



PRESS RELEASE

Populist and Nativist Views Still Prevail

New Ipsos study shows populist and nativist sentiment growing in some countries while receding in others

Washington, DC, September 5, 2019 — At a global level, perceptions that the system is broken remain as prevalent today as they were weeks after the election of Donald Trump and months after a majority of British voters opted to leave the European Union. A new Ipsos survey of more than 18,000 adults from 27 countries conducted finds that the overall incidence of populist sentiment across the world has remained nearly unchanged and that nativist attitudes have gained some ground since then. The survey also shows that, while some countries show an uptick in populist opinions (e.g., Sweden, South Africa, Argentina, India) or in nativist ones (e.g., Mexico, Sweden again, and Japan), they have receded in other parts of the world (Israel, Italy, Hungary and the United States).

A majority of citizens across the world feel left out of the “normal order” of life in their country:

- 70% say the economy is rigged to favor the rich and powerful (up 1 percentage point between December 2018 and April 2019)
- 66% feel that traditional parties and politicians don’t care about people like them (up 2 points)
- 54% agree that their country’s society is broken (down 4 points).

In this context, many want more hands-on leadership and/or lean toward citizen-first views.

Populist sentiment is widespread:

- 64% say their country needs a strong leader to take it back from the rich and powerful (up 1 point)
- 62% feel that local experts don’t understand the lives of people like them (up 2 points)
- 49% say that, to fix it, their country needs a strong leader willing to break the rules (unchanged)

Nativist views are all commonplace:

- 60% say employers should prioritize hiring people of their country over immigrants when jobs are scarce (up 4 points)
- 60% *disagree* their country would be better off if it let in all immigrants who wanted to come there (up 1 point)
- 43% agree that immigrants take important social services away from their country’s “real” nationals (up 4 points)



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A Broken System

In every single country except for Sweden, a majority agree that their economy is rigged in favor of the rich and powerful. More than 70% do so across Latin America, Eastern Europe (except Poland) and Southern Europe. Since December 2018, this opinion has increased by 11 percentage points in each of Sweden, Japan and Argentina – all of which have seen consumer confidence recede over the past year. However, it has receded in several countries: most of all in Israel, where the survey was conducted days before the April 2019 elections (by 15 points) and, to a lesser extent, in Hungary and Serbia (by 5 points each) and in Mexico and the United States (by 3 points each).

Only one in ten adults surveyed across the world disagree that traditional parties and politicians don't care about people like them (11%). Since 2016, the perception of not being cared for by traditional parties and politicians has become a lot more prevalent in South Africa (up 13 points), Great Britain (up 11), as well as in Japan and Argentina (both up 9), and Sweden (up 8). On the other hand, it has receded in Israel (down 8), Serbia and Italy (both down 5).

In the meantime, the feeling that “society is broken” has slightly receded between 2016 and 2019 (by 4 points). Agreement has dropped by sharply in South Korea (down 29), Italy (down 19) and Mexico (down 15) – three countries that experienced political change during that time – and, to a lesser extent, in Belgium (down 13), Spain (down 9), Serbia (down 9), Turkey (down 7), Israel (down 7), France (down 6) and the U.S. (down 6). Only Canada shows a double-digit increase in agreement (by 15 points), but notable gains are also seen in India (up 8), Peru (up 8), Great Britain (up 7) and Poland (up 5).

Populism

Globally, the share of adults who agree their country needs a strong leader to take it back from the rich and powerful has remained nearly unchanged between 2016 and 2019 (up 1 point to 64%). Germany, Sweden and Japan continue to be the only countries surveyed where agreement is below 50%. However, Sweden is where it has increased the most (by 10 points), followed by South Africa and India (both by 9 points). Countries where agreement has decreased the most are: Italy (down 8 points), Israel (down 6) and South Korea (down 6). The U.S. shows a slight drop (down 3).

At 49%, the proportion of adults surveyed who agree that fixing their country requires a strong leader willing to break the rules has not changed since December 2016. The prevalence of this opinion varies widely across countries with no clear regional pattern emerging. It has increased most in Sweden (up 13 points), Belgium (up 11), South Africa (up 9), Argentina (up 8), and India (up 7). In contrast, it has dropped most in Serbia (down 13), Israel (down 11), Hungary (down 7), Italy (down 6), and the U.S (down 5).



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The opinion that “experts don’t understand the lives of people like me” is shared by majority of people in nearly every country. The perception that intellectual elites are estranged from people’s reality is most prevalent in Spanish-speaking countries and in France. Since 2016, it has grown by 2 points globally, reflecting greater increases in Germany (up 11), Japan (up 10), Sweden (up 9), Great Britain (up 8), Argentina (up 8) and South Africa (up 7). Israel (down 13) is the only country showing a drop of more than 5 points.

Nativism

Across the 27 countries surveyed, the proportion of adults who agree that employers should prioritize natives over immigrants when jobs are scarce has increased by 4 points since 2016 and is now 60%. With few exceptions, the level of agreement is above the global average across Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia and below average in Western Europe and North America. Countries where this nativist opinion has become a lot more prevalent over the past few years include: Sweden (up 17 points), Japan (up 15), Mexico (up 14) and, to a lesser extent, Poland (up 8), South Korea (up 6), Canada (up 5) and Belgium (up 5). Italy (down 7) is the only country where this sentiment has lost ground by more than 4 points.

The view that immigrants take important social services from real nationals is held by only 43% of all adults surveyed globally, but this represents an increase of 4 percentage points since 2016. Only three countries record a level of agreement of more than 50%: Turkey, Malaysia and Serbia. At the end of the spectrum, only a quarter of adults in Japan (25%) and in Poland (26%) agree. Five countries record double-digit gains in agreement (most of them having experienced an influx of refugees): Mexico (up 25), Peru (up 23), Serbia (up 17), Sweden (up 13) and Brazil (up 10). Agreement is also up in Germany (up 8), as well as in Japan (up 8), Poland (up 7) and Canada (up 6). Only Hungary (down 10) and Israel (down 9) show drops in agreement of more than five points. Agreement in the U.S. is down 4 points.

Only 15% of adults globally agree that their country “would be better off if we let in all immigrants who wanted to come here”. This proportion has barely changed between 2016 and 2019 (up just 1 point) and no country records an increase or a drop of more than 5 points. An outright majority of adults in 24 of the 27 countries surveyed disagree with this opinion.



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About the Study

These are the findings of a survey conducted in 27 countries via Global Advisor, the online survey platform of Ipsos, between March 22 and April 5, 2019.

For this survey, Ipsos interviews a total of 18,528 adults aged:

- 16-74 in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, and Sweden;
- 18-74 in Canada, Israel, South Africa, Turkey, and the United States of America;
- 19-74 in South Korea

The sample consists of 1,000+ individuals in each of Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the U.S., and of 500+ individuals in each of the other countries surveyed.

The data is weighted so each country's sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of its adult population according to the most recent census data, and to give each country an equal weight in the total "global" sample.

Online surveys can be taken as representative of the general working-age population in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. Online samples in other countries surveyed are more urban, more educated and/or more affluent than the general population and the results should be viewed as reflecting the views of a more "connected" population.

Sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error. The precision of online surveys conducted on Global Advisor is measured using a Bayesian Credibility Interval. Here, the poll has a credibility interval of +/-3.5 percentage points for countries where the sample is 1,000+ and +/- 4.8 points for countries where the sample is 500+. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please go to https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/2017-03/IpsosPA_CredibilityIntervals.pdf.

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About Ipsos

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Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

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