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# The Optimism Gap

## Personal Complacency versus Societal Pessimism in European Public Opinion

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In previous reports, such as *Fear Not Values: Public Opinion and the Populist Vote in Europe* and *Globalization and the EU: Threat or Opportunity?*, we demonstrated how anxiety due to large-scale societal change is a driver of both polarization and politicization. As we showed in our report *Power of the Past*, these anxieties also make people more susceptible to the political messages propagated by populist and extremist political movements. Political entrepreneurs on the far left and right of the political spectrum skillfully employ nostalgic rhetoric that casts the way forward as a return to the past.

### Project

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