

# invent

EUROPEAN INVENTORY  
OF CULTURAL VALUES



## **POLICY BRIEF 3** **AUGUST 2023**



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## INVENT Policy brief 3 - Digitalization and Culture

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## 1. Introduction

Omnipresent digital media, information, and communication technologies have deeply influenced cultural production, distribution, and participation in recent decades. Taking its point of departure in the [INVENT project's](#) overall objectives, the INVENT team has primarily focused on cultural participation – by studying how European citizens from various social groups perceive and understand changes influenced by the introduction of information technologies into all spheres of life, in particular, the transformation of cultural participation in a time of digital media.

The INVENT project applies a bottom-up – or people-centred – approach to the study of digital cultural transformations. The core of the project's WP5: Culture is digital/boundless is, first, to explore how digital media have changed people's access to, consumption of, and participation in culture and, second, to explore how Europeans express themselves online about culture and thus how digital media have reshaped and extended Europeans' communication about culture.

This policy brief presents some key findings of the INVENT project about the digitalization of culture. We respectively zoom in on Europeans' engagement in various types of digital cultural participation, the cultural conversations and forms of advocacy unfolding on social media platforms, and issues of media use, cultural backlash, and institutional trust. We conclude by listing some recommended readings that can inform cultural policies in the context of digital transformations.

## 2. Mapping and enhancing digital cultural participation in Europe

### Introduction

Digital technology has revolutionized how people access, consume, and create arts and culture across Europe. To comprehensively understand digital cultural participation and its predictors, INVENT conducted a study encompassing nine European countries. This summary report provides insights and recommendations to policymakers, cultural institutions, and stakeholders on promoting and facilitating digital cultural participation in Europe. By addressing barriers, leveraging affordances, and fostering inclusivity, we can further democratize and diversify cultural engagement in the digital realm.

The INVENT team analysed engagement in digital cultural activities using original survey data collected among representative samples of the population in Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. More than 14,000 European residents participated in the survey. The primary objective was to enhance our comprehension of the factors that influence participation, both in terms of attitudes and socio-demographics. We also aimed to identify potential social and cultural factors that facilitate or hinder digital cultural engagement.

Departing from the existing literature (e.g., Casemajor et al., 2021; Mihelj et al., 2019), we sought to delve deeper into the concept of digital cultural participation. Previous research has primarily focused on single digital cultural activities and data from individual countries. The INVENT team aimed to provide more comprehensive insights across a broader spectrum of digital culture, transcending specific national contexts.

Therefore, our study encompassed nine European countries, from the North to the South, East to the West, and mitigated the narrow focus of past research by investigating European's involvement in a diverse range of digital cultural activities. These activities span a spectrum from highbrow to popular to everyday forms of participation. We also considered different modes of participation - including receptive, communicative, and creative ones - and considered activities requiring varying levels of effort and digital skills.

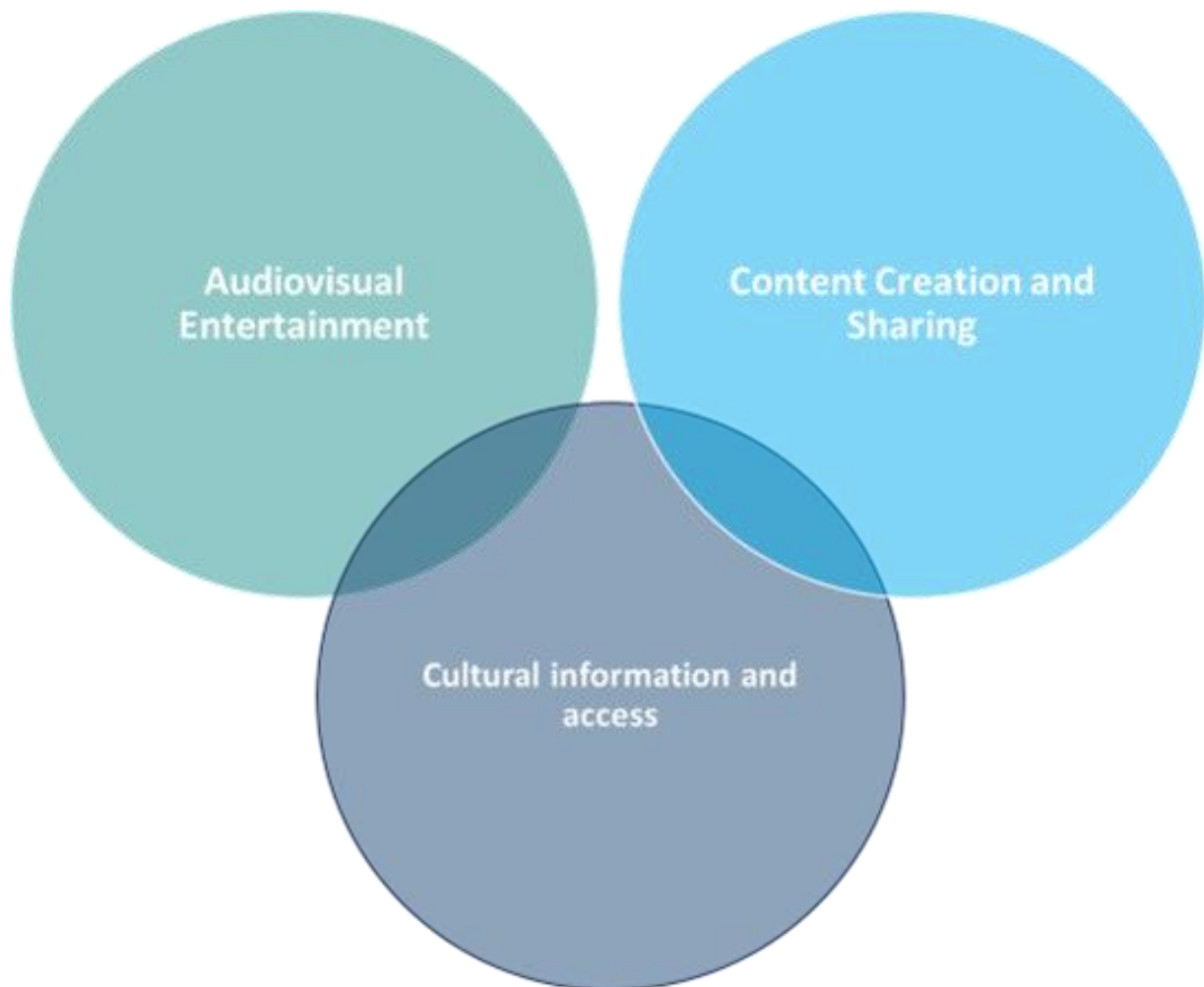
### Democratizing and diversifying cultural participation

Our findings underscore the significance of examining diverse forms of digital cultural participation, ranging from highbrow to entertainment-based activities. The data corroborates that the Internet has allowed citizens to access a wide array of cultural content, supporting the democratization of culture. However, we also found that certain forms of digital cultural participation, such as cultural content creation and sharing beyond photographs, are far less common than often assumed. This finding suggests that there is potential for policymakers to promote initiatives encouraging citizens to participate in digital content creation and sharing, fostering a culture of digital creativity that may support well-being.

### Recognizing the dimensional structure of digital cultural participation

Through exploratory factor analysis, we identified three distinct components of digital cultural participation: (a) Audiovisual Entertainment, (b) Content Creation and Sharing, and (c) Cultural Information and Access. Our subsequent analysis showed that these three dimensions of digital cultural participation are associated with distinct socio-demographic, attitudinal, and behavioural

profiles, thus highlighting the importance of differentiating between them in developing policies and programs and avoiding using digital cultural participation as a container term.



### **Addressing sociodemographic disparities**

As expected, age emerged as a significant determinant of digital cultural participation, with younger people engaging more frequently. This suggests that policy programs and campaigns targeting older age groups to bridge the digital age gap in cultural engagement would be beneficial. Moreover, gender and education were relevant predictors for some dimensions of digital cultural participation, pointing to the need for targeted interventions to ensure inclusivity and equality. Lastly, while digital platforms can potentially reduce the urban-rural divide in cultural engagement, our study indicates this divide persists (cf. Mihelj et al., 2019), most pronouncedly in the two South-Eastern European countries in our study. Closing this gap calls for investment in digital infrastructure and skills training in rural areas in these countries to improve access to digital cultural offerings.

## Impact of barriers

Our survey also asked about potential barriers to digital cultural engagement which exhibited diverse effects for the three dimensions of participation we identified. Respondents perceiving cultural activities as costly were likelier to engage in online audiovisual entertainment and share self-generated content. Time constraints hindered the use of digital platforms for audiovisual entertainment and cultural information access, while content creation and sharing remained unaffected. Lower self-reported digital skills reduced internet use for audiovisual entertainment and information access but correlated positively with self-created content sharing. Distrust in social media negatively impacted all participation forms, paralleling internet scepticism. Interestingly, the latter demonstrated a small positive link with self-produced content sharing, suggesting content sharers may depend on online social networks while maintaining overall digital scepticism.

## Policy implications and recommendations

Recommendations to address barriers and cultivate a more equitable digital cultural landscape:

- **Affordable access:** Cultural institutions and digital platforms should explore methodologies to render their offerings financially accessible. Initiatives such as discounted digital memberships, subsidized ticketing, and free cultural content can alleviate the financial barrier to engagement.
- **Digital skill development:** Digital literacy programs can address the adverse implications of low self-reported digital skills on participation. Collaborations involving educational institutions, community centres, and cultural organizations can provide training, empowering individuals to navigate digital platforms confidently and interact with cultural content.
- **Building trust and overcoming scepticism:** Prioritizing transparent practices, safeguarding data privacy, and offering high-quality content can mitigate the adverse effects of distrust in social media and internet scepticism on participation. Fostering trust among users is pivotal. Encouraging virtual communities centred around shared cultural interests can help surmount scepticism and promote active involvement and a sense of belonging.
- **Facilitate content creation:** Cultural organizations can harness the positive correlation between lower digital skills and sharing of self-generated content by designing user-friendly digital tools that streamline content creation. Workshops, tutorials, and collaborative initiatives can motivate a more comprehensive array of individuals to contribute and disseminate their views and creative expressions.
- **Tailored engagement strategies:** The diverse impacts of barriers on distinct digital participation formats call for targeted approaches to aptly reach and resonate with specific demographic groups.



### Leveraging social-cultural affordances

Our findings also demonstrated that social and cultural openness are essential drivers of digital cultural participation. High interest in connecting with others with shared cultural interests strongly predicts all types of digital cultural activity. Additionally, respondents interested in other cultures, foreign products, and diverse others more frequently used the Internet for audiovisual entertainment, cultural information, and accessing cultural offerings. We note that these positive effects persisted as statistically significant even after accounting for other pertinent sociodemographic variables affecting digital participation, such as age and education.

Considering the importance of cultural curiosity and social connection as motivators for digital cultural engagement, policies could prioritize initiatives contributing to a digital environment that encourages cross-cultural understanding and exploring diverse cultural content. Additionally, our results point to the potential of platforms and events facilitating social interactions among culturally diverse groups, building online communities for individuals with shared cultural interests, and supporting audio-visual content that features cultural diversity to enhance digital engagement and inclusivity.

### Relation between offline and online digital cultural participation

We observed a robust positive correlation between individuals' offline engagement in popular cultural pursuits and all three categories of digital cultural involvement. Offline engagement in traditional highbrow activities proved positively connected with the frequency of sharing self-generated cultural content and, especially, with accessing cultural information and performances, concerts, and museums through digital platforms, but not with participation in digital audiovisual entertainment. These findings suggest that digital cultural engagement complements rather than replaces offline cultural participation and that traditional highbrow pursuits do not attract a different, new audience in the digital sphere. These findings hold significant policy implications for promoting a holistic cultural engagement approach that intertwines offline and digital participation.

#### Policy implications and recommendations

- **Balanced programming:** Acknowledging that offline cultural activities may not inherently attract a distinct online audience, a balanced programming approach is needed that accommodates both offline and digital cultural activities to meet diverse preferences and engagement patterns. Efforts to enhance the digital experience should **respect the uniqueness of offline experiences**. Digital offerings can complement and improve offline experiences rather than replace them. Cultural institutions should receive support to develop initiatives that integrate traditional activities like attending performances or visiting museums with their digital counterparts. A **synergistic approach** that **integrates offline and digital cultural engagement** caters to diverse audience preferences and offers a comprehensive and enriched cultural experience.
- **Enhancing information access:** Recognizing the positive correlation between offline classical cultural participation and the use of the Internet for cultural information and access, cultural organizations can collaborate with digital platforms to provide accessible and comprehensive cultural information, fostering **deeper participant engagement**.
- **Targeted promotion of self-created content:** Given the connection between offline cultural participation and digital content creation and sharing, policies should support initiatives that encourage individuals to create and share their cultural content online. Workshops, contests, and

digital tools can empower participants to contribute to the digital cultural landscape, enriching the overall cultural discourse and experience.

- **Collaborative initiatives:** Cultural institutions, digital platforms, and relevant stakeholders should collaborate to create seamless transitions between offline and digital cultural engagement and maximize the benefits of both realms.

### Understanding country-level variations

We observed noteworthy differences in the frequency of diverse types of digital cultural participation across countries. Some of these discrepancies correlated with variations in cultural policy models, levels of public investment in culture, digital media landscapes, digital readiness levels, and socio-economic prosperity and inequality levels (Rius-Ulldemolins et al., 2019; Peruško et al., 2015). These country-specific factors need to be kept in mind when crafting policies to promote digital cultural participation. Collaboration between European countries to share best practices and foster cross-cultural exchanges can be beneficial.

Nonetheless, our analyses also indicated that individual-level characteristics play a more significant role in determining the extent of engagement in digital cultural activities than country-level attributes. In this context, one should keep in mind that our study encompassed a limited number of European countries that - despite notable distinctions – share many similarities when considered on a broader global scale. The primary differentiation we found in citizens' engagement in digital cultural participation is between the South-Eastern countries – Croatia and, especially, Serbia, on the one hand, and the Western-European and Nordic countries on the other.

### Future research

Due to the cross-sectionality of our data, we need to interpret causal relationships between predictors cautiously. Longitudinal research is required to better understand these relationships over time. Further research should also consider a more extensive range of countries to validate and expand upon our findings. Such broader perspectives will provide a more comprehensive understanding of digital cultural participation, transcending the confines of the European context.

### Conclusion

Enhancing digital cultural participation in Europe requires a multifaceted approach that addresses sociodemographic disparities and barriers, leverages digital affordances, and considers country-specific variations. By fostering a digital culture of creativity, promoting inclusivity, and bridging the urban-rural divide policymakers and cultural institutions can propel Europe toward a future of democratized and diversified cultural engagement in the digital age.

More insights on digitalization and culture can be found in our report on [Digitalization and Culture](#), our [blog](#), the INVENTORY, and several forthcoming journal articles and book chapters. Make sure to follow INVENT's [website](#) and social media accounts to receive our publication alerts.



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## 3 Online cultural conversations and advocacy

### Introduction

In the past three years, the INVENT team conducted extensive research on the multifaceted landscape of digital cultural participation, which often manifests as dynamic cultural conversations in the digital realm. Our primary interest was to delve into how Europeans articulate their viewpoints, interests, and concerns about culture online. Digital techniques like data scraping and API search were used to examine the cultural conversations unfolding on various social media platforms. Our approach encompassed two main avenues of investigation, each contributing distinctive insights.

### Mapping conversations about culture through digital methods

In the initial phase, we mapped the cultural landscape on Twitter, an arena we colloquially refer to as the 'Twittersphere.' Our inquiry involved identifying prevalent themes associated with the keyword 'culture' in Twitter discussions during two significant periods: the pre-Covid19 year 2019 and the pandemic-impacted year 2020.

Using topic modelling analysis, we identified eight thematic clusters across the nine INVENT partner countries, transcending the confines of art, leisure, and creativity, constituting "culture as arts." Additionally, these discussions extended to encompass fundamental aspects of human existence such as politics, inequality, and economics—a portrayal of "culture as a way of life." Our investigation also brought to light distinctive country-specific topics, like conversations on "MeToo" (in Denmark) or "Health" (in the UK), rooted in the unique contexts of each country.

Interestingly, our findings underscored the dynamic involvement of diverse participants in cultural dialogues on Twitter. While media entities, cultural organizations, journalists, and artists formed the more active contributors, a rich tapestry of users from varied backgrounds engaged in these cultural discussions. This diverse engagement highlighted the significance of employing a bottom-up analytical approach using social media data such as Twitter.<sup>1</sup>

### E-petitions as a lens for cultural engagement

In tandem with our exploration of Twitter posts and dialogues, we undertook an in-depth analysis of e-petitions, viewing them as a lens through which to examine an example of grassroots digital cultural participation. We gathered information from public Facebook posts referencing the term "petition." We then refined our dataset by applying culture-related keywords from prior data collection endeavours, allowing us to uncover the prevalence and nature of e-petitioning across countries.

From our data e-petitioning emerged as a significant form of civil engagement across all examined nations, albeit to varying degrees. Notably, countries adopted distinct approaches. In several countries, non-profit and commercial e-petition platforms hosted a broad spectrum of topics and petitioners, while in other countries governments maintained official e-petitioning platforms. E-petitioning, we discovered, operates as a conduit for more than just influencing policy decisions. It serves as a channel for expressing dissatisfaction, forming communities around shared concerns, and drawing attention to pressing issues. Our analysis also hinted at the potential of online petitions to initiate public conversations and heighten awareness about cultural matters, even without necessitating legal changes.

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<sup>1</sup> In July 2023, Twitter was rebranded as X.



The culmination of our analysis provides a panoramic view of the diverse and broad cultural discourse occurring through digital petitions. We pinpointed seven prominent themes resonating across cultures: children and education, social equality and human rights, social inequality and divisions, national and international disparities, climate change and sustainability, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the realm of popular culture. While these thematic concerns are shared across nations, the strategies proposed by citizens to address them exhibit distinct variations. The diversity inherent in these cultural themes validates the necessity of adopting an expansive conceptualization of culture that accommodates a broad spectrum of expressions and interests, at the intersection of the cultural and the political.

## Conclusion

Our studies of online conversations about culture underscore the value of such vernacular and bottom-up conversations as a critical resource for policymakers seeking insights into the evolving cultural interests, concerns, and sentiments among specific segments of society. The research insights can inform the formulation of policies that are inclusive and responsive to citizens' cultural concerns and aspirations. Fostering an environment where online cultural discussions are valued and effectively harnessed can lead to a more engaged, informed, and culturally enriched citizenry.

## Policy implications and recommendations

- **Recognizing bottom-up cultural engagement:** Acknowledging the intrinsic value of online cultural discussions is crucial. Encouraging different forms of bottom-up digital engagement can contribute to a more inclusive dialogue representing the entire spectrum of perspectives.
- **Leveraging insights for informed policies:** Incorporating insights from digital cultural conversations can contribute to more inclusive policy-making processes. By examining data from social media platforms, e.g. Twitter (now X), Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, or Instagram, policymakers can better understand prevalent cultural concerns, issues, and aspirations. This information can be crucial for designing culturally relevant and responsive policies and initiatives.
- **Promoting digital cultural literacy:** Investing in programs and initiatives that foster digital cultural literacy among citizens is essential. This involves educating individuals about the potential impact of their online cultural conversations and data traces and empowering them to participate in meaningful, constructive dialogues that positively contribute to the cultural landscape.
- **Strengthening e-petitioning platforms:** Enhancing the functionality and accessibility of digital platforms for online petitioning is recommended. Governments should explore options for unified e-petitioning platforms that encourage citizens to voice their opinions on cultural matters and feel confident that their voices are heard.
- **Facilitating public awareness and engagement:** Online petitions can serve as catalysts for raising public awareness and stimulating conversations about cultural issues. While most petitions do not lead to legal changes, they can foster constructive discussions and encourage societal engagement.
- **Data ethics and privacy considerations:** Incorporating ethical considerations and prioritizing user privacy when employing data scraping and analysis methods is paramount. Digital media research should strike a balance between extracting valuable insights and respecting individuals' rights and privacy.



- **Continuous research and adaptation:** Maintaining a commitment to ongoing research and analysis of digital cultural conversations is recommended. This approach allows policymakers to remain attuned to evolving trends, emerging cultural concerns, and shifts in online engagement.

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**INVENT reports and publications**

The INVENT team published three extensive, collaborative reports on its explorations of cultural conversations and advocacy in the digital realm. More insights on the topic can be found in our report on [Digitalization and Culture](#) and several forthcoming journal articles and book chapters. Make sure to follow INVENT’s [website](#) and social media accounts to receive our publication alerts.



## 4. Institutional trust, cultural backlash, and media use

Trust in political and societal institutions is a crucial foundation for well-functioning, open democratic societies. However, institutional trust seems to be declining – a trend linked to developments in the political realm and the media field.<sup>2</sup> According to some scholars, political polarisation and the rise of right-wing populism have led to a "cultural backlash" against progressive-liberal values and even democratic principles (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). At the same time, the diversification and digitalization of the media have led to new types of media use. Notably, digital media use has proved to be associated with lower institutional trust (Mari et al., 2021; Verboord, 2023).

The INVENT team examined how critical cultural backlash and the media diversification perspective are may explain institutional trust (Verboord, Janssen, Kristensen, & Marquart., 2023). Using the INVENT survey data, we analysed how institutional trust – consisting of trust in political institutions, the media, and science – is associated with various aspects of cultural backlash and different types of media use in nine European countries.



The results show that various dimensions of cultural backlash matter in explaining institutional trust. Trust is partly influenced by the perceived performance of institutions and partly by individuals' socio-cultural values (independent of institutional performance). Media use has a more limited influence. While using public television is positively associated with trust, social media and video platforms have a negative effect on trust. Using printed press and domestic digital news sites also had a positive but weaker relationship with trust. While we find distinctions across institutions, there is huge consistency across countries.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/news/news-articles/trust-in-institutions-continues-to-fall-in-eu-despite-declining-unemployment-and-phasing-out-of>



## Key findings

Citizens with more progressive-liberal values and less extreme opinions tend to trust institutions more. Conversely, citizens with more pessimistic views about how their society functions and has developed in the past ten years tend to have lower institutional trust.

The extent to which citizens trust the national government predominantly depends on their perceptions of its performance. In contrast, trust in the European Union (EU) and the field of science is primarily shaped by socio-cultural values.

Considering the impact of media use, we found that media consumption has a limited effect on institutional trust. However, it is crucial to differentiate between various types of media. Public broadcasters continue to play a significant role in fostering trust. Other traditional media show no clear relationship (commercial broadcasters) or a moderate positive relationship (printed press) with trust.

In the digital media landscape, we find a clear distinction between digital news websites, on the one hand, and social media and video platforms, on the other. Citizens relying primarily on digital news sites for information tend to be quite trustful of institutions, whereas institutional trust is much lower among people who mainly use social media and video platforms to keep themselves informed.

## Policy implications and recommendations

### *Socio-cultural policy and crisis communication*

- *Addressing cultural backlash and polarization:* Given the significant impact of cultural backlash on institutional trust, it is vital to address cultural polarization and its underlying causes. Promoting inclusive dialogue, fostering social cohesion, and countering divisive rhetoric are essential steps to reduce the adverse effects of cultural backlash on trust in institutions.
- *Addressing sociocultural and political stances:* Policymakers could consider designing initiatives that independently address sociocultural and political viewpoints. Recognizing that negative evaluations of society and political party support are distinct components of cultural backlash, efforts to engage citizens in constructive discussions about these issues can help mitigate their negative impact on trust.
- *Promotion of progressive-liberal values:* Our findings point to the importance of developing ways to promote progressive-liberal values, as they are associated with higher levels of trust. Policies that support diversity, inclusivity, and open dialogue can contribute to cultivating an environment that encourages trust in institutions.
- *Responsive communication during crises:* While we find that the Covid-19 pandemic did not drastically impact trust levels, maintaining transparent and responsive government communication is crucial, especially during times of crisis. Consistent, evidence-based messaging can help preserve trust in science and institutions.



### Media policy

- *Media literacy and responsible media consumption:* Recognizing the differential impact of media sources on trust, enhancing media literacy and responsible media consumption is crucial. Developing educational programs that teach critical thinking and evaluation of information from various sources can help citizens make informed decisions and reduce the influence of negative media portrayals on trust levels.
- *Support for public service broadcasting:* Given the positive role of public service television in fostering trust, it is crucial to provide adequate support to maintain and enhance the quality of public service broadcasting as cross platforms. Ensuring that these platforms provide balanced and reliable information is crucial for promoting institutional trust.

### Policy research

- *Long-term monitoring and research:* Continuously monitoring trust levels, media consumption patterns, and societal attitudes is needed to capture institutional trust dynamics comprehensively. Regular surveys and research can inform targeted interventions and policy adjustments to maintain and strengthen trust (cf. OECD 2022).
- *International cooperation:* Collaboration with other European countries to share best practices and insights on building institutional trust is key. Comparative studies across countries with similar socio-economic characteristics can provide valuable lessons for effective strategies.
- *Multi-dimensional data collection:* Enhancing data collection methodologies by incorporating multi-item trust measures and diverse sociocultural indicators can provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing trust and guide targeted policy interventions.
- *Longitudinal research:* Conducting longitudinal studies that explore the reciprocal relationship between trust, media use, and perceptions of change can facilitate the understanding how trust impacts media consumption and vice versa and inform more effective strategies for improving institutional trust.
- *Cross-country analysis:* We suggest expanding the scope of research to include a broader range of countries and exploring country-specific variables. Comparing trust levels and media consumption patterns across diverse nations can reveal contextual insights that inform tailored policy approaches.

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## 5. Digitalization and cultural policy: Recommended readings

**Wright, D. (2022). How culture became digital:** Editor's introduction. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 28(7), 777–785. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2022.2137160>

This special issue in the *International Journal of Cultural Policy* focuses on the digitalization of culture. The nine articles present different perspectives, country and platform examples, and historical developments of “how culture became digital”. Policymaking is at the centre of these analyses, which show how cultural policy has constantly been adapting (in many instances slowly and lagging behind technological developments) to changes in society and cultural institutions, often driven by commercial interest.

The issue provides an overview of central topics at the intersection of digitalization and cultural policy at a point in time when Ministries are in the process of adding ‘digital’ as one of their main areas. As Wright summarises, “Together they can contribute to an important conversation about the relations between ‘culture’ and ‘the digital’ that goes beyond whether such technologies are somehow inherently good, bad, essential, or damaging for social and cultural life but acknowledges the stakes at play in this relationship for the varied organisations, institutions, and actors that make up the cultural sector and for the societies of which they are a part.” (p. 783).

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**Valtýsson, B. (2020). Digital cultural politics: From policy to practice.** Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-35234-9>

This book by Icelandic researcher Bjarki Valtýsson is one of the first works providing an introduction and overview of the many ways cultural policy has been undergoing changes prompted by technological development. The author departs from macro, meso, and micro level analyses, from the infrastructural and regulatory perspectives to institutional and user perspectives, and exemplifies them through several case studies.

The author describes "Digital Cultural Politics" as "a broad term meant to cover what, traditionally, is referred to as cultural policy, media policy, and communication policy, how these converge and which effects this has on archival, institutional and user politics" (p. 7).

Valtýsson shows how contemporary cultural policy has been converging and must do so even more in the future, for instance, regarding media and communication policy, to grasp the complexities of the influence that tech companies have on culture.

Many examples in this book involve cases in the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom, countries with strong public broadcasting and cultural policy traditions. Internationally, one can learn from these "front runners" and understand the many difficulties the digital transformation entails for cultural policy.

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**Mihelj, S., Leguina, A., & Downey, J. (2019). Culture is digital: Cultural participation, diversity, and the digital divide.** *New Media & Society*, 21(7), 1465–1485. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818822816>



This research critically examines the claims and hopes set forth by cultural policy agendas, commercial tech companies, and techno-optimistic voices in public discourse that directly connect the use of digital media to increased cultural participation. Mihelj, Leguina, and Downey critically analyse British cultural participation statistics. While they confirm that digital media provide an important means for cultural institutions to engage new audiences, they also show that this engagement remains deeply unequal both online and offline. Although digital media and access to culture via digital means have been imagined to solve unequal access to culture and thus received support from political agendas, the numbers point towards an even broader participation gap, reproducing existing inequalities.

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**Verboord M., Janssen, S., Kristensen, N., Marquart F. (2023). Institutional trust and media use in times of cultural backlash: A cross-national study in nine European countries.** *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. Online first July 21, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612231187568>

The paper contributes to the study of institutional trust by connecting to “cultural backlash” theory and analyzing more recent forms of news consumption. The authors examine how “cultural backlash” and media use in nine European countries shape trust in politics, media, and science. As part of a large European research project, we employ representative survey data collected in 2021 in Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The results suggest that both exogenous (or “cultural”) and endogenous (or “institutional”) dimensions of cultural backlash matter in explaining institutional trust. Trust benefits from progressive–liberal values and less ideological extremism but is hindered by discontentment with societal developments and political disengagement. Using public television is positively, and social media is negatively associated with trust. While we find distinctions across institutions, there is huge consistency across countries.

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**Hepp, A. (2022). Agency, social relations, and order: Media sociology’s shift into the digital.** *Communications*, 47(3), 470–493. <https://doi.org/10.1515/commun-2020-0079>

In this article, Hepp establishes the theoretical grounds for how media sociology can keep up with the ongoing transformations brought about by digitalization. This technological development in societies demands a rehaul of theoretical frameworks and concepts, which can help understand and research a highly complex, deeply mediatized world in which all human practices, social relations, and social order are entangled with digital media and their infrastructures. This paper signifies a significant shift and step forward from theories and frameworks shaped by mass media logics. Through this ongoing digitalization in terms of digital media and infrastructures, Hepp focuses on three affected areas: agency, social relations, and rediscovering social order.

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**Lindgren, S. (2017). *Digital media & society*. SAGE.**

This book provides an overview of the changes and transformations through which digital media and digitalization have shaped societies. It is an academic textbook but recommended for any reader interested in understanding interdisciplinary research on those transformations. With chapters dedicated to, i.e. Digital Citizenship, Digital Power and Exploitation, Digital Activism, Mobile Culture, Software, and Algorithms and Data, Lindgren’s work covers a wide range of relevant areas that define digitalization. The author finally introduces a framework and theory of digital media and social change. Its primary focus lies on “digitally transformative” outcomes of digital media use, which are central to



understanding the actual changes in the fabric of society, as compared to mere enhancements. These transformative outcomes “happen when social actions and practices that are carried out rely so much on digitally specific affordances that they would not be possible without them” (p. 295).

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**van Dijk, J. (2019). *The digital divide*. Polity.**

In increasingly digital societies, new and reinforced inequalities emerge that exclude and disadvantage part of our societies, determined by access to the internet and technologies, engagement with digital media, and the skills to navigate the plethora of digital devices, platforms, and services. Scholarship has been exploring these “new” forms of inequalities since the mid-1990s, and with new developments in theory and research, this description of the digital divide illustrates this change. Van Dijk addresses the relational character of digitalization and societal developments and shows that digital inequality reinforces traditional inequalities.

This book serves as a theoretical and conceptual framework and empirical proof for “the digital divide”, which shapes and restricts how citizens can participate in contemporary and future societies. Though the main focus is on the digital divide more generally, not on culture specifically, this work is an indispensable resource to scholars, students, and policymakers, as it considers the state of digital inequality and, importantly, argues how to tackle it.

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**Kristensen, N., Janssen, S., Eva Myrczik, Verboord, M. (2022). *Digitalization and culture. Impacts, practices, perceptions in nine European countries*. INVENT Report D5.3 submitted to the EU (47 pages).**

<https://inventculture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/INVENT-REPORT-DigitalizationandCulture.pdf>

This report, representing deliverable D5.3 of the H2020-funded INVENT project, provides a preliminary overview of how the project has studied the influence of digitalization on culture in a broad sense, applying an audience or people-centred approach. The report opens with a brief discussion of key theoretical concepts and meta-processes such as digitalization, mediatization, and datafication (of culture); (digital) media use; digital cultural participation; and the role of digitalization in connection to the other trends studied in the project – changing notions of culture, globalisation, and rising social inequalities.

Second follows a part on some of the innovative digital methods applied in the project, both digitized and digital-born methods, as the question of digitalization and digital technologies is essential not only to the research topics and focus areas of the project but also to how INVENT has methodologically approached these topics.

Third, the report presents some of the preliminary empirical findings of the project so far linked to digitalization of culture, including descriptive results from a nationally representative survey collected in 2021 in the nine INVENT partner countries, probing issues of, among other topics, digital cultural participation and the digital transformation; findings from two (of three) consecutive phases of data scraping of social media content about cultural issues; and spotlights from the ongoing interview data collection on Europeans’ perceptions of cultural changes in their lives related to digitalization in the Danish, Finnish, French, Serbian, and UK contexts.

The analyses show, among other things, that Europeans engage in a wide variety of digital cultural practices, but many activities are done by a limited number of people. The most common activity is

communicating or sharing things with friends and family – this has become a structural feature of everyday life in Europe. Several are more niche activities for separate, specific groups. Overall, Europeans seem more positive than negative about the impact of the internet in everyday life. For many, it is not easy to live without the internet nowadays – the internet has made it easier to keep in touch with others, access online entertainment, find information about arts and culture, buy (cultural) products, and make cultural connections. However, there is still a substantial group who have difficulties coping with the digital society, and such digital divides in the cultural domain seem to be socially stratified. Finally, when Europeans express themselves online about the culture, they communicate about and engage in both narrower defined types of culture and broader types of culture connecting to societal values and issues such as well-being and inequalities.

The concluding section summarises key preliminary findings, reflects on the methodological and comparative issues, and points to the upcoming tasks related to WP5 and the digitalization of culture.





## 6. Project Identity

PROJECT NAME	European inventory of societal values of culture as a basis for inclusive cultural policies in the globalizing world (INVENT)
COORDINATOR	Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, The Netherlands,
CONSORTIUM	Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), The Netherlands Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Spain University of Haifa (UoH), Israel, conducting the research in the UK University of Copenhagen (UCPH), Denmark Tampere University (TAU), Finland University of Zurich (UZH), Switzerland Institute of social sciences “Ivo Pilar” (ISSIP), Croatia Centre for Empirical Cultural Studies of South-East Europe (CECS), Serbia Ecole normale supérieure Paris-Saclay (ENS), France.



FUNDING SCHEME	Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020); Societal Challenge 6 – Europe in a changing world: inclusive, innovative and reflective societies; call H2020-SC6-TRANSFORMATIONS-2019; topic TRANSFORMATIONS-08-2019 - The societal value of culture and the impact of cultural policies in Europe
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GRANT AGREEMENT ID	870691
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DURATION	1 February 2020 – 31 July 2023 (42 months)
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BUDGET	EU contribution: € 2 999 875
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WEBSITE	<a href="https://inventculture.eu/">https://inventculture.eu/</a>
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FOR MORE INFORMATION	Contact: Susanne Janssen, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, project leader, <a href="mailto:s.janssen@eshcc.eur.nl">s.janssen@eshcc.eur.nl</a>
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