural matter touching upon our lifestyles, values, and identities; or whether minority

rights are understood primarily as a legal question of citizenship or as a broader cultural issue having complex implications for worth, recognition, and identity. To put it differently, when the understanding of culture is very narrow, culture is not easily seen as playing a major part in such political issues. Thus, if culture – and the relativity which the broad understanding of culture often carries with itself – is not perceived to be involved, the stances and perspectives regarding these political issues might be more straightforward, or even arduous. Then again, if culture is understood more broadly and thus also as deeply involved in these political questions, it may make it easier to recognize the multitude of aspects and complexities of the issues, for instance that they are not only matters possible to be solved by simply technical means. Maybe the broad understanding of culture even facilitates taking societal issues such as climate change and problems with guaranteeing minority rights more seriously and being more concerned about them? These types of questions can be investigated empirically once we know how different understandings of culture are distributed among people and associated with other attitudes and values.

Finally, a question of its own is whether the classical hypotheses regarding narrow ("culture as the arts") and broad ("culture as a way of life") understandings of culture necessarily hold anymore in present-day societies. The narrow and "pure" understandings of culture – including often also ideas of moral superiority – were traditionally expected to be more typical among high-status groups, while broader and more mundane understandings referring to everyday practices, norms and traditions (i.e., also popular, folk and commercial forms or culture) were expected to be associated with lower-status groups and, ultimately, the working class (e.g., Bourdieu, 1984; Levine, 1988; Schulze, 1992). However, the main debates of sociology of culture since the 1990s, such as those of the cultural omnivore and growing tolerance and openness (Peterson & Kern, 1996; Ollivier, 2008; Hazir & Warde, 2016; Chan, 2019; Lindblom, 2022), can be seen as turning these expectations the other way round. They all emphasize that it is the high-status rather than low-status groups who embrace the breadth and diversity of tastes, practices and repertoires of culture, at least at the manifest level. Against this background, one could expect the high-status groups to also embrace the broadness and inclusivity in the understandings of the culture itself, while being hesitant to delimit its sphere. Therefore, examining the divergent understandings of culture in present-day Europe can enhance and update our knowledge also about these key hypotheses.

1.2 The objectives of WP3 Mapping Diversity and the aim of this report

The core of INVENT's Work package 3 (WP3) *Mapping Diversity* involves exploring and mapping the different understandings of culture prevalent in today's Europe among ordinary people. Thus, it employs a thoroughly bottom-up approach: an inductive empirical investigation about the conceptions and understandings of culture instead of armchair theorizing. The work in WP3 started at the beginning of INVENT (February 2020) and continues for the whole duration of the project (after the extension due to COVID-19, in July 2023). The WP3 is led by Tampere University (TAU), but all INVENT partners contribute to its work in order to achieve its goals. The objectives of WP3 are:

1) Identification of multiple concepts of culture among various social groups in and across European societies to reveal how they are associated with societal values and broader socio-political divisions in these different contexts;
2) Classification of these various concepts of culture and the attached societal values into a certain number of relatively coherent viewpoints and examination of their interrelationship;
3) Examination of combinations of these understandings of culture and societal values with the sociodemographic characteristics of their bearers – e.g. their national, class-related,

educational, ethnic, religious, gender and age characteristics – to identify their positions in social hierarchies and how they relate to different expectations of culture;

4) Generation of research hypotheses and questions based on the explanatory work mapping the diversity to be further analyzed in WP4 (on globalization), WP5 (on digitalization), WP6 (on Inequalities) and WP7 (on decoding culture).

This report addresses the first three objectives – with the very first objective being the major focus –, while the fourth one is touched upon more briefly and indirectly in its discussions. The explorative analyses on the diverse notions of culture already done in the WP3 have been based on a variety of empirical data collections: the exploratory piloting survey collected in the summer 2020 to test some questions that later ended up being included in the major, representative surveys and to understand better the meanings of culture especially under the particular circumstances created by a global pandemic, COVID-19 (INVENT, 2021c); the online data scraping during 2021 to find out how culture is discussed in Twitter by focusing on the hashtags and keywords including the word "culture" (INVENT, 2021a); the smartphone study on everyday uses and meanings of culture that was conducted in spring 2022 (INVENT, 2022a); and the qualitative interviews collected in summer and fall 2022 about the ways in which the interviewees from diverse backgrounds see and are capable to verbalize their experiences and meanings related to consumption of culture as well as cultural values and attitudes.

This report is based on the survey data collected in spring-summer in 2021 in all nine countries, since these have created a unique possibility to scrutinize the divergent meanings of culture prevalent in present-day Europe among ordinary people and are thus crucial in achieving the WP3 objectives. The survey data – including more than 14,000 respondents in total and being comprised of nationally representative samples aged 18–80-years old from Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK – have been documented in detail in the respective technical reports of national samples already submitted to the EU (INVENT, 2021b).

The report will focus on the survey questions that explicitly concern different understandings of culture, both in unstructured and structured format. Thus, the open answer question about the meanings given to "culture" (Q6) and the pattern of 20 items probing whether the respondents see them as belonging or not belonging to "culture", or whether they are ambivalent about this (Q7) – will provide the basic way of addressing the main objectives of WP3 in this report. While WP3 advances a broad understanding of culture and thus also involves the investigation of different cultural practices, perceived hierarchies, and attitudes, those perspectives have mostly been left outside the scope of this report, which focuses on Q6 and Q7 and takes them as the starting point. However, the associations between understandings of culture and measures of politico-cultural factors such as cultural participation, institutional trust, attitudes towards the EU and European culture, cosmopolitanism, and political attitudes, are addressed in this report.

As for the sociodemographic divisions according to which the diverse understandings of culture will be investigated, this report will focus on a variety of key background variables, such as age, gender, household size, place of residence, education, income, migrant background, and religion. In addition, to highlight the potential societal relevance of the patterning of the diverse understandings of culture, the associations between the understandings and several politico-cultural variables will be examined. Finally, in line with INVENT's strong interest in cross-national comparative work, the report pays special attention to national variation in the distributions of different understandings of culture as well as the potential variation in how different sociodemographic backgrounds shape those understandings across the nine countries. Thus, many of the analyses will be conducted also separately, country by country, besides performing analyses of the aggregated, European-level dataset.

1.3 The structure of the report

Section 2 of the report presents a brief discussion on the diverse conceptions of culture and how the manifold societal megatrends in Europe and the western world since the latter part of the 20th century have affected not only the cultural environment in which we live, but also both the conceptual "baggage" associated with the term culture and the expansion of the usage of the concept. Moreover, a brief overview on the rare previous empirical studies of the different understandings of culture is provided.

The empirical parts that follow are based on the original survey data collected by the INVENT project and the questions already briefly described above. The first empirical part in Section 3 focuses on the open-ended question of the survey, in which the respondents could freely define in their own words which meanings they associate with the term "culture" (Q6). Using topic modeling to create distinct clusters for the major meanings attached to the concept of culture, it is examined how those clusters are distributed according to major sociodemographic divisions in and across the nine countries. Furthermore, it is analyzed to what degree the topics are associated with politico-cultural factors such as cultural participation, trust, cosmopolitanism, and different attitudes. The second empirical part in Section 4 analyses a structured survey question, which includes a list of twenty items (of cultural objects, places, and practices) representing varying dimensions of popularity, legitimacy, traditionality and commerciality, and asks whether the respondents see each of them belonging to culture or not, or whether they remained ambivalent in their judgement. Using Latent Class Analysis, distinct clusters of different understandings of culture are, again, constructed and analyzed according to several sociodemographic variables in the nine countries. Finally, also these clusters' associations with politico-cultural variables will be examined. All variables used in the report are described in Appendix B.

The final section of the report (Section 5) provides a summary of the findings, reflects on the methodological and comparative issues behind the findings and suggests new avenues for future research on the diverse notions of culture and its broader societal relevance.

2 On the multiplicity of the notions of culture

2.1 Polysemy, expansion, ubiquity

The conceptual polysemy characteristic to "culture" is well known and documented, largely thanks to the work by anthropologists and, later on, cultural studies and media scholars (e.g., Williams, 1976, 1981; Fornäs, 2017). American anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) famously identified already early in the 1950s no less than 164 different definitions for the concept. Since the days of Kroeber and Kuckhohn, much has, of course, changed, while the concept arguably carries ever more meanings and enjoys an unforeseen popularity among social scientists.

> "Little did Kroeber and Kluckhohn know that for the next 50 years the idea of 'culture,' in its anthropological sense, would be frequently debated, doubted, distrusted, and scorned and associated with a variety of sins. Nor could they have anticipated that at the beginning of the twenty-first century the idea of 'culture' would be a key concept in many of the social sciences, while cultural anthropology would remain a scene for various kinds of 'anticultural' or 'postcultural' critiques." (Shweder & Beldo, 2015: 582)

Originally, culture is a process concept – starting from the Latin "agricultural" vocabulary (cf. Cicero's *cultura animi* including the connotation of human development) – while the static idea of culture, or cultures in plural, as something which characterizes a group or collectivity, is more modern and often associated with the writings of Herder, the 18th century German romantic philosopher (Williams, 1976: 87–89; Fornäs, 2017: 25–27). Herder was the first who articulated the idea of *Volksgeist* ("folk spirit", the spirit to be dubbed in modern terms as "folk culture"), which turned into a more famous concept of "national culture", culture typical to a given nation-state and the people living there (Lybeck, 2015). The spirit (*Geist*) of the people was grounded, however, not in biology but in culture and language; in "a unique manifestation of groups and societies reflected in 'dress, food, customs, domestic economy, arts, and amusements'" (Herder, 1803: 8; cited in Lybeck, 2015: 668). This meaning of culture and Herder's emphasis on diversity of and comparisons between many *cultures* was one of the milestones towards the "anthropological", broad conceptualization of culture as the "whole 'way of life' of a distinct people" (Williams, 1981: 11). The development of this meaning has culminated, among others, into UNESCO's famous definition of culture, according to which culture is "the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs" (UNESCO, 2001:3).

However, as a counterpoint to the broad definition, there exists also the "narrow" conception of culture – of which there are some traces left also in UNESCO's broad definition (cf., "not only art and literature") –, which developed and was codified in the form of definitions and manifestoes especially during the 19th century. This hierarchical and universalistic notion of culture involves the ideas of cultivation, civilization, and development, and is ultimately crystallized, in its narrowest meaning, in understanding culture as the "high arts" indicating moral superiority by its practitioners and admirers (e.g., Levine, 1988; Peterson, 1997; cf. also Elias, 1994). Exemplary historical cases include the way how Viennese aristocrats begun to appreciate Beethoven's music in the late 18th century in order to use it for the purposes of ideological and social exclusion (DeNora, 1991); how cultural entrepreneurs in Boston demarcated "high" from "popular" culture almost a century later (DiMaggio, 1982); or how the influential British literary critic Matthew Arnold, roughly at the same

time, defined culture as “the study and pursuit of perfection” (Arnold, 1993: 61). All these are episodes paving a way to the strongly established highbrow/popular divide over most of the 20th century throughout the Global North. Indeed, in the 19th century, arts education was a key feature of the national elites’ aspiration to civilize the lower classes (or the “masses”) and, at the same time, a means for nation-building by construction and reforming new national cultural canons (Alasuutari, 2001; Smith, 2013).

For sure, the classical distinction between the narrow and the broad conceptions of culture does not summarize all complexities around the meanings of culture. Williams (1981), for instance, distinguishes three major meaning layers included in the narrow conception, with each having their own histories: (1) a developed state of mind (cf. “a cultured person”); (2) the processes of this development (cf. “cultural activities”); and (3) the means of these processes (cf. “culture as the arts”). More broadly, and to refer only to some of the paradoxes and confusions involved after being discussed in humanities and social sciences for more than 200 years, culture is, at the same time, underdefined and overdefined; too general and too specific; it is essentially seen as carrying both positive (inclusiveness, diversity) and negative (exclusiveness, homogeneity) connotations. Also, in most languages, the concept can refer at the same time at least to 1) objects (e.g. books), 2) practices (e.g. reading) and 3) perspectives (how the book is understood, i.e. meaning making), of which only the first two are usually easy to observe, while the last one, the “perspectives” that include meanings, values, attitudes, ideas and so on, are often hidden and have to be inferred indirectly (see Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021: 45–47). Similarly, Lizardo (2017) distinguishes, as part of his effort to improve the sociological analysis of culture, between declarative (“explicit”, articulated) and nondeclarative (“implicit”, not articulated) culture. With these terms he refers to two different forms to acquire and to use culture at the personal level, which is, again, to be differentiated from “public culture” (public symbols, discourses, and institutions).

In addition to the classical discussions in the field of philosophy, literary essays and manifestoes, and anthropology (see e.g. Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952), this conceptual polysemy and its subsequent problems have been acknowledged by scholars from fields as diverse as psychology (Jahoda, 1984), history (Sewell, 1999), comparative education (Anderson-Levitt, 2012), management and organizations (Fellows & Liu, 2013), and media studies (Fornäs, 2017), not to speak of fields including “culture” in their title, such as cultural studies (e.g. Bennett, 2015), cultural policy studies (e.g. Gray, 2015), cultural sociology (e.g. Lamont & Small, 2008) and cultural theory (e.g. Lizardo, 2016). But while the polysemy of the concept of culture is well-known, less attention has been paid to how the usage and prevalence of the concept has expanded and become more and more ubiquitous over the last two centuries and, to be more precise, since the World War II and after the 1960s.

Current (at least western) societies are characterized by “cultural abundance” (Wright, 2015), i.e. by an unprecedented number of cultural objects and products, both material and digital, that are constantly available and being produced, circulated and consumed. Arguably, this state of our current “cultural environment” (Bail, 2014) – the abundance of the “content” of culture in our everyday life – also implies an increase in the usages of the concept of culture. In media, scholarly, and everyday discourses the culture concept itself figures more ubiquitously than ever. One key insight from the research in conceptual history is that society and concepts evolve in tandem (e.g., Koselleck, 2004). Or, to put it another way, conceptual change is an elementary part of societal change itself. In the case of culture, this means that the conceptual and “contentual” development and expansion we have witnessed in the past hundred and, especially, fifty years, are two sides of the same coin. This double abundance of culture in present-day societies has likely also caused people's understandings of culture to be more and more diverse and manifold.

The increase in the prominence of culture in terms of both content and concept over the last decades can be seen from the results of studies analysing media data, such as newspapers, over time. In their study of quality newspapers' culture sections from six European countries from 1960 to 2010, Purhonen et al. (2019), for instance, identified a clear expansion of the cultural content, accompanied by the institutionalization process concerning the "culture pages" in newspapers and how the cultural content has been organized and spread within newspaper issues. Similar results have been found by other cross-national studies analysing newspaper and other media datasets with slightly different time frames and country selections (e.g. Janssen et al., 2011; Verboord & Janssen, 2015). The same process has been detected also, for instance, in studies showing how elites' ways to demonstrate their cultural activities and self-images have changed over the 20th century (Friedman & Reeves, 2020), as well as in studies analysing changes inside the art worlds (e.g. Lena, 2019). All of them point to the direction that "culture" has become an unforeseen, dominant keyword towards the late 20th century and, at least in some contexts and intermediary institutions, has replaced the concept of more strictly defined "arts".

Further (albeit somewhat incidental) evidence for this trend can be found from Google Ngram data, if one looks for the prevalence of the concept of culture in the published books in English over a 200-year period. The number of books in the corpora are counted in millions (the exact numbers are not published), but the latest available data is from 2019 and provides normalized proportions by the number of books published in each year and thus controlling for the huge increase in the number of published books towards the present-day (see https://books.google.com/ngrams/info/; Michel et al., 2011). In sum, Google Ngram "charts word frequencies from a large corpus of books and thereby allows for the examination of cultural change as it is reflected in books" (Younes & Reips, 2019: 1).

Next to "culture", to provide points of comparison, we also plotted "sister concepts", or keywords (Williams, 1976), in Ngram viewer. Figure 1 shows how the prevalence of "culture" has evolved from 1800 to 2019 in English language books along with the concepts close to it following the narrow definition of culture: "art", "civilization" and "taste".

Figure 1 shows that the concept of culture, for the most of the 19th century, was rarely used in English-language books. This also holds for "civilization", the concept with which "culture" shares a common and complex history and from which the somewhat synonymous meaning "culture" (associated with development and progress) diverged only during the 19th century (cf. Williams, 1976: 57–60, 88–89). Outnumbering the concept of "taste" already by the earliest decades of the 20th century, by the time of World War II, the term "culture" was featured about twice as often in English-language books than the word "civilization". But this was only the start of the expansion of the usage of "culture". The increase in its prevalence accelerated in the following decades and, especially, since the 1980s. This coincides nicely with several other well-known processes, for instance regarding the study of culture inside the academic discipline of sociology became institutionalized (Griswold, 1992), the rise of degree programmes in "Cultural Studies" at many western universities or how the cultural content expanded and diversified in European and North-American quality newspapers (see Janssen et al., 2011; Purhonen et al., 2019). Finally, since the 1990s, culture has become even more prevalent in the English-language books than "art". The prevalence of "art" had been somewhat stable over the 20th century but declined compared to the previous century.

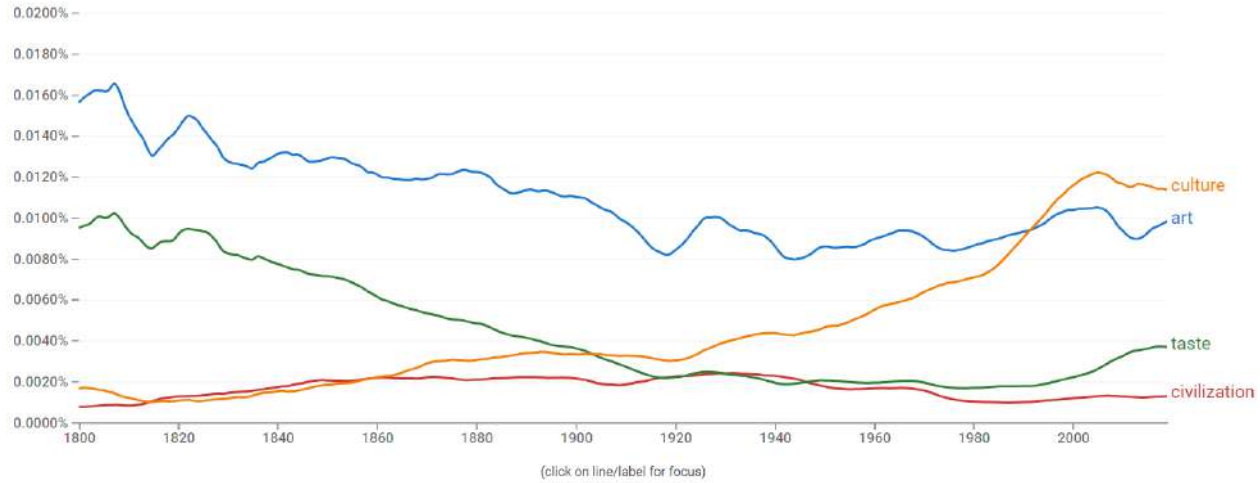

Figure 1. The prevalence of the concepts of "art", "civilization", "taste", and "culture" in the Google Books NGram corpus from 1800 to 2019 including English language books (http://books.google.com/ngrams/; see also Michel et al. 2011).

In Figure 2, culture is presented along with its sister concepts – "history", "society" and "economy" – in the broadest possible sense, considering how the social world might be conceptualized. Perhaps surprisingly, of all the concepts featured in Figures 1 and 2, only "economy" was not included in Williams' *Keywords* (1976).

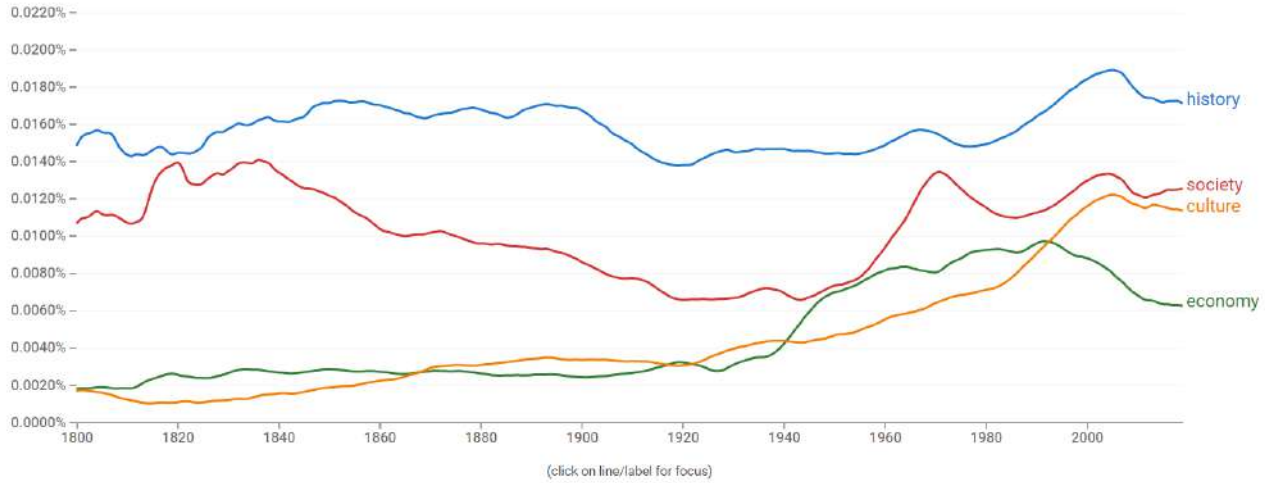

Figure 2. The prevalence of the concepts of "history", "society", "economy", and "culture" in the Google Books NGram corpus from 1800 to 2019 including English language books (http://books.google.com/ngrams; see also Michel et al. 2011).

Figure 2 shows that the trends of "culture" and "economy" have been rather similar, the latter just peaked earlier (from the World War II) than the former (from the 1980s). Thus, "culture" has outnumbered "economy" in how often it appears in English-language books since the 1990s. Compared to "society", then, "culture" was for long a much more marginal concept in the English-language books, but since the 2000s, both terms are roughly at the same level in their prevalence. "History" continues to be clearly a more common concept in the English-language books than culture,

enjoying quite stable usage over the decades and even centuries. However, the relative difference has diminished substantially due to culture's expansion; "history" was used in the English-language books in the early 19th century about ten times more often than "culture", while the difference today is only around 60%.

2.2 Cultural change: The megatrends

While the debate on the concept of culture and its manifold meanings is vast, it is still important to ask what the key processes – or "megatrends" – behind the expansion of culture are, both in terms of content and concept. The main and general-level tendency goes towards challenging the narrow and universalistic notions of culture and embracing the broad and inclusive ones (cf. e.g. Lena, 2019; Purhonen et al., 2019; Friedman & Reeves, 2020). Sociologists of culture recognized and have debated about this tendency already from the 1980s and early 1990s (DiMaggio, 1987; Lamont & Fournier, 1992) onwards, and subsequently the increased cultural heterogenization and the widening of the sphere of "culture" have been tracked also empirically through multitude of settings, institutions and national contexts (e.g. Janssen et al., 2008, 2011; Purhonen et al. 2017; Lena, 2019). This has meant, in particular, showcasing the rise and legitimization of popular culture to be on par with traditionally defined "high" culture (Lopes, 2002; Baumann, 2007; Janssen et al., 2011, Purhonen et al. 2019) – a process which applies also to the ways in which elites signal status (Friedman and Reeves, 2020).

The cultural "abundance" of the present-day world (Wright, 2015) can be seen, most of all, as the product of two intensified and in many ways interconnected megatrends: geographical flows of culture – the globalization of culture – and the digitalization of culture, which, in an obvious way, facilitates cultural flows to be geographically unattached in an unforeseen manner. Despite the apparent cultural significance of these processes – particularly from the point of view of increasing cultural supply and "abundance" –, there is no consensus among social scientists, however, about the precise meaning or role of either globalization or digitalization of culture for the changes in classifications, hierarchies or cultural stratification patterns either on the side of cultural production or consumption. On the one hand, cultural globalization has been understood as increasing cultural heterogeneity and hybridity, but also as increasing homogeneity, isomorphism or even commercial or politically motivated cultural imperialism (see, e.g., Robertson, 1992; Tomlinson, 1999; Nederveen Pieterse, 2004; Janssen et al., 2008; Lauronen et al., 2019). On the other hand, the digitalization of consumption, mediation and production of culture has been thought to even out cultural hierarchies by increasing availability and breaking the barriers of unequal access and gatekeeping authorities and ceremonial institutions, but also to strengthen the traditional inequalities or establishing even new ones (see, e.g., Beer, 2013; Verboord, 2014; Kristensen, et al. 2018; Mihelj et al., 2019; Webster, 2020; Purhonen et al., 2021c).

Indeed, when concentrating on the relationship between culture and inequality, the picture of the trends over the last decades is rather mixed. While it has become commonplace to refer to the "rising inequalities" in popular and sometimes also scholarly discourses, it is not exactly clear to what degree, if any, and in which sense inequalities relevant to culture have intensified. Much depends on how inequality is defined and operationalized and the time period that is observed. Moreover, national variation cannot be underestimated. The most usual way of measuring inequality through income distribution (Gini index, etc.) is a case in point. As shown by Piketty (2014), Milanovic (2018) and others, the case is indeed that the income inequality has increased in many Western countries since the last decades of the 20th century. However, this is mostly due to increase of the earnings (or, especially, wealth) of the richest and not because the poor would have gotten poorer. Thus, and especially if the time period is extended to cover more than just a couple of decades – just like in the case of our other

megatrends of interest, the heterogenization, globalization and digitalization of culture – the big picture is arguably an unprecedented growth of economic prosperity rather than increase of inequality (even if, in relative terms, they do not contradict each other). Moreover, if a shorter time period is taken, such as the 2010s, the Gini index has remained more or less stable in most of the European countries, including also most of the countries in INVENT project (e.g. Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK; in Switzerland, it has slightly increased, and in Croatia and Serbia, it has decreased; see, e.g., https://fred.stlouisfed.org/categories/33525/).

Of course, crude measures such as the Gini index or other population-level data on income distribution do not capture the whole picture – or, according to some, do not provide an sociologically accurate picture at all. It is certainly possible that in many European countries, differently defined inequalities and polarization processes have been taking place over the last years, especially if inequality is approached from the perspective of struggles over identities, recognition, discrimination and stigmatization (cf. Lamont et al., 2016). More important is, however, that it is not exactly clear how those potentially increased social inequalities are reflected in the matters of culture, in general, or understandings of culture, in particular.

On the one hand, the story of the last half-century in the western world from this perspective is a story of the democratization of culture: growing tolerance, openness and omnivorousness (Peterson & Kern, 1996) and a major turn towards less codified cultural hierarchies (DiMaggio, 1987; Lizardo, 2010), the loosening of aesthetic authorities in general (Wouters, 2007) and the decreased power of traditional gatekeepers and exclusive/elite media, in particular (Verboord, 2014; Lena, 2019; Purhonen, et al. 2019). But on the other hand, the story is different. A vast amount of research shows that cultural inequalities have not vanished. The traditional forms of stratification – besides some new ones – still hold and demonstrate the persisting relevance of class and the volume and composition of different capitals possessed by individuals (Bennett, et al. 2009; Prieur & Savage, 2013; Savage et al., 2015; Flemmen et al., 2018; Heikkilä & Lindblom, 2022). The much-debated omnivorous taste, for instance, has been convincingly shown to be a new manifestation of upper-class taste. It does not signify a distinction-free and limitlessly tolerant cultural order (e.g. Lizardo & Skiles, 2012; although this was stated already in the original study by Peterson & Kern, 1996; see, however Chan, 2019; Lindblom, 2022). The digitalization of culture has hardly meant democratization either (Mihelj et al., 2019; Purhonen et al., 2021c) and the same holds for globalization and intensified geographical flows of people and cultures. All these trends are multifaceted and ambiguous, "both and" rather than "either or", as they have been found to alleviate as well as intensify inequalities. In this context, Savage's (2021) account of the "return" of inequality underlines nicely how different dimension inequality is in comparison to other megatrends such as cultural globalization or digitalization, historically speaking, when considered against cultural change over the last decades.

2.3 Previous empirical research on ordinary people's understandings of culture

Whereas previous literature has provided multiple and much debated definitions for the concept of culture, there seems to be a lack of inductive and exploratory empirical research from the point of view of the ordinary people and their understandings of culture. However, in 2007, a Special Eurobarometer 278 "European Cultural Values" was collected in 27 European countries. It included an open-ended question "*Please tell me what comes to mind when you think about the word 'culture'?*". It had 14 predefined categories into which respondents' answers were then sorted (presented here from the most common to the least common understanding): culture as 1) *Arts (visual and performing arts)* 2) *Traditions, languages, customs and social or cultural communities*, 3) *Literature, poetry, playwriting, authors*, 4) *Education and family*, 5) *Knowledge and science (research)*, 6) *Life style and*

manners, 7) *Civilization (Western, Asian, African, Arab, etc.)*, 8) *History*, 9) *Museums*, 10) *Leisure, sport, travels, fun*, 11) *Values and beliefs (including philosophy and religion)*, 12) *Other*, 13) *Not interested, not for me*, and 14) *Too elite, snobbish, posh, boring (negative things)*. The most common category was understanding culture as arts, with 39% of respondents mentioning this, followed by traditions and literature, both mentioned by 24% of the respondents (Eurobarometer, 2007: 5).

Some cross-national differences were discovered in the Eurobarometer study. For example, people in the Nordic countries associate culture with arts considerably more often than the average, while understanding culture as education and family was more common in Southern European countries such as Italy and Spain. Understandings also varied with demographics such as age, education, and occupation. In general, both being older and having a higher level of education are linked with associating culture with arts more often than being younger or less educated. Moreover, in this survey collected some 15 years ago, people with high occupational status are more likely to see culture as arts than other occupational groups with lower status. (Eurobarometer, 2007: 8.)

Another European-level report, "The Europeans, Culture and Cultural Values" (2006), using qualitative group discussions carried out in 27 countries, also asked participants what comes to their minds when hearing the word "culture". Every country had two groups in which participants discussed the meaning of culture among other topics. Four distinct understandings of culture were identified from the data. The first was *culture as a human, artistic or aesthetic creation*, in which culture was associated with mostly traditional cultural products such as arts, music and theatre. This understanding of culture was mainly quite narrow. In the second understanding, *culture as learning and acquired knowledge*, there was a recognition of cultural hierarchies and demarcation between "high" and "low" culture, although these hierarchies were also challenged. The third understanding, *culture as an anthropological or sociological concept* was much broader than other definitions, describing culture as something that gives different social groups, geographical regions, or whole societies their unique characteristics and is something that differentiates them from each other. These features include, for example, values, rituals, traditions, and ways of life. Finally, the fourth and last understanding of *culture as a normative system*. Here, culture was defined as a set of rules for civilized human behaviour, descriptions of appropriate manners and respect for others. Somewhat contradictory to the results from Eurobarometer data, the qualitative findings did not indicate significant cross-national differences in the understandings of culture, but rather suggested that the perceptions are broadly similar across the countries. However, the last understanding, culture as normative system, was somewhat more salient in some Central European countries.

Besides these two European-level studies, systematic empirical research on the diversity of the understandings of culture is extremely rare. One notable exception is a survey administered by the French Ministry of Culture and analysed by Guy (2016). He examined people's perceptions of the limits of the concept of culture in France using a structured list of different items varying in legitimacy and traditionality (such as science, the press, fashion, gardening, cuisine etc.) and asked whether the respondents considered each of them to belong to culture, or whether they were ambivalent and created differentiation between the items. Four notions were recognized: cultural liberalism (everything is cultural), critical eclecticism (everything is potentially cultural, according to certain criteria), the conservative view (the cultural sphere is not extensible) and the anti-establishment view (real culture is elsewhere) (Guy, 2016.) The survey collected by INVENT in 2021 included a question (Q7, analysed in Section 4) which was adapted from and inspired by this previous, French study.

3 What comes to mind first when you think of the word "culture": Analysing the open-ended question

3.1 Topic modelling the meanings of "culture"

Section 3 is partly based on and extends the work that has been done in the WP3 working group during spring 2022 to analyse the Q6 of the INVENT data. However, the analysis presented here is different from the one to be presented as a conference paper in in September 2022 (Purhonen et al., 2022) and which is currently in progress to be developed as a full-length journal article.

"What comes to mind first when you think of the word 'culture'? Please elaborate." This open-ended question Q6 in the INVENT survey is central to the whole project aim: understanding and grasping the multiple perspectives Europeans have on the concept of culture. The formulation of the questions was intentionally very simple and open, and it was decided not to give any specifications (for example, regarding the length of the answer). Moreover, the formulation emphasized the inductive "bottom-up" approach, which means that the respondents had the chance to define themselves and in their own words what culture means to them. Unlike the only previous large-scale survey research including a similar, open-ended question on the meaning of culture (Eurobarometer, 2007), we decided not to include any predetermined classifications. Instead, we categorized the answers *a posteriori* with unsupervised textual classification algorithms for further analysis. This has been made possible by the rapid development of computational text analysis methods over the last two decades (see, e.g., McFarland et al., 2016). Because of the importance of this question for the whole project, its formulation was also tested in an exploratory pilot study conducted in summer 2020. In the pilot study, the question proved to be satisfactory. Regarding this question in particular, it was important to carefully select its placement in the survey questionnaire, and we decided to include it in the beginning of the survey to avoid any influence by prior questions.

Before going on to our specific method of analysis, *topic modelling*, it is necessary to take a look at the open-ended answers of Q6 to find out what kind of textual data it involves. Table 1 below presents the descriptive statistics of the answers and number of words included in the answers.

Table 1. Statistics of answers and word counts in translated answers of Q6 before data cleaning.

Country	N of respondents	N of respondents with answer to Q6	Mean wordcount	Median wordcount	Wordcount standard deviation	Proportion of empty answers	Proportion of one-word answers	Proportion of answer with less than four words
Croatia	1,200	1,200	3.12	2	3.21	0.00	0.41	0.71
Denmark	1,666	1,605	11.26	6	14.76	0.04	0.14	0.34
Finland	1,247	1,000	13.41	8	19.36	0.20	0.04	0.32
France	2,259	1,410	3.55	1	5.88	0.38	0.14	0.67
Netherlands	1,596	1,578	7.62	5	8.22	0.01	0.20	0.40
Serbia	1,237	1,237	4.70	3	4.51	0.00	0.21	0.53
Spain	1,398	1,398	6.92	4	7.56	0.00	0.24	0.44
Switzerland	1,370	1,295	5.66	3	8.32	0.05	0.29	0.57
United Kingdom	2,411	2,407	6.07	4	6.47	0.00	0.24	0.45
Total or mean of all countries	14,384	13,130	6.92	4	8.70	0.08	0.21	0.49

In Table 1, statistics of wordcounts per country and in total are presented. Answer lengths range from Croatia's 3.12 to Finland's 13.41, the mean length of answers being 7 words. Proportions of very short answers differ as well; in the French data, more than one-third of all answers are completely empty, and less than half of the answers contain more than one word. The proportion of short answers, three words at maximum, ranges from 32% in Finland to 71% in Croatia. Answers with just one words included, for example, ones such as "*Museum*" and "*Education*". Some answers including a few words were "*Art, Literature, Tradition*" and "*something man-made*", and full sentence answers were, for example, "*My origins, my roots, my country of origin*" and "*Theater performances, I always enjoy those.*". Some answers contained multiple sentences, such as: "*The word culture reminds me of a kind of framework that includes the general values, norms, and practices of society. I feel that each individual is shaped by the influence of the prevailing culture, and people in general follow the boundaries 'set' by culture.*"

To achieve good results with computational text analysis, data cleaning procedures were applied to the translated answers of Q6. Data was lemmatized using R package udpipe (Wijffels, 2021), which also provides part-of-speech-tagging, which was later utilized to select only nouns, proper nouns, and adjectives from the lemmatized words. The remaining text was further cleaned by excluding common English-language stop words and the word "culture" and its variants. Words shorter than three characters were excluded. Then, the document-term-matrix, which was used as input for the topic modelling function, was finally filtered to only contain words that occurred more than 3 times and respondents with more than 2 words in their cleaned answer. This procedure yielded answers from 5,963 individuals.

Topic modelling is a collection of algorithms that are a suite of machine learning methods for discovering hidden thematic structure in large collections of documents (DiMaggio et al., 2013), in our case, open survey answers. With topic modelling, words that co-occur frequently in the answers are identified, and these "bags" or groups of words are interpreted as themes found from the textual data. Each answer is then presented with a probability distribution for stemming from each respective topic. For our analysis, we use Latent Dirichlet Allocation (Blei et al., 2003), implemented in R-package topicmodels (Grün & Hornik, 2011).

To determine the optimal number of topics for the model, both model evaluation metrics and contextual evaluation of topics were utilized. After careful consideration, we kept a model with 5 topics that struck a good balance between model complexity and interpretability of the topics.

To achieve a better understanding of the similarities and differences of the answers between the countries included in the analysis, we apply a tf-idf-vectorization for the 800 most common words in the cleaned textual data. The tf-idf coefficient reflects how important a word is to a document in a collection of documents (Silge & Robinson, 2017). The dimensionality of the document-term-matrix filled with tf-idf coefficients is then reduced to two dimensions, employing a dimension reduction method called "t-distributed, stochastic, neighbour embedding" (t-sne) (Maaten et al., 2008).

After presenting the five topics obtained from the data, we assign each answer to a cluster according to the topic from which the answer most likely stems from. This obtained cluster variable is then used to reveal bivariate links between understanding of culture and socio-demographic factors, such as age, country, or level of education of the respondent. We also use this cluster variable to inspect the distribution of answers and their most probable topics by country in the 2-dimensional space obtained by tf-idf vectorisation and t-sne dimension reduction.

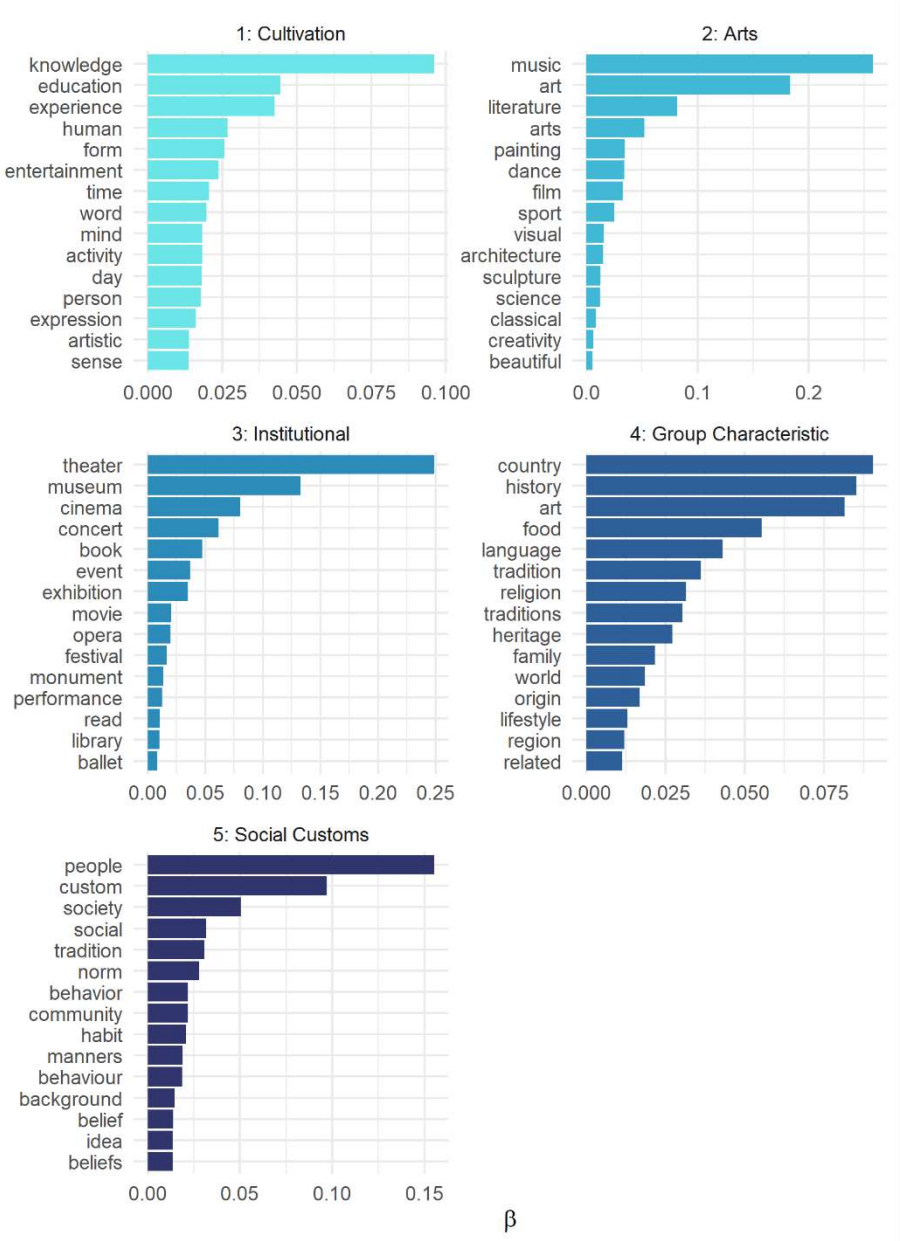

Figure 3. Five topics found from the data. 15 words for each topic with highest Beta value are shown. Beta represents the probability for a word to stem from corresponding topic. Notice the different values on the x-axis in each plot.

The 5-topic model is presented in Figure 3. The first topic is labelled as *Cultivation*. In this topic, positive, cultivating, and enlightening aspects of culture are emphasized. Words such as knowledge and education are present, along with experience and entertainment. The second topic is *Arts*. The most important words include music, art, literature, arts, painting, dance, and film. This aligns with a narrow understanding of culture representing different realms of art. The third topic is *Institutional*. This topic is similar to the previous topic, culture as arts, but it is more oriented towards activities and events. Important words include theatre, museum, cinema, and concert. The fourth topic is *Group Characteristic*. In this topic, history, art, food, language, traditions, religions and heritage of specific countries, regions or groups are emphasized. Compared to the previous two topics, which were more

connected to a narrow understanding of culture as arts and places where art is consumed, this fourth topic is associated with a very broad notion of culture, including entire lifestyles and histories of nations or groups. Finally, the fifth topic is *Social Customs*. This topic resembles the previous one, in that it refers to specific features of groups of people, but it is more focused on the social element. Important words include people, customs, society, social, tradition, norm, and behaviour.

Our topic model solution clearly shows the relevance of the classical distinction between the narrow and broad understandings of culture: understanding culture as arts – whether in an abstract sense just "art" or concretized as legitimate cultural institutions (Topics 2 and 3) –, and understanding culture in a wider manner, as cultivation, group characteristic (often related to the idea of "national cultures") as well as habits and customs. This seems to be the main distinctive structure separating understandings of culture, although it is interesting that not only the broad understanding is divided into several distinct meanings, but also the narrow understanding is divided into two distinct topics.

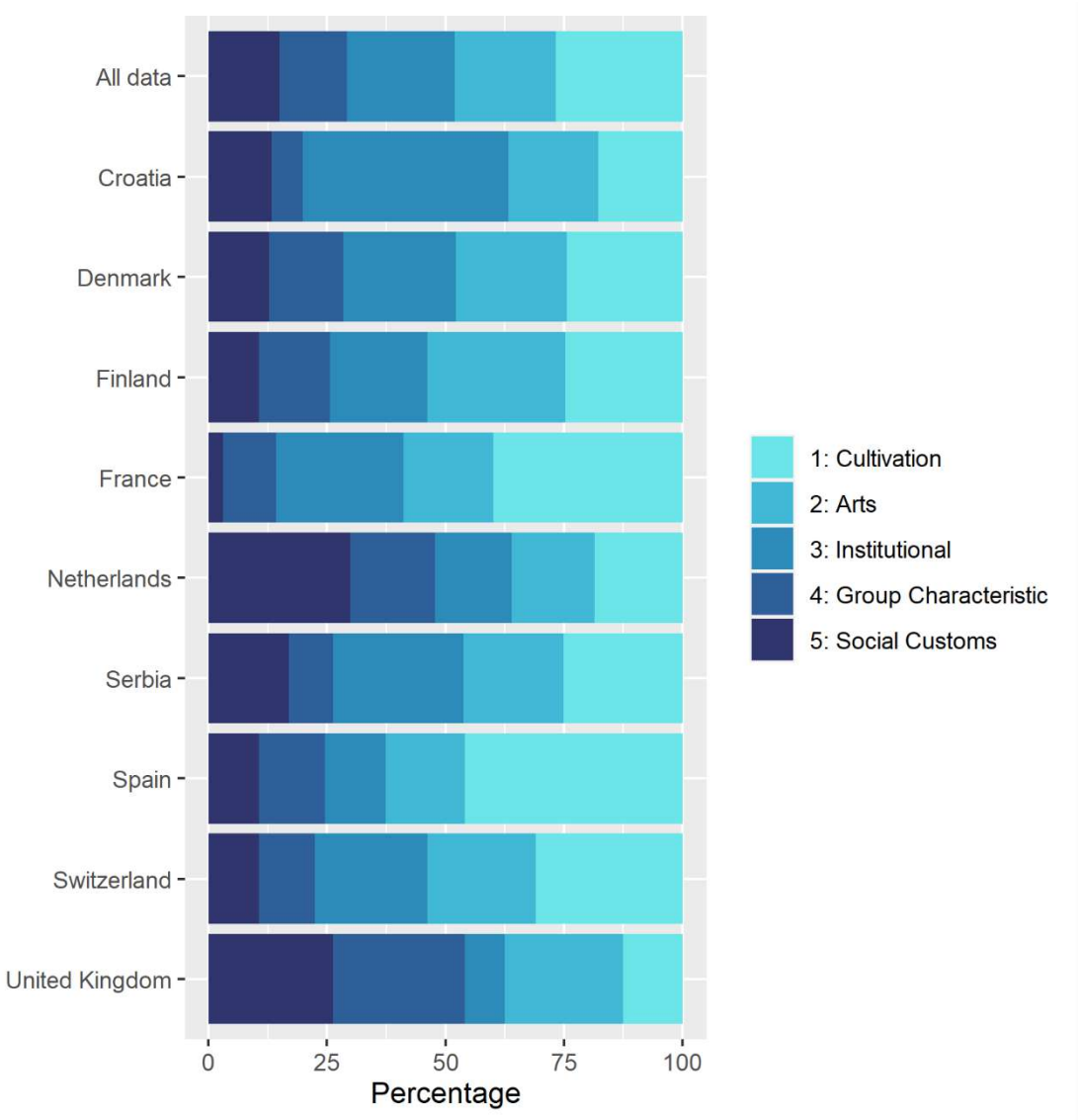

Figure 4. Distribution of most probable topics in answers of each country.

How are the five topics distributed, then, in the entire data and in each of the nine countries? Figure 4 above shows this regarding the most probable topics. Answers stemming from each of the topics can be found, but the most prevalent ones are understanding culture as cultivation (Topic 1) or culture as institutional (Topic 3). Moreover, interesting country differences emerge. For example, understanding culture as social customs (Topic 5) is very rare in France, whereas it is the most common topic in the Netherlands. In France and Spain, understanding culture as cultivation (Topic 1) is very dominant. Distributions in Finland and Denmark are very close to each other, indicating that the respondents in these countries most likely understand culture in highly similar manners. In Croatia, the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of the word culture are most typically cultural institutions.

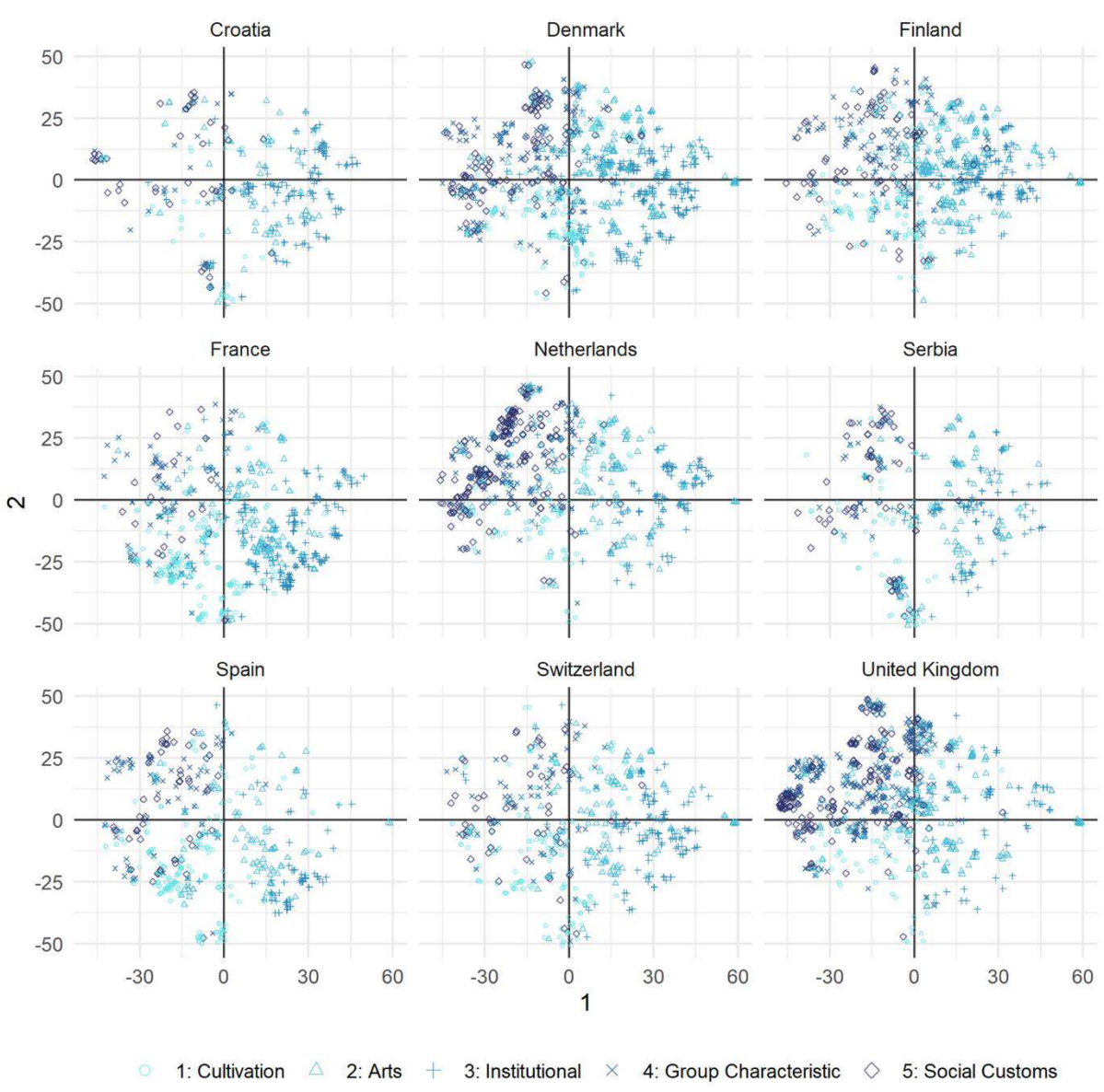

Figure 5. 2-dimensional representation of tf-idf-vectorization of 800 most common words in the data. One point represents one answer in the analysis.

Finally, Figure 5 presents a visual, two-dimensional representation of the answers by country, coloured by the most probable topic where the respective answer stems from. Inspecting the shape of the clouds and positions of the answers yields some interesting results.
First, the distribution of answers in the two-dimensional space is, again, highly similar for Denmark and Finland, suggesting that words used to describe the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about culture are similar. Answers are distributed relatively evenly in space, meaning that all the topics found from the whole data are discussed in both Denmark and Finland in a relatively uniform manner. In Croatia, France, Serbia and Switzerland, the majority of the answers are located on the positive side of the x-axis, whereas in the Netherlands and the UK they are on the negative side of the x-axis. The difference in answers and understandings of culture between France and the UK is particularly clearly seen in the two-dimensional space.

Aided by the most probable topic a particular answer stems from, the interpretation of the axes is easier. Answers stemming most probably from topics 2 (arts) and 3 (institutional) are on the right side of the space, whereas answers that stem from topics 4 (group characteristics) and 5 (social customs) are located on the negative side of the x-axis. This suggests that the most important structuring dimension for the understandings of culture is the distinction between a narrow understanding of culture – where culture is understood as arts and artistic and cultural institutions – and a broad understanding of culture, where culture is understood in terms of group and social features such as customs, traditions, national characteristics, languages, norms, and history. The second main dimension is harder to interpret. Here, the opposition seems to be between understanding culture as cultivation – locating on the positive side of the y-axis – and understanding culture in the narrow sense, which are the most probable topics with the lowest values on the y-axis.

3.2 The most probable topics of the meanings of "culture" according to sociodemographic divisions

In this section, the most probable topic variable – including the five distinct meanings of culture derived from topic modelling presented in Section 3.1 – will be examined according to major sociodemographic variables. As the associations with the various countries in our dataset have already been taken into account, we will now focus on the following variables: age, gender, household size, city size of the place of residence (in terms of the number of inhabitants), respondent's own education, income, migrant background, and religion.

Going beyond these usual sociodemographic characteristics and to further demonstrate the potential societal relevance of divergent understandings of culture, we will also examine several politico-cultural variables, such as cultural participation, institutional trust, positive attitude towards Europe and the EU, cosmopolitanism, in addition to agreeing with two attitude statements, the first reflecting the opposition between conservative/progressive and liberal politico-moral stances ("Same sex marriages should be allowed throughout Europe") and the other reflecting the opposition between left-wing and right-wing economic stances ("People who are employed should not get benefits if they do not try to find work"). However, while in the first part the membership in the most probable topic is treated as a dependent variable (and predicted by sociodemographic factors), in the second part the membership in the topic will be the independent variable aiming to predict other politico-cultural variables. Table 2 on the next page shows how the most probable topic variable is distributed according to sociodemographic divisions.

Table 2. Most probable topics on cultural understandings according to eight sociodemographic variables: age, gender, household size, city size, education, income, migrant background, and religion (%).

	Topic 1: Cultivation	Topic 2: Arts	Topic 3: Institutional	Topic 4: Group Cha-racteristic	Topic 5: Social Customs	Total (N)
Total size	26.0	22.0	20.8	15.7	15.5	100 (5,965)
Age* **						
18–27 years	18.5	18.1	14.9	25.5	23.0	100 (730)
28–44 years	23.5	19.5	18.2	19.0	19.8	100 (1,548)
45–64 years	27.5	22.5	23.0	13.6	13.4	100 (2,136)
65+ years	30.1	25.5	23.2	10.7	10.5	100 (1,532)
Gender* **						
Female	24.6	22.2	22.5	16.3	14.4	100 (3,943)
Male	28.0	21.7	18.6	14.9	16.8	100 (2,558)
Household size* **						
1 person	27.4	23.3	20.7	15.1	13.6	100 (1,333)
2 persons	28.7	21.7	24.6	12.8	12.3	100 (2,018)
3 persons	25.5	21.4	22.8	15.1	15.1	100 (760)
4 persons	27.4	17.8	20.2	16.9	17.7	100 (758)
5+ persons	18.8	24.4	13.1	21.4	22.3	100 (1,096)
City size (place of residence)* **						
Capital or 250k+	26.2	22.4	17.1	16.0	18.3	100 (1,290)
Medium 80-250k	27.8	21.4	21.4	16.4	13.0	100 (1,147)
Small city 10-80k	22.6	23.0	19.6	16.4	18.3	100 (1,833)
Countryside -10k	28.4	20.8	25.1	13.6	12.1	100 (1,601)
Education* **						
Low	23.5	19.9	22.4	20.0	14.3	100 (729)
Medium	25.0	21.4	24.5	14.8	14.3	100 (2,085)
High	27.2	22.9	18.1	15.3	16.5	100 (3,144)
Income **						
Low	23.7	23.9	19.9	17.2	15.3	100 (1,167)
Medium	26.8	21.5	22.2	15.3	14.2	100 (2,422)
High	27.8	22.0	19.9	13.4	17.0	100 (1,362)
Migrant background						
No	26.9	23.0	22.6	13.8	13.7	100 (4,649)
Yes	22.6	18.6	14.5	22.6	21.7	100 (1,307)
Religion* **						
Christian Catholic	31.6	19.0	24.4	12.5	12.5	100 (1,419)
Christian Protestant	24.2	27.1	24.9	12.7	11.1	100 (1,353)
Christian Orthodox	24.1	21.2	26.0	12.6	16.1	100 (453)
Not belonging to any religion	25.4	22.1	17.5	17.0	17.9	100 (2,010)
Other	21.2	18.6	12.2	25.9	22.1	100 (730)

Notes. * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 (Chi-square significance tests for the differences between the categories of sociodemographic variables).

Overall, Table 2 reveals that the associations between the sociodemographic variables and the most probable topics are relatively weak (albeit mostly statistically significant). The association between the topics and age is clear, however. The first three topics are more typical to older age groups, while the last two topics are more typical among the younger groups. Genders, in turn, have hardly any differences regarding their most probable topics. Household size shows that understanding culture as cultivation (Topic 1) or institutional (Topic 3) are more uncommon among those living in bigger households. This latter group understands culture more often as group characteristic (Topic 4) or social customs (Topic 5) than others. Otherwise, the differences across the household sizes are very small. Also city size produces only small differences with little consistency or logic (e.g. those living in largest cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants belong to the cluster 3 least often, which could be considered rather counterintuitive).

The associations with the education of the respondent show that Topic 1 (Cultivation) is slightly more common among the highly educated, while Topic 3 (Institutional) is slightly less common. Topic 4 (Group characteristic) is, then again, most common among the lower educated. Income levels produce only very small differences that also more or less replicate the same associations as respondent's education (but not as powerfully). Migrant background shows clear differences between those who have one or both parents born in another country and the majority of the respondents who do not. The three first topics are more common among the "local" majority than for those having a migrant background, whereas those having migrant background (through their parents) see culture more often than others as group characteristic and related to social customs. Finally, considering how religion is associated with the most probable topics, Topic 1 (Cultivation) appears to be most common among Catholic respondents, Topic 2 (Arts) is most common among Protestants, and Topic 3 (Institutional) is more uncommon among those not belonging to any religion compared to the main Christian categories.

The overall weak nature of the associations between the sociodemographic variables and the membership in most probable topics is well demonstrated if the same analysis is conducted country by country. As reported in Appendix Table A1, the country-specific associations are very seldom statistically significant anymore. Only the associations with age, migration status, and religion are significant in the majority of the nine countries. (Besides the fact that our data is nested in nine aggregate-level units, namely countries, this demonstrates well the importance of sample size and how even tiny differences may become statistically significant when the sample size is large enough).

Of the three associations that hold in most of the countries when inspected separately, age is interesting, as its association with the most probable topic variable is significant in all countries except in Croatia and Serbia. In which respect are the results different, then, in these two countries compared to others, where the three first topics (Cultivation, Arts and Institutional) were related to old age and the last two (Group characteristic and Social customs) to young age? Both in Croatia and Serbia, the non-significance of the associations is partly due to the relatively small number of responses to the open-answer question (N=338, in Croatia and N=407, in Serbia, being the lowest two in the whole dataset). However, it is noteworthy that Croatia is different from the rest of the countries in that the Topic 3 (Institutional) – which is clearly the most common topic in the country with about 44% of the Croatian respondents representing it – is very equally distributed across the age groups, the oldest group having, in fact, the lowest proportion of all age groups (40.0%). Serbia's case is a bit similar, namely that the age groups are not systematically different regarding their most common topics, especially regarding the last two topics which were most typical to young groups elsewhere. In Serbia, the oldest and the youngest age groups are no different regarding how often their views represent Topics 4 and 5.

3.3 How are the most probable topics of the meanings of "culture" associated with other politico-cultural factors?

To start analyzing how the most probable topics – indicative of different ways to understand the meaning of "culture" – might have broader societal relevance, Table 3 below examines the associations between the most probable topics and six other politico-cultural variables by comparing means.

Table 3. Six politico-cultural variables according to most probable topics: cultural participation, institutional trust, positive attitude towards the EU and European culture, cosmopolitanism, agreeing that same sex marriages should be allowed throughout Europe, and agreeing that people who are unemployed should not get benefits if they do not try to find work (means, standard errors in brackets; all dependent variables standardized, i.e., mean=0, SD=1).

	Topic 1: Cultivation	Topic 2: Arts	Topic 3: Institutional	Topic 4: Group Cha-racteristic	Topic 5: Social Customs	Total
Cultural participation**	0.14	0.12	0.05	0.02	0.06	0.09
	(0.92)	(0.90)	(0.91)	(0.92)	(0.90)	(0.91)
Institutional trust***	0.10	0.16	0.22	0.01	-0.02	0.10
	(1.00)	(0.93)	(0.96)	(1.02)	(1.01)	(0.98)
Positive towards the EU and Europe***	0.20	0.24	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.16
	(0.96)	(0.95)	(0.94)	(0.96)	(0.97)	(0.96)
Cosmopolitanism***	0.21	0.14	-0.04	0.25	0.22	0.15
	(0.90)	(0.91)	(0.97)	(0.90)	(0.91)	(0.92)
"Same sex marriages should be allowed"**	0.18	0.19	0.06	0.18	0.15	0.15
	(0.93)	(0.94)	(1.01)	(0.95)	(0.96)	(0.96)
"Unemployed should not get benefits"**	-0.05	-0.13	0.03	-0.04	-0.04	-0.05
	(1.01)	(1.01)	(1.00)	(1.02)	(1.02)	(1.01)

Notes. * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 (F-tests for the differences between the categories of topic variable).

Overall, Table 3 shows that the associations between the topics and the selected politico-cultural variables are relatively weak. Respondents who understand culture as cultivation (Topic 1) or arts (Topic 2) are slightly more active in actual, conventionally defined outside-home cultural participation (going to concerts, etc.). In turn, those understanding culture as institutional or related to conventional cultural participation in institutional contexts (Topic 3) have the highest institutional trust (i.e. trust in government, EU, news media, and science).

Respondents who understand culture as cultivation (Topic 1) or arts (Topic 2) have the most positive attitude towards the EU and European culture. Those understanding culture as group characteristic (Topic 4) or social customs (Topic 5) are most cosmopolitan – especially in comparison with those understanding culture as institutional participation (Topic 3). Respondents who understand culture as institutional (Topic 3) agree slightly less often than others with the statement "Same sex marriages should be allowed" (but they still agree with it more often than average in the entire data, i.e. including also respondents who did not answer Q6). Finally, agreeing with the statement "People

who are unemployed should not get benefits if they do not try to find work" does not show meaningfully sized differences, but one may note that the respondents from all topics except Topic 3 (culture as institutional) agree with it less often than average.

In general, and again, the relatively weak nature of the associations between the most probable topic and the politico-cultural variables are showcased by the fact that hardly any of the associations remain statistically significant when examined in each country separately (see Appendix Table A2). As an example, we can see from Figure 6 how the association between the most probable topic and cultural cosmopolitanism varies across the nine countries. As shown in Table A2, this association is statistically very significant in Denmark and Finland, and a bit less so in France and Spain, but not significant in the remaining five countries.

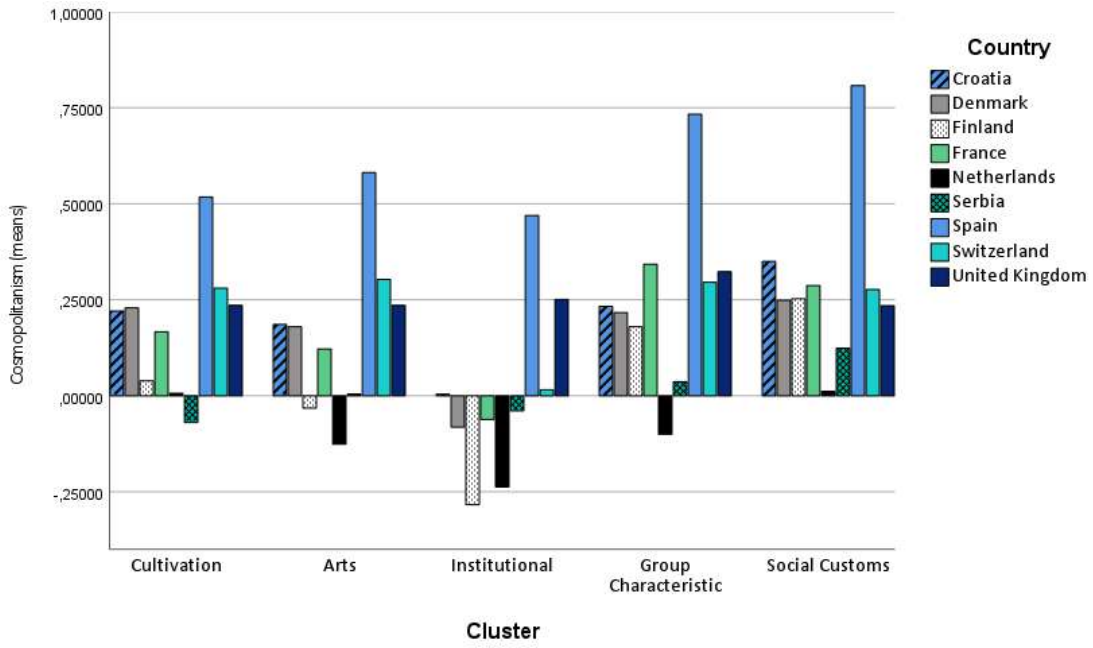

Figure 6. Cosmopolitanism according to the most probable topic in each of the nine countries separately (means).

Figure 6 shows that, indeed, in some countries the differences in having cosmopolitan attitudes according to the most probable topic are more clearly pronounced (Denmark, Finland, France, Spain) than in others (Croatia, the Netherlands, Serbia, Switzerland, and the UK). However, more striking is the overall picture emerging from the figure about the different "levels" of supporting cosmopolitanism across the countries in the first place. In particular, Spanish respondents seem to be different compared to any other country – and irrespective of the most probable topic they belong to – in their appreciation of cosmopolitan attitudes. In the opposite end, the respondents from Serbia and, perhaps surprisingly, the Netherlands, are rarely cosmopolitan in their attitudes.

All in all, using topic modeling to analyze the open-ended, unstructured textual data on the divergent understandings of culture enabled disentangling five major notions of culture, based on the content of the open-ended answers by representative samples from our nine INVENT countries. These understandings, crystallized in the form of the most probable topics related to culture, were linked to the meanings of (1) cultivation, (2) arts, (3) institutional, (4) group characteristic, and (5) social

customs. Each of the most probable topics were associated with several sociodemographic background characteristics (mostly age, education, migrant background, and religion), besides being associated with several politico-cultural factors (such as institutional trust, attitudes towards Europe and cosmopolitanism). However, despite many of these associations being statistically significant, they were mostly relatively weak in magnitude.

4 Belonging to culture – or not? Analysing the contents and limits of "culture" by a structured question pattern

4.1 Descriptive analysis of whether certain items are considered as culture or not

This section is based on, partly overlaps with, and extends the work presented in two conference papers in fall 2021 (Purhonen et al., 2021a, 2021b) which is currently in progress to be developed as a full-length journal article.

"For each of the following items, please indicate if it belongs to culture in your opinion." This question, Q7 in the INVENT survey, was followed by a list of 20 different items, out of which the respondents were asked to evaluate whether they belong to culture or not. There were three answering options: "Yes, definitely", "No, definitely not" and "It depends". While choosing the first, the respondents could acknowledge the item's status inside the sphere of culture, the second gave them the possibility to not to do so by consciously delimiting the sphere of culture by leaving the item in question outside of it, or, to put it another way, to draw a symbolic boundary between the item and what the respondent considered as culture (cf. Lamont & Molnár, 2002). And as the symbolic boundaries rarely are clear-cut and context-independent, the third alternative was meant for cases the respondents considered ambivalent.

The motivation for this question was to further examine the meaning of culture and, especially, to explore the contents and limits of culture from the point of view of contemporary Europeans. The list of 20 items ranged from opera to hip-hop and from yoga to shopping malls. Thus, it was designed to cover very different items, representing various levels of legitimacy, both traditional and modern items, both commercial and non-commercial items, and so on. The question pattern was inspired by a similarly formulated question in a French survey in 2015 commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture (but with different items, designed for French respondents), where it produced a clear differentiation between the items (see Guy, 2016).

All the 20 items with their distributions by each country separately are presented in Figure 7. It shows that some of the items most unanimously accepted as belonging to culture according to ordinary citizens include historical monuments, folk dances, and opera. Tattoos, video and computer games, TV reality shows, and shopping malls are on average most rarely accepted as belonging to culture. This big picture is clearly shared in all countries. However, some interesting differences between countries emerge: For example, in the Netherlands, a notable larger share of the respondents did not accept or were unsure whether literature belongs to the sphere of culture. Hollywood and blockbuster films were considered clearly more often part of culture in Spain than in the rest of the countries. One of the most contested items was graffiti, for which the distributions of the answers (yes, definitely, it depends, and no, definitely not) were almost uniform in all countries.

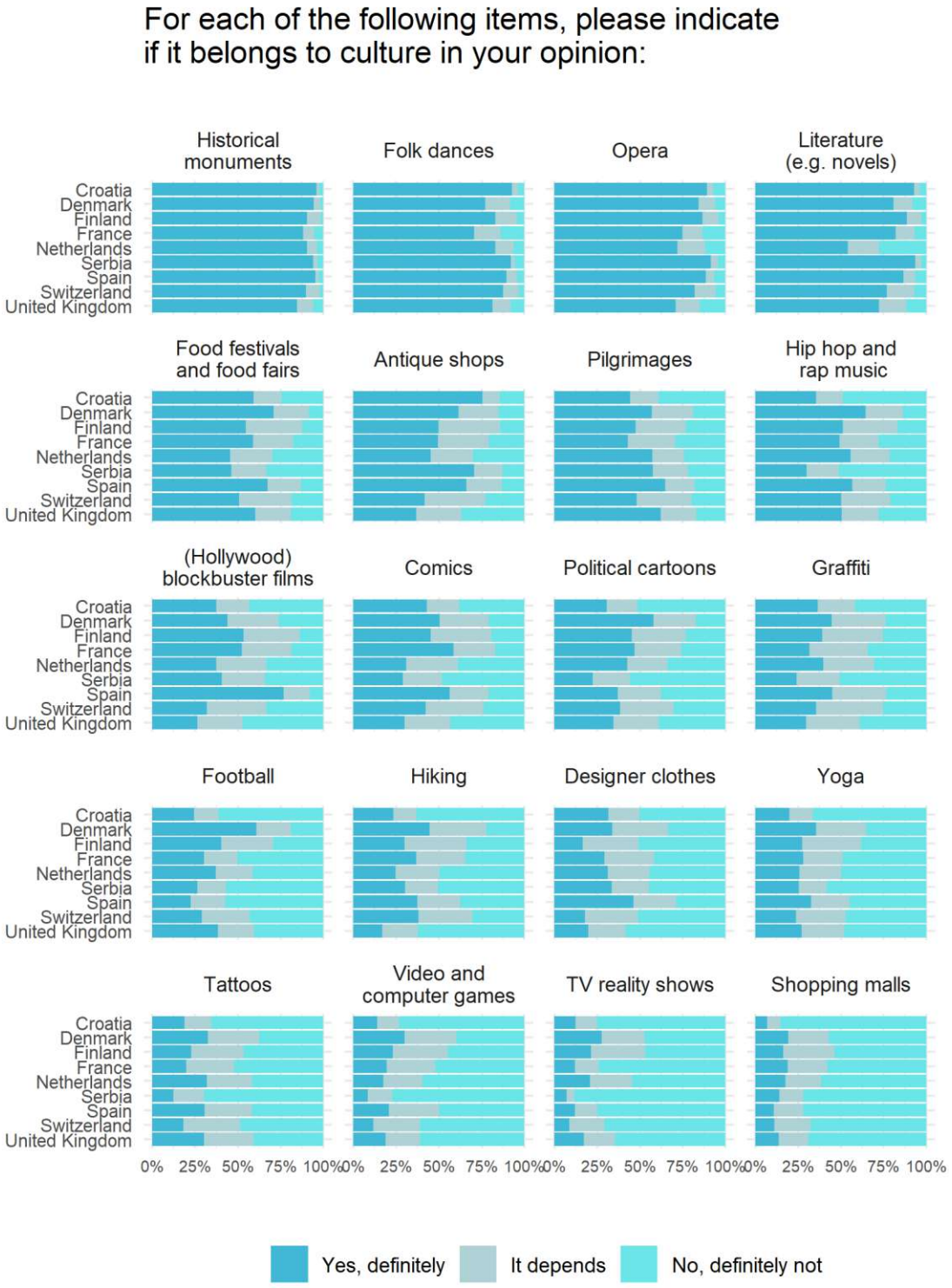

Figure 7. Distribution of Q7 items by country (%). (Missing values excluded.)

Next, in Figure 8, means of the three answer options of Q7 – yes, definitely; it depends; and no, definitely not – are presented by country after calculating the number of each of the answer options together. The mean values, thus, demonstrate how many of the 20 items the respondents, on average, considered unambiguously belonging to culture, not belonging to culture or how many times they

remained ambivalent and whether the nine countries were different in these respects. A high number of "yes" answers (and a low number of "no" answers) would suggest a broad conception of culture in a country, while the opposite points to narrow understandings. Moreover, a high number of "it depends" answers indicates that the inhabitants of a country are more cautious or ambivalent in how they define what is culture and what is not.

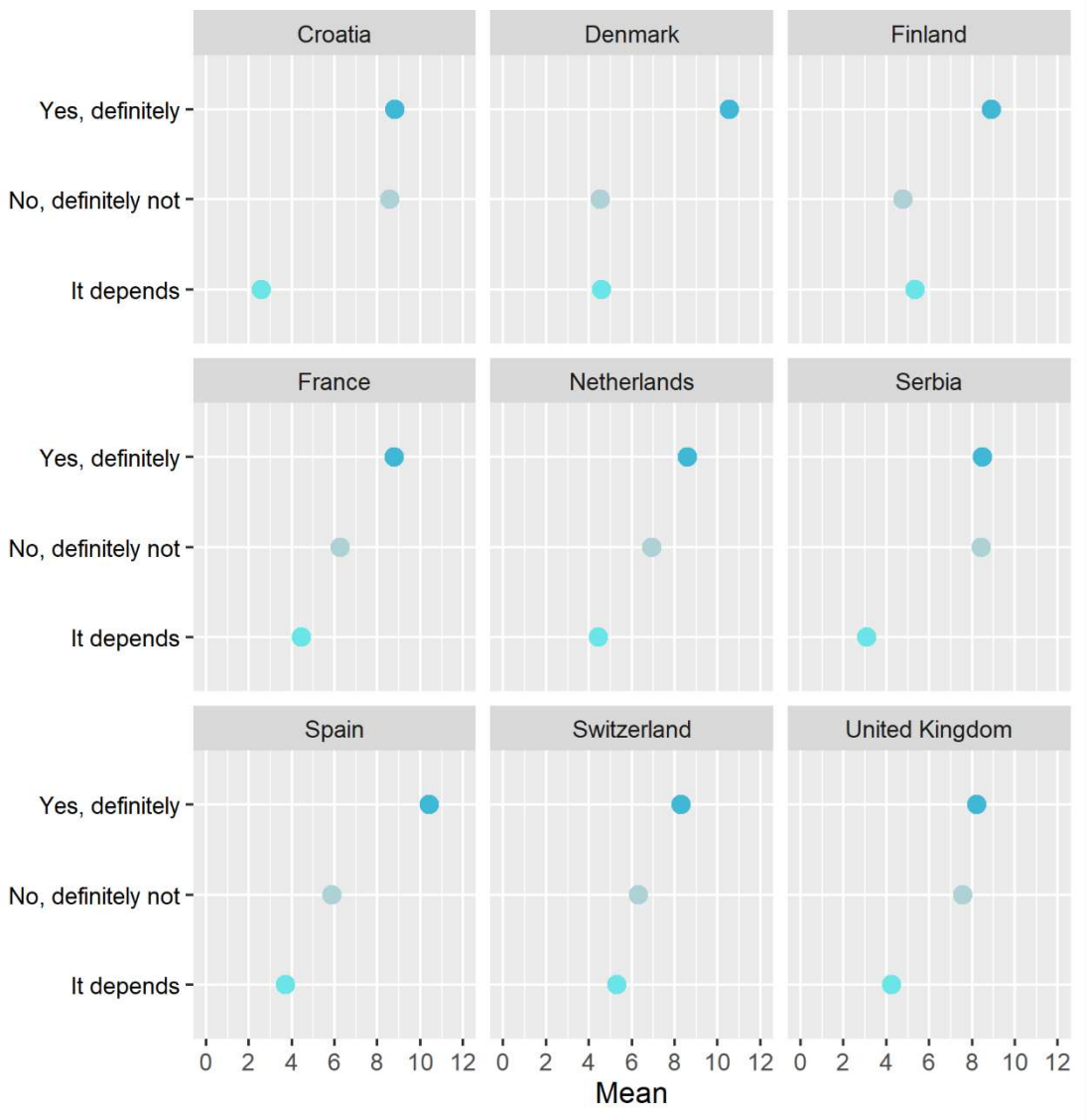

Figure 8. Average counts of the three alternative answer options of Q7 by country (means).

Some different patterns in the answers are evident in Figure 8. With clearly fewer "it depends" answers than in other countries, Croatian and Serbian respondents seem to be most opinionated with their assignments of items to be included or excluded from the sphere of culture. Besides these two countries, also the respondents in the UK answered often that some items do not belong to the sphere of culture. The Spanish respondents, in turn, are most likely to accept items to be part of culture, whereas the respondents from Denmark and Finland are the least willing to delimit some items outside culture. In fact, respondents from these two countries are as often or even more often ambivalent than ready to consider some items' status as not belonging to culture.

4.2 Latent Class Analysis of patterned understandings of culture

The method applied in this section is Latent Class Analysis (Vermunt & Magidson, 2004, 2016), which is used to reduce and crystallize information from the rather complex and long pattern of 20 items. Important is that LCA classifies individuals (and not items) into mutually exclusive clusters – or classes – that are characterized by their distinctive understandings of culture. After choosing a suitable LCA solution and inspecting the composition and meaning of each of the classes, the next step is to predict the group memberships in each of the latent classes found by sociodemographic variables, and, finally, to test to what degree the latent classes found can predict other politico-cultural variables. Regarding these two last stages of our analysis, we use the same variable selection and a similar structure as we did for the analysis presented in Section 3.

The LCA presented here is conducted using the cluster option in LatentGold 5.1. A multilevel component by grouping respondents by country was used in the analysis to ensure that standard errors are appropriately estimated and to account for the clear national differences already evident in the previous section's descriptive analyses. After testing several different models and cluster numbers, the final model was selected using both technical criteria (BIC, AIC) and interpretability. Our choice is the five-cluster solution.

Figure 9 shows how the 5 clusters that we have demarcated from the data are composed. The colour scheme in the figure is as follows: green means "yes, definitely", blue "it depends" and red "no, definitely not". If we look at the first two clusters, we can see that there is much more blue in both of them compared to the other three clusters. That is why we used the word "cautious" in the labels for both clusters. We labelled Cluster 1 as *Traditional Cautious* – it is the largest of all clusters with 26.8% of all respondents representing it –, and Cluster 2 as *Broad Cautious* (23.3%). The difference between them is that in Cluster 2 the understanding of culture is broader (there is more green), whereas there is much more red in Cluster 1 (and that is why it is more limited and, in this case, traditional in its understanding of culture). The three other clusters (Clusters 3, 4 and 5) do not have almost any blue in them, which means that they are far less ambivalent in their understandings of culture. Clusters 4 and 5 are representing the opposite ends: Cluster 5 is almost totally green while Cluster 4 has very much red – thus we labelled Cluster 5 as *Inclusive Exhaustive* (the smallest cluster in size, 10.6%) and Cluster 4 as *Exclusive Determinate* (18.1%). Cluster 3 in the middle is, finally, some kind of a moderate case, although it is distinctive in the sense that it has clear red areas, and it does not show cautiousness; that is why it has been labelled as *Broad Distinct* (21.3%).

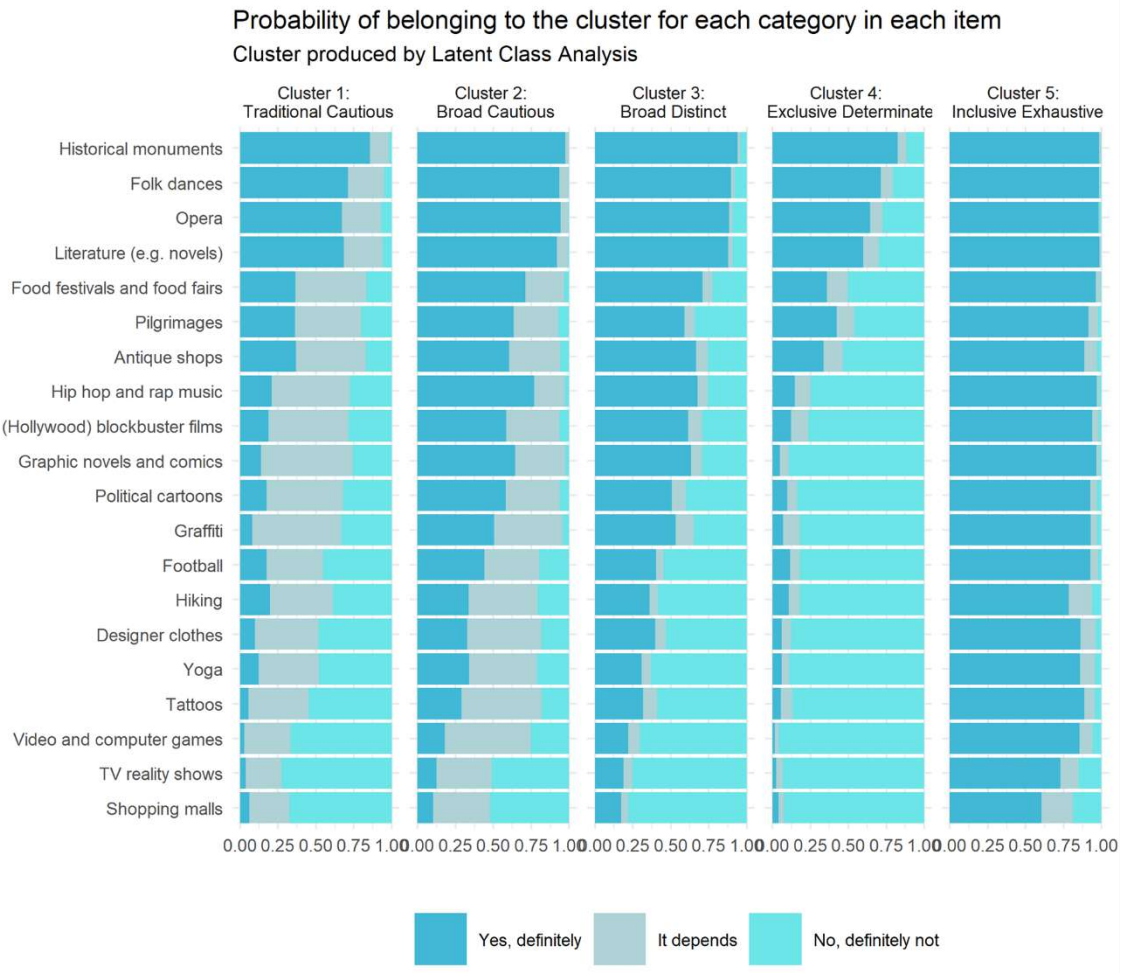

Figure 9. The composition of the 5 clusters from LCA: Probability of belonging to the clusters for each category in each 20 items.

How, then, are the clusters constructed by LCA distributed across the nine countries? This is revealed in Figure 10. In Switzerland, the Netherland and France, Cluster 1 (Traditional Cautious) is the largest one. Cluster 2, the Broad Cautious, represents the dominant understanding of culture in Denmark. In the case of Finland, Clusters 1 and 2 are almost equally distributed with the most substantial proportions. Cluster 3 (Broad Distinct) is the largest one in Croatia and Spain. In Spain, Cluster 2 is similar in size as Cluster 3. In the UK and Serbia, Cluster 4 (Exclusive determinate) is the largest of all. Cluster 5 (Inclusive Exhaustive) is the smallest group in most countries except Spain, Finland, and Denmark where Cluster 4 is the smallest one. Especially Denmark has a high distribution of Cluster 5 compared to other countries.

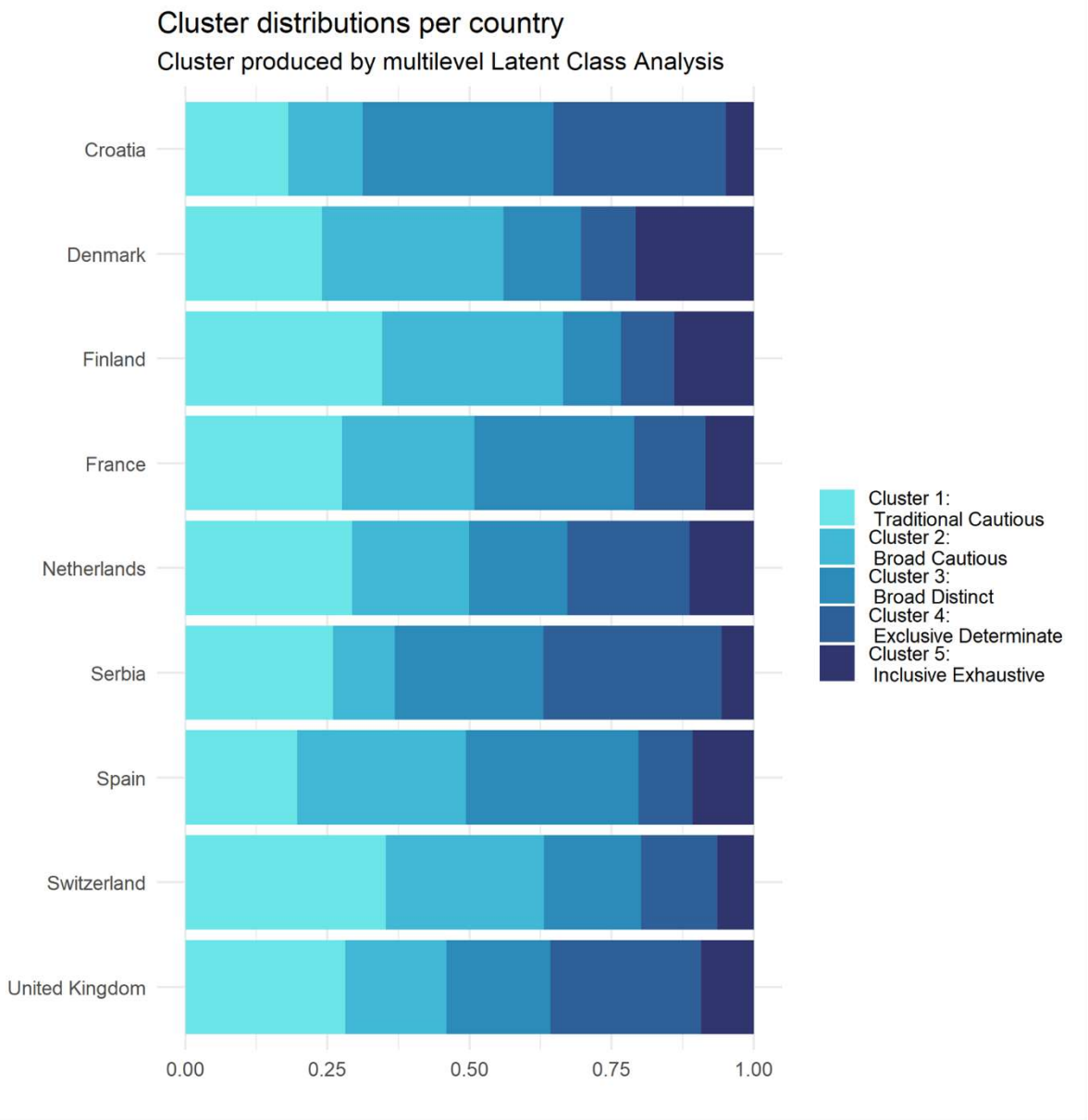

Figure 10. The distribution of 5 clusters in nine countries (%).

To summarize the results thus far before going into the last empirical section, the LCA made for the list of 20 items and the patterns it produced reveals – once again – the importance of the distinctions between the narrow and the broad understandings of culture. However, and importantly, it also reveals a further dimension, which complicates the picture: to what degree individuals are willing to define or delimit culture in the first place, or in other words, how "cautious" or "determinate" they are in the judgments and constructions of what is culture and what is not.

4.3 How are LCA clusters associated with sociodemographic and politico-cultural variables?

Table 4 below shows how the clusters measuring the distinct understandings of culture in terms of its contents and limits are distributed according to basic sociodemographic divisions.

Table 4. Clusters of understandings of the contents and limits of culture according to eight sociodemographic variables: age, gender, household size, city size, education, income, migrant background and religion (%).

	Cluster 1: Traditional Cautious	Cluster 2: Broad Cautious	Cluster 3: Broad Distinct	Cluster 4: Exclusive Determinate	Cluster 5: Inclusive Exhaustive	Total (N)
Total size	27.0	22.8	21.6	18.4	10.2	100 (13,813
Age* **						
18–27 years	23.4	27.8	22.6	13.6	12.5	100 (1,634)
28–44 years	24.7	22.3	23.6	16.7	12.7	100 (3,683)
45–64 years	25.9	23.0	21.4	20.5	9.2	100 (5,059)
65+ years	32.7	20.6	19.2	19.6	8.0	100 (3,413)
Gender* **						
Female	26.8	24.3	20.1	18.8	10.0	100 (7,514)
Male	27.2	20.9	23.4	18.0	10.4	100 (6,268)
Household size* **						
1 person	27.6	25.2	20.0	16.9	10.4	100 (2,831)
2 persons	29.1	23.4	20.7	16.6	10.3	100 (4,459)
3 persons	23.9	23.6	25.1	16.5	10.9	100 (1,846)
4 persons	26.2	22.9	23.6	17.5	9.7	100 (1,908)
5+ persons	25.7	18.6	20.8	25.0	9.8	100 (2,769)
City size (place of residence)* **						
Capital or 250k+	23.2	24.3	22.1	17.6	12.8	100 (3,026)
Medium 80-250k	25.9	25.7	20.4	15.8	12.2	100 (2,444)
Small city 10-80k	30.2	22.7	18.4	19.5	9.1	100 (4,009)
Countryside -10k	28.7	20.8	22.6	19.7	8.2	100 (4,063)
Education* **						
Low	29.3	15.3	22.0	26.9	6.5	100 (2,373)
Medium	28.8	19.5	22.4	21.8	7.5	100 (5,331)
High	24.5	28.6	20.7	12.1	14.1	100 (6,090)
Income* **						
Low	29.6	20.9	19.3	20.9	9.4	100 (2,693)
Medium	27.1	22.3	21.9	18.7	10.0	100 (5,334)
High	25.8	29.0	17.7	13.8	13.6	100 (2,517)
Migrant background						
No	27.2	23.4	20.8	18.7	10.0	100 (10,668
Yes	26.4	20.8	24.1	17.6	11.1	100 (3,127)
Religion* **						
Christian Catholic	25.8	22.3	25.8	19.2	6.9	100 (3,924)
Christian Protestant	30.6	30.3	14.0	12.2	12.9	100 (2,368)
Christian Orthodox	24.3	11.1	27.3	30.4	6.9	100 (1,351)
Not belonging to any religion	25.7	25.2	20.1	15.2	13.8	100 (4,261)
Other	29.8	17.2	21.4	23.4	8.2	100 (1,909)

Notes. * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 (Chi-square significance tests for the differences between the categories of sociodemographic variables).

The first observation is that the associations are overall stronger here in Table 4 than what they were in the previous similar analysis of Section 3 (Table 2). Cluster 1 (Traditional cautious) is more common among those 65+ years old than the younger groups. Cluster 2 (Broad cautious) and 5 (Inclusive exhaustive) are most common among the youngest groups. Cluster 4 (Exclusive determinate) is rarer among the youngest group than among older respondents. Broad cautious (Cluster 2) is slightly more prevalent among females, whereas Broad distinct (Cluster 3) is somewhat more common among males. But the differences are very small.

When it comes to the household size, the differences are very small, except that those respondents living in the largest households (with persons 5 or more) belong more typically to the Exclusive determinate class (Cluster 4) and slightly more rarely to Broad cautious (Cluster 2) compared to other respondents. As for the size of the city the respondents live in, Cluster 1 (Traditional cautious) is slightly less common in the largest cities than elsewhere. Belonging to Cluster 5 (Inclusive exhaustive), on the other hand, is slightly more typical to those living in big or medium sized cities than those living in more sparsely populated areas. Regarding education, it is evident that the broad and inclusive understandings (Cluster 2 Broad cautious and 5 Inclusive exhaustive) are strongly associated with high education, while the most limited understanding (Cluster 4 Exclusive determinate) is strongly associated with low education. These are clear and important differences. Income, again, shows the same associations as education, but in a much more moderate form.

Migrant background shows that – unlike in the case of the similar analysis with the most probable topic in Section 3 – respondents with migrant background through their parents do not differ substantially from the majority not having migrant background for any of the clusters. This means, in fact, that migrant background is basically the only sociodemographic variable which had stronger associations with topic model-based clusters than with the LCA-based clusters presented here. Finally, the variable measuring respondents' religion shows that Cluster 2 Broad cautious is most typical to Protestants and least typical to Orthodox Christians, while the case is the other way round in Cluster 3 Broad distinct. The differences between these groups are substantial in these cases. Moreover, the Cluster 4 Exclusive determinate is most common among the Orthodox Christians (and least common among Protestants). Inclusive exhaustive (Cluster 5) is the least typical among Catholic Christians, no matter whether Roman Catholic or Orthodox.

The more powerful nature of the associations between the sociodemographic variables and the membership in clusters presented in Table 4 above is well demonstrated if the same analysis is conducted country by country (see Appendix Table A3). The country-specific associations are clearly more often statistically significant inside many, if not always all, countries than was the case with the country-by-country analysis presented in Section 3. For instance, the associations with respondents' age and educational level are statistically significant in all nine countries. Nevertheless, let us look at more closely how the opposite ends – Clusters 4 and 5, the Exclusive determinant and the Inclusive exhaustive – are associated with education in each country. Figure 11 reveals this by showing the case of Cluster 4 in all countries on top and the case of Cluster 5 below. The result is a kind of mirror image as these two clusters are, indeed, kind of opposite ends when it comes to the understandings of culture based on our LCA patterns. Note also that the scale of y-axis is slightly different between the two panels in Figure 11.

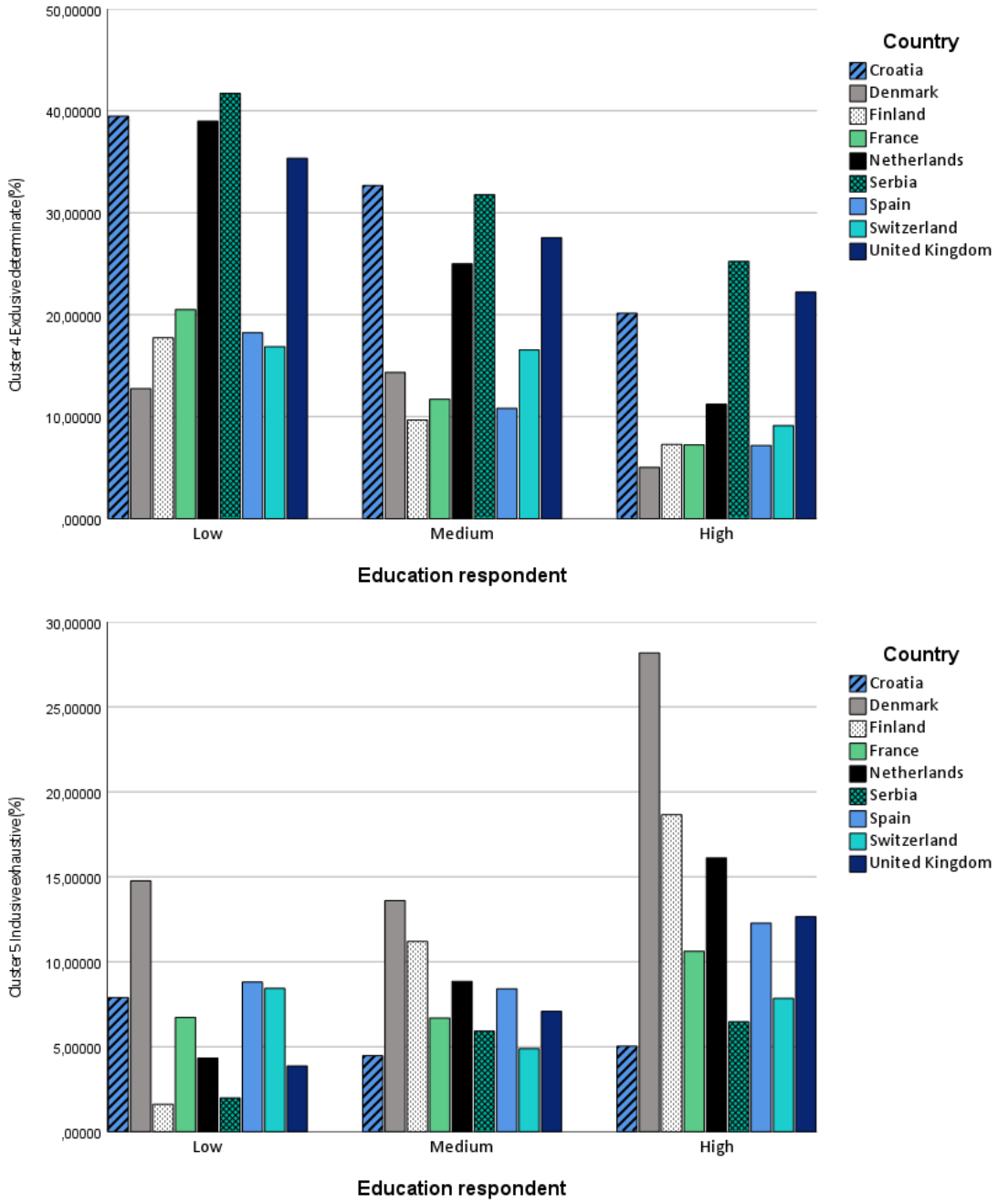

Figure 11. Membership in Cluster 4 Exclusive determinate (on top) and in Cluster 5 Inclusive exhaustive (at the bottom) according to education in each of the nine countries separately (%).

Figure 11 shows that, without exception, the Exclusive determinate understanding of culture is associated with low education in all countries, and, vice versa, the Inclusive exhaustive understanding of culture is associated with high education in all countries. But the figure demonstrates, once again, also the substantial cross-country differences in the prevalence of these understandings. The Exclusive determinate understanding is much more common in Croatia, Serbia, UK and, perhaps surprisingly, the Netherlands (but in the latter case only in the case of those respondents with low or medium education). To put it differently, the Exclusive determinant understanding is more probable in Croatia, Serbia and the UK even among the highly educated than among the lowest educated groups in

countries such as Denmark, Finland, Spain or Switzerland. On the other side, the bottom part of Figure 11 shows how the Inclusive exhaustive understanding of culture is by far the most substantial in Denmark. Finland is once again similar to the other Nordic country in the overall prevalence of the Inclusive understanding of culture, with the exception of the lowest educated. In fact, this Inclusive exhaustive understanding is the least present among the Finnish respondents with low education compared to all educational groups of all countries. In other words, the association between education and having the Inclusive exhaustive understanding is strongest in Finland of all countries.

Finally, in Table 5, the cultural clusters are used to predict the six politico-cultural variables that were also included in the analysis for the most probable topics in Section 3. Thus, the results of the latter analysis (cf. Table 3) can be compared with those of the analysis presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Six politico-cultural variables according to the clusters of understandings of the contents and limits of culture: cultural participation, institutional trust, positive attitude towards the EU and European culture, cosmopolitanism, agreeing that same sex marriages should be allowed throughout Europe, and agreeing that people who are unemployed should not get benefits if they do not try to find work (means, standard errors in brackets; all dependent variables standardized, i.e., mean=0, SD=1).

	Cluster 1: Traditional Cautious	Cluster 2: Broad Cautious	Cluster 3: Broad Distinct	Cluster 4: Exclusive Determinate	Cluster 5: Inclusive Exhaustive	Total (N)
Cultural participation***	-0.06	0.24	0.02	-0.37	0.30	0.00
	(0.92)	(0.95)	(1.05)	(0.91)	(1.10)	(1.00)
Institutional trust***	-0.08	0.21	0.03	-0.26	0.29	0.00
	(0.99)	(0.92)	(1.00)	(1.02)	(0.97)	(1.00)
Positive towards the EU and Europe***	-0.13	0.30	0.03	-0.45	0.46	0.00
	(0.96)	(0.88)	(1.00)	(1.03)	(0.87)	(1.00)
Cosmopolitanism***	0.11	0.29	0.08	-0.44	0.39	0.01
	(0.95)	(0.82)	(0.99)	(1.15)	(0.82)	(1.00)
"Same sex marriages should be allowed***	-0.07	0.30	-0.09	-0.38	0.40	0.00
	(0.98)	(0.84)	(1.04)	(1.08)	(0.81)	(1.00)
"Unemployed should not get benefits"***	0.05	-0.12	0.02	0.19	-0.25	0.00
	(0.96)	(0.99)	(1.04)	(0.98)	(1.03)	(1.00)

Notes. * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 (F-tests for the differences between the categories of cluster variable).

Again, we find that the associations between the clusters and the politico-cultural variables are much more pronounced than the associations in the case of the most probable topic variable in Section 3 (Table 3). Having a Broad cautious (Cluster 2) or Inclusive exhaustive (Cluster 5) understanding of culture is clearly positively associated with cultural participation, while the association between Exclusive determinate (Cluster 4) understanding and cultural participation is clearly negative. The same holds for associations with institutional trust: those belonging to inclusive clusters (Clusters 2 and 5) trust the most, while those belonging to exclusive cluster (4) trust the least. As for the positive attitude towards the EU and European culture, the case is no different from cultural participation or

institutional trust. Those having broad understanding of culture (Clusters 2 and 5) have the most positive attitude while those having the narrowest understanding of culture (Cluster 4) have the most negative attitude towards the EU and European culture.

Cosmopolitanism, too, demonstrates the same pattern as described above with cultural participation, institutional trust, and attitude towards European culture. The same is true for agreeing with the statement "Same sex marriages should be allowed": having a broad understanding of culture is associated with agreeing with this statement, while having a narrow understanding of culture is associated with disagreeing with it. Finally, agreeing with the statement "People who are unemployed should not get benefits if they do not try to find work" does not produce the same pattern as clearly as all the previous politico-cultural variables. However, also in this case there is the opposition between the broadest (tending to disagree with the statement) and the narrowest (tending to agree) understandings of culture.

As the results in Table 5 suggest, the associations are strong enough to be clear and statistically significant also if examined country-by-country (see Appendix Table A4). Only the last statement (agreeing that the "unemployed should not get benefits") makes a difference with non-significant associations in two countries (Croatia and France) to the otherwise univocally significant table. To provide a point of comparison to Figure 6 (Section 3.3) on the associations between clusters based on topic modeling and cosmopolitanism across all countries, Figure 12 below shows the same by using the latent class based clusters.

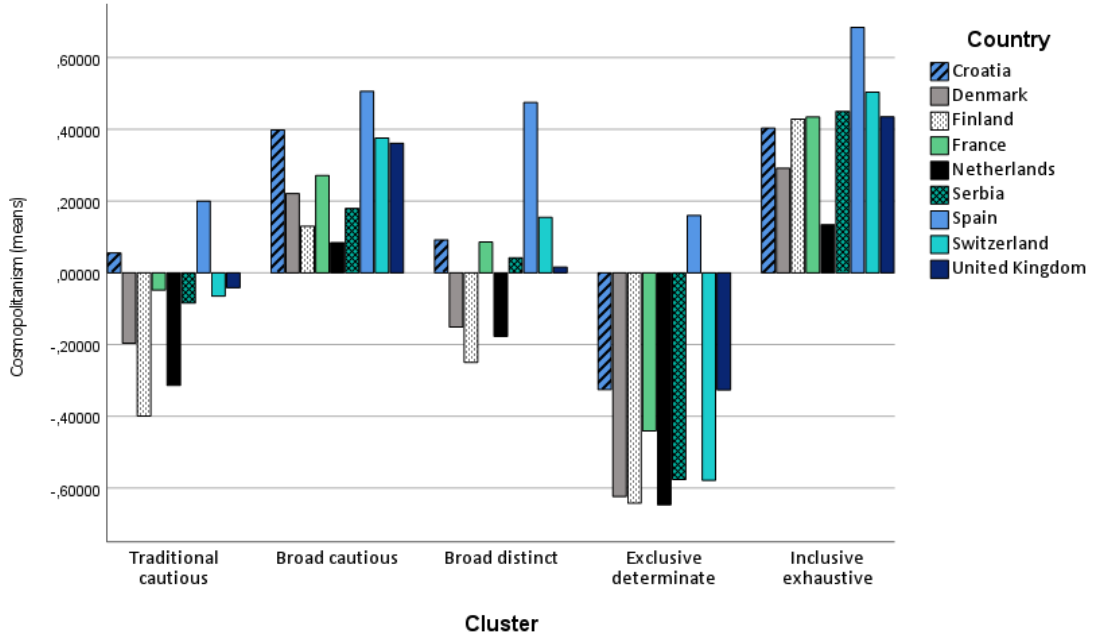

Figure 12. Cosmopolitanism according to clusters of understandings on the contents and limits of culture in each of the nine countries separately (means).

The figure highlights stronger associations in general, and the mutually opposite status of Exclusive determinate and Inclusive exhaustive understandings in particular, when compared to the Figure 6 previously. Of course, the figure also showcases the importance of cross-national differences, even if the associations are clear in all countries. Belonging to the Exclusive determinate cluster seems to mean a strongly negative attitude towards cosmopolitanism, especially in wealthy Nordic European

countries (Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, also Switzerland). Only the Spaniards remain on the positive side of the average towards cosmopolitanism irrespective of their understanding of culture.

5 Discussion

5.1 Summary and key takeaways

This report has provided an empirical, "bottom-up" perspective on the diversity of the notions of culture among people in present-day Europe, based on INVENT's representative survey data collected in 2021 in nine countries: Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK. Taking stock of the literature on the polysemy and unforeseen ubiquity of the concept of culture, especially under the circumstances of today's "cultural abundance" brought by globalization and digitalization of culture, among other megatrends, the report investigated the understandings of culture in two ways. First, relying on an open-ended question on the meanings attached to culture, utilizing topic modelling (Section 3); and second, examining respondents' views about which objects and practices from a structured list of 20 different items belong or do not belong to "culture", utilizing latent class analysis (Section 4). In both cases, after disentangling major ways to understand culture, we analysed their associations with sociodemographic divisions, on the one hand, and with politico-cultural variables, on the other.

The results demonstrate the continuing persistence of the relevance of the classical distinction between the narrow ("culture as arts") and the broad ("culture as ways of life") notions of culture, but also that it does not fully capture the diversity of how people in today's Europe understand the concept. The topic modelling in the first empirical part revealed five distinct understandings of culture: culture as *cultivation*, as *arts*, as *institutional*, as *a group characteristic*, and as *a social custom*. Thus, it showed that the narrow way of understanding culture as arts is divided, in fact, into two variants; the more abstract idea of art itself and the more institutional-practical idea of art engaged with or practiced in arts institutions. In a similar vein, the broader, anthropological or social notion of culture, was separated into three different variants: culture understood as cultivation, as a group characteristic, and as a social custom. The Latent Class Analysis in the second empirical part, in turn, disentangled five major understandings, based on the level of breadth and ambiguity of respondents' views of what counts as culture and what does not. These proved to be the *traditional cautious*, *broad cautious*, *broad distinct*, *exclusive determinate*, and *inclusive exhaustive* understandings of culture. Thus, while the topic modelling demarcated different understandings of culture content-wise, the latent class analysis was, in addition to that, sensitive to the varying levels of "assertiveness" or determination behind the different understandings (even if they would have been similar otherwise, in terms of broadness/narrowness).

Both ways of measuring the diverse notions of culture showed that different understandings are statistically significantly associated with sociodemographic divisions as well as politico-cultural attitudes. However, these associations were overall stronger in the case of clusters produced by Latent Class Analysis than topic modelling. Most importantly, the results unambiguously show that the traditional hypotheses that the narrow and exclusive understandings of culture would be more typical to the upper-status groups rather than lower-status groups do not hold anymore in present-day Europe, at least when investigated with representative population-level datasets. On the contrary, the narrow understandings seem to be quite clearly associated with lower-status groups, while the upper-status groups have broad understandings of culture – at least on the manifest levels that were analysed. The paramount example here is the opposition between the most inclusive ("inclusive exhaustive") and exclusive ("exclusive determinate") conceptions of culture, revealed in Section 4, which consistently demonstrated how the inclusive understanding is associated with high levels of education and income, while the associations were inverted for the exclusive understanding of culture.

It remains to be investigated in further analyses whether this inclusive/exclusive opposition is mostly due to educational differences or other forms of social status such as capital volume and composition. Nevertheless, the finding that high-status groups seem to embrace broad and inclusive understandings of culture is in line with abundant research arguing that cultural omnivorousness, openness, and tolerance have become valued and attractive high-status signals among upper- and middle-classes and even the elite (e.g. Peterson & Kern, 1996; Ollivier, 2008; Hazir & Warde, 2016; Friedman & Reeves, 2020).

As for other key sociodemographic differences, the analyses showed the significance of age. More precisely, understanding culture broadly as a group characteristic or as social customs (Section 3) or overall inclusively rather than exclusively (Section 4) were clearly associated with young age, whereas understanding culture as cultivation or institutional (Section 3) or having either a "traditional cautious" or an "exclusive determinate" (Section 4) view of the boundaries of culture were associated with old age. These findings indicate that broad understandings of culture are not only associated with high status, but are also something "modern" and contemporary in contrast to traditional and "past". The fact that the younger cohorts seem to be more inclusive and less exclusive than the old cohorts may also indicate a more general trend towards inclusive understandings – or even that the distinction between inclusive and exclusive understandings of culture may become overall a less central dividing line in the future.

Besides the associations with social status (here, education and income) and age, there were also hints of interesting differences in understandings of culture according to migration status and religion. Most of all, those respondents having a migrant background understood culture clearly more often as a group characteristic or as social customs than the majority of respondents who had no migrant background. This difference may in part be explained by the fact that understandings of culture as a group characteristic were most often articulated through the idea of distinct "national cultures" – something which may be more evident for those respondents with a migrant background than for others. Belonging to a Christian Catholic denomination was clearly associated with having a broad distinct or exclusive determinate view on the boundaries of "culture", while belonging to a Christian Protestant denomination was associated with more ambivalent and broad understandings (the "traditional cautious", "broad cautious" and "inclusive exhaustive" notions).

However, more thorough research is obviously needed to elaborate the nature of these associations more in depth. This is particularly the case when considering the cross-national differences found and taking into account how the countries differ from each other in terms of dominant religions, for instance. The Nordic countries, Denmark and Finland, seem to be very close to each other regarding how people understand the concept of culture; the respondents from these two countries show the broadest and most cautious understandings (i.e. unwillingness to draw exclusive boundaries for what counts as culture). In contrast, the respondents from Croatia and Serbia (and to a lesser degree, also from the UK) proved to be most determinate and exclusive in their conceptions. However, these three countries are very different from each other in terms of the topics attached with the concept of culture. For instance, in Croatia, culture is predominantly understood as institutional, whereas in the UK, it is most often understood as either a group characteristic or social custom. In fact, it is only in the Netherlands where culture is understood as social custom more often than in the UK. In countries such as France, Spain, and Switzerland, understanding culture as a social custom (or group characteristic) is very rare – in these countries, culture understood as cultivation is clearly the most common meaning of the concept. Moreover, Swiss respondents seem to be most "traditional cautious" in their ways of understanding the contents and limits of "culture".

Finally, the analyses of both empirical sections demonstrated the wider socio-political relevance of the patterning of different understandings of culture by establishing significant associations between the understandings and a variety of politico-cultural variables: cultural participation, institutional trust, adherence to the EU and European culture, cosmopolitanism, as well as attitudes towards marginalized groups such as sexual minorities and the unemployed. These associations – conspicuously, again, stronger in the case of clusters produced by latent class analysis than by topic modelling – all point to the direction that broad and inclusive understandings of culture predict positive societal outcomes, while the opposite is the case with the narrow and exclusive understandings. Thus, broad and inclusive notions of culture are positively associated with active cultural participation, high institutional trust, supporting the EU and European culture, cosmopolitan attitudes, and granting minorities equal rights as the majority. These associations call for more research to unravel their significance not only from academic but also from policy perspectives.

5.2 Methodological issues and the road ahead

Comparing the two methods used in this report to uncover people's understandings of culture, one could argue that forcing respondents to make certain choices – as was the case in Q7 – has a certain advantage over the open-ended approach of Q6. Q7 offered the respondents a list of cultural items and asked them to determine whether each of the items belonged to culture or not, or whether "it depended" in their opinion. This way, the semi-experimental design of Q7 implied that stimuli were chosen to contrast one another and respondents were supplied with a wide range of options; researchers controlled stimuli to test whether differences were found. In contrast, Q6 was fully open, lacking the hand of the researcher, implying that the results – even though diverse in length and style – are likely to show less variation if many respondents would resort to "common", "safe", and "widespread" notions of culture.

However, we would be inclined to combine both methods again in future studies. The methods applied in this report – the topic modelling used for analysing the open-ended answers in Section 3 and the latent class analysis used for analysing the structured list of cultural objects and practices in Section 4 – yielded, at the end, not only complementary classifications of major ways in which people across Europe understand culture, but also highly similar findings in terms of the observed associations of various understandings of culture with a suit of sociodemographic and politico-cultural variables. Thus, including both of the key questions in the survey questionnaire and investigating the data of both variables can be considered as a successful exercise of triangulation, which increases confidence in the external validity regarding both measures.

The differences found are mostly about the strength and statistical significance of these associations. Thus, it is an interesting finding from a methodological point of view that the cluster variable based on topic modelling (Section 3) had weaker associations than the cluster variable based on latent class analysis (Section 4) both with sociodemographic and politico-cultural variables. One reason for the relatively low associations of Q6 topics could be the way the topic modelling was done, i.e. that the cluster variable quite straightforwardly classified each respondent based only on the most probable topic, rather than on the full variety of topics applicable to his or her answer. This means a huge reduction of information. In one of our forthcoming follow-up analyses, we aim to tackle this problem by using structural topic modelling as an approach that is more sensitive to the overlapping nature of the topics (cf. Purhonen et al., 2022). In another, forthcoming analysis of the open-ended Q6 survey question, the INVENT team employs topic modelling, clustering and semantic analysis to examine how cultural meaning systems correspond to the social order in Spain and United Kingdom (Kim et al., 2022).

Next to working towards the refinement of the two main methodological approaches employed in this report, the INVENT team will also use different methods of data analysis and data collections to get at the diverse meanings that culture may have for different groups of people within and across European societies.

For instance, the Smartphone study (INVENT, 2022a) may provide new insights in this regard by mapping various activities and conversations observed in daily life close to the moment that people are engaging in cultural activities and practices. Whilst less open or inductive and not aimed at analysing boundary drawing, it will enable us to see associations with well-being and social cohesion. Secondly, our analyses of large amounts of textual data scraped from social media platforms (INVENT, 2021a) have already proven highly useful for uncovering how "culture" (either as a hashtag or a keyword) is being discussed online, especially on Twitter, and in which contexts it is most often discussed, within and across the nine European countries included in the INVENT project. Third, and finally, the interviews and focus groups that the INVENT team is conducting during the summer and fall of 2022, will provide a further perspective to the different understandings of culture. Most importantly, they will provide an in-depth, narrative view of understandings of culture by individuals located in specific positions, focusing on aspects that are hard to capture quantitatively, for instance regarding how valuations of culture are articulated.

For sure, it will be a great challenge to be able to synthesize the findings across all these empirical elements and approaches, that, taken together, also form the background against which this report should be considered and evaluated. However, INVENT's aim to provide thus far the most comprehensive investigation of diverse understandings of culture among present-day Europeans makes it necessary to continue the work for confronting and addressing the challenge.

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7 Appendices

A. Appendix Tables

Table A1. Statistical significance tests for the associations between the most probable topics on cultural understandings and eight sociodemographic variables in each of the nine INVENT countries.

	CH	DK	ES	FI	FR	HR	NL	SR	UK	Total
N	532	954	535	770	754	338	739	407	936	5,965
Age	***	***	*	***	***	NS	***	NS	***	***
Gender	NS	**	NS	NS	NS	NS	*	NS	**	***
Household size	NS	NS	NS	*	NS	NS	NS	*	NS	***
City size	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	*	NS	NS	NS	***
Education	NS	**	NS	NS	NS	NS	*	NS	NS	***
Income	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	**
Migrant background	*	***	***	***	*	**	*	NS	NS	***
Religion	*	***	***	***	*	*	NS	NS	NS	***

Notes. NS=p>0.05; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 (Chi-square significance tests for the differences between the categories of sociodemographic variables).

Table A2. Statistical significance tests for the associations between the most probable topics on cultural understandings and six politico-cultural variables in each of the nine INVENT countries.

	CH	DK	ES	FI	FR	HR	NL	SR	UK	Total
N	532	954	535	770	754	338	739	407	936	5,965
Cultural participation	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	**	**
Institutional trust	NS	***	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	***
Positive towards the EU/Europe	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	***	***
Cosmopolitanism	NS	***	*	***	**	NS	NS	NS	NS	***
"Same sex marriages should be allowed"	NS	*	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	**
"Unemployed should not get benefits"	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	*	NS	**

Notes. NS=p>0.05; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 (F-tests for the differences between the categories of topic variable).

Table A3. Statistical significance tests for the associations between the clusters of understandings of the contents and limits of culture and eight sociodemographic variables in each of the nine INVENT countries.

	CH	DK	ES	FI	FR	HR	NL	SR	UK	Total
N	1,326	1,598	1,398	1,081	1,987	1,200	1,575	1,237	2,411	13,813
Age	*	**	*	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Gender	NS	NS	NS	***	NS	NS	NS	NS	***	***
Household size	NS	NS	NS	*	**	NS	*	NS	NS	***
City size	NS	*	NS	***	NS	**	*	NS	***	***
Education	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	*	***	***
Income	**	**	NS	***	**	NS	*	NS	NS	***
Migrant background	NS	NS	***	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	**	***
Religion	NS	**	***	NS	NS	**	***	NS	***	***

Notes. NS=p>0.05; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 (Chi-square significance tests for the differences between the categories of sociodemographic variables).

Table A4. Statistical significance tests for the associations between the clusters of understandings of the contents and limits of culture and six politico-cultural variables in each of the nine INVENT countries.

	CH	DK	ES	FI	FR	HR	NL	SR	UK	Total
N	1,326	1,598	1,398	1,081	1,987	1,200	1,575	1,237	2,411	13,813
Cultural participation	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Institutional trust	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Positive towards the EU/Europe	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Cosmopolitanism	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
"Same sex marriages should be allowed"	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
"Unemployed should not get benefits"	***	***	**	*	NS	NS	***	**	***	***

Notes. NS=p>0.05; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 (F-tests for the differences between the categories of cluster variable).

B. Description of the variables used in the report

Key variables

The two key variables of the report, the open-ended **Q6 "What comes to mind first when you think of the word 'culture'? Please elaborate"**, and the list of 20 items that are asked to be evaluated in **Q7 "For each of the following items, please indicate if it belongs to culture in your opinion"**, are described in detail in Sections 3 and 4 of the report.

The key variable from the cross-national comparative perspective, **country**, includes the following nine European countries in which the INVENT survey data was collected: Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK.

Sociodemographic variables

Based on Q2 in the survey questionnaire, "In what year were you born", the variable **Age** is classified into four categories: 18–27-years old, 28–44 years old, 45–64 years old, and 65+ years old.

Based on Q1 "What is your gender", **Gender** is treated as dichotomy (Female, Male), while the other response alternatives, "Other" (0.1%, n=10) and "Prefer not to say" (0.2%, n=26) were coded as missing data.

Based on Q31a "How many people live permanently in your household, yourself included?", the variable **Household size** is classified into the following five: 1 person, 2 persons, 3 persons, 4 persons, and 5+ persons.

Based on Q3b "In which type of city or place do you live?", the variable **City size (place of residence)** is classified into the four categories: Capital or big city of 250k+ inhabitants, Medium city of 80–250k inhabitants, Small city of 10–80k inhabitants, Countryside of less than 10k inhabitants.

Based on Q5a "What is the highest diploma you have achieved?", originally ranging from 10 to 12 country-specific response alternatives all compatible with the ISCED 2011 (International Standard Classification of Education), the variable **Education** is classified into three: Low (including no formal education, primary education and lower secondary education), Medium (including upper secondary education and post-secondary non-tertiary education), and High (including vocational tertiary education and university degrees).

Based on Q32 "Think of the total monthly income of all the household members together. What is your household's net monthly income (after tax and compulsory deduction), from all sources (wages, payments and other rents)? If you don't know the exact figure, please give an estimate in which category the net monthly income of your household would fit.", including originally ten response alternatives that reflected the amounts (in Euros or other national currency) of country-specific income deciles, the variable **Income** is classified into three: Low (including the three lowest deciles), Medium (including the four middle deciles), and High (including the three highest deciles).

Based on Q4c "Were your parents born in [country of survey]? 1 Mother (yes/no) and 2 Father (yes/no), the variable **Migrant background** is classified as dichotomous, measuring whether one or both parents were born abroad (No, Yes).

Based on Q28a "Could you please indicate your belonging to a religion or denomination?", including originally 15 response alternatives, the variable **Religion** is classified into the following four categories: Christian Catholic, Christian Protestant, Christian Orthodox, Not belonging to any religion, and Other.

Politico-cultural variables (all used as standardized, i.e. mean=0, standard deviation=1)

Based on Q15b "How often do you typically go to the following events or places? Please answer for a situation in which there are no restrictions because of COVID-19" and its four items, "Classical music concert, opera, ballet performance or theatre performance in a concert hall or theatre", "Popular music concert or popular music festival", "Local fair with food and music", and "Museum, monument, or historical place", all of which were asked with five response alternatives ranging from "(Almost)

every week" to "(Almost) never", the variable **Cultural participation** is a summated scale of the four items, counting together the frequency of participation in each of them (after inverting the scales, "(Almost) never" coded as 0 and "(Almost) every week" coded as 4). The scale, ranging from 0 to 16, has a good reliability with Cronbach's alpha of 0.72.

Based on Q22 "To what extent do you trust the following institutions or agents?", and inverting the values of the 7-point scale response alternatives to "Completely trust" as 6 and "Completely distrust" as 0, the variable **Institutional trust** is a summated scale of four items included in Q22, counting together the trust for "The government [of the country of survey]", "The European Union", "News media", and "Science and scientists". (Thus, to increase the internal consistency and theoretical coherence of the scale, two items of Q22 – "Social media (e.g. Facebook)" and "Religious leaders" – were left out.) The scale, ranging from 0 to 24, has a good reliability with Cronbach's alpha of 0.77.

Counting together responses to five attitude statements – Q8_2 "I take pride in historical monuments, places, works of art, and/or traditions from other European countries", Q8_3 "Europe's cultural heritage should be taught at [country of survey's] schools, as it tells us about our history and culture", Q16_5 "European integration has enabled me to experience other European cultures", Q23_7 "Being part of the European Union has brought new opportunities to people in [country of survey]", and Q25_6 "It is a good thing that [country of survey] is part of the European Union" [in countries not currently members, the phrasing was adjusted as "It would be good for (country) to be part of the European Union] – the variable **Positive attitude towards the EU and European culture** is a summated scale of these items after inverting the 5-point Likert-scales where relevant (after which "Strongly agree" is coded as 4 and "Strongly disagree" as 0). The scale, ranging from 0 to 20, has a good reliability with Cronbach's alpha of 0.70.

Based on Q19 "To what degree do you agree with the following descriptions of yourself", the variable **Cosmopolitanism** is a summated scale, counting together the responses (after inverting the 5-point Likert-scales as "Strongly agree" coded as 4 and "Strongly disagree" as 0) of the four items: "I am interested in learning more about people who live in other countries", "I enjoy exchanging ideas with people from other cultures and countries", "I like to learn about other ways of life", and "I enjoy being with people from other countries to learn about their unique views and approaches". The scale, ranging from 0 to 16, has a very good reliability with Cronbach's alpha of 0.92.

As an example of a politico-moral attitude reflecting the opposition between liberal/progressive and conservative stances, Q25_2 **"Same sex marriages should be allowed throughout Europe"** is used after inverting the 5-point Likert scale, after which "Strongly agree is coded as 4 and "Strongly disagree as 0.

As an example of a political attitude reflecting the opposition between left-wing and right-wing economic stances, Q25_5 **"People who are unemployed should not get benefits if they do not try to find work"** is used after inverting the 5-point Likert scale, after which "Strongly agree is coded as 4 and "Strongly disagree as 0.