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MIDEM Study

POLARIZATION IN EUROPE

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS BY COUNTRY

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MERCATOR FORUM MIGRATION AND DEMOCRACY

POLARIZATION IN EUROPE

**QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS
BY COUNTRY**



FOREWORD

In 2023, the Mercator Forum Migration and Democracy (MIDEM) published the study *Polarization in Europe. A Comparative Analysis of ten European Countries*, which for the first time takes a detailed look at the so-called issue-based affective polarization on a larger scale. The data is based on an online survey of over 20,000 respondents in 10 European countries (see Source of Data). The focus was on the comparison between countries and issues. However, country-specific findings have received less attention.

In response to a significant demand for country-specific insights, this publication presents detailed findings for each of the ten countries surveyed, using illustrated data. We hope that the analyses of the individual countries presented here will give rise to further studies and interpretations. Any use of the data should be accompanied by appropriate citation. MIDEM remains available for assistance and clarification should there be any queries or further questions.



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THE STUDY

Much has been said in recent years about the widening gap between opinions and political positions in European democracies. The apparent increase in ideological polarization is accompanied by a marked shift in interpersonal dynamics, characterized by intensified emotional reactions. Individuals with opposing views are often met with hostility, while those with similar perspectives receive affirmation and support. In political science, this phenomenon is known as affective polarization. This concept originated in the U.S. party context, where an increasing affective polarization between Democratic and Republican supporters has been observed in recent years. More recently, affective polarization has been applied to multiparty systems and analyzed in European democracies. However, affective polarization is not limited to partisanship or parties. The crises of recent years, such as the migrant crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic, have shown that groups within a democratic society can also grow apart due to disagreements on specific issues.

A total of seven issues that are at the center of political and public debate are examined:

- Immigration
- War in Ukraine
- Pandemics such as COVID-19
- Climate change
- Social benefits and their financing
- Gender equality
- Policy toward sexual minorities

Source of data

The empirical basis for the results presented here is a survey conducted by MIDEM in cooperation with YouGov Germany in 10 European Union countries. Between Sept. 16 and Oct. 12, 2022 (France: Nov. 4 to 15, 2022), a total of 20,449 people aged 18 and over were surveyed. Data were collected in Czechia (n = 2,101), France (n = 2,117), Germany (n = 2,091), Greece (n = 1,587), Hungary (n = 2,069), Italy (n = 2,123), Netherlands (n = 2,095), Poland (n = 2,055), Spain (n = 2,105) and Sweden (n = 2,106). The countries were selected to produce an overall group of respondents that reflected the EU's socio-spatial and political-cultural diversity, while also representing a

significant majority – ultimately just under 80 percent – of its population. The sampling was based on (regional) online access panels. To account for the distribution of population characteristics in the individual countries, quotas were established based on age, gender, region, and education level. A subsequent weighting process was used to compensate for additional distributional differences between the sample and the populations in each country. The results are representative of the population aged 18 and older. In the survey, participants were given a standardized questionnaire that in part used established items from previous surveys. Individual questions were adapted to fit country-specific contexts, and the survey as a whole additionally included newly developed items.

How to calculate affective polarization?

To calculate the affective polarization score for each issue, the total distance between the respondent's evaluations of two antagonistic groups of people were measured (see Antagonistic groups by issue). For example, on the issue of immigration, respondents were asked to rate their affinity toward two groups of people: those who believe "Immigration opportunities for foreigners should be eased" and those who would like to "restrict" such opportunities. Respondents could rate the groups by using a so-called "feeling thermometer" with a scale from "-5 – very cold and negative" to "+5 – very warm and positive." The more the ratings given to these two groups of people differ from each other, the more pronounced this affective polarization. If one group is given a maximum positive rating of +5, while the other is given a maximum negative rating of -5, the difference reaches its highest possible value of 10. On the other hand, if both groups of people are rated equally well or poorly, there is no affective polarization (difference = 0).

In addition, an index of affective polarization that includes all seven issues was introduced (see first figure for each country). To calculate the index for each respondent the affective polarization scores for all seven issues were added together. This accordingly allows for values between 0 and 70. If a person has a value of 0, this person has consistently given identical ratings to the two opposing opinion groups in each of the seven issue areas. However, with a value of 70, a person exhibits the maximum level of affective polarization across all seven issues.

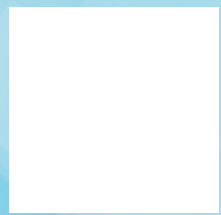
Tab. 1: Positions by issue

Issue	Position 0	Position 10
Immigration	"Immigration opportunities for foreigners should be eased."	"Immigration opportunities for foreigners should be restricted."
War in Ukraine	"[Country] should limit its support for Ukraine in order to avoid negative consequences for our own population (such as rising energy and living costs)."	"[Country] should support Ukraine even if this is associated with negative consequences for our own population (such as rising energy and living costs)."
Pandemics such as COVID-19	"To fight a pandemic like COVID-19, I consider far-reaching encroachments on individual freedom to be necessary."	"To fight a pandemic like COVID-19, I fundamentally oppose encroachments on individual freedom."
Climate change	"Policies to combat climate change still do not go far enough."	"Political measures to combat climate change already go much too far."
Social benefits and their financing	"I am in favor of less taxes and contributions, even if that means fewer social welfare benefits."	"I am in favor of more social welfare benefits, even if that means an increase in taxes and contributions."
Gender equality	"Policies addressing gender equality still do not go far enough."	"Policies addressing gender equality already go much too far."
Policy toward sexual minorities	"To combat discrimination against sexual minorities (such as homosexual or transsexual people), much more must be done."	"Policies to combat discrimination against sexual minorities (such as homosexual or transsexual people) already go much too far."

Tab. 2: Antagonistic groups by issue

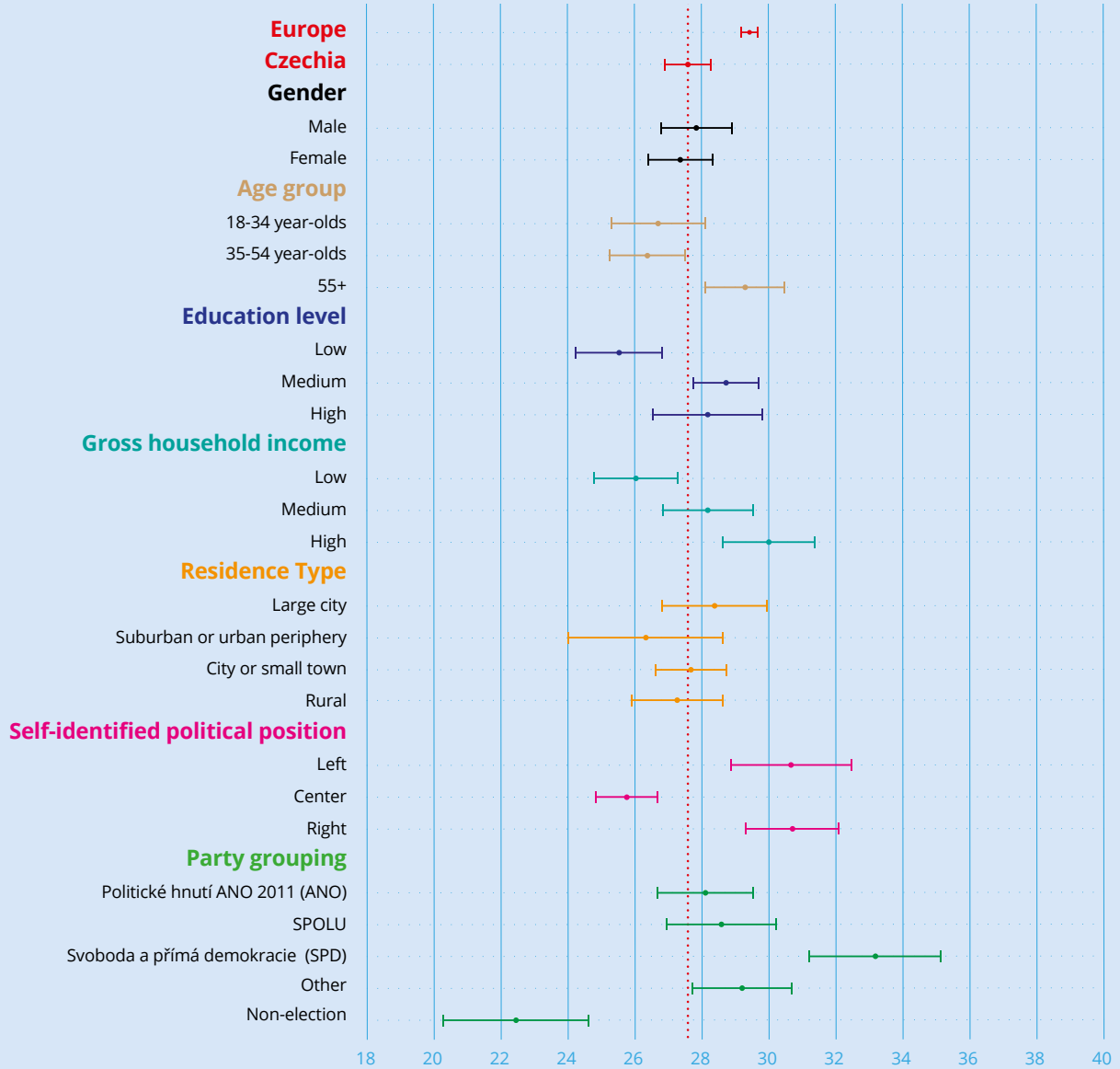
Issue	Group 1	Group 2
Immigration	People who think that immigration opportunities for foreigners should be eased.	People who think that immigration opportunities for foreigners should be restricted.
War in Ukraine	People who think that [country] should support Ukraine even if it means negative consequences (such as rising energy and living costs) for their own country.	People who think that [country] should limit support for Ukraine to avoid negative consequences for their own country (such as rising energy and living costs).
Pandemics such as COVID-19	People who consider far-reaching encroachments on individual freedom to be necessary in order to fight a pandemic such as COVID-19.	People who think that [country] should limit support for Ukraine to avoid negative consequences for their own country (such as rising energy and living costs).
Climate change	People for whom policies to combat climate change still do not go far enough.	People for whom policies to combat climate change already go much too far.
Social benefits and their financing	People who want less taxes and contributions, even if that means less social welfare benefits.	People who want more social welfare benefits even if that means an increase in taxes and contributions.
Gender equality	People for whom policies addressing gender equality still do not go far enough.	People for whom policies addressing gender equality already go much too far.
Policy toward sexual minorities	"To combat discrimination against sexual minorities (such as homosexual or transsexual people), much more must be done."	"Policies to combat discrimination against sexual minorities (such as homosexual or transsexual people) already go much too far."

1



CZECHIA

Fig. 1.1: Polarization index in Czechia by region, sociodemographic features and political characteristics (average scores and confidence intervals)



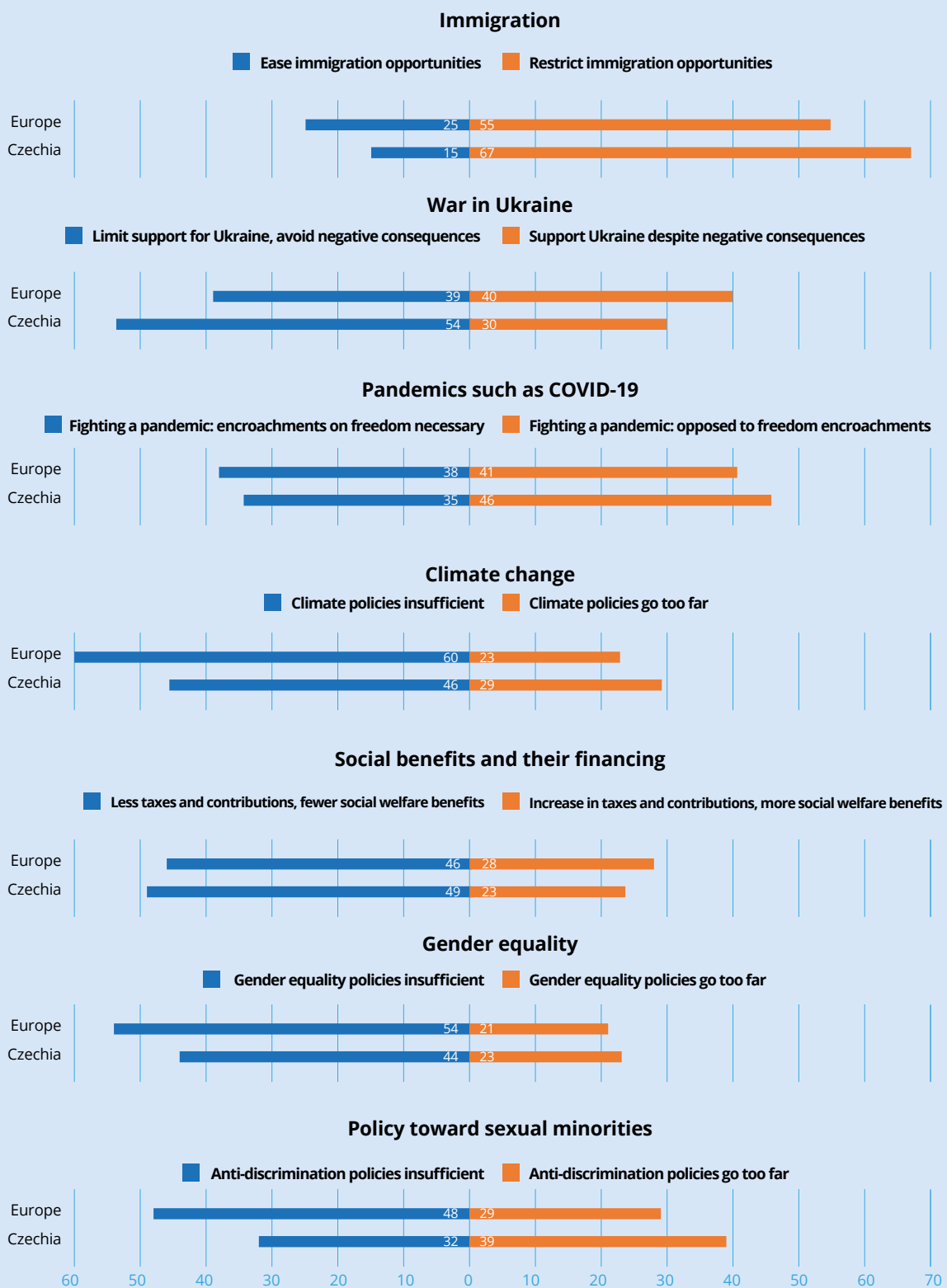
Note: Dots indicate the average group values on the polarization index with associated 95% confidence intervals, within different segments of the Czech population. The higher the value, the stronger the affective polarization.

To calculate affective polarization index values, respondents were asked to express their feelings toward two groups of people with opposing positions as a numerical evaluation. This was done for each of the seven issues. The distances between these two evaluations were calculated for each issue, and in a final step, the seven distance figures were added together. The index can thus take values between 0 and 70. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Czechia}} = 2,101$, except for gross household income and party groupings, where $n =$ at least 1,747. Missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



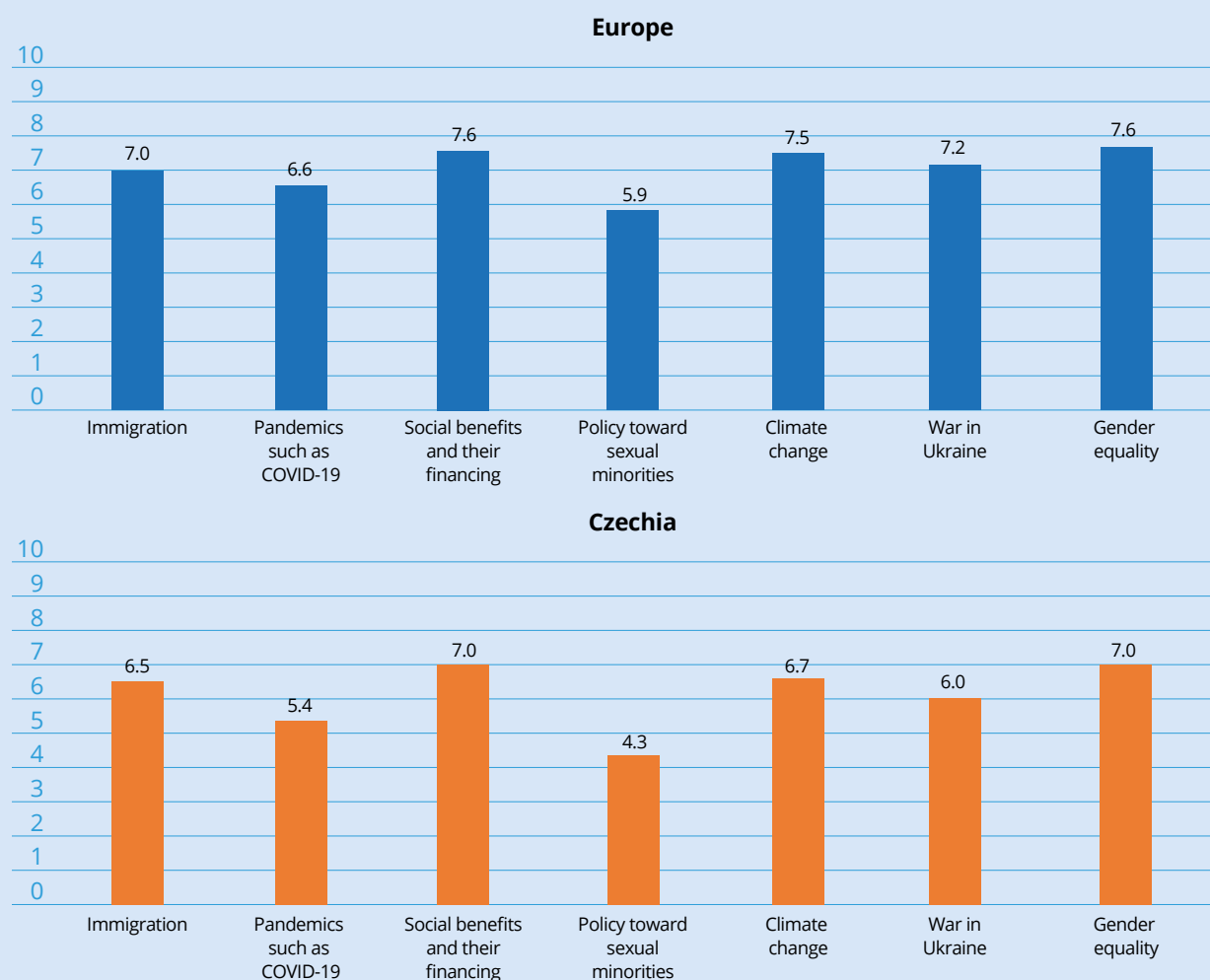
Fig. 1.2: Attitudes toward various topics in Czechia and Europe (%)



Note: Bars in this chart represent the percentages of individuals who lean in one direction for each of the seven different questions, meaning their response to each question fell within the range of either 0 to 4 or 6 to 10. The original wording of the individual positions can be found in Chapter 2. The results have been weighted to account for factors such as age, gender, education and region. The sample sizes are as follows: $n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Czechia}} = 2,101$. Missing values are attributed to those who were undecided (response category 5) or those who provided no response ("don't know" or no response).

Source: Own survey / YouGov

Fig. 1.3: Saliency of various issue areas in Czechia and Europe (average scores)

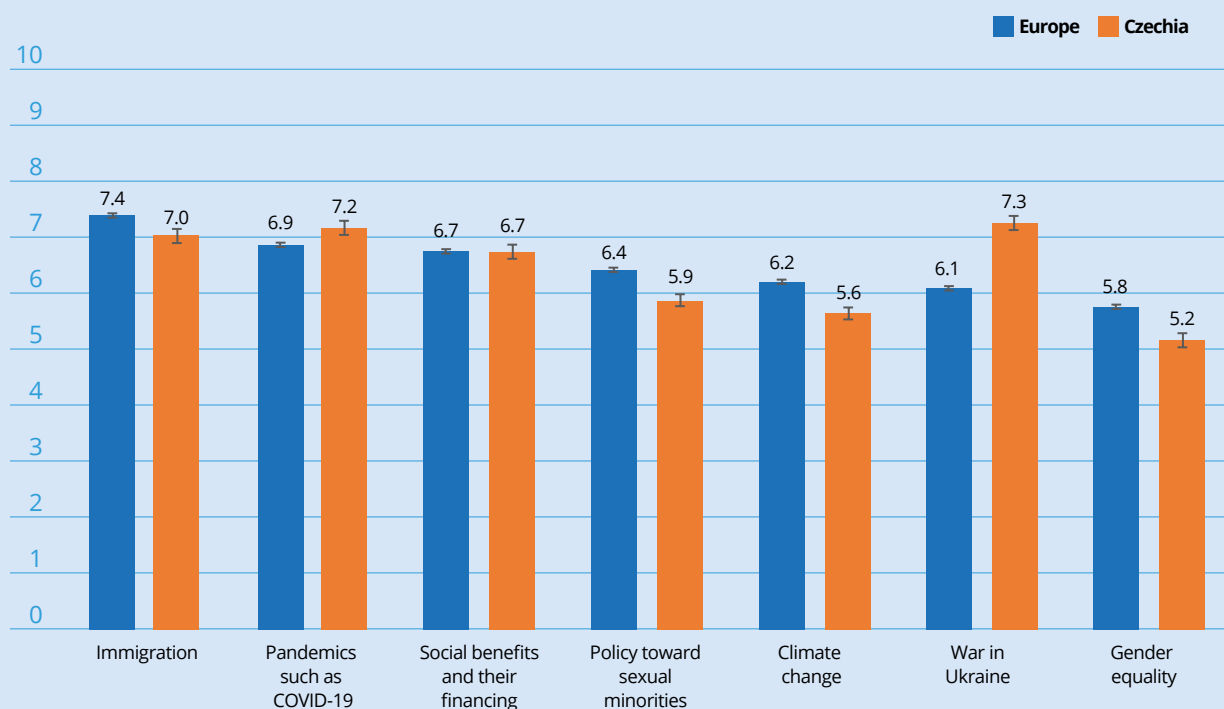


Note: The figures depicted here are average scores. Question: "How important are the following issues to you personally?" Respondents were asked to position themselves between "0 - Not at all important" and "10 - Very important." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Czechia}} = 2,101$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 1.4: Subjective perception of division by topic (average scores and confidence intervals)



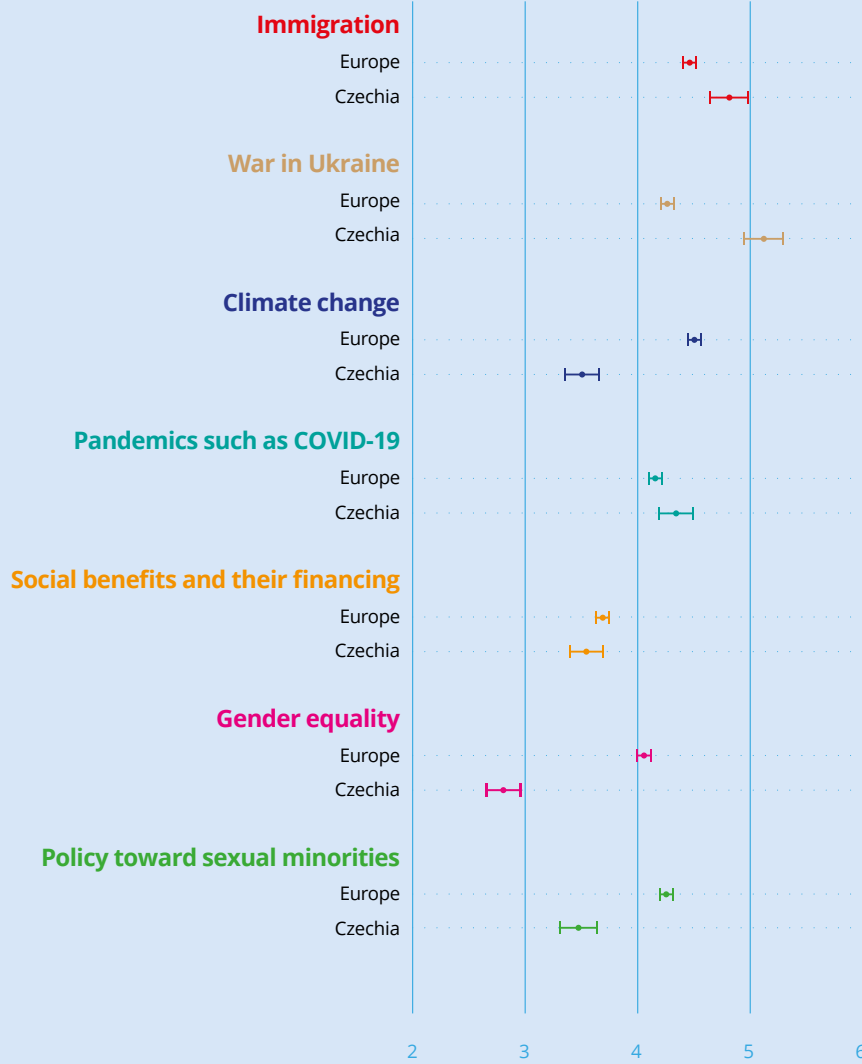
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

Question: "For which of the political issues addressed do you see a division in society? Please rate your answer on a scale from 0 (no division at all) to 10 (very strong division)." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region (n_{Europe} = at least 18,328; n_{Czechia} = at least 1,882; missing values = "don't know" / no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 1.5: Affective polarization by issue (average scores and confidence intervals)

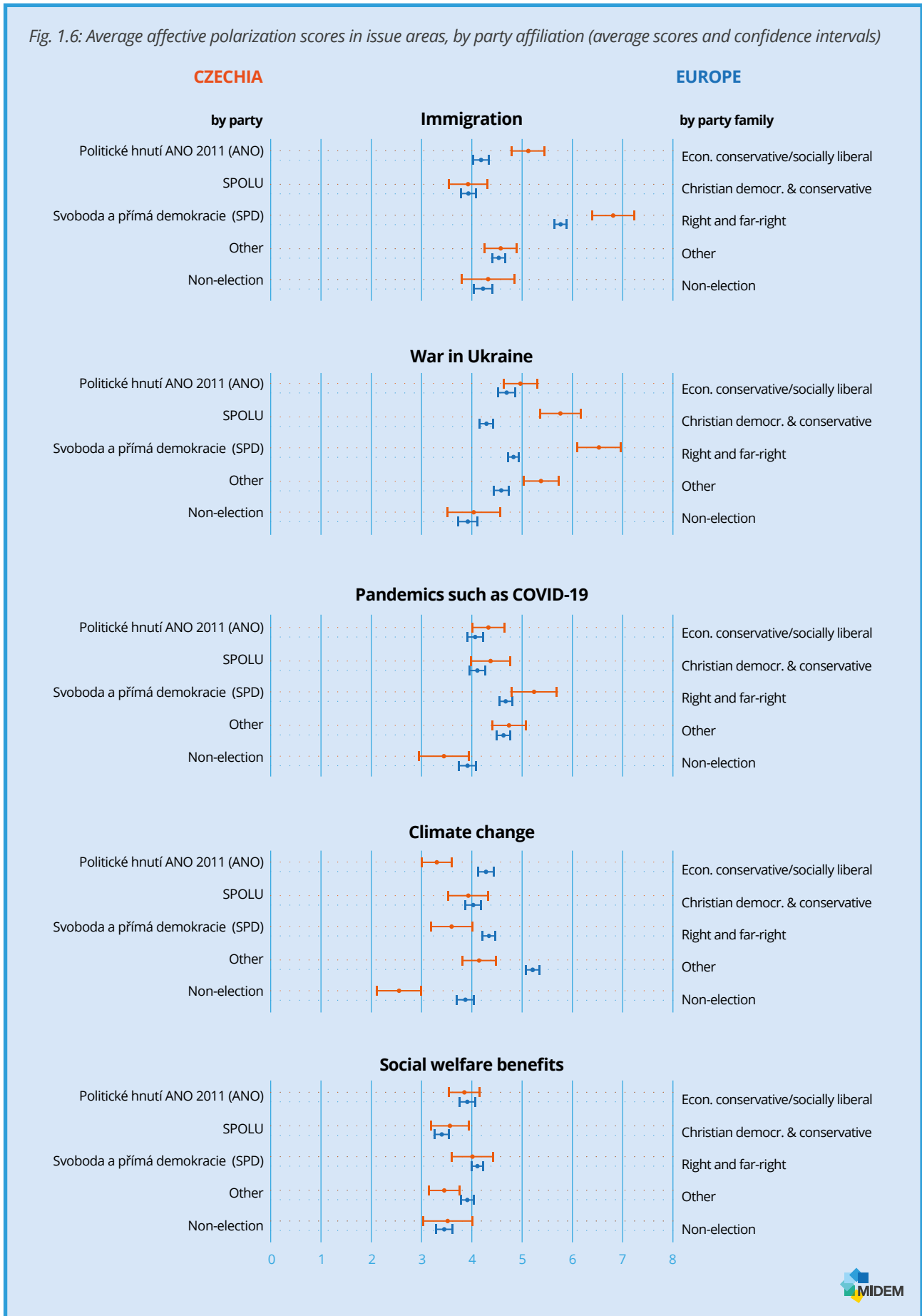


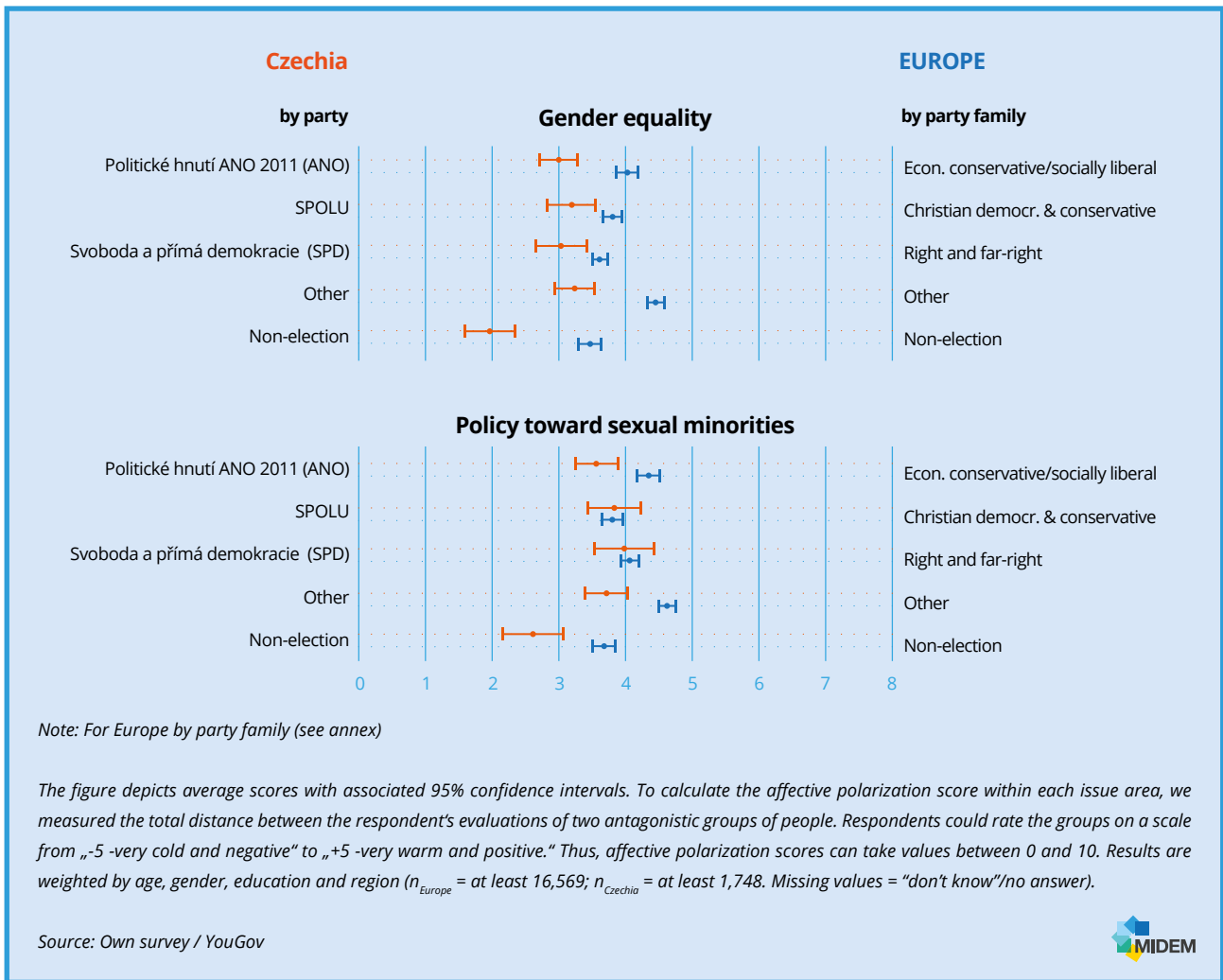
Note: The figure depicts average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals. To calculate the affective polarization score within each issue area, we measured the total distance between the respondent's evaluations of two antagonistic groups of people. Respondents could rate the groups on a scale from "-5 -very cold and negative" to "+5 -very warm and positive." Thus, affective polarization scores can take values between 0 and 10. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Czechia}} = 2,101$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 1.6: Average affective polarization scores in issue areas, by party affiliation (average scores and confidence intervals)

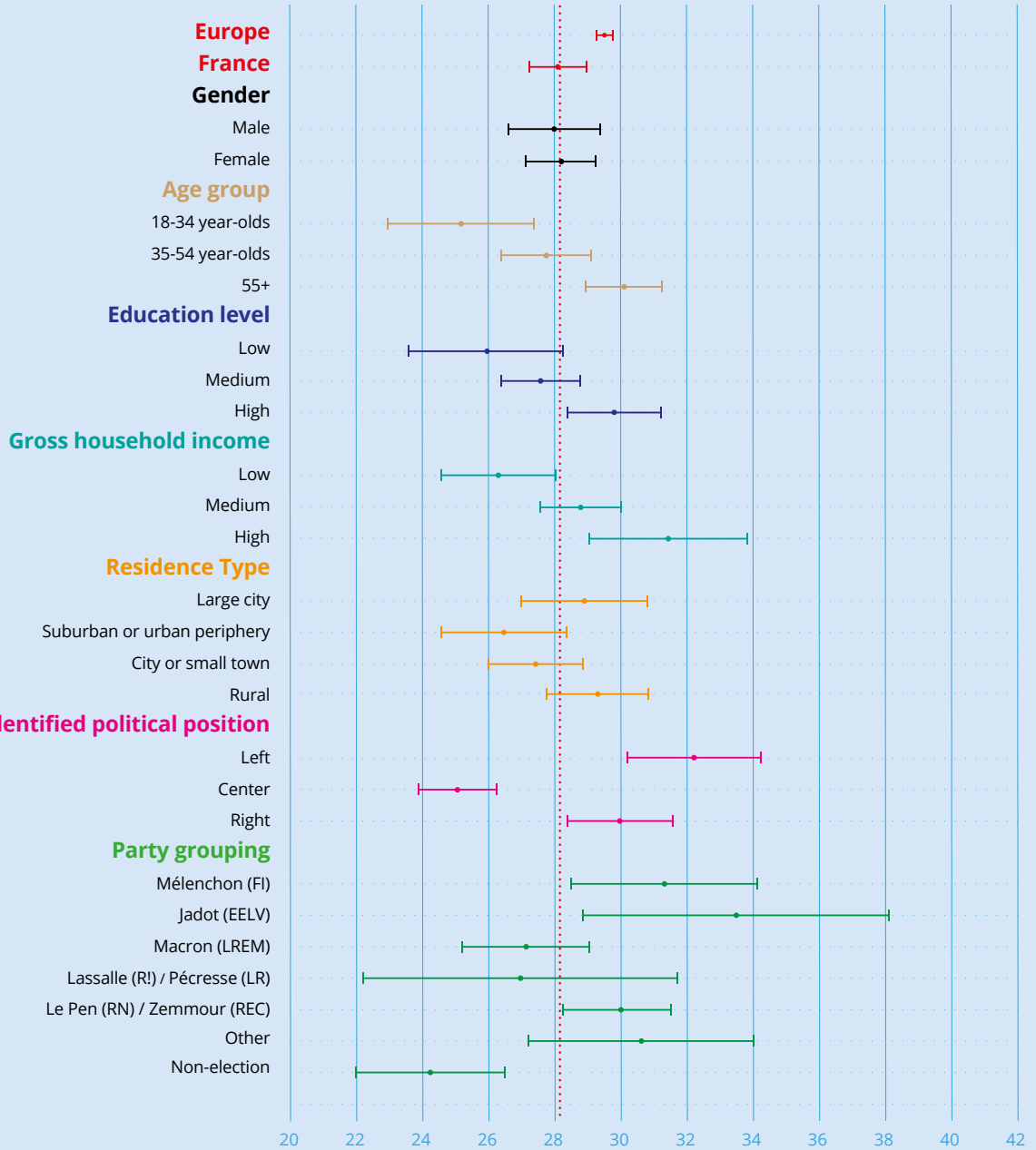






FRANCE

Fig. 2.1: Polarization index in France by region, sociodemographic features and political characteristics (average scores and confidence intervals)



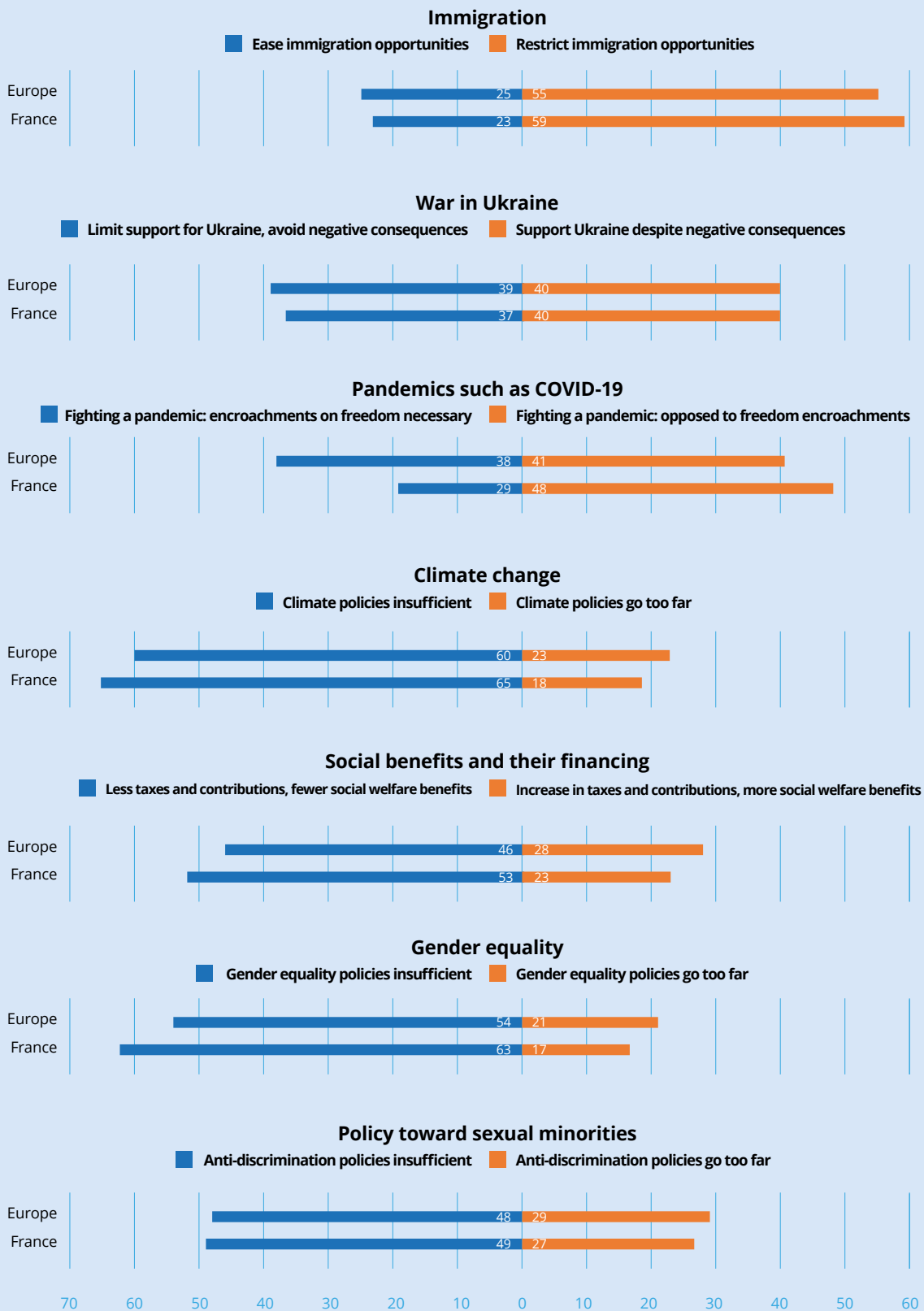
Note: Dots indicate the average group values on the polarization index with associated 95% confidence intervals, within different segments of the France population. The higher the value, the stronger the affective polarization.

To calculate affective polarization index values, respondents were asked to express their feelings toward two groups of people with opposing positions as a numerical evaluation. This was done for each of the seven issues. The distances between these two evaluations were calculated for each issue, and in a final step, the seven distance figures were added together. The index can thus take values between 0 and 70. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{France}} = 2,117$, except for gross household income and party groupings, where $n =$ at least 1,685. Missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 2.2: Attitudes toward various topics in France and Europe (%)

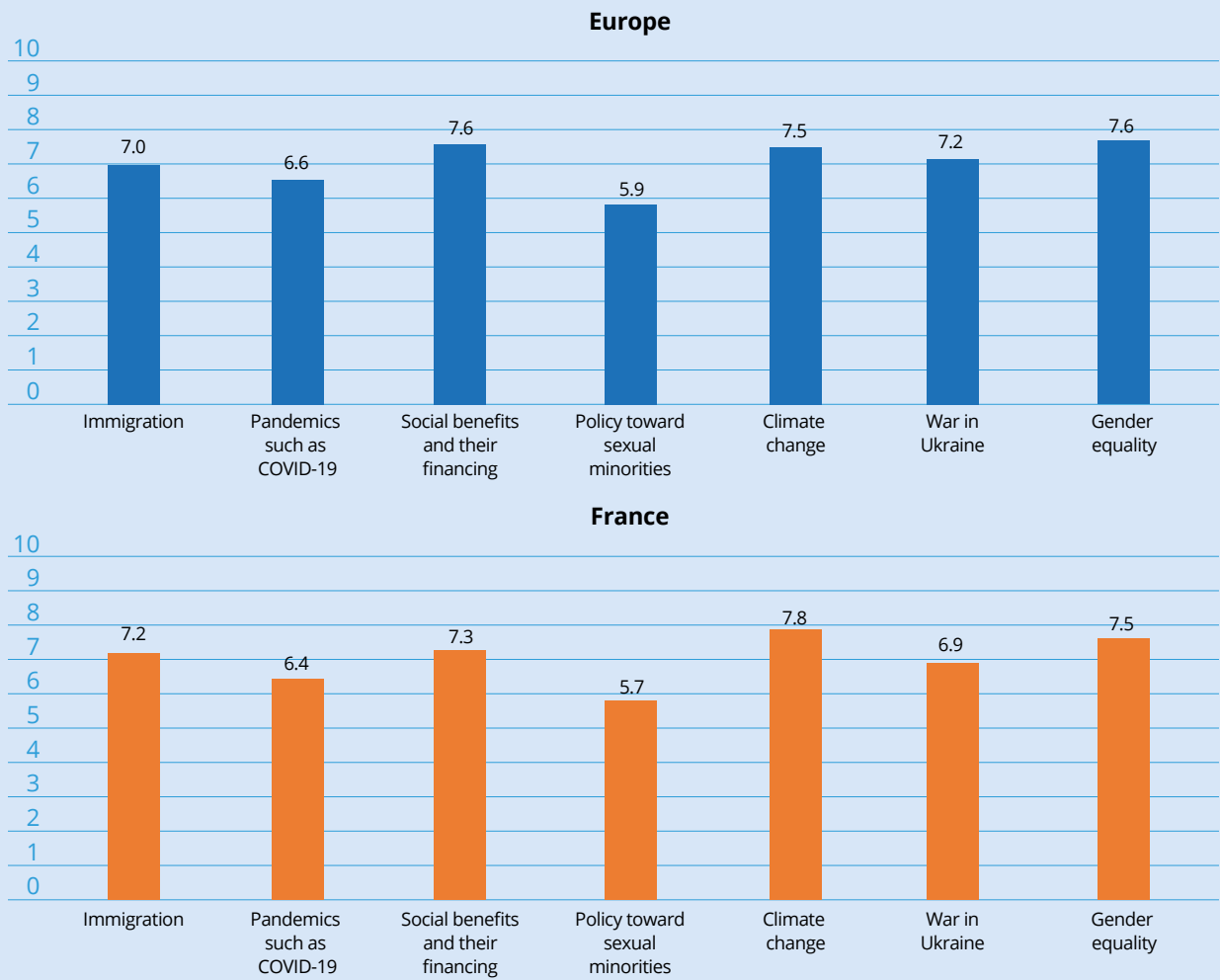


Note: Bars in this chart represent the percentages of individuals who lean in one direction for each of the seven different questions, meaning their response to each question fell within the range of either 0 to 4 or 6 to 10. The original wording of the individual positions can be found in Chapter 2. The results have been weighted to account for factors such as age, gender, education and region. The sample sizes are as follows: $n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{France} = 2,117$. Missing values are attributed to those who were undecided (response category 5) or those who provided no response ("don't know" or no response).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 2.3: Salience of various issue areas in France and Europe (average scores)

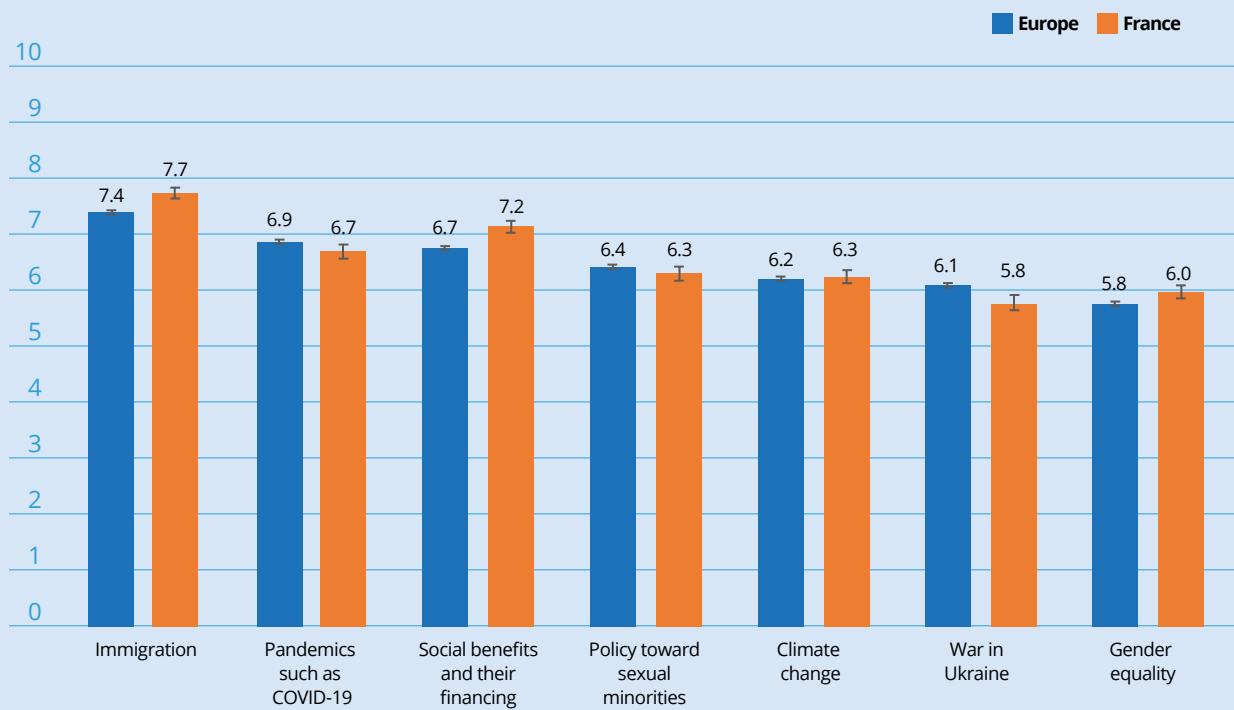


Note: The figures depicted here are average scores. Question: "How important are the following issues to you personally?" Respondents were asked to position themselves between "0 - Not at all important" and "10 - Very important." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{France} = 2,117$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 2.4: Subjective perception of division by topic (average scores and confidence intervals)



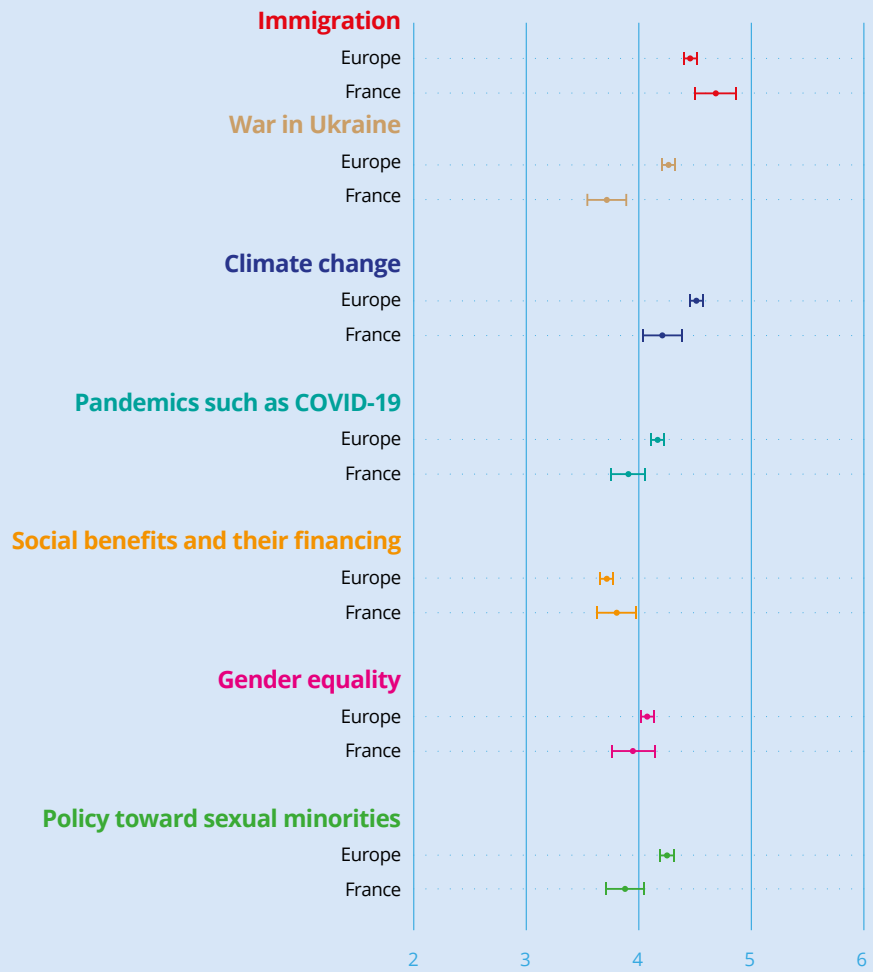
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

Question: "For which of the political issues addressed do you see a division in society? Please rate your answer on a scale from 0 (no division at all) to 10 (very strong division)." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region (n_{Europe} = at least 18,328; n_{France} = at least 1,802; missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 2.5: Affective polarization by issue (average scores and confidence intervals)

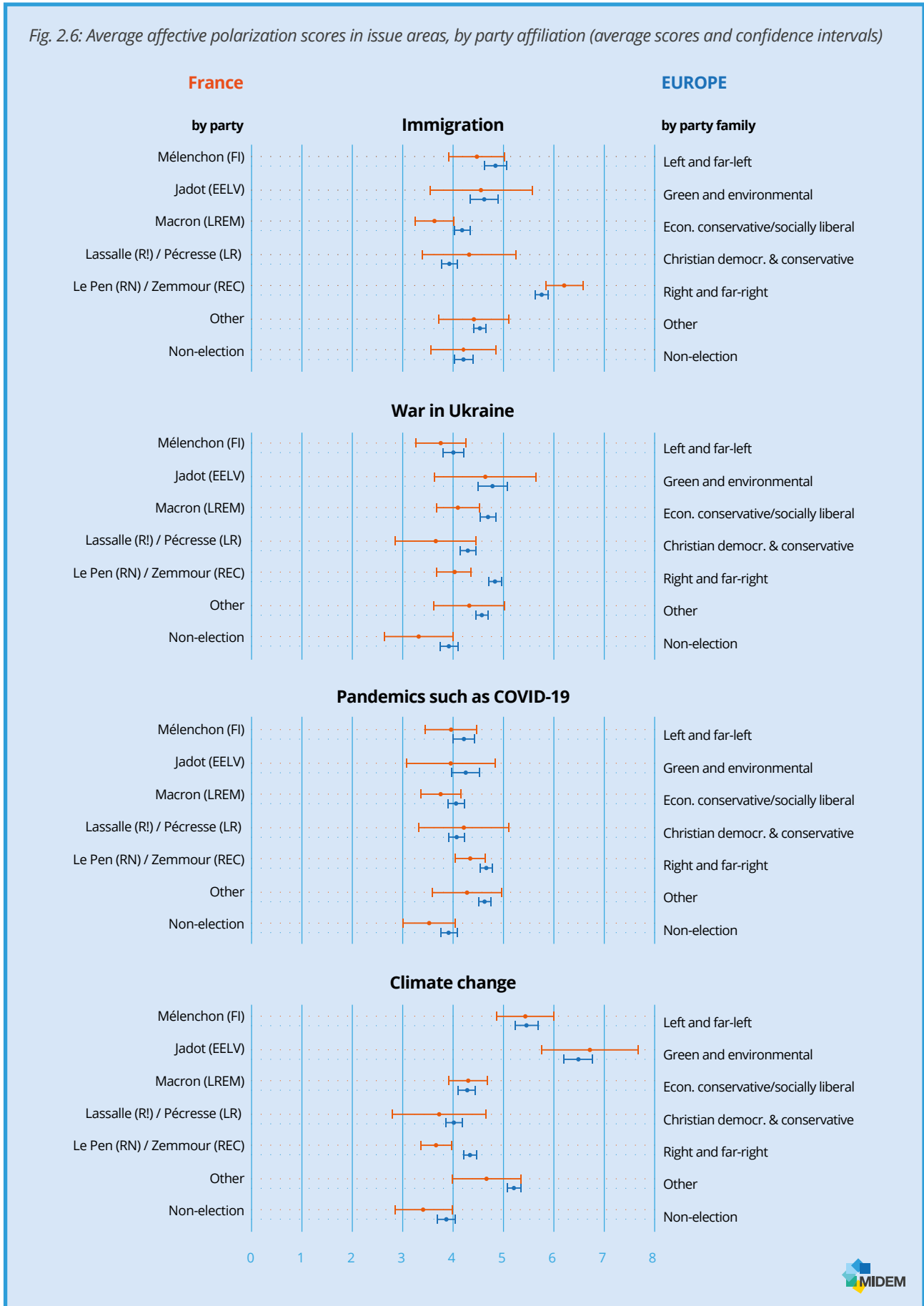


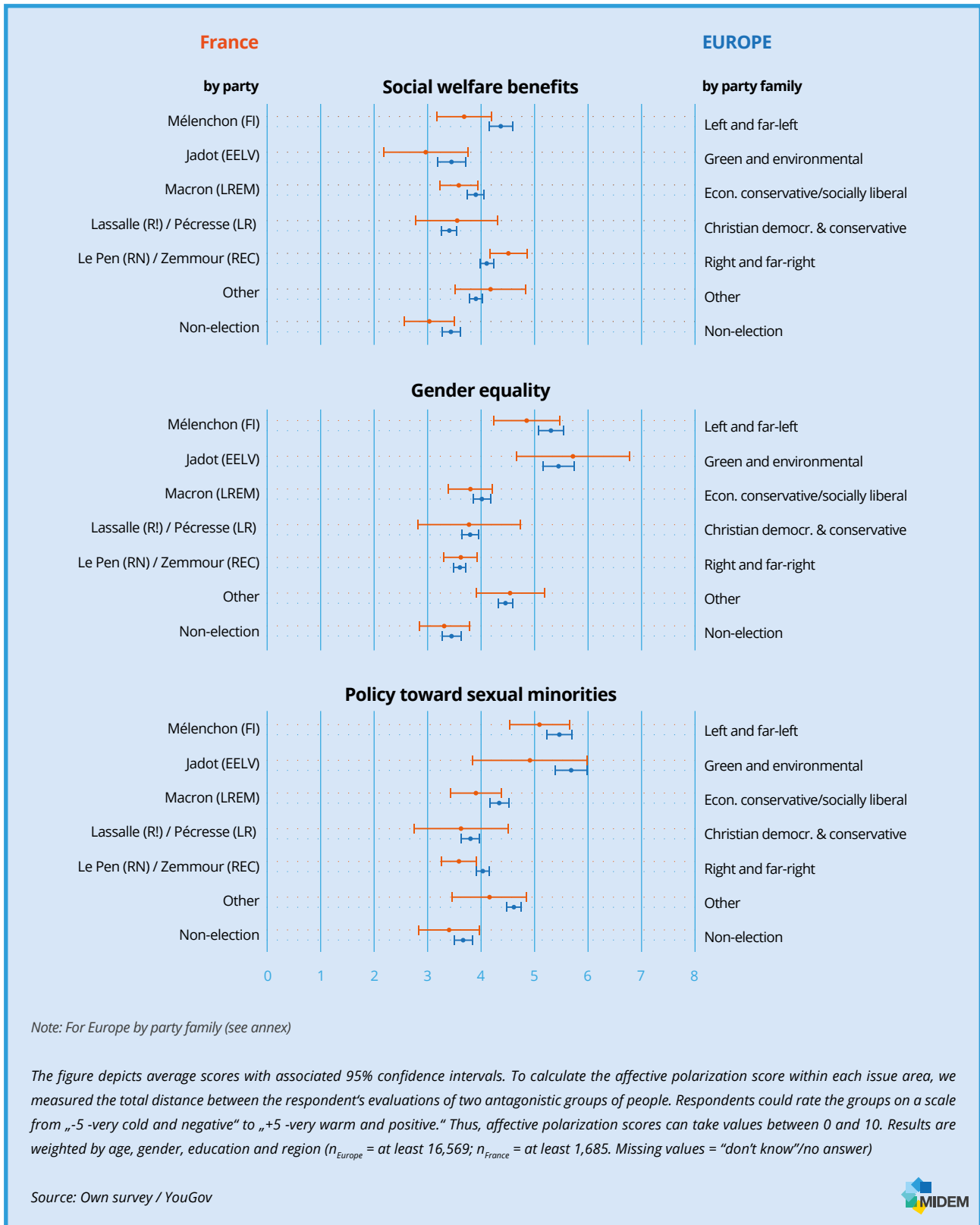
Note: The figure depicts average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals. To calculate the affective polarization score within each issue area, we measured the total distance between the respondent's evaluations of two antagonistic groups of people. Respondents could rate the groups on a scale from "-5 -very cold and negative" to "+5 -very warm and positive." Thus, affective polarization scores can take values between 0 and 10. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{France}} = 2,117$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 2.6: Average affective polarization scores in issue areas, by party affiliation (average scores and confidence intervals)

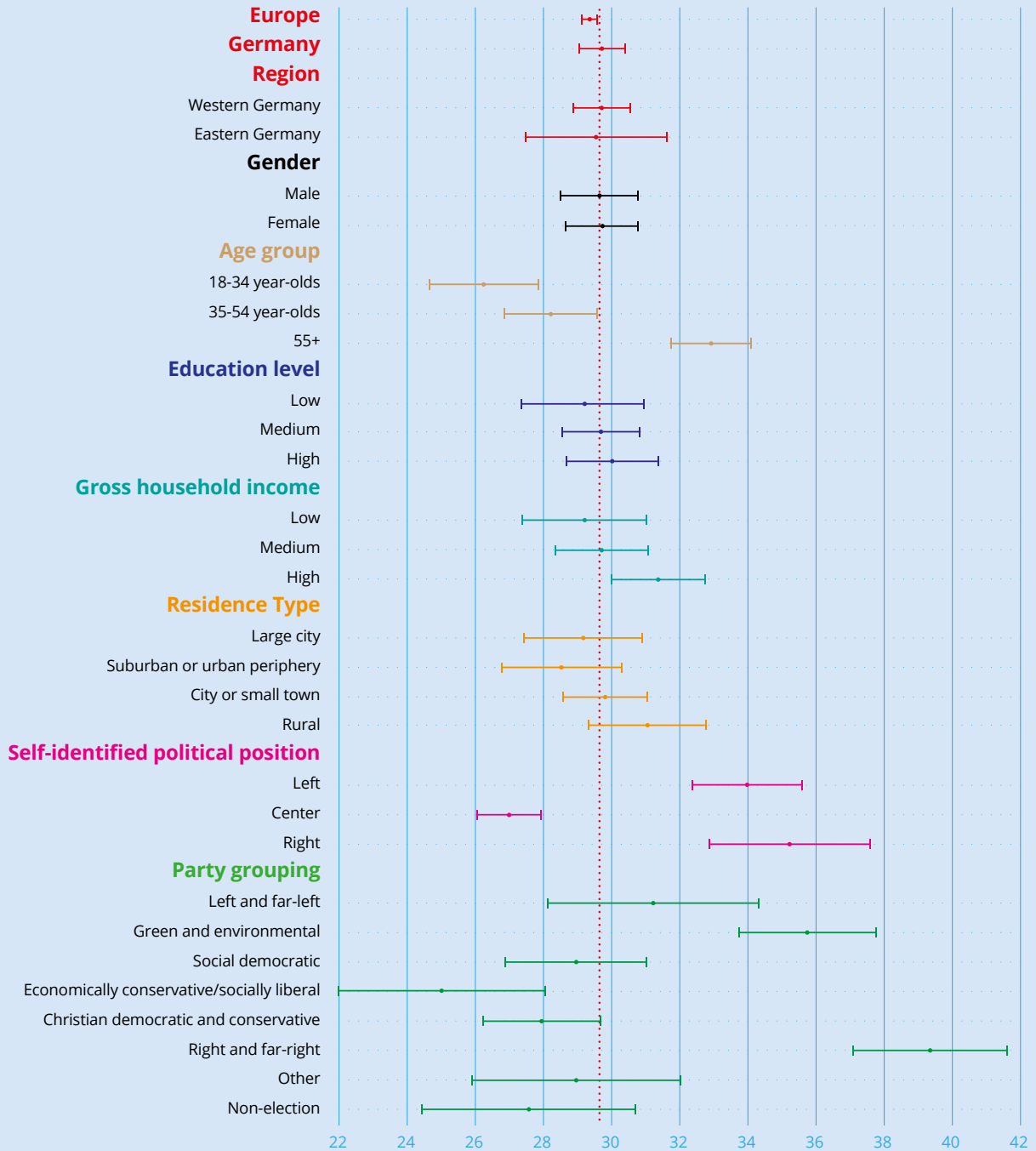






GERMANY

Fig. 3.1: Polarization index in Germany by region, sociodemographic features and political characteristics (average scores and confidence intervals)



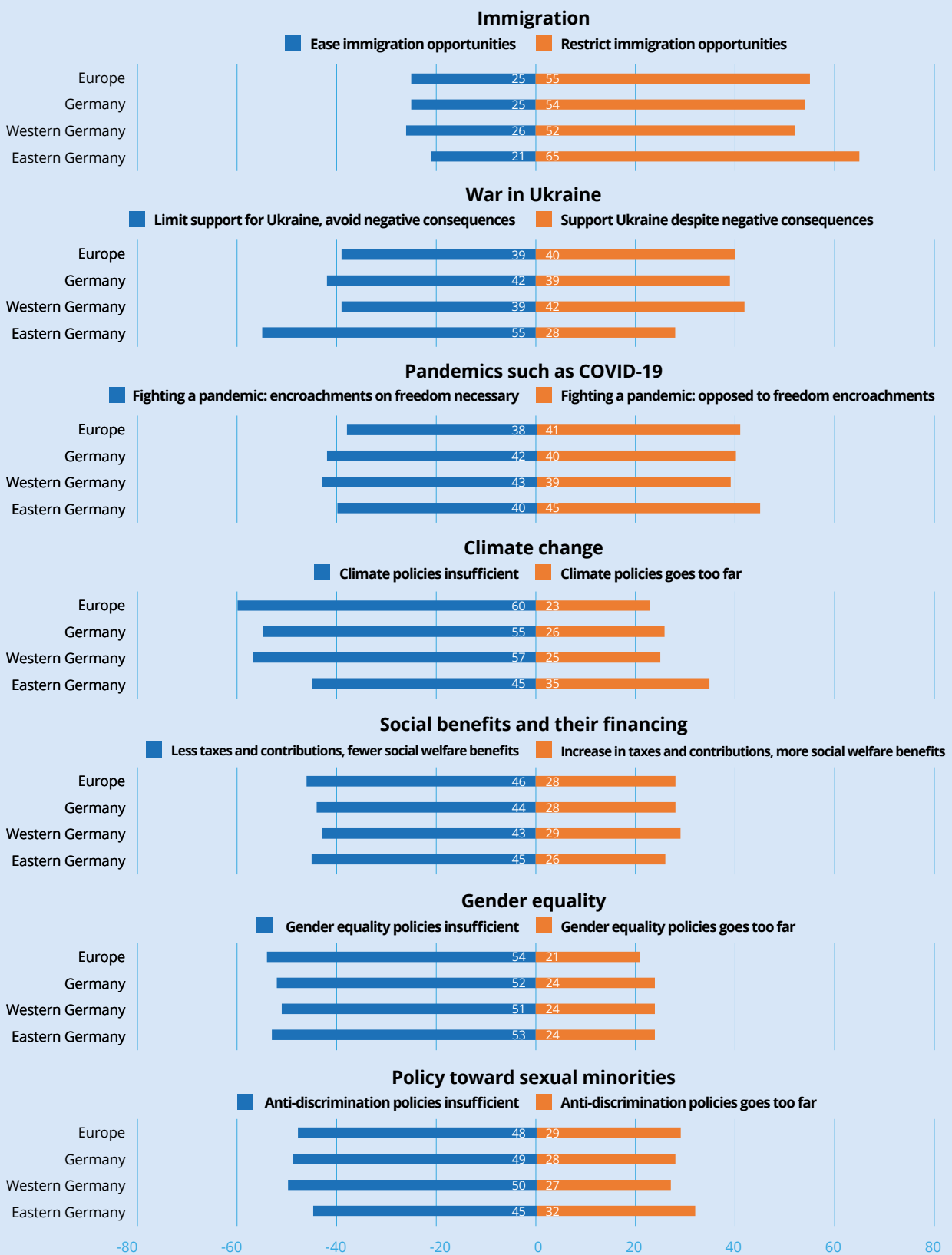
Note: Dots indicate the average group values on the polarization index with associated 95% confidence intervals, within different segments of the German population. The higher the value, the stronger the affective polarization.

To calculate affective polarization index values, respondents were asked to express their feelings toward two groups of people with opposing positions as a numerical evaluation. This was done for each of the seven issues. The distances between these two evaluations were calculated for each issue, and in a final step, the seven distance figures were added together. The index can thus take values between 0 and 70. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Germany}} = 2,091$, except for gross household income and party groupings, where $n =$ at least 1,727. Missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 3.2: Attitudes toward various topics in Germany and Europe (%)

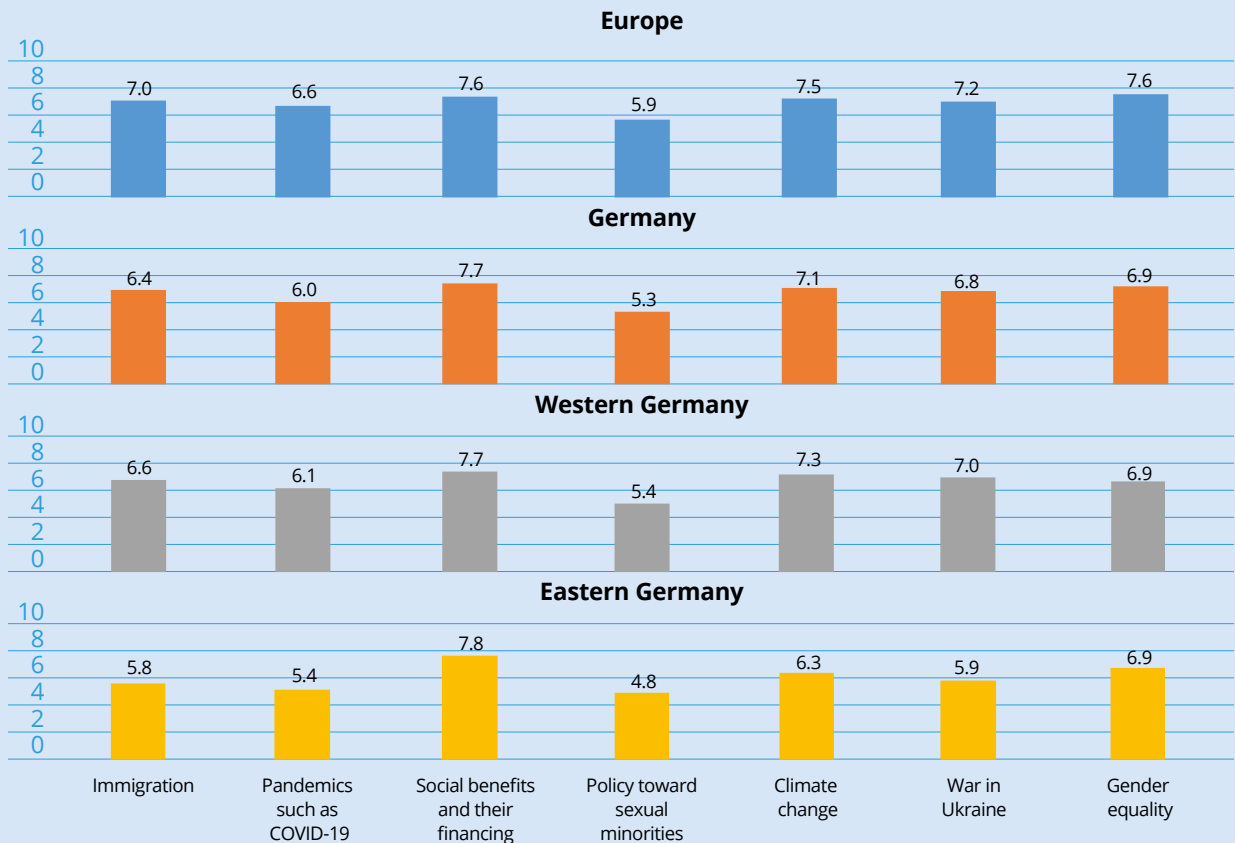


Note: Bars in this chart represent the percentages of individuals who lean in one direction for each of the seven different questions, meaning their response to each question fell within the range of either 0 to 4 or 6 to 10. The original wording of the individual positions can be found in Chapter 2. The results have been weighted to account for factors such as age, gender, education and region. The sample sizes are as follows: $n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Germany} = 2,091$; $n_{West\ Germany} = 1,754$; $n_{East\ Germany} = 337$. Missing values are attributed to those who were undecided (response category 5) or those who provided no response ("don't know" or no response).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 3.3: Salience of various issue areas in Europe (average scores)

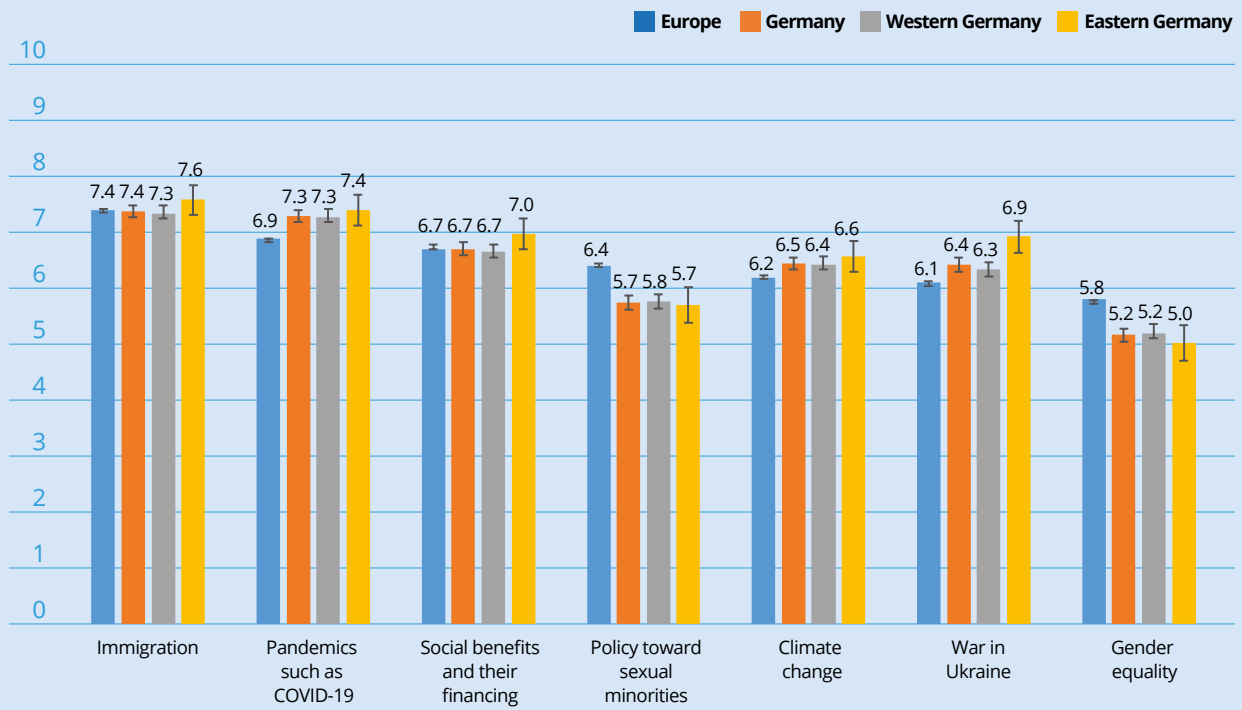


Note: The figures depicted here are average scores. Question: "How important are the following issues to you personally?" Respondents were asked to position themselves between "0 - Not at all important" and "10 - Very important." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Germany} = 2,091$; $n_{West Germany} = 1,754$; $n_{East Germany} = 337$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 3.4: Subjective perception of division by topic (average scores and confidence intervals)



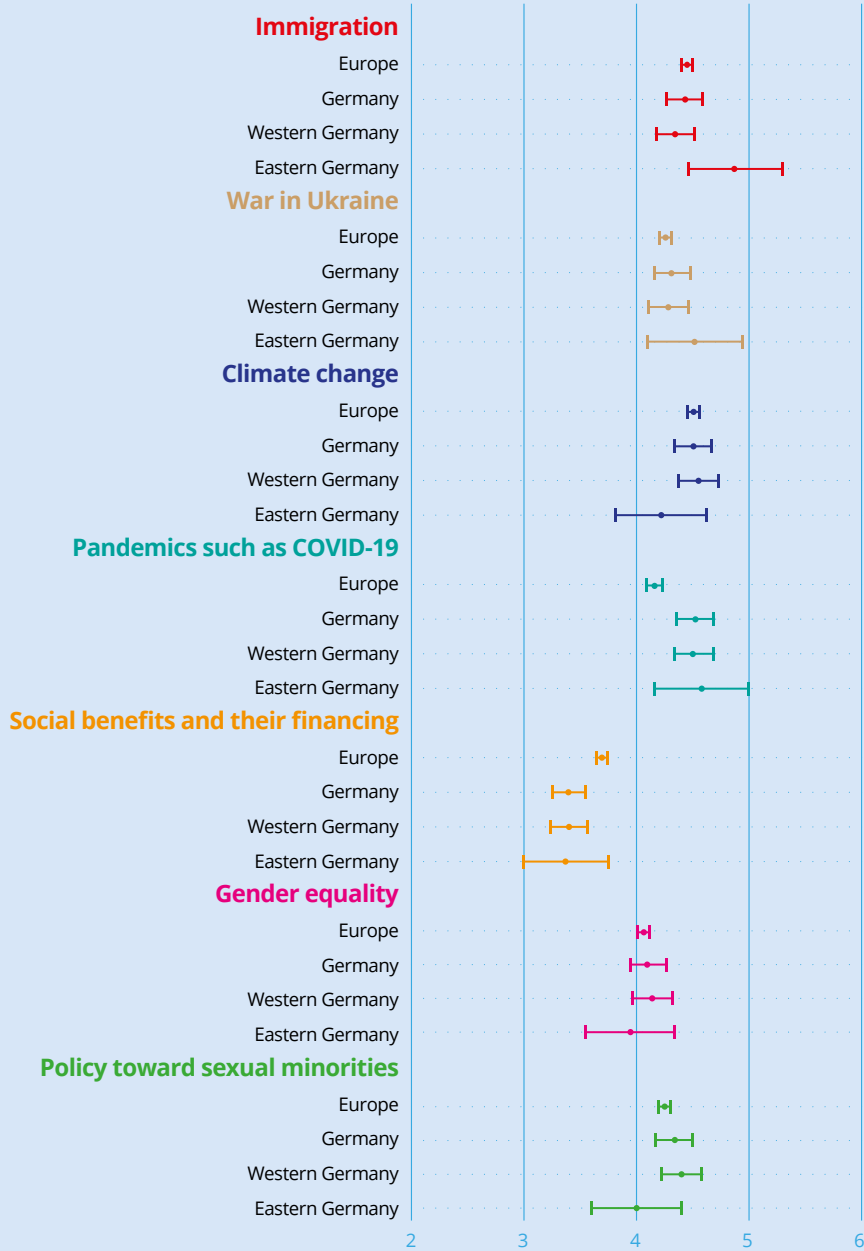
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

Question: "For which of the political issues addressed do you see a division in society? Please rate your answer on a scale from 0 (no division at all) to 10 (very strong division)." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region (n_{Europe} = at least 18,328; $n_{Germany}$ = at least 1,885; $n_{West\ Germany}$ = at least 1,594; $n_{East\ Germany}$ = at least 291; missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 3.5: Affective polarization by issue (average scores and confidence intervals)

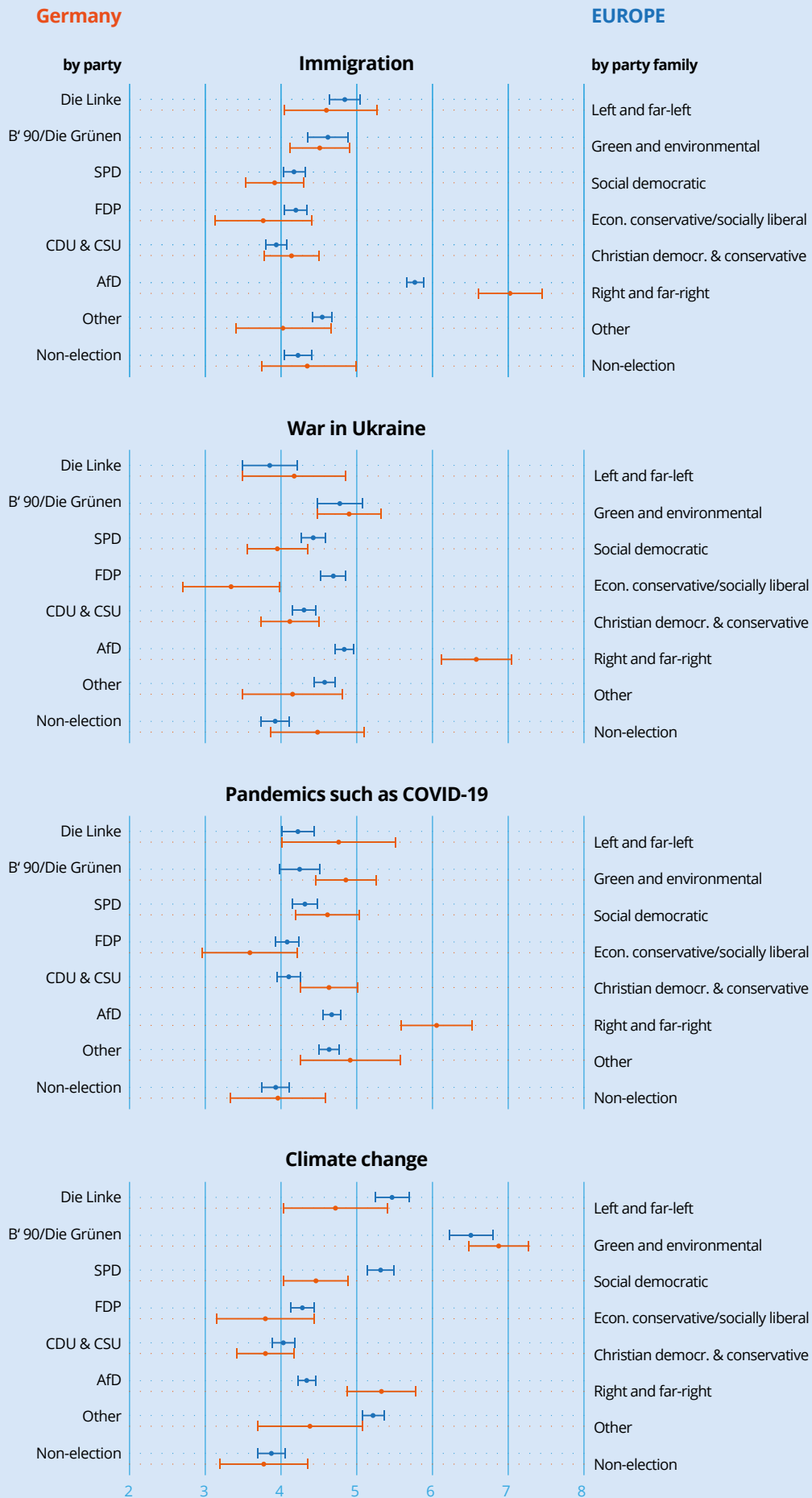


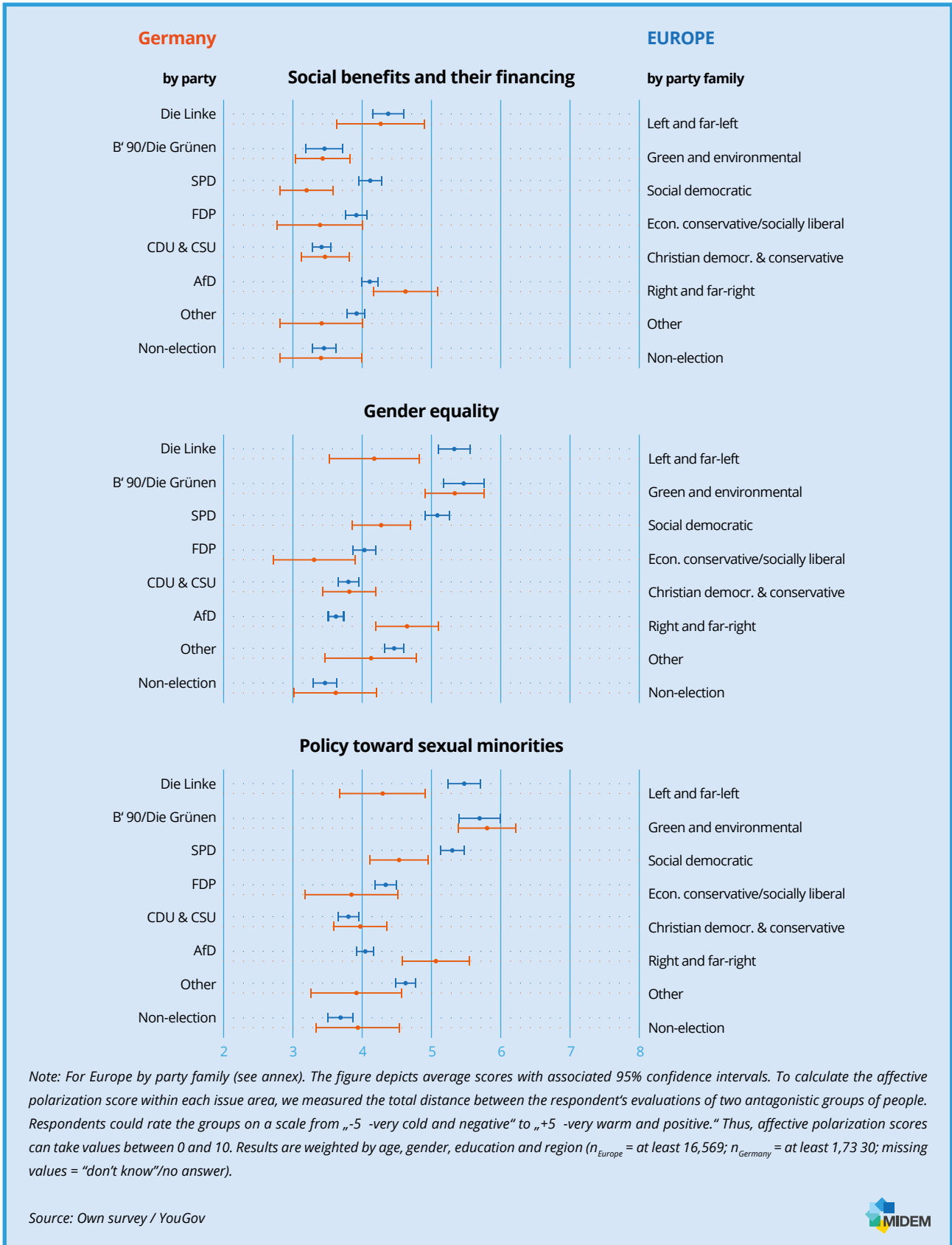
Note: The figure depicts average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals. To calculate the affective polarization score within each issue area, we measured the total distance between the respondent's evaluations of two antagonistic groups of people. Respondents could rate the groups on a scale from "-5 -very cold and negative" to "+5 -very warm and positive." Thus, affective polarization scores can take values between 0 and 10. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Germany}} = 2,091$; $n_{\text{West Germany}} = 1,754$; $n_{\text{East Germany}} = 337$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 3.6: Average affective polarization scores in issue areas, by party affiliation (average scores and confidence intervals)

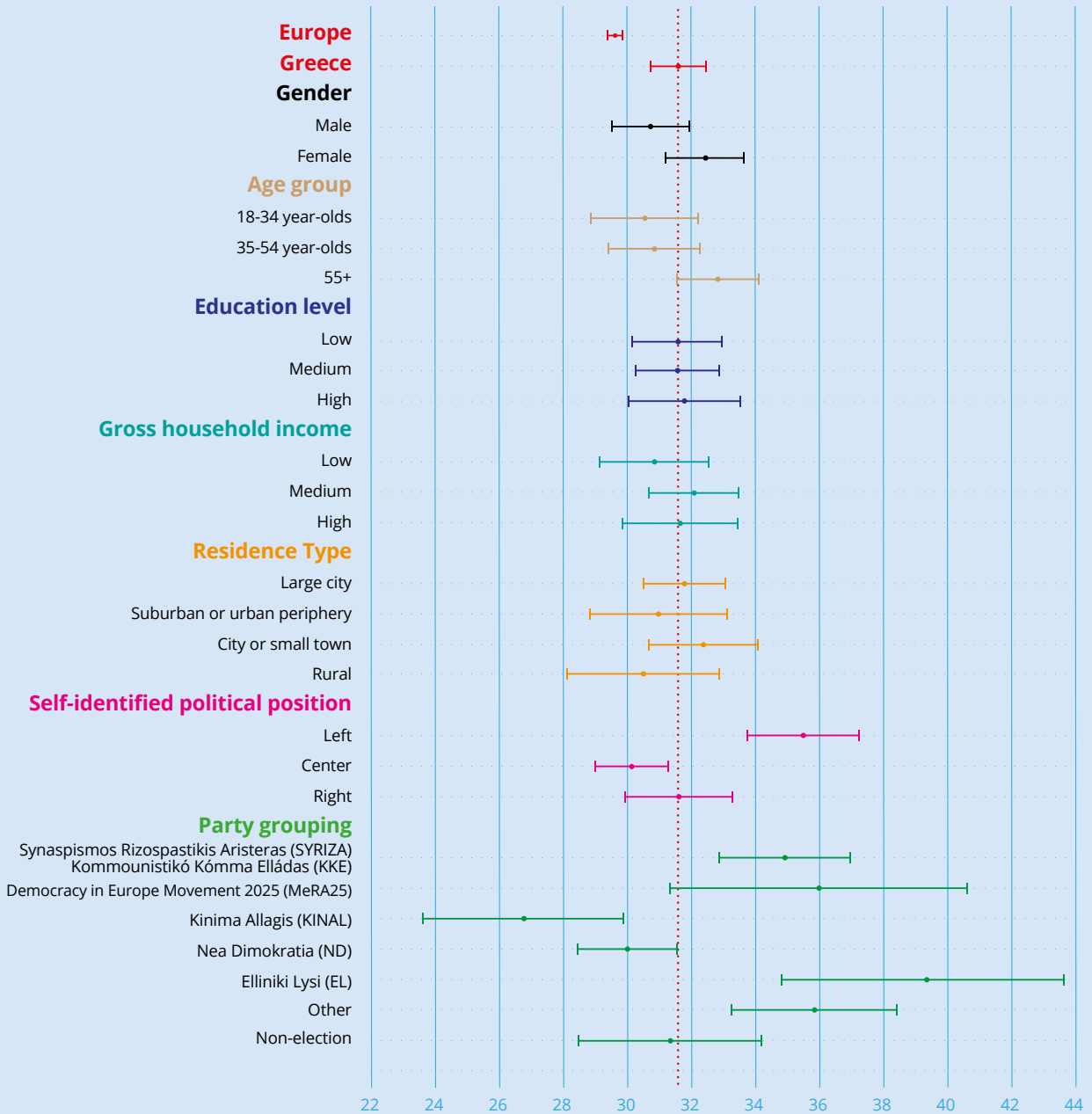




4+

GREECE

Fig. 4.1: Polarization index in Greece by region, sociodemographic features and political characteristics (average scores and confidence intervals)



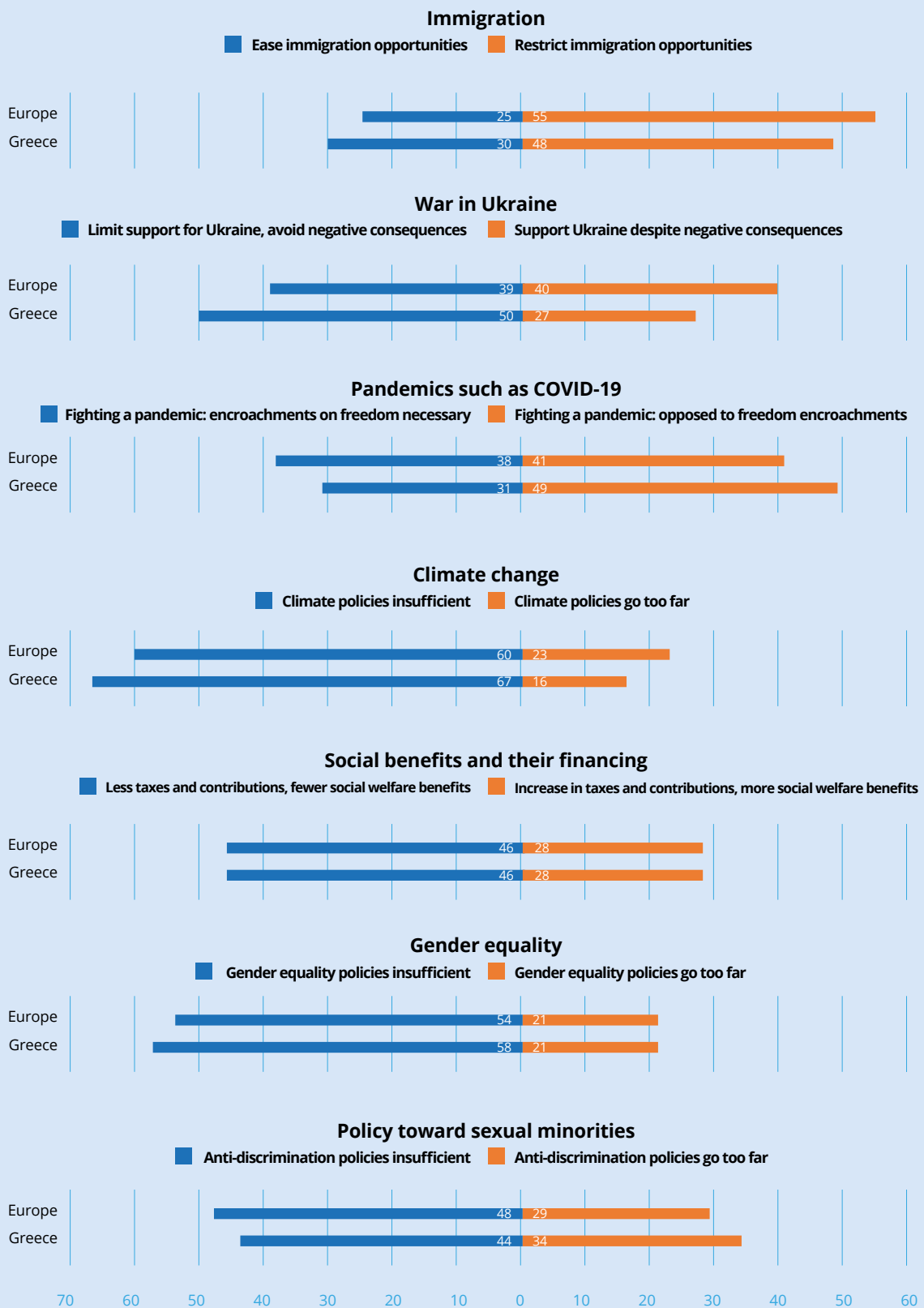
Note: Dots indicate the average group values on the polarization index with associated 95% confidence intervals, within different segments of the Greek population. The higher the value, the stronger the affective polarization.

To calculate affective polarization index values, respondents were asked to express their feelings toward two groups of people with opposing positions as a numerical evaluation. This was done for each of the seven issues. The distances between these two evaluations were calculated for each issue, and in a final step, the seven distance figures were added together. The index can thus take values between 0 and 70. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Greece}} = 1,587$, except for gross household income and party groupings, where $n =$ at least 1,175. Missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 4.2: Attitudes toward various topics in Greece and Europe (%)

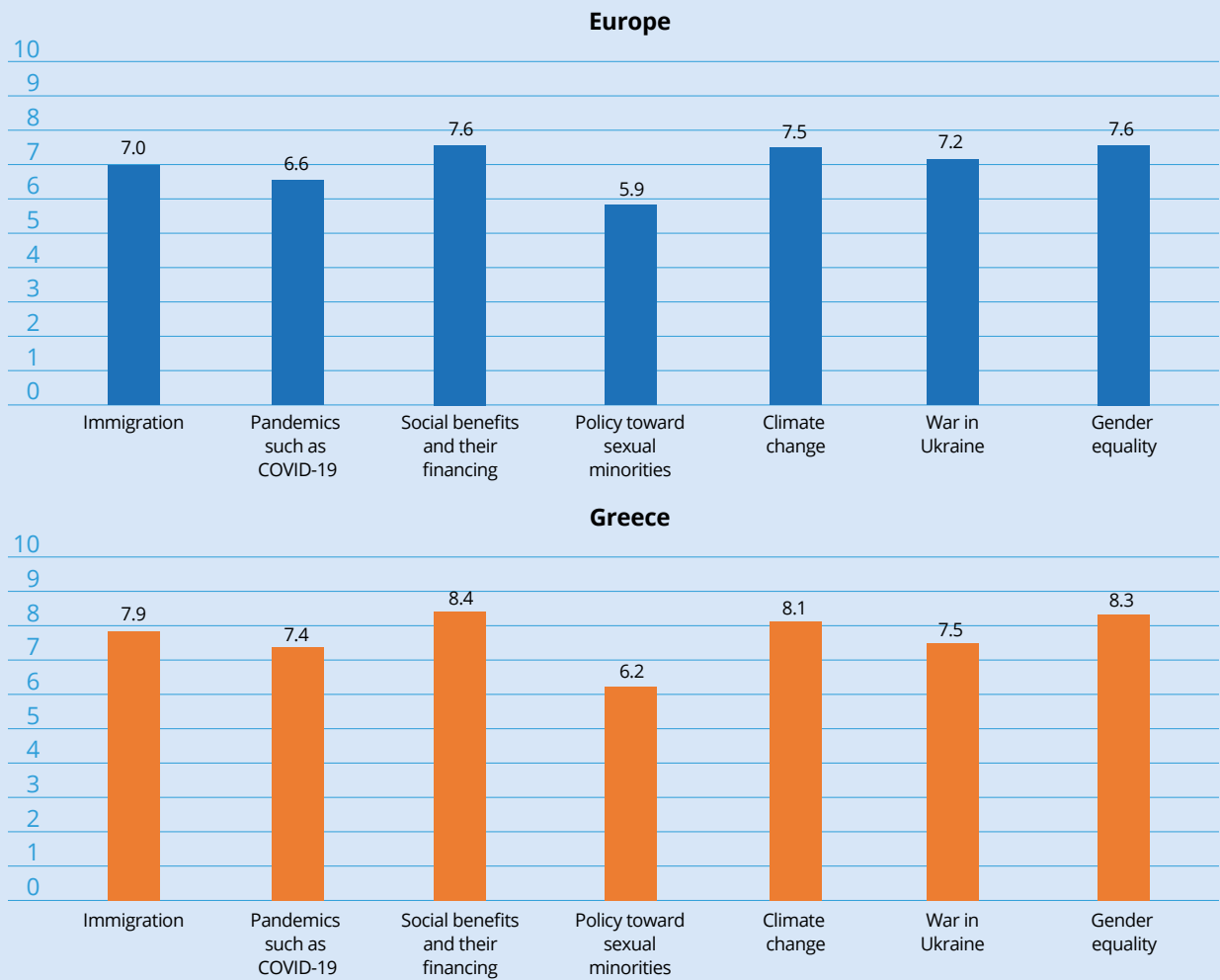


Note: Bars in this chart represent the percentages of individuals who lean in one direction for each of the seven different questions, meaning their response to each question fell within the range of either 0 to 4 or 6 to 10. The original wording of the individual positions can be found in Chapter 2. The results have been weighted to account for factors such as age, gender, education and region. The sample sizes are as follows: $n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Greece} = 1,587$. Missing values are attributed to those who were undecided (response category 5) or those who provided no response ("don't know" or no response).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 4.3: Salience of various issue areas in Greece and Europe (average scores)

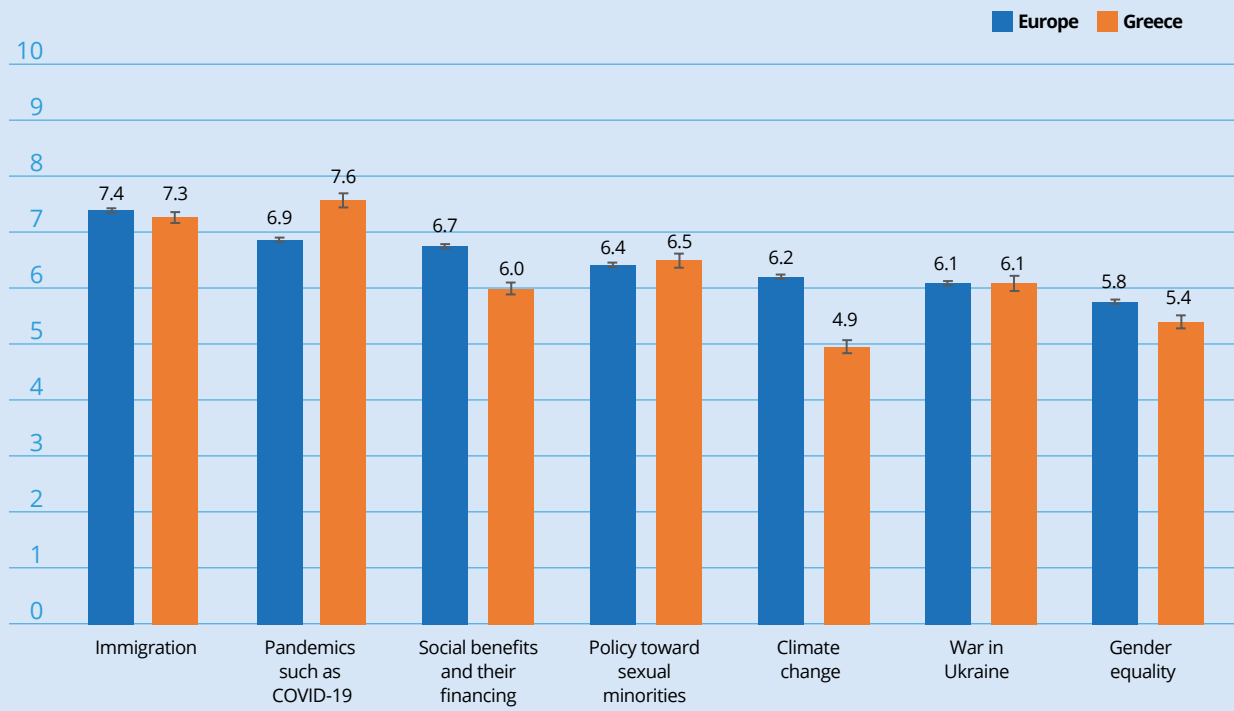


Note: The figures depicted here are average scores. Question: "How important are the following issues to you personally?" Respondents were asked to position themselves between "0 - Not at all important" and "10 - Very important." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Greece} = 1,587$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 4.4: Subjective perception of division by topic (average scores and confidence intervals)



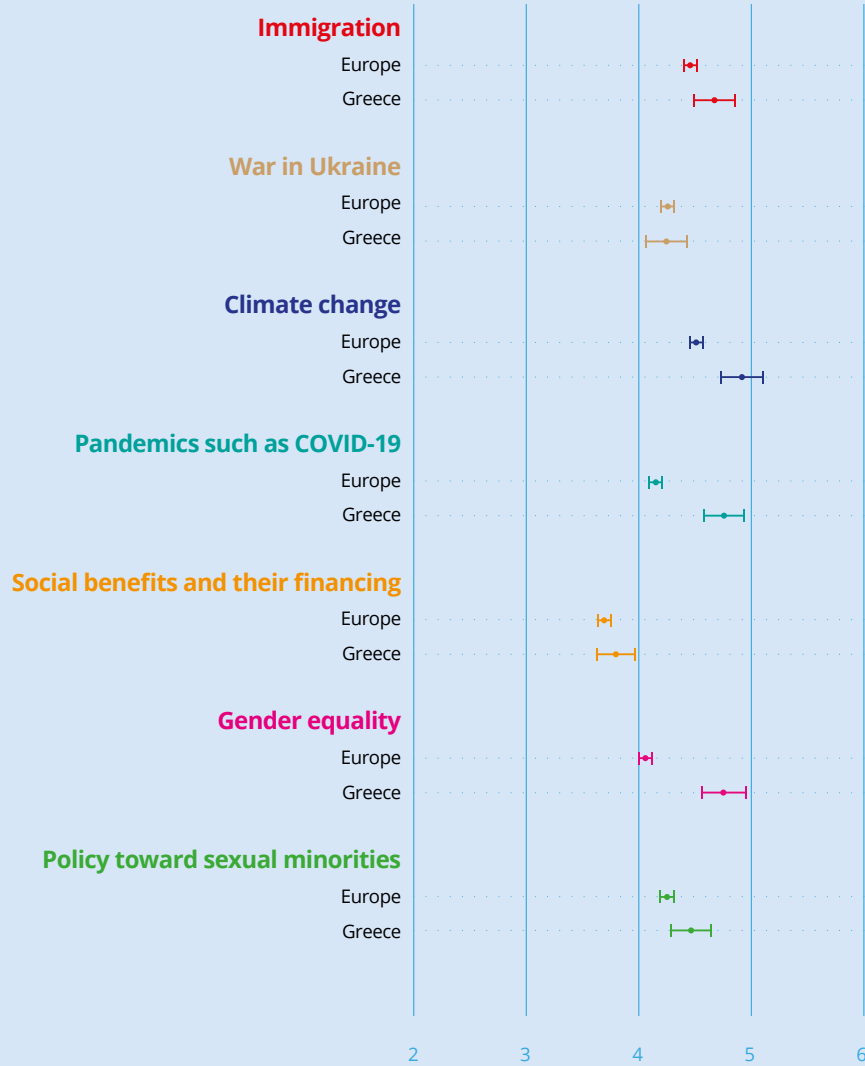
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

Question: "For which of the political issues addressed do you see a division in society? Please rate your answer on a scale from 0 (no division at all) to 10 (very strong division)." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region (n_{Europe} = at least 18,328; n_{Greece} = at least 1,459; missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 4.5: Affective polarization by issue (average scores and confidence intervals)

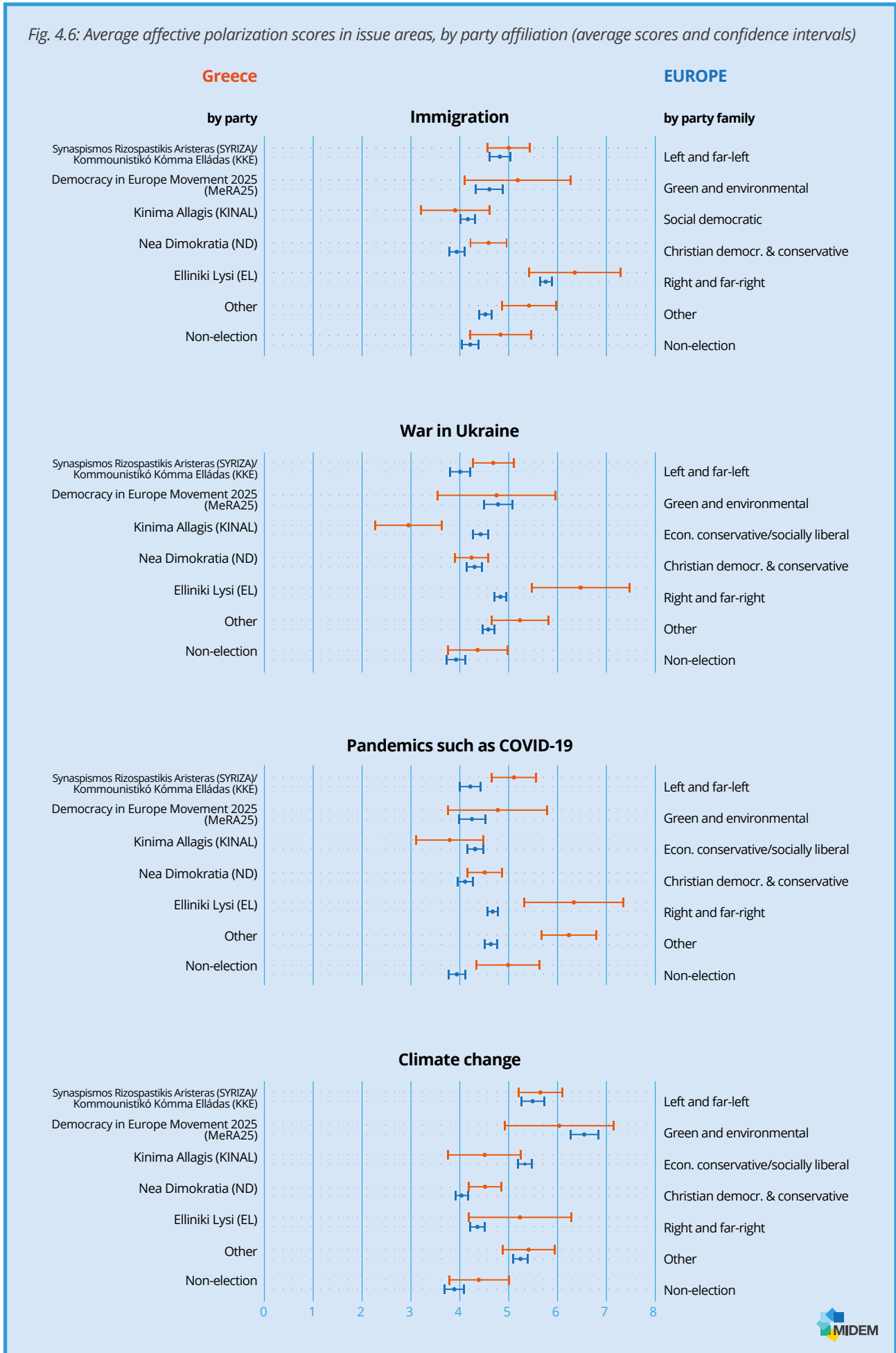


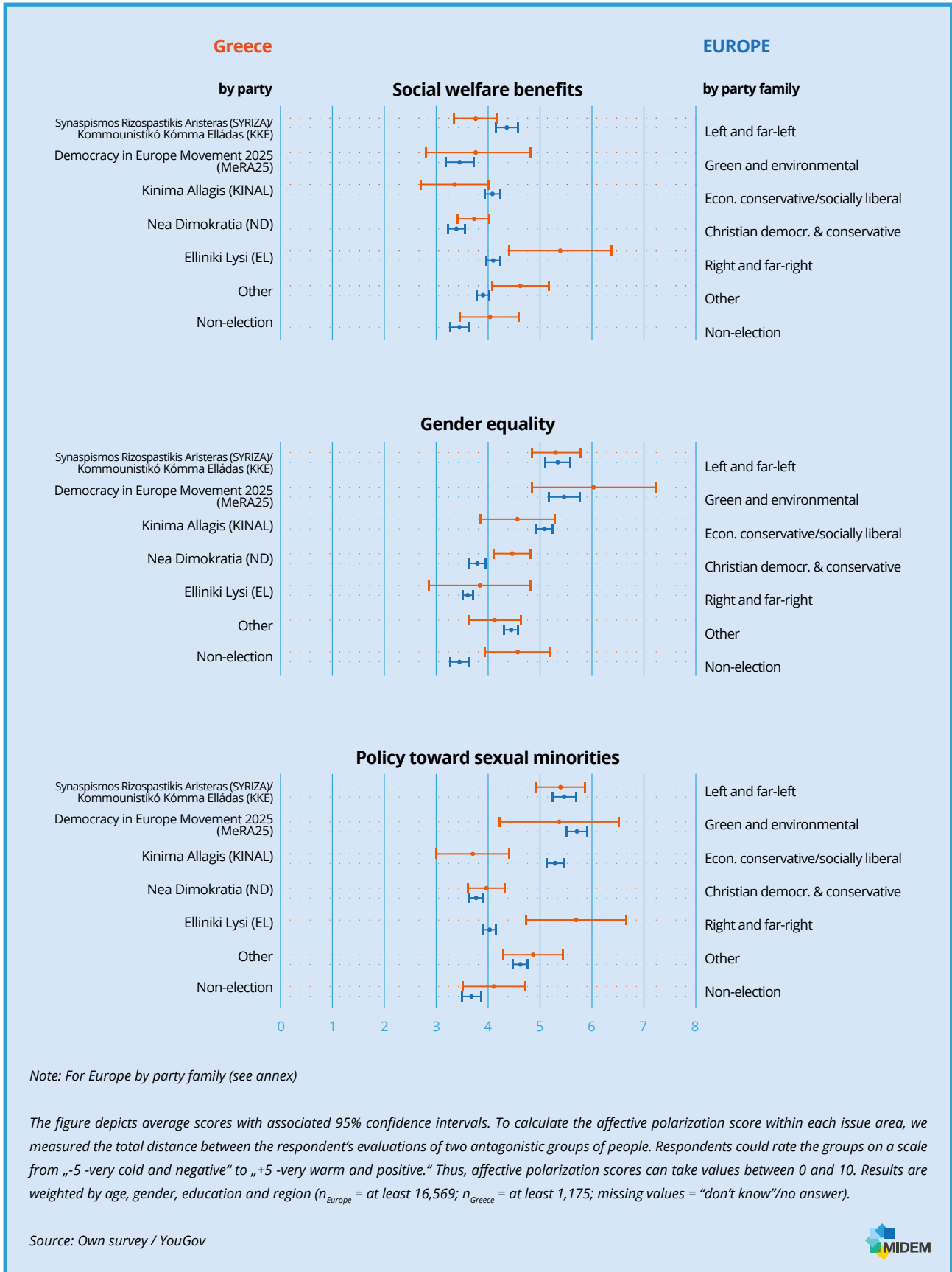
Note: The figure depicts average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals. To calculate the affective polarization score within each issue area, we measured the total distance between the respondent's evaluations of two antagonistic groups of people. Respondents could rate the groups on a scale from "-5 -very cold and negative" to "+5 -very warm and positive." Thus, affective polarization scores can take values between 0 and 10. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Greece}} = 1,587$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 4.6: Average affective polarization scores in issue areas, by party affiliation (average scores and confidence intervals)

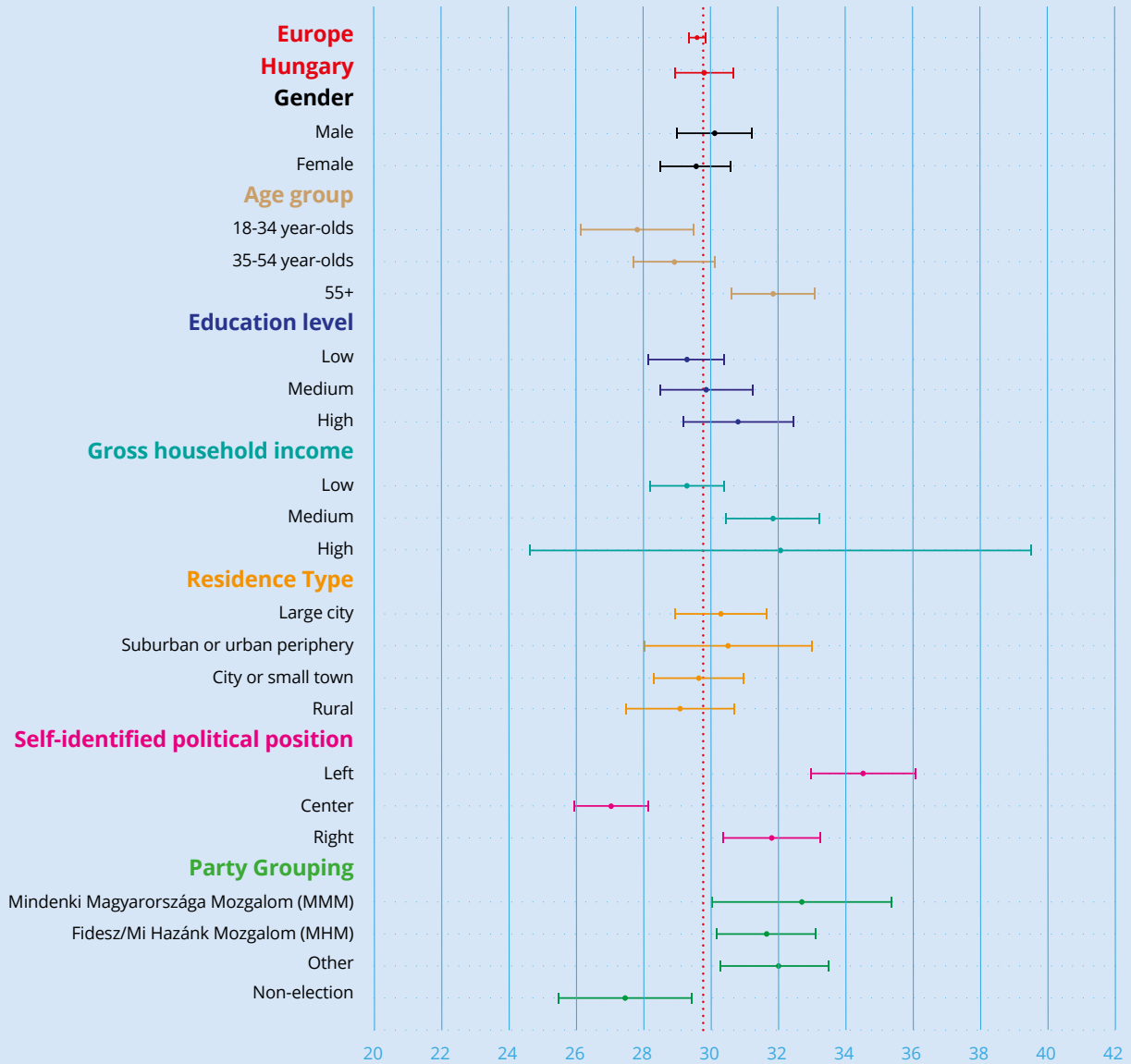






HUNGARY

Fig. 5.1: Polarization index in Hungary by region, sociodemographic features and political characteristics (average scores and confidence intervals)



Note: Dots indicate the average group values on the polarization index with associated 95% confidence intervals, within different segments of the Hungarian population. The higher the value, the stronger the affective polarization.

To calculate affective polarization index values, respondents were asked to express their feelings toward two groups of people with opposing positions as a numerical evaluation. This was done for each of the seven issues. The distances between these two evaluations were calculated for each issue, and in a final step, the seven distance figures were added together. The index can thus take values between 0 and 70. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Hungary}} = 2,069$, except for gross household income and party groupings, where $n =$ at least 1,623. Missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 5.2: Attitudes toward various topics in Hungary and Europe (%)

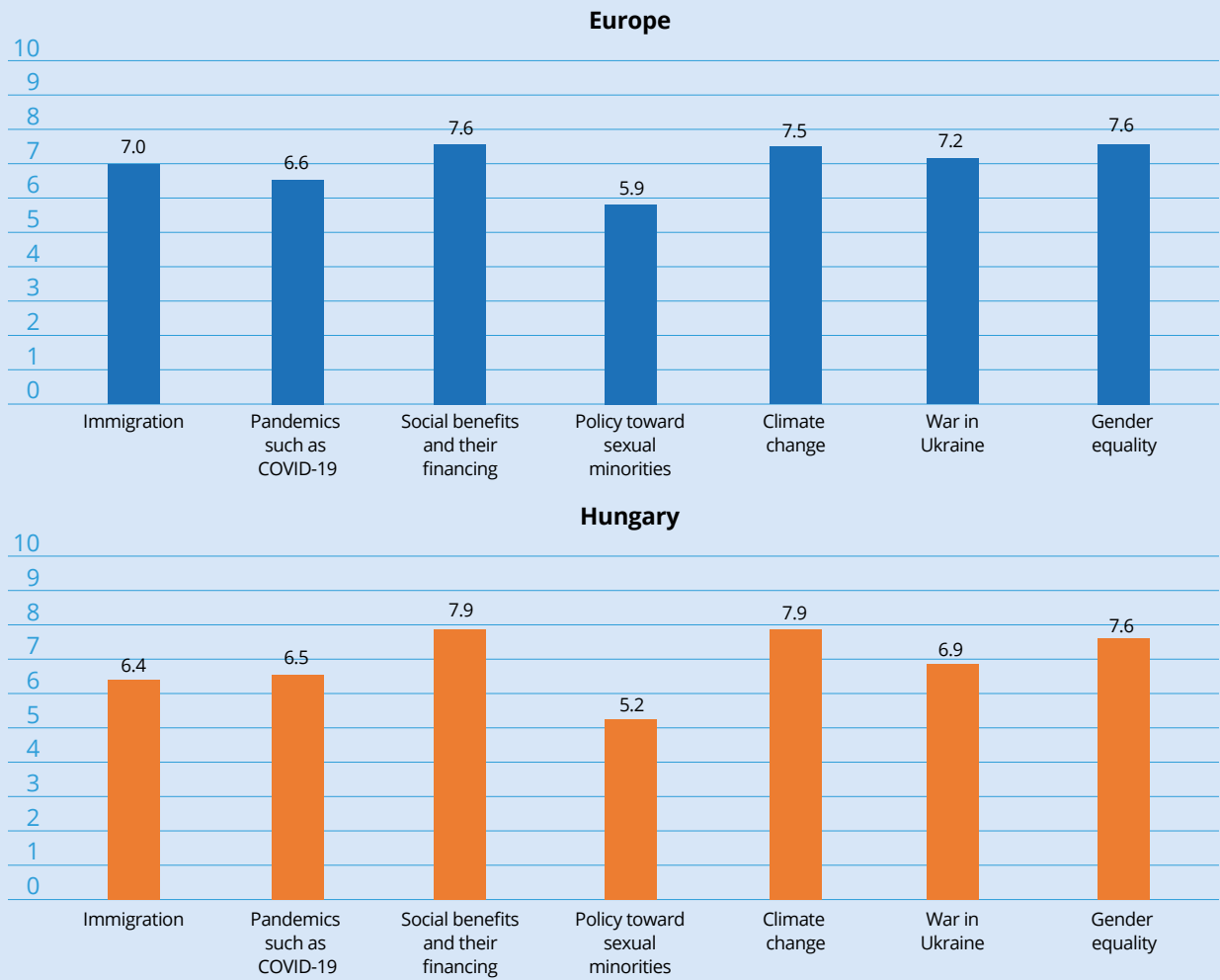


Note: Bars in this chart represent the percentages of individuals who lean in one direction for each of the seven different questions, meaning their response to each question fell within the range of either 0 to 4 or 6 to 10. The original wording of the individual positions can be found in Chapter 2. The results have been weighted to account for factors such as age, gender, education and region. The sample sizes are as follows: $n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Hungary}} = 2,069$. Missing values are attributed to those who were undecided (response category 5) or those who provided no response ("don't know" or no response).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 5.3: Salience of various issue areas in Hungary and Europe (average scores)

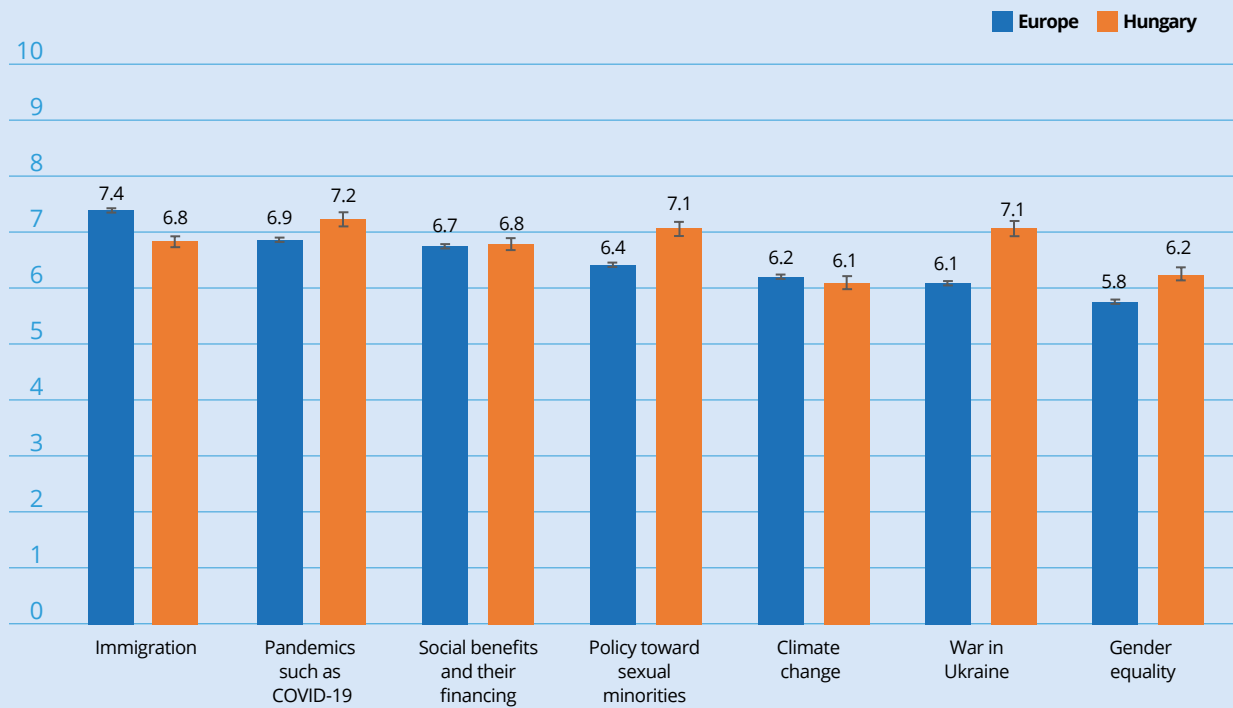


Note: The figures depicted here are average scores. Question: "How important are the following issues to you personally?" Respondents were asked to position themselves between "0 - Not at all important" and "10 - Very important." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Hungary}} = 2,069$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 5.4: Subjective perception of division by topic (average scores and confidence intervals)



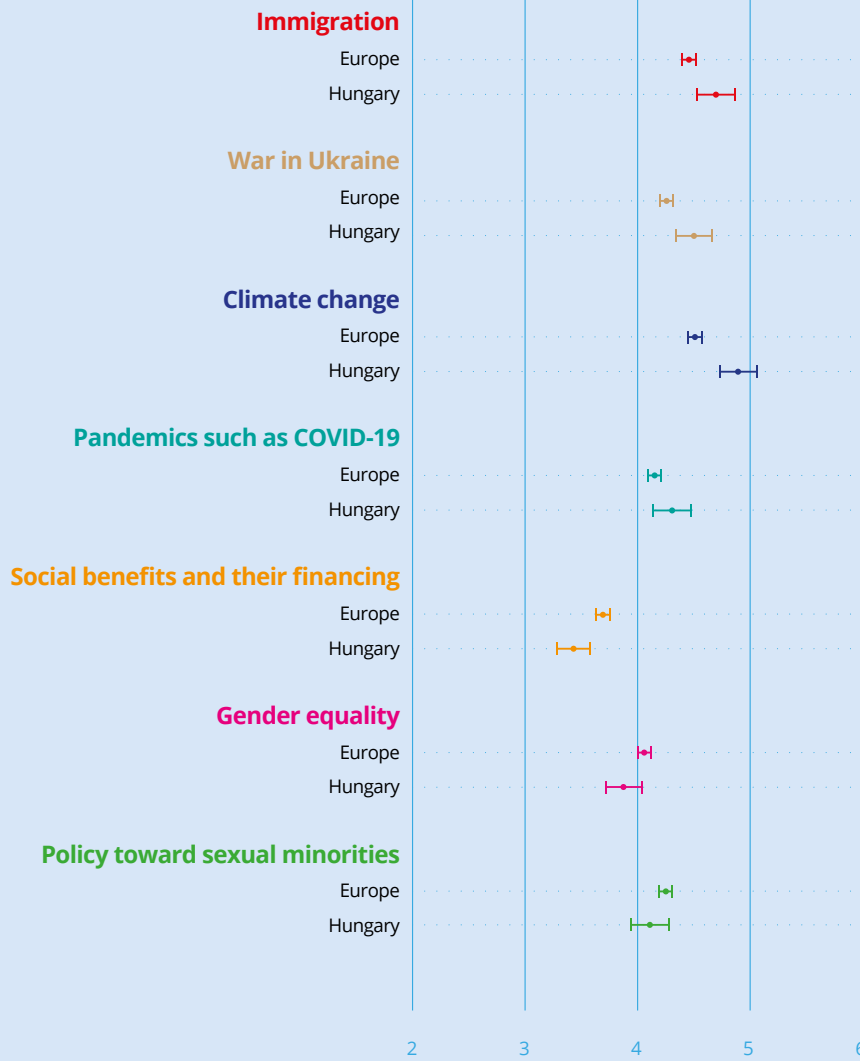
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

Question: "For which of the political issues addressed do you see a division in society? Please rate your answer on a scale from 0 (no division at all) to 10 (very strong division)." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region (n_{Europe} = at least 18,328; n_{Hungary} = at least 1,871; missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 5.5: Affective polarization by issue (average scores and confidence intervals)



Note: The figure depicts average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

To calculate the affective polarization score within each issue area, we measured the total distance between the respondent's evaluations of two antagonistic groups of people. Respondents could rate the groups on a scale from "-5 -very cold and negative" to "+5 -very warm and positive."

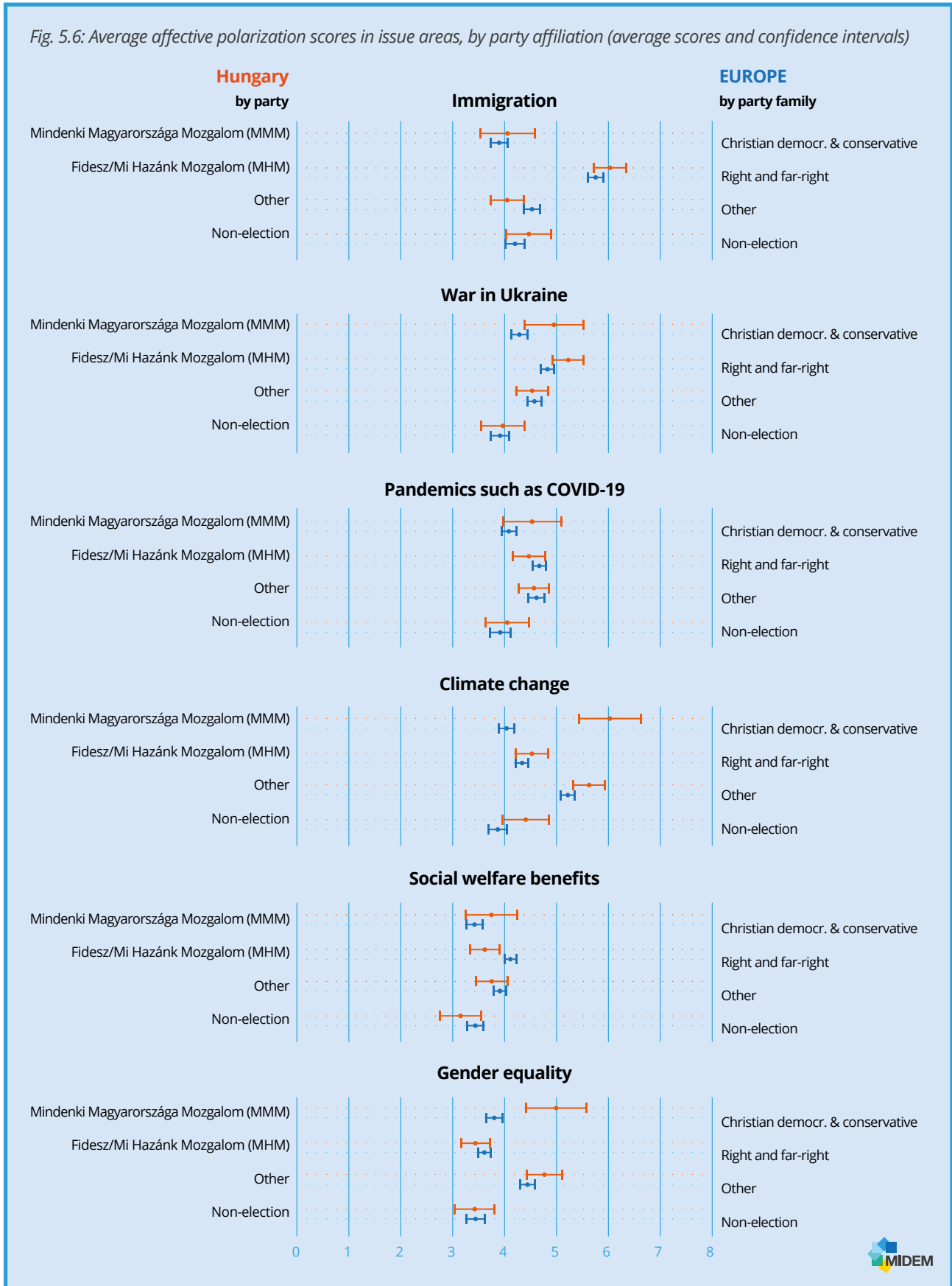
Thus, affective polarization scores can take values between 0 and 10. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region

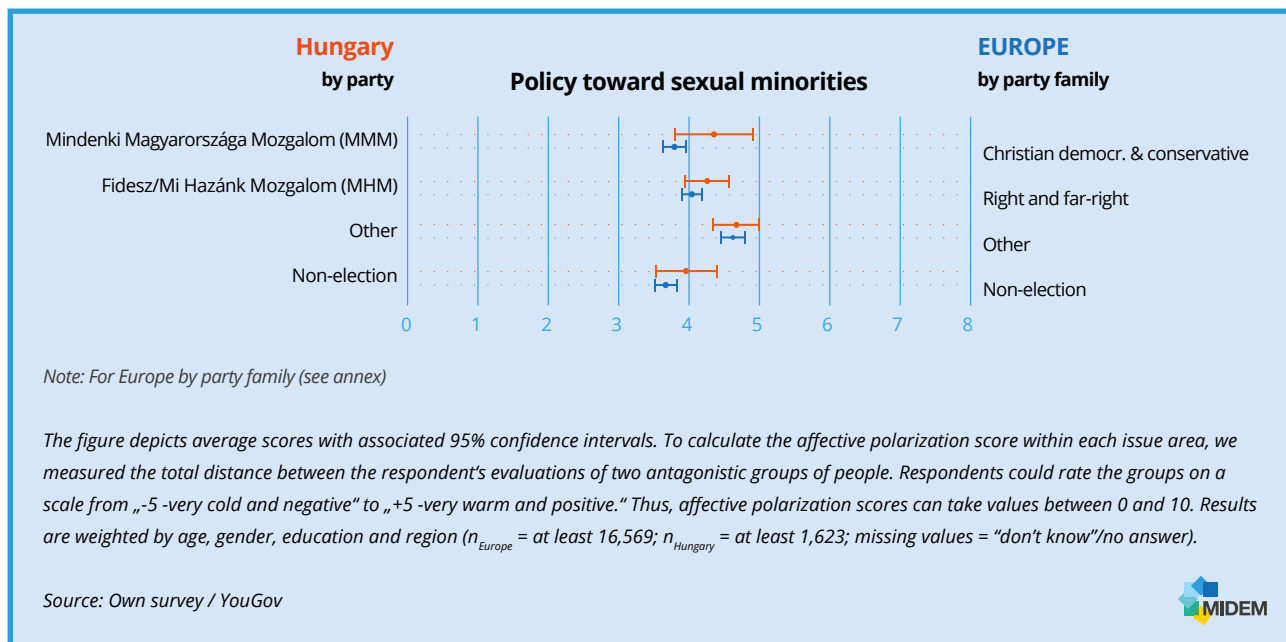
($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Hungary}} = 2,069$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 5.6: Average affective polarization scores in issue areas, by party affiliation (average scores and confidence intervals)

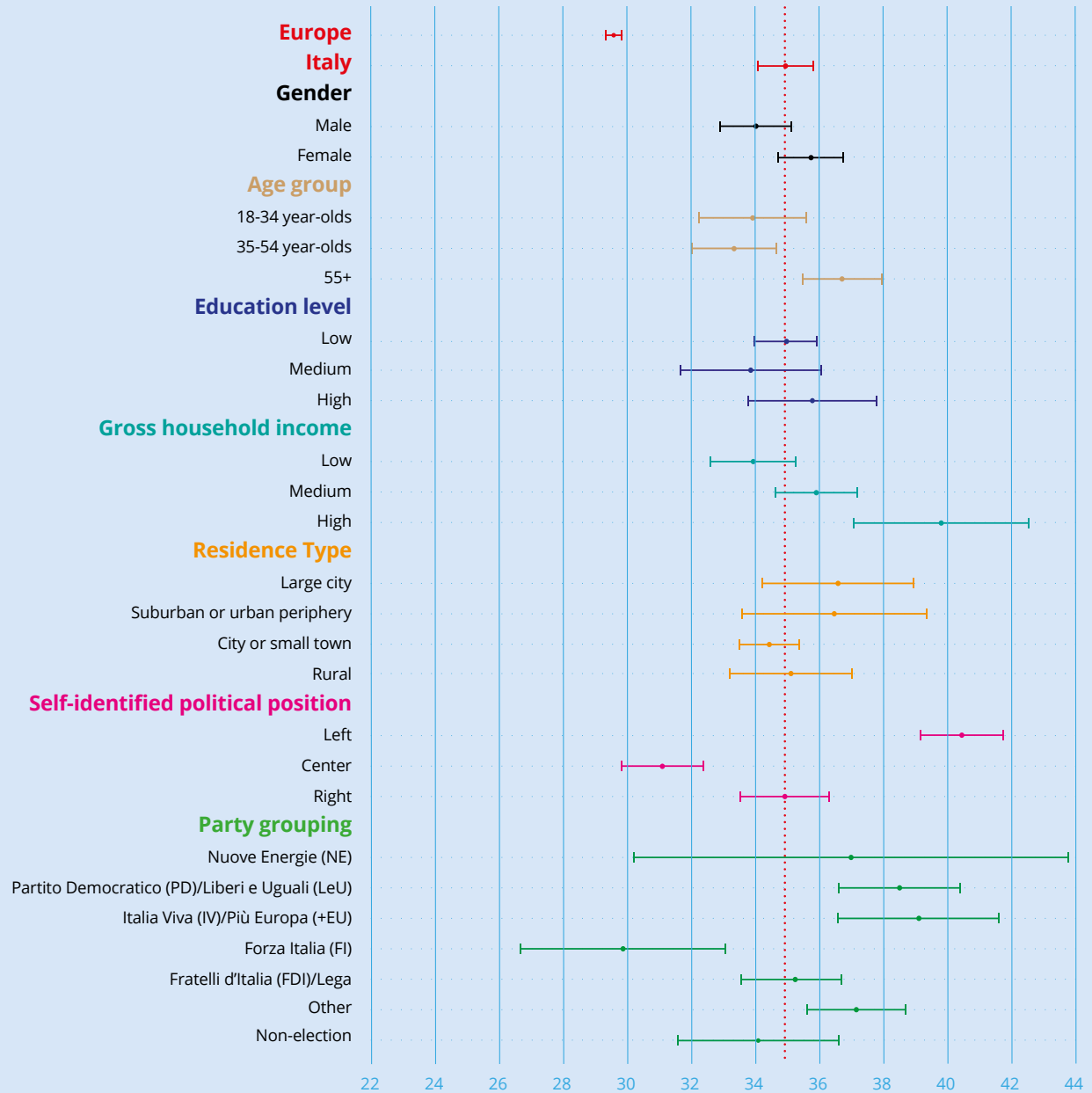






ITALY

Fig. 6.1: Polarization index in Italy by region, sociodemographic features and political characteristics (average scores and confidence intervals)



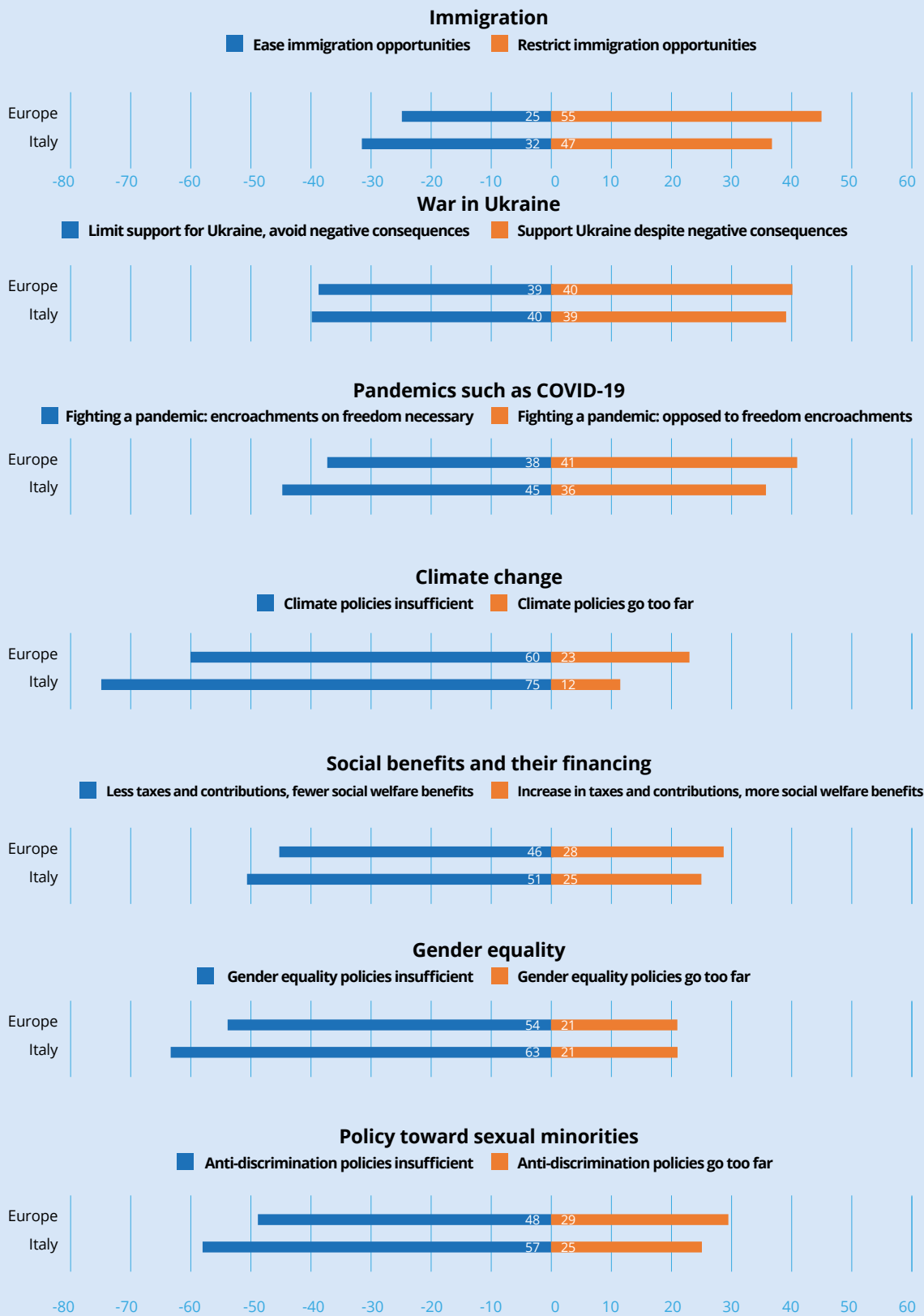
Note: Dots indicate the average group values on the polarization index with associated 95% confidence intervals, within different segments of the Italian population. The higher the value, the stronger the affective polarization.

To calculate affective polarization index values, respondents were asked to express their feelings toward two groups of people with opposing positions as a numerical evaluation. This was done for each of the seven issues. The distances between these two evaluations were calculated for each issue, and in a final step, the seven distance figures were added together. The index can thus take values between 0 and 70. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Italy} = 2,123$, except for gross household income and party groupings, where $n =$ at least 1,708. Missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 6.2: Attitudes toward various topics in Italy and Europe (%)

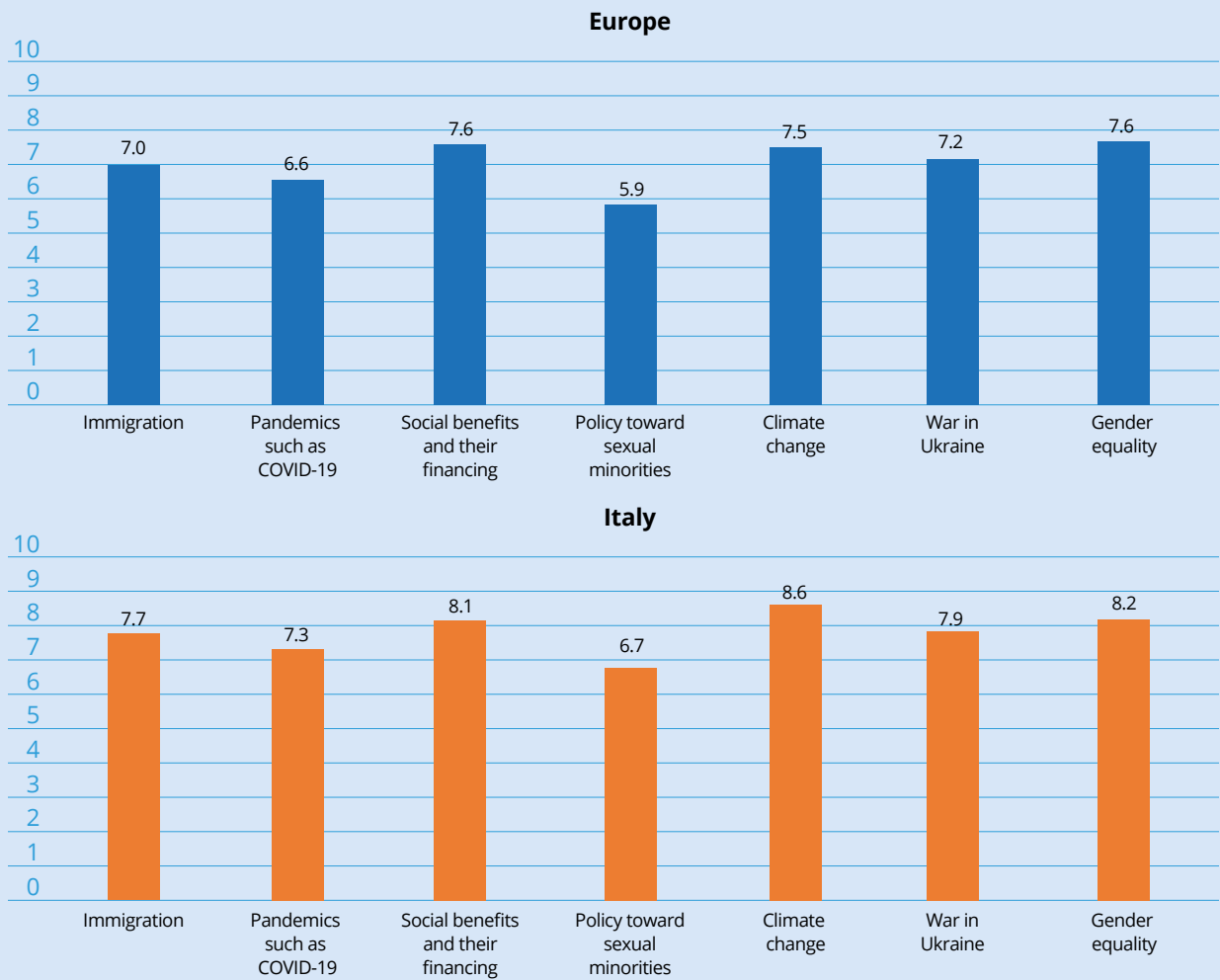


Note: Bars in this chart represent the percentages of individuals who lean in one direction for each of the seven different questions, meaning their response to each question fell within the range of either 0 to 4 or 6 to 10. The original wording of the individual positions can be found in Chapter 2. The results have been weighted to account for factors such as age, gender, education and region. The sample sizes are as follows: $n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Italy} = 2,123$. Missing values are attributed to those who were undecided (response category 5) or those who provided no response ("don't know" or no response).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 6.3: Salience of various issue areas in Italy and Europe (average scores)



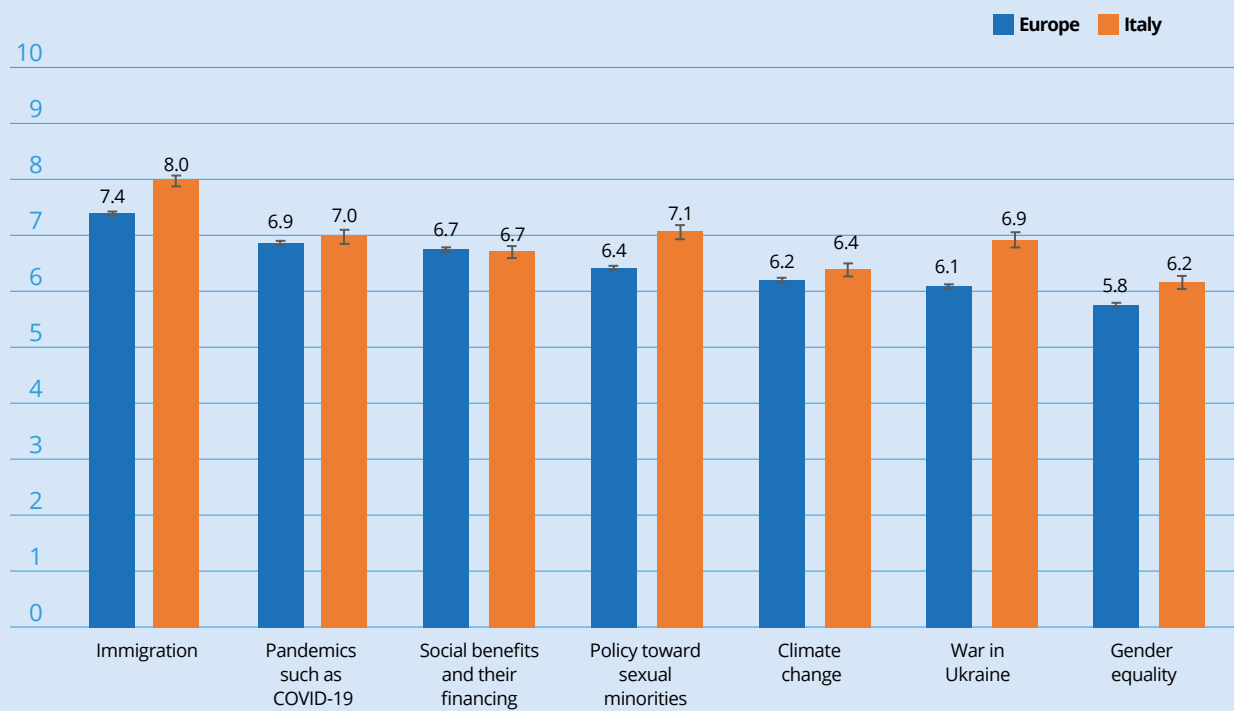
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores.

Question: "How important are the following issues to you personally?" Respondents were asked to position themselves between "0 - Not at all important" and "10 - Very important." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Italy} = 2,123$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 6.4: Subjective perception of division by topic (average scores and confidence intervals)



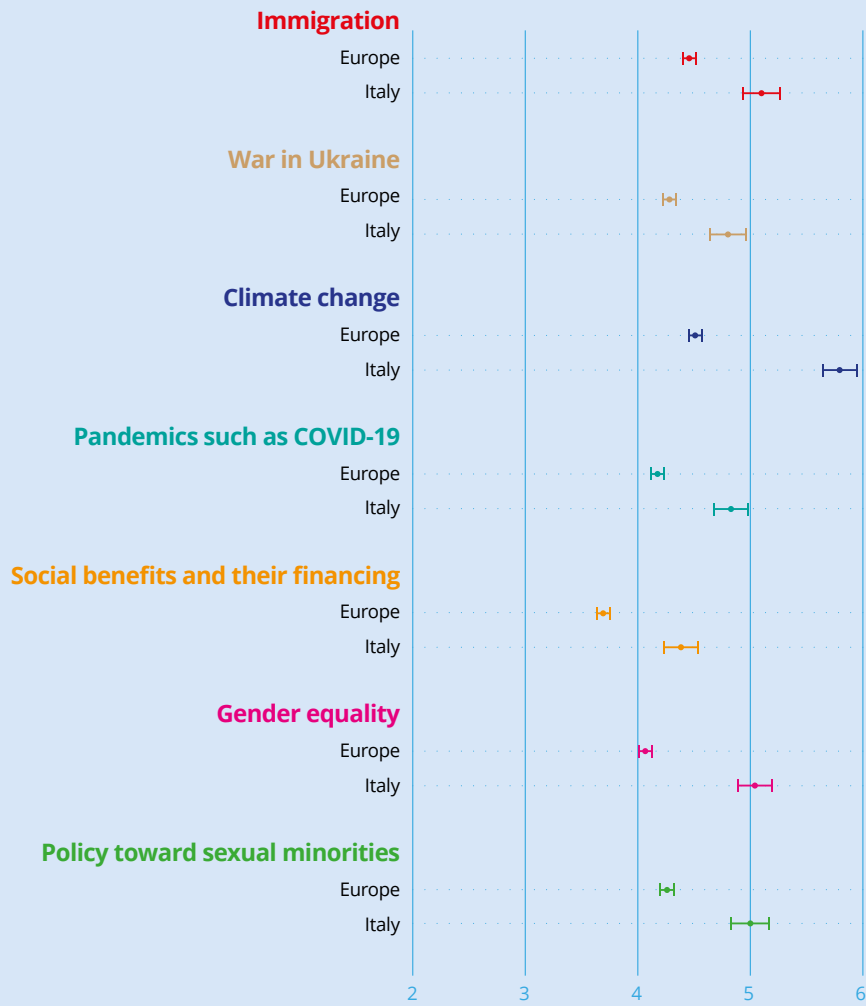
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

Question: "For which of the political issues addressed do you see a division in society? Please rate your answer on a scale from 0 (no division at all) to 10 (very strong division)." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region (n_{Europe} = at least 18,328; n_{Italy} = at least 1,887; missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 6.5: Affective polarization by issue (average scores and confidence intervals)



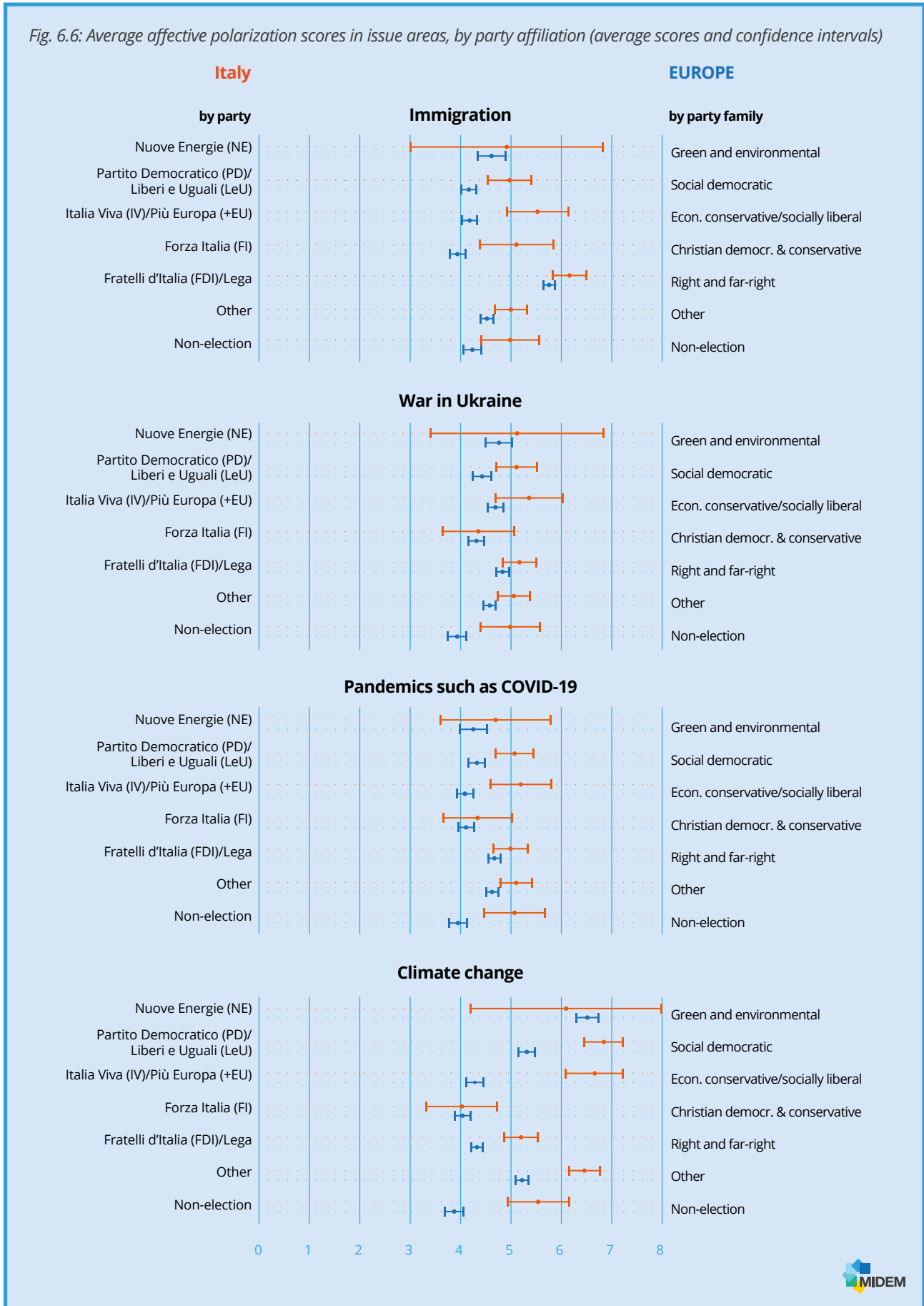
Note: The figure depicts average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

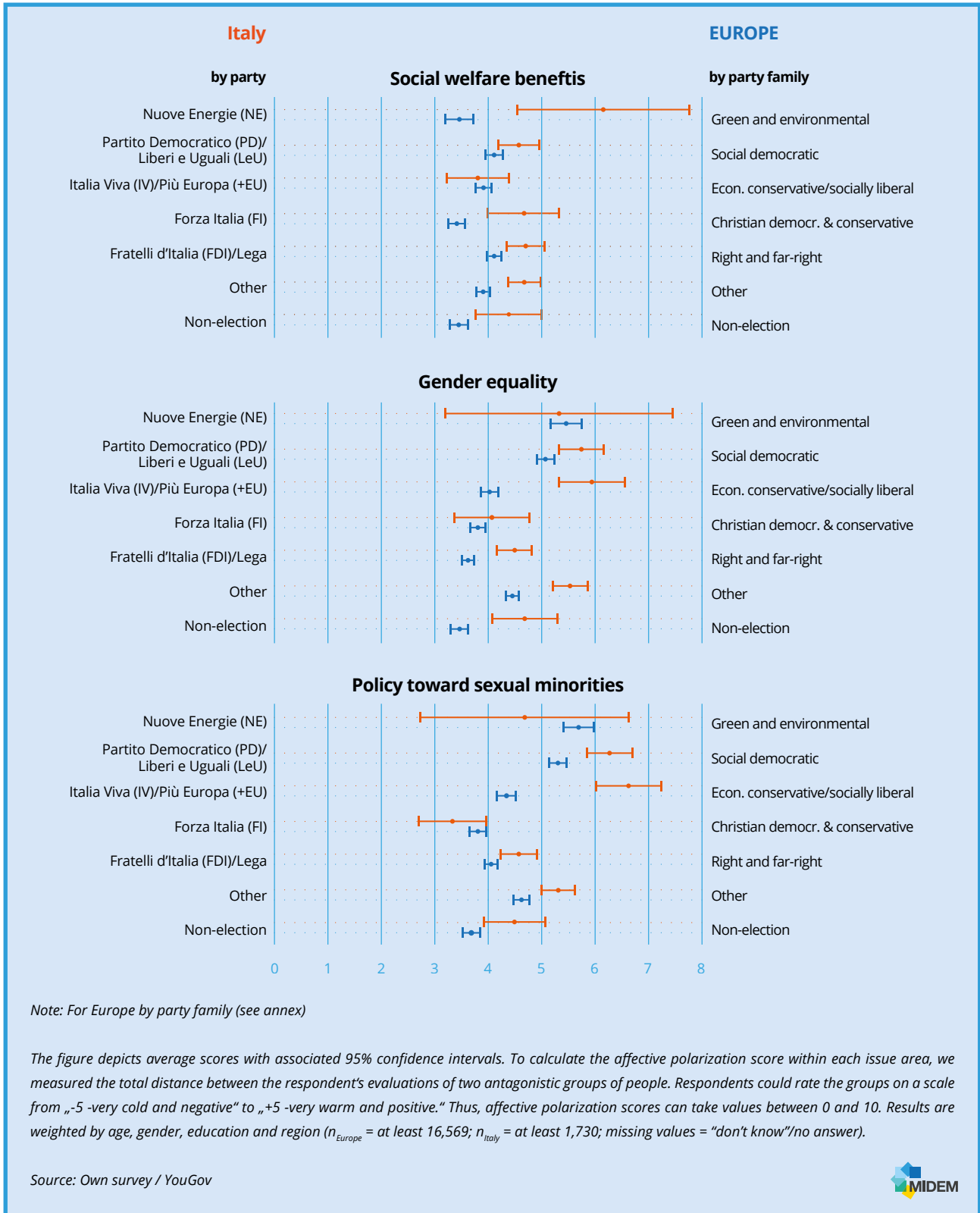
To calculate the affective polarization score within each issue area, we measured the total distance between the respondent's evaluations of two antagonistic groups of people. Respondents could rate the groups on a scale from "-5 -very cold and negative" to "+5 -very warm and positive." Thus, affective polarization scores can take values between 0 and 10. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Italy} = 2,123$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 6.6: Average affective polarization scores in issue areas, by party affiliation (average scores and confidence intervals)

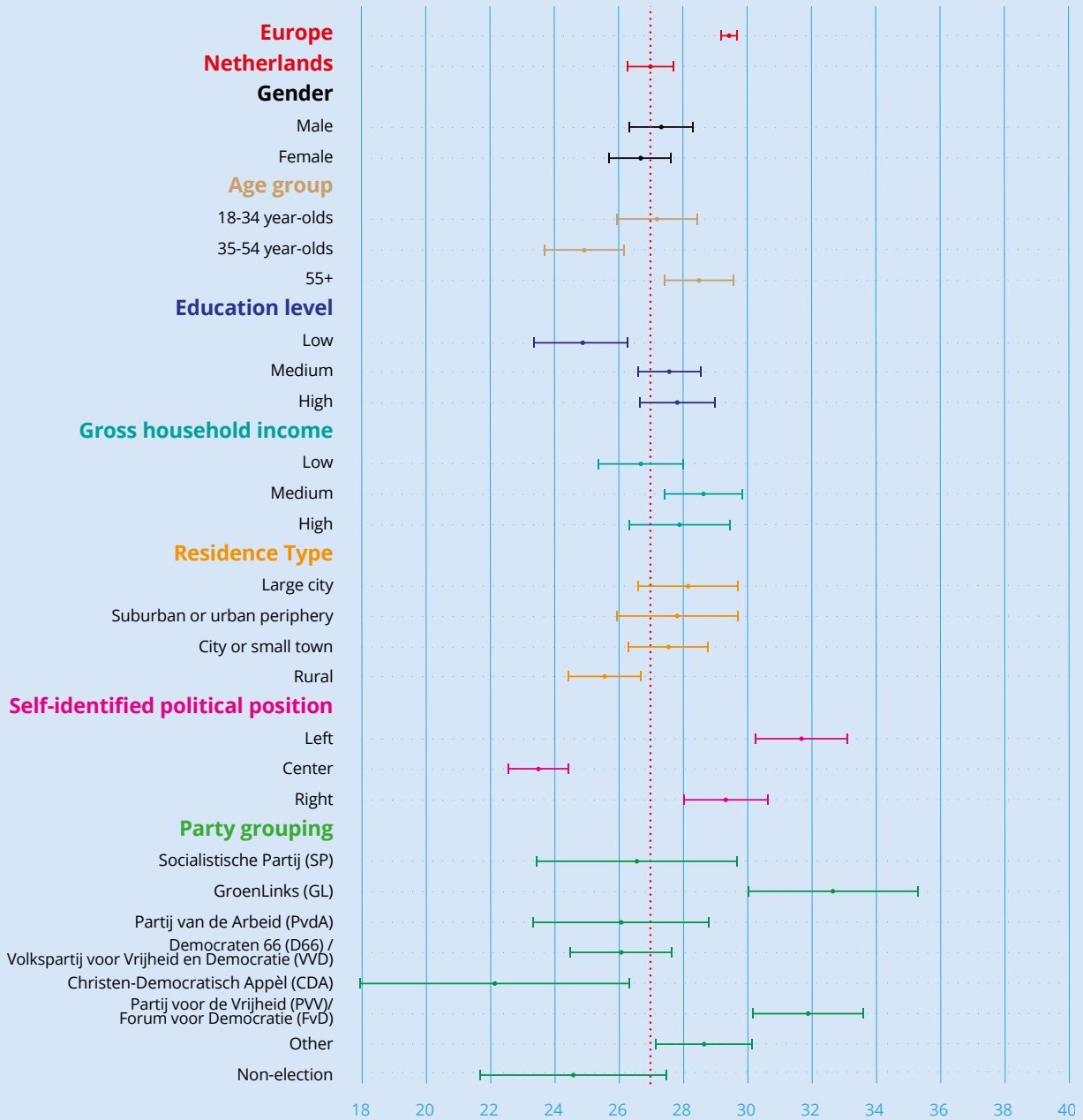






NETHERLANDS

Fig. 7.1: Polarization index in the Netherlands by region, sociodemographic features and political characteristics (average scores and confidence intervals)



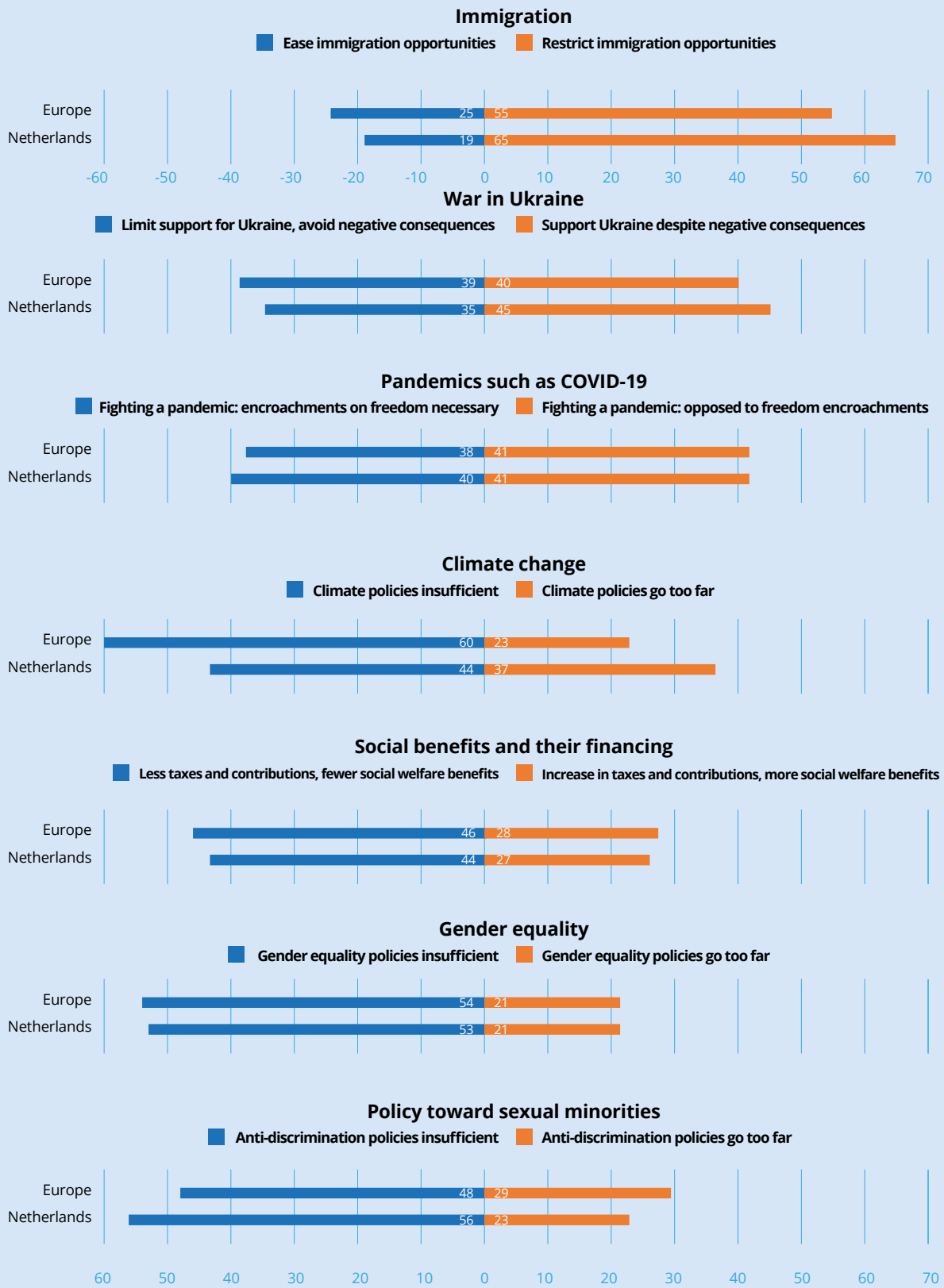
Note: Dots indicate the average group values on the polarization index with associated 95% confidence intervals, within different segments of the Dutch population. The higher the value, the stronger the affective polarization.

To calculate affective polarization index values, respondents were asked to express their feelings toward two groups of people with opposing positions as a numerical evaluation. This was done for each of the seven issues. The distances between these two evaluations were calculated for each issue, and in a final step, the seven distance figures were added together. The index can thus take values between 0 and 70. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Netherlands} = 2,095$, except for gross household income and party groupings, where $n =$ at least 1,618. Missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 7.2: Attitudes toward various topics in the Netherlands and Europe (%)

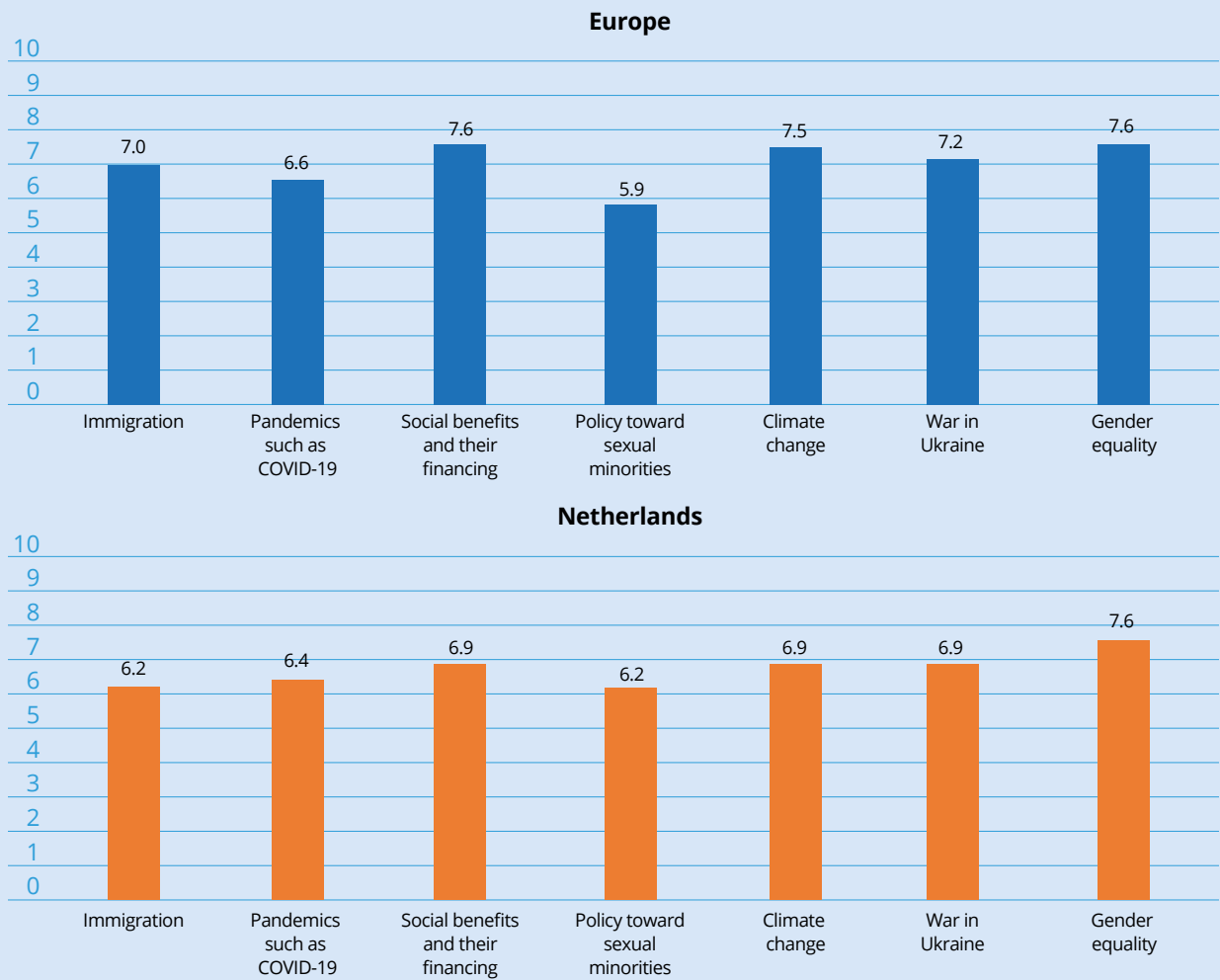


Note: Bars in this chart represent the percentages of individuals who lean in one direction for each of the seven different questions, meaning their response to each question fell within the range of either 0 to 4 or 6 to 10. The original wording of the individual positions can be found in Chapter 2. The results have been weighted to account for factors such as age, gender, education and region. The sample sizes are as follows: $n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Netherlands} = 2,095$. Missing values are attributed to those who were undecided (response category 5) or those who provided no response ("don't know" or no response).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 7.3: Salience of various issue areas in the Netherlands and Europe (average scores)

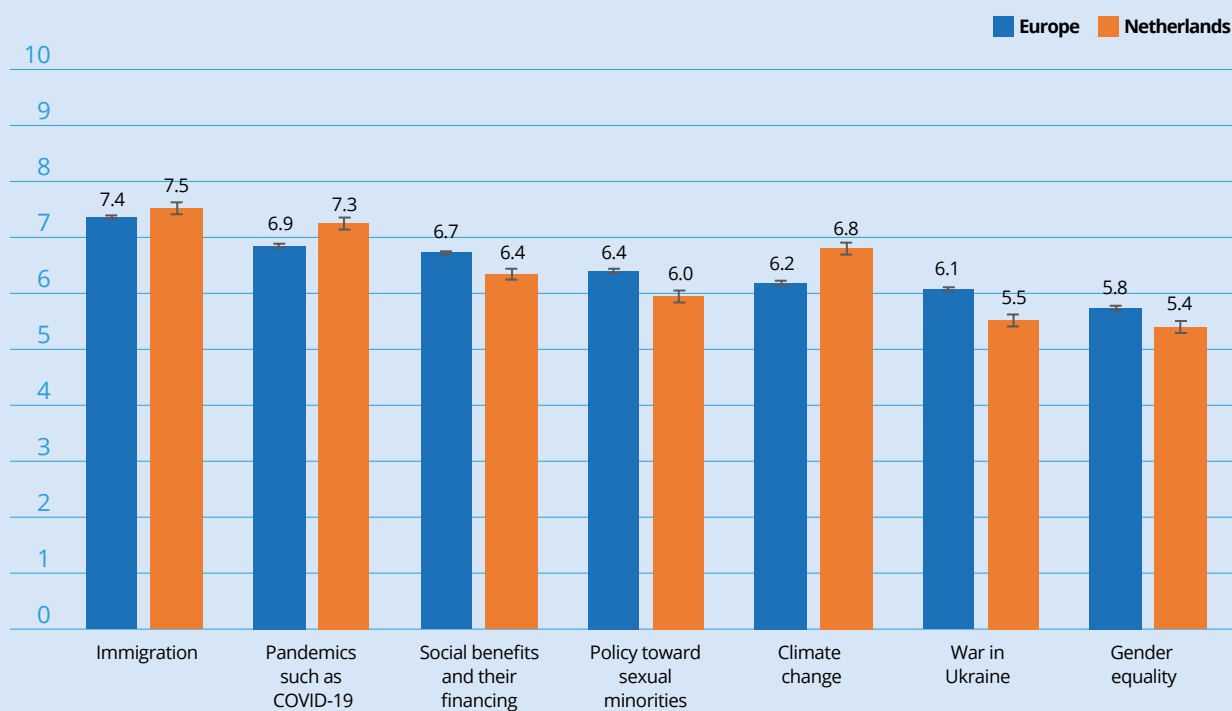


Note: The figures depicted here are average scores. Question: "How important are the following issues to you personally?" Respondents were asked to position themselves between "0 - Not at all important" and "10 - Very important." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Netherlands} = 2,095$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 7.4: Subjective perception of division by topic (average scores and confidence intervals)



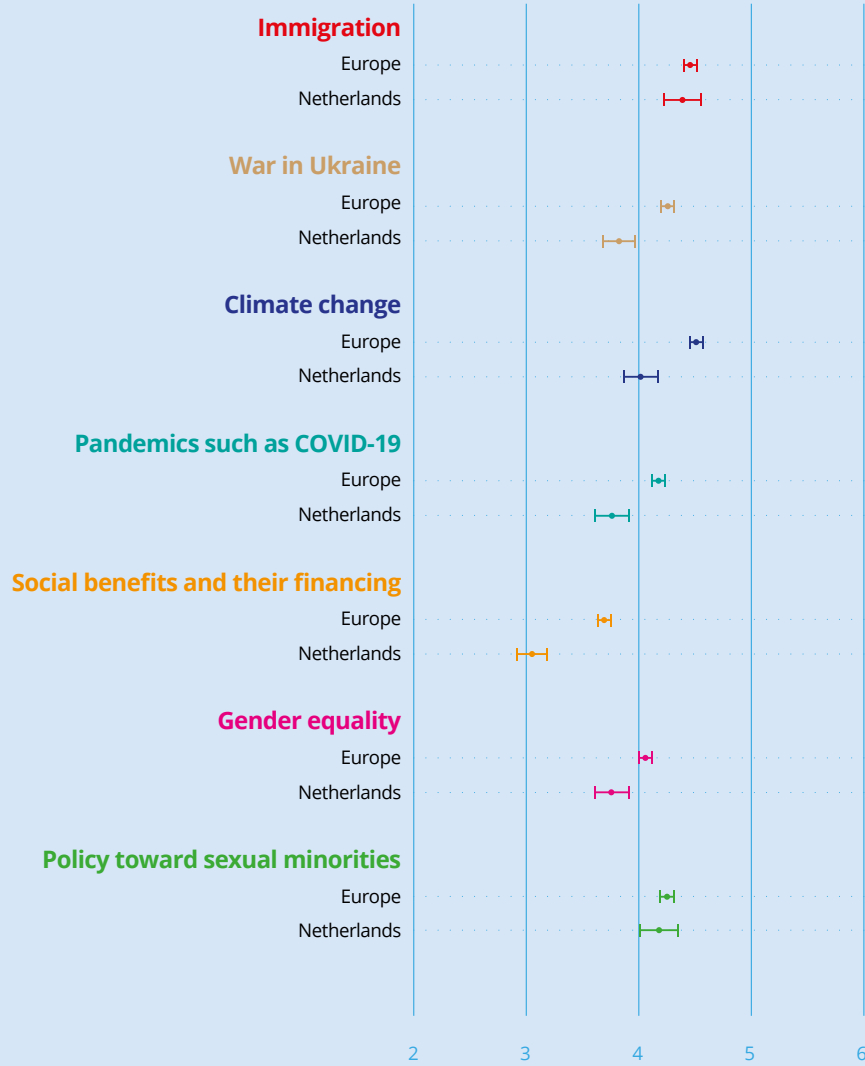
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

Question: "For which of the political issues addressed do you see a division in society? Please rate your answer on a scale from 0 (no division at all) to 10 (very strong division)." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region (n_{Europe} = at least 18,328; $n_{\text{Netherlands}}$ = at least 1,850; missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 7.5: Affective polarization by issue (average scores and confidence intervals)



Note: The figure depicts average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals. To calculate the affective polarization score within each issue area, we measured the total distance between the respondent's evaluations of two antagonistic groups of people. Respondents could rate the groups on a scale from "-5 -very cold and negative" to "+5 -very warm and positive." Thus, affective polarization scores can take values between 0 and 10. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Netherlands}} = 2,095$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 7.6: Average affective polarization scores in issue areas, by party affiliation (average scores and confidence intervals)

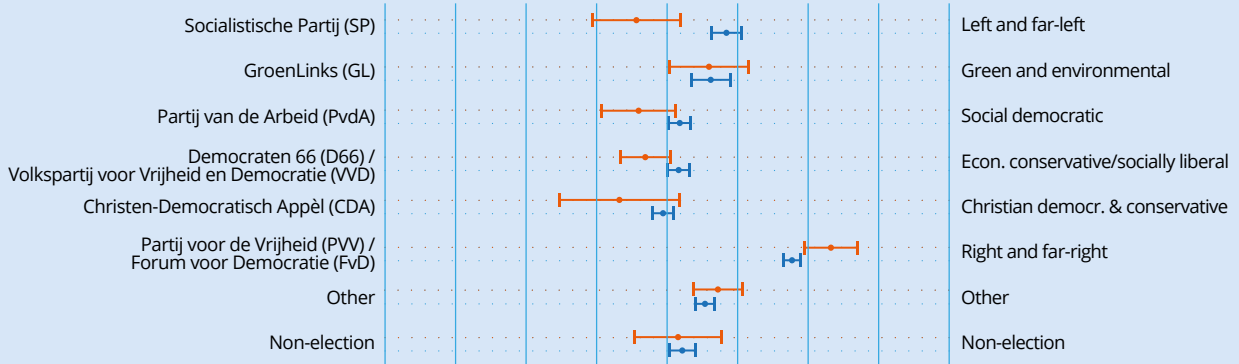
Netherlands

EUROPE

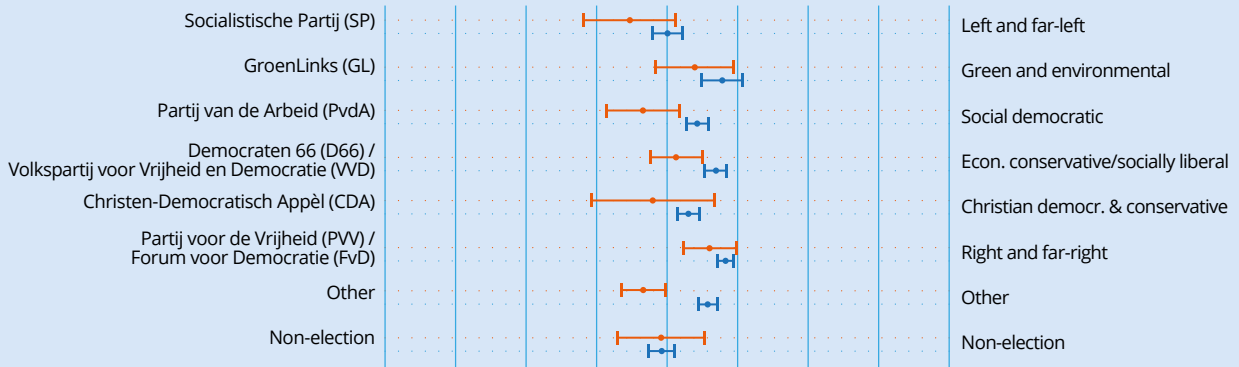
by party

Immigration

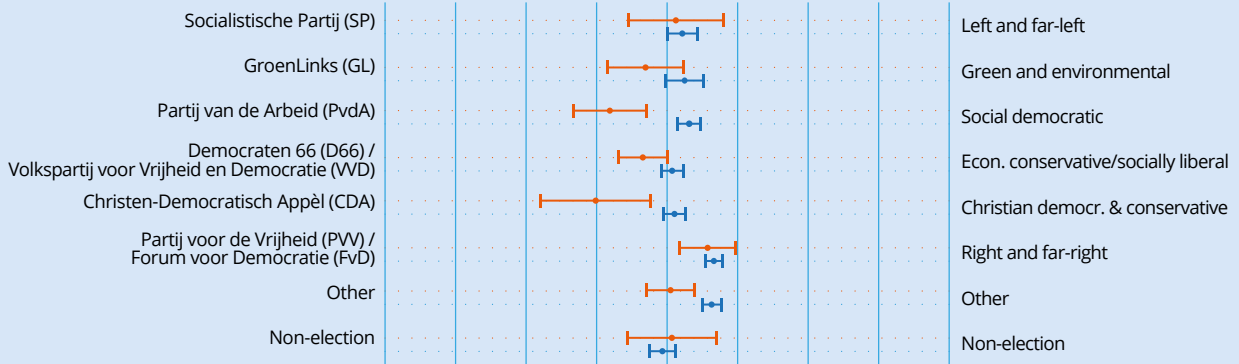
by party family



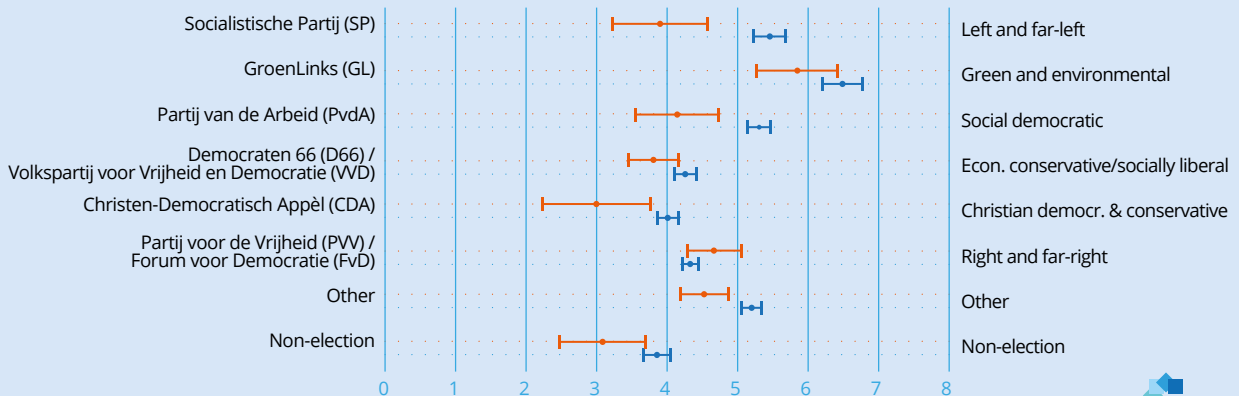
War in Ukraine



Pandemics such as COVID-19

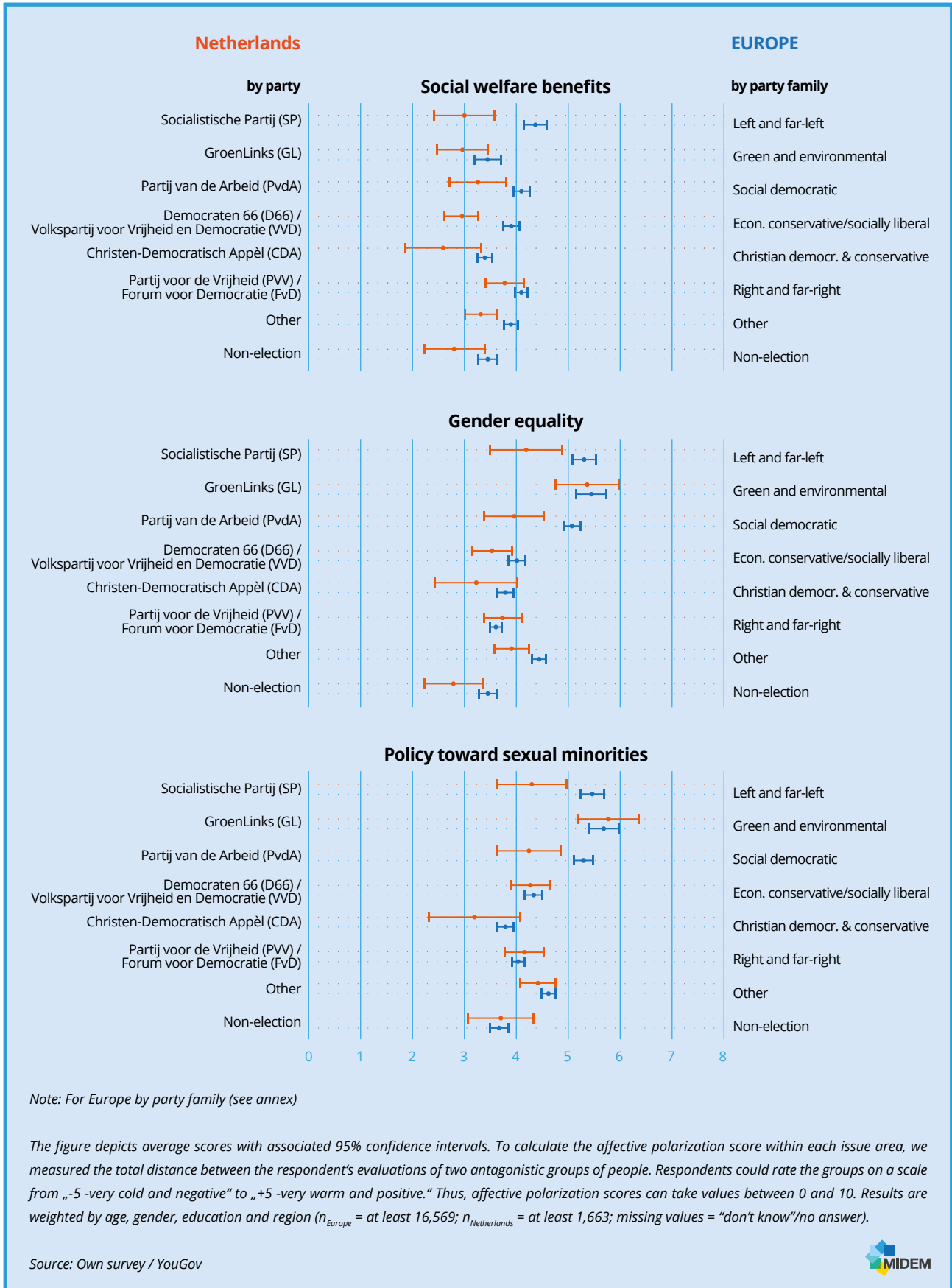


Climate change



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

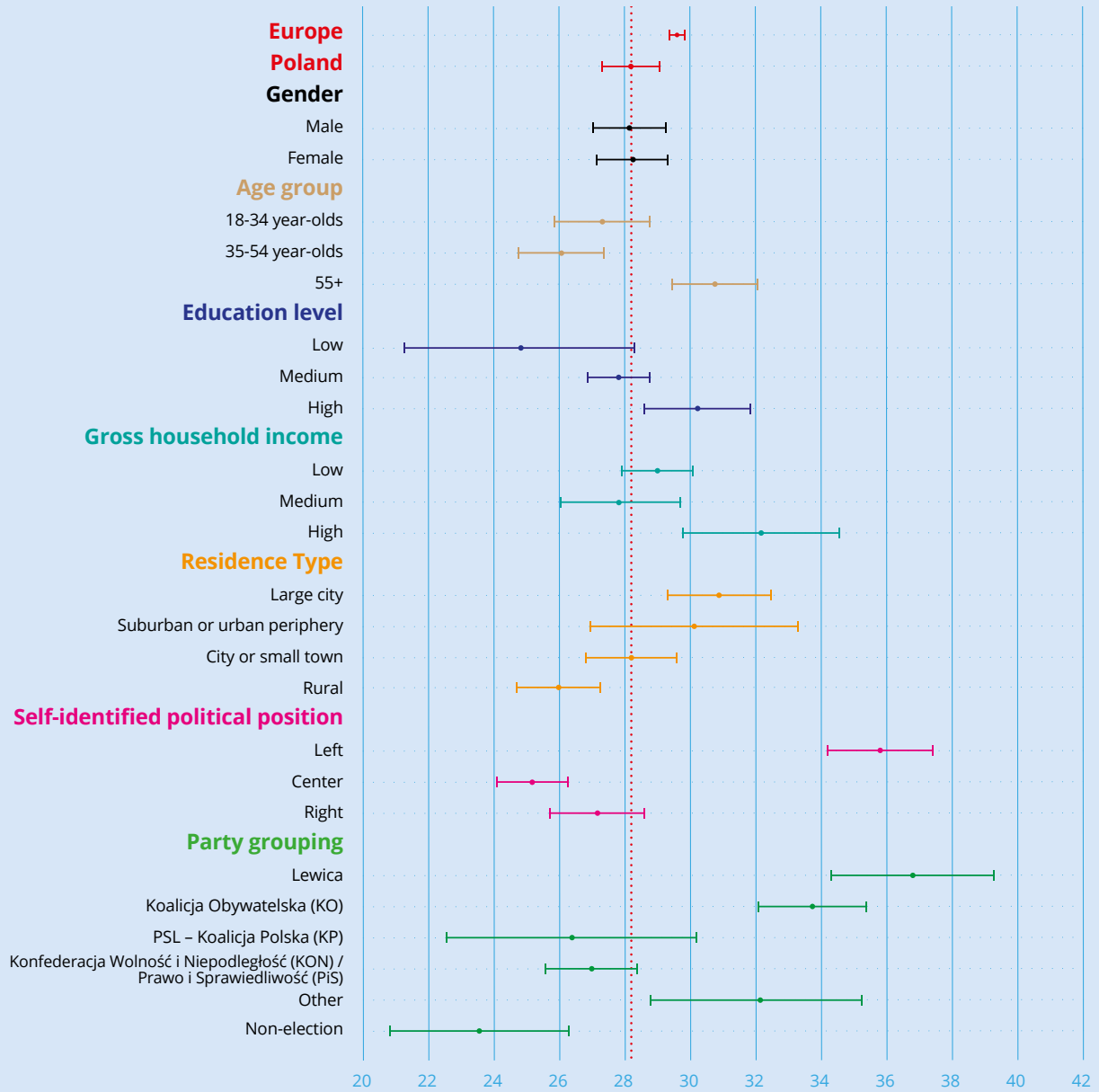






POLAND

Fig. 8.1: Polarization index in Poland by region, sociodemographic features and political characteristics (average scores and confidence intervals)



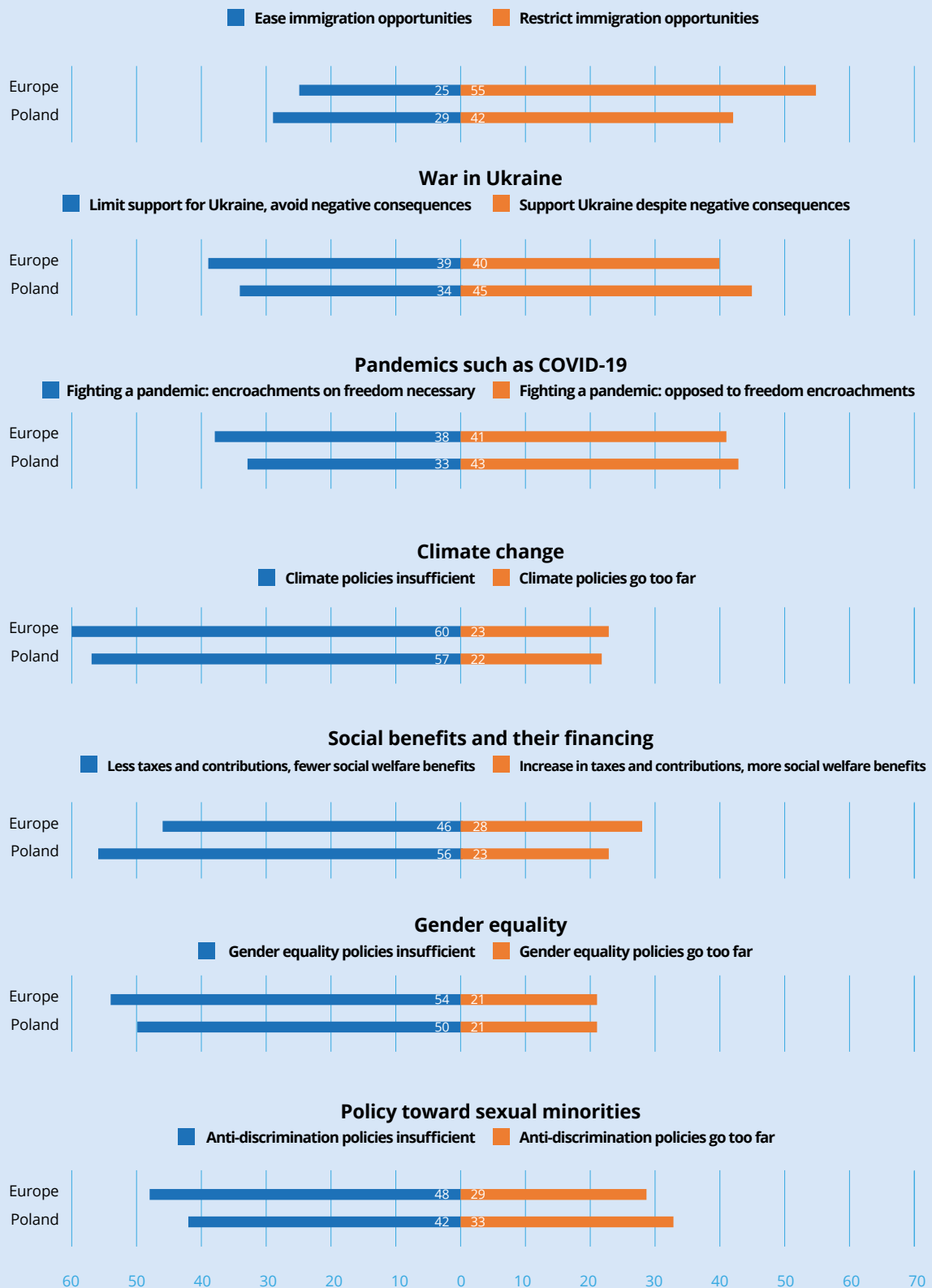
Note: Dots indicate the average group values on the polarization index with associated 95% confidence intervals, within different segments of the Polish population. The higher the value, the stronger the affective polarization.

To calculate affective polarization index values, respondents were asked to express their feelings toward two groups of people with opposing positions as a numerical evaluation. This was done for each of the seven issues. The distances between these two evaluations were calculated for each issue, and in a final step, the seven distance figures were added together. The index can thus take values between 0 and 70. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Poland} = 2,055$, except for gross household income and party groupings, where $n =$ at least 1,582. Missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



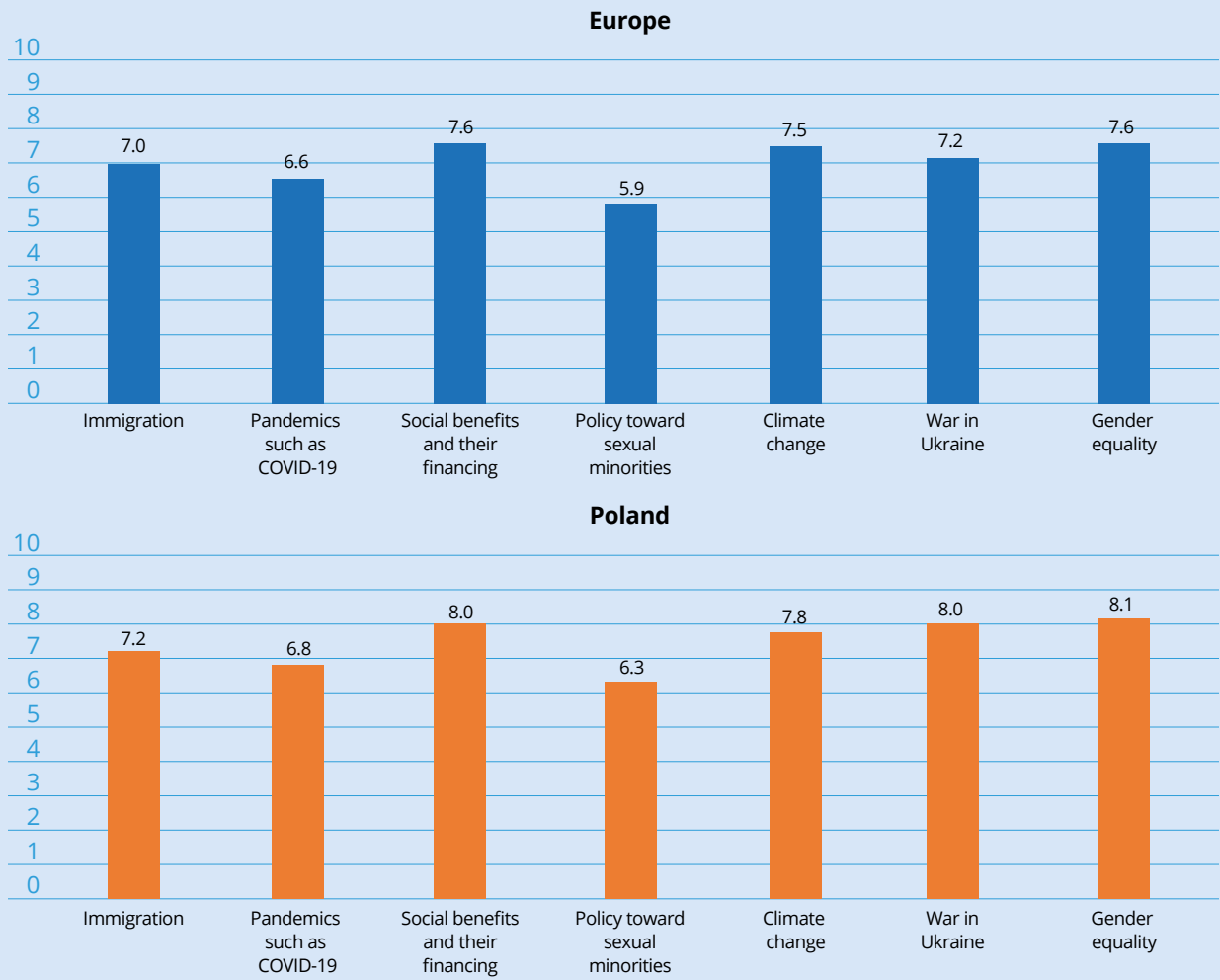
Fig. 8.2: Attitudes toward various topics in Poland and Europe (%)



Note: Bars in this chart represent the percentages of individuals who lean in one direction for each of the seven different questions, meaning their response to each question fell within the range of either 0 to 4 or 6 to 10. The original wording of the individual positions can be found in Chapter 2. The results have been weighted to account for factors such as age, gender, education and region. The sample sizes are as follows: $n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Poland}} = 2,055$. Missing values are attributed to those who were undecided (response category 5) or those who provided no response ("don't know" or no response).

Source: Own survey / YouGov

Fig. 8.3: Saliency of various issue areas in Poland and Europe (average scores)



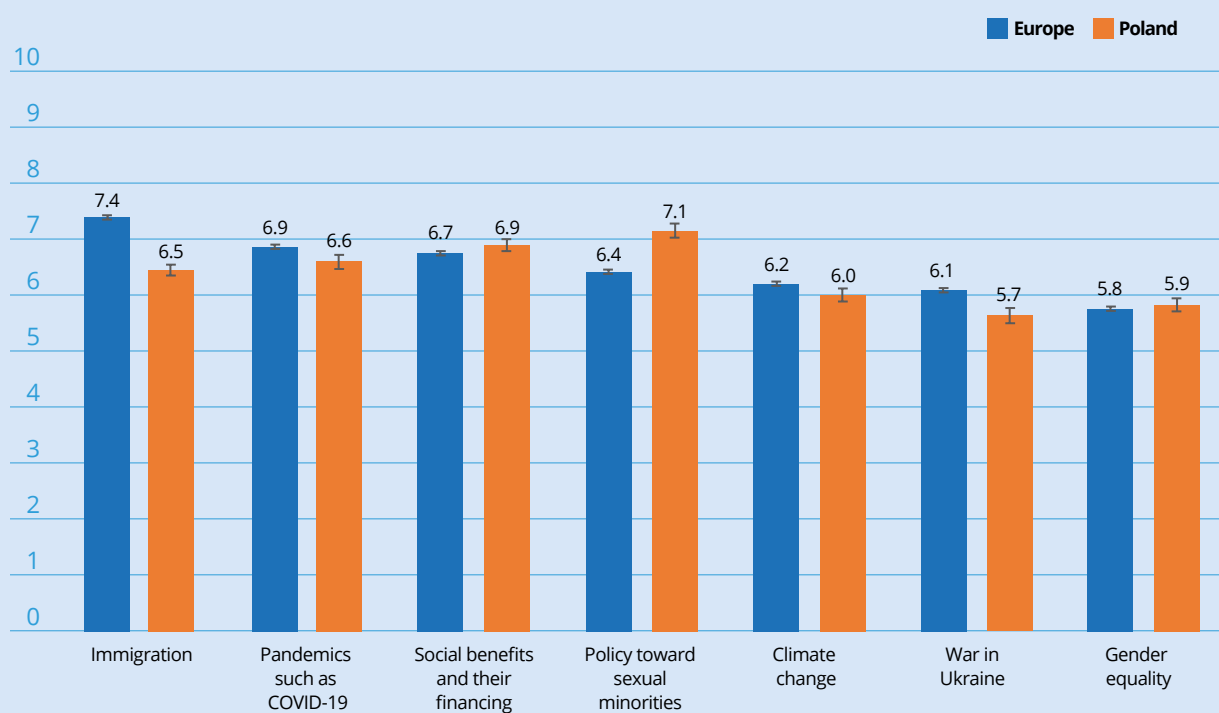
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores.

Question: "How important are the following issues to you personally?" Respondents were asked to position themselves between "0 - Not at all important" and "10 - Very important." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Poland} = 2,055$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 8.4: Subjective perception of division by topic (average scores and confidence intervals)



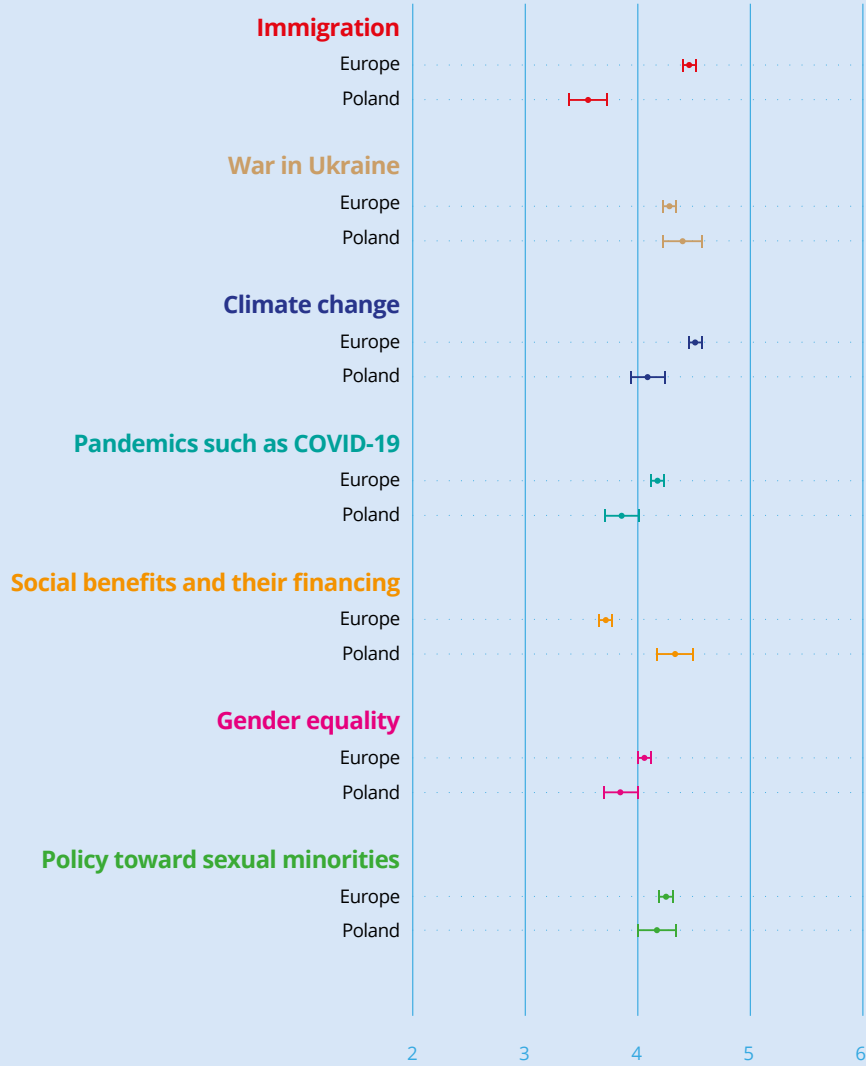
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

Question: "For which of the political issues addressed do you see a division in society? Please rate your answer on a scale from 0 (no division at all) to 10 (very strong division)." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region (n_{Europe} = at least 18,328; n_{Poland} = at least 1,765; missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 8.5: Affective polarization by issue (average scores and confidence intervals)



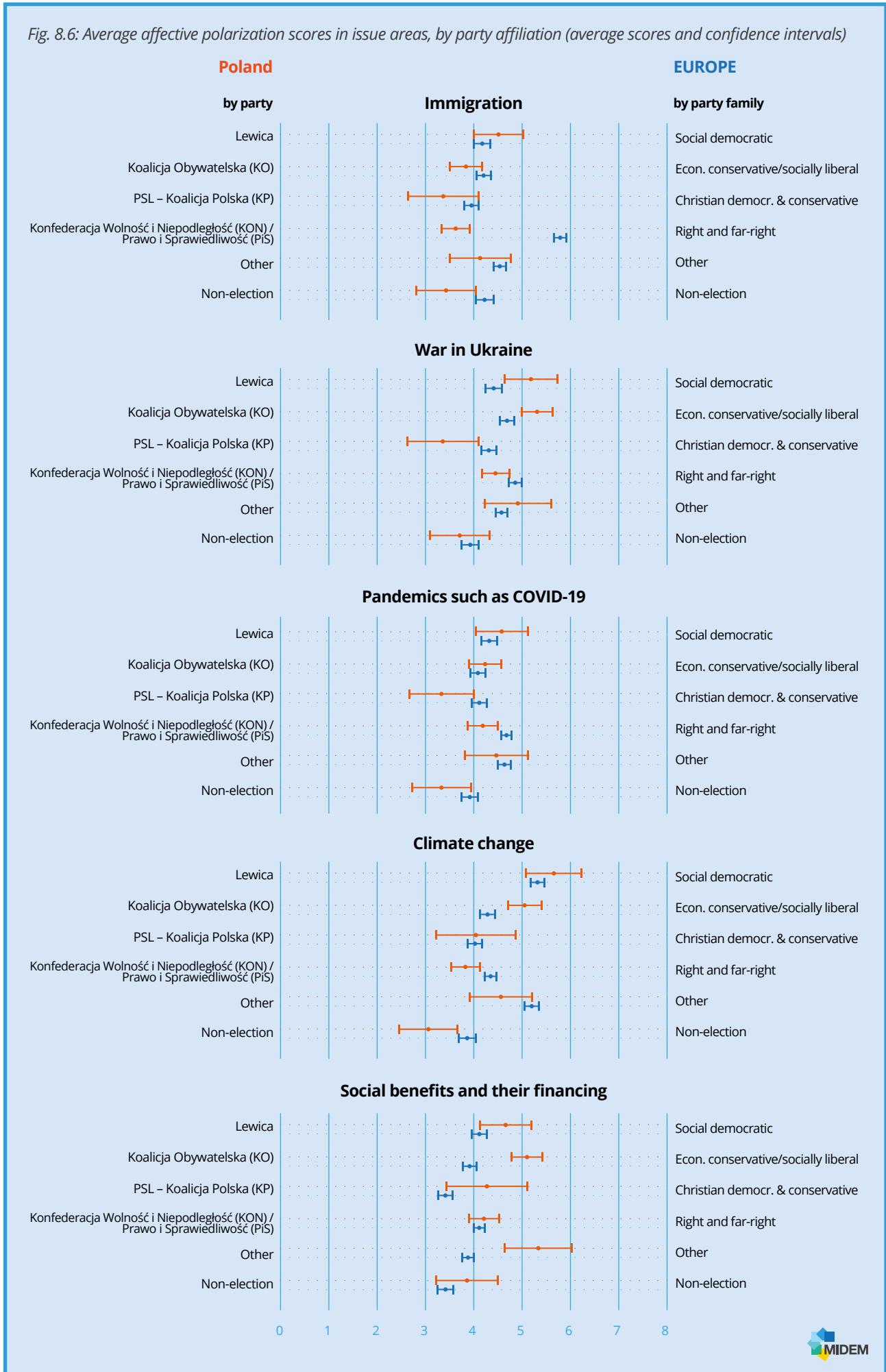
Note: The figure depicts average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

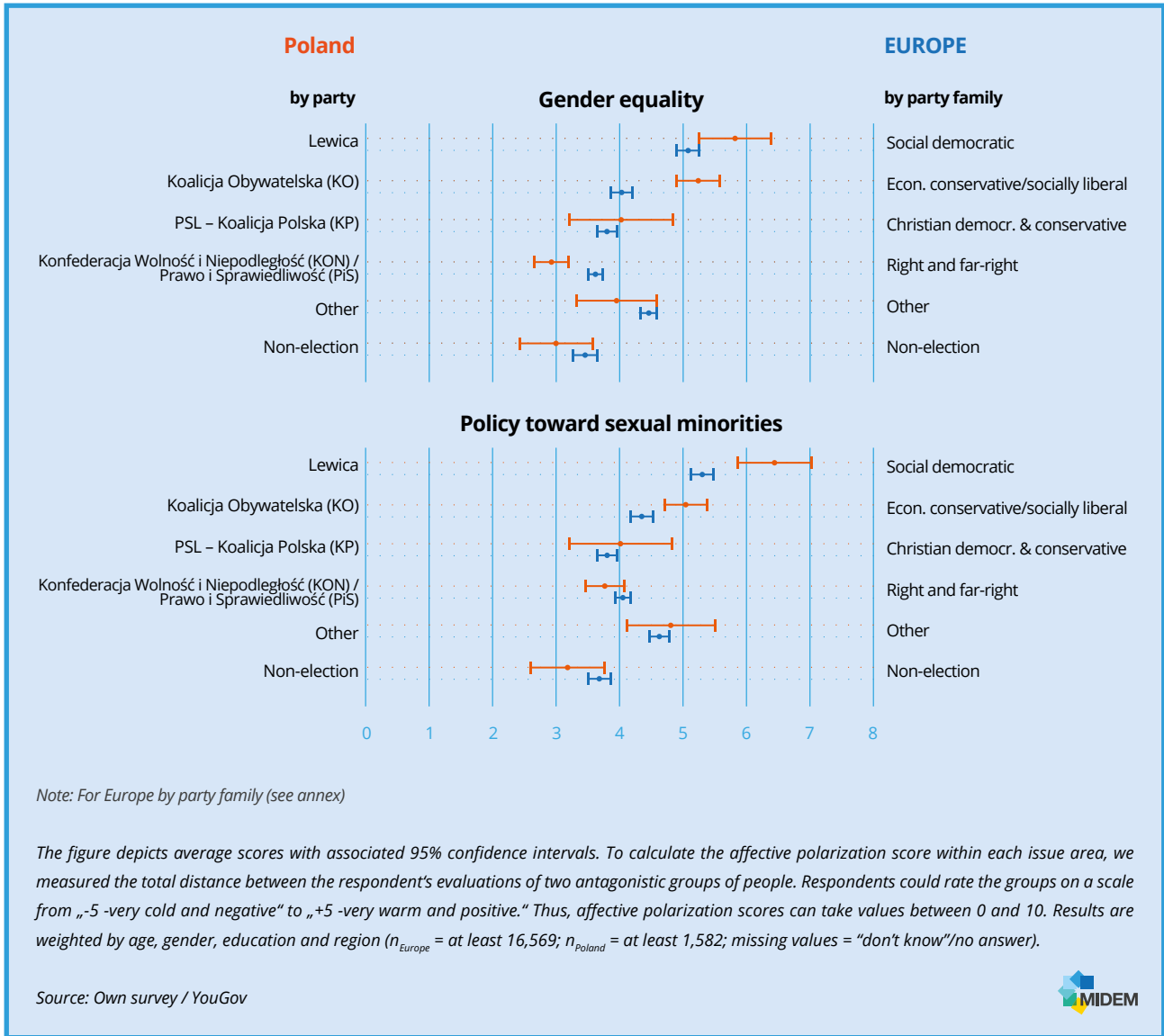
To calculate the affective polarization score within each issue area, we measured the total distance between the respondent's evaluations of two antagonistic groups of people. Respondents could rate the groups on a scale from "-5 -very cold and negative" to "+5 -very warm and positive." Thus, affective polarization scores can take values between 0 and 10. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Poland}} = 2,055$).

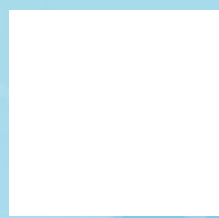
Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 8.6: Average affective polarization scores in issue areas, by party affiliation (average scores and confidence intervals)

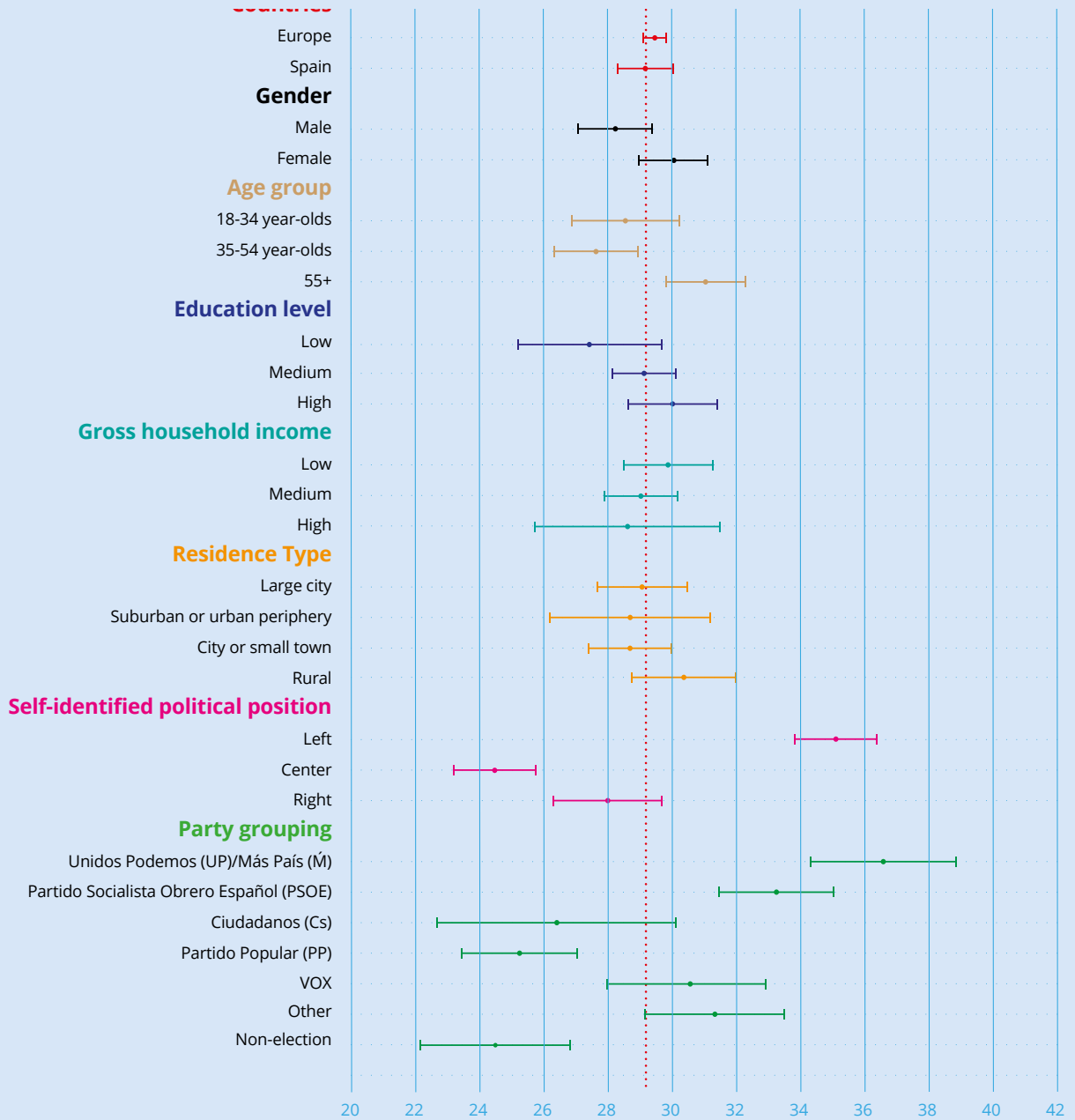






SPAIN

Fig. 9.1: Polarization index in Spain by region, sociodemographic features and political characteristics (average scores and confidence intervals)



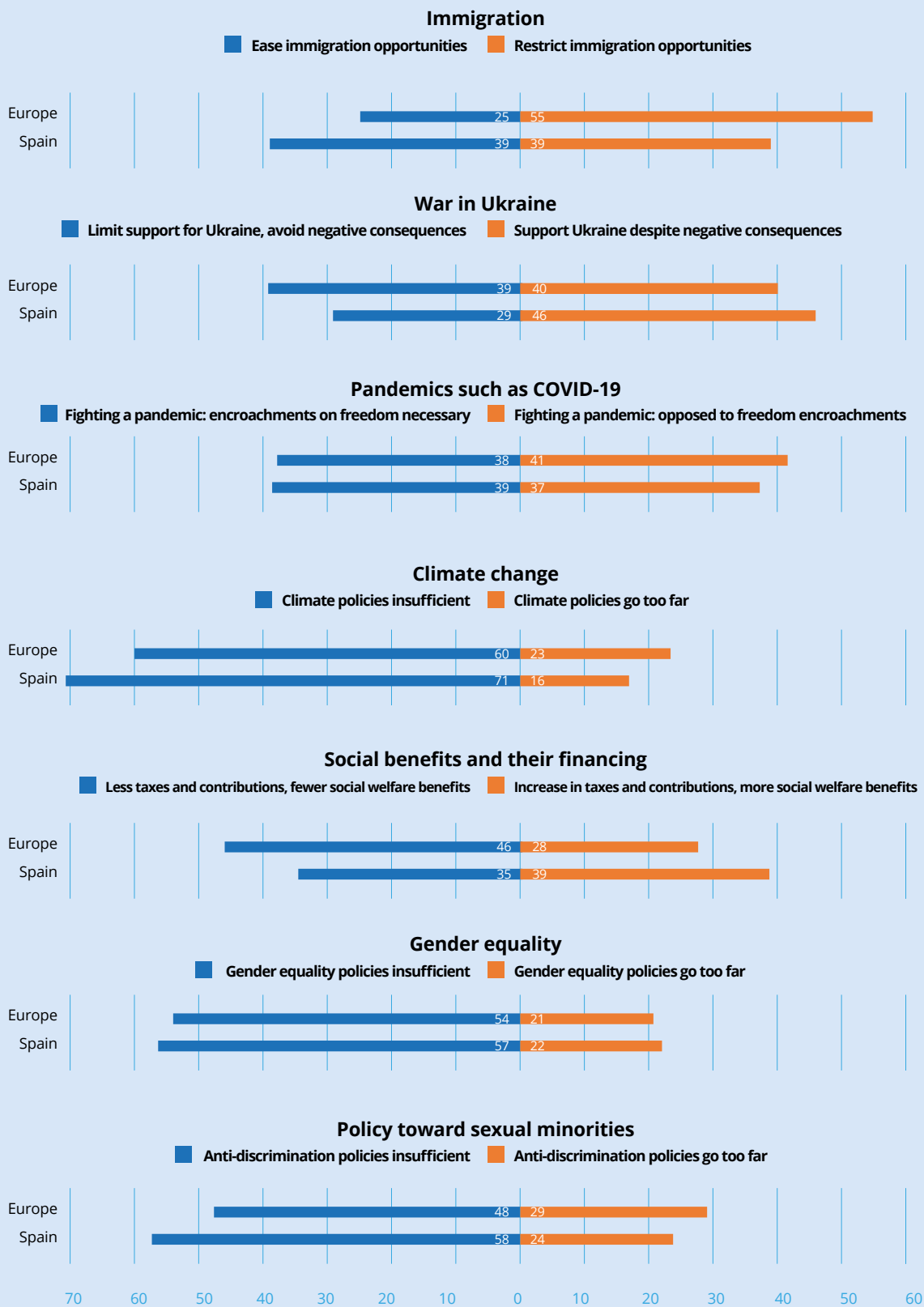
Note: Dots indicate the average group values on the polarization index with associated 95% confidence intervals, within different segments of the Spanish population. The higher the value, the stronger the affective polarization.

To calculate affective polarization index values, respondents were asked to express their feelings toward two groups of people with opposing positions as a numerical evaluation. This was done for each of the seven issues. The distances between these two evaluations were calculated for each issue, and in a final step, the seven distance figures were added together. The index can thus take values between 0 and 70. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Spain} = 2,105$, except for gross household income and party groupings, where $n =$ at least 1,730. Missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 9.2: Attitudes toward various topics in Spain and Europe (%)

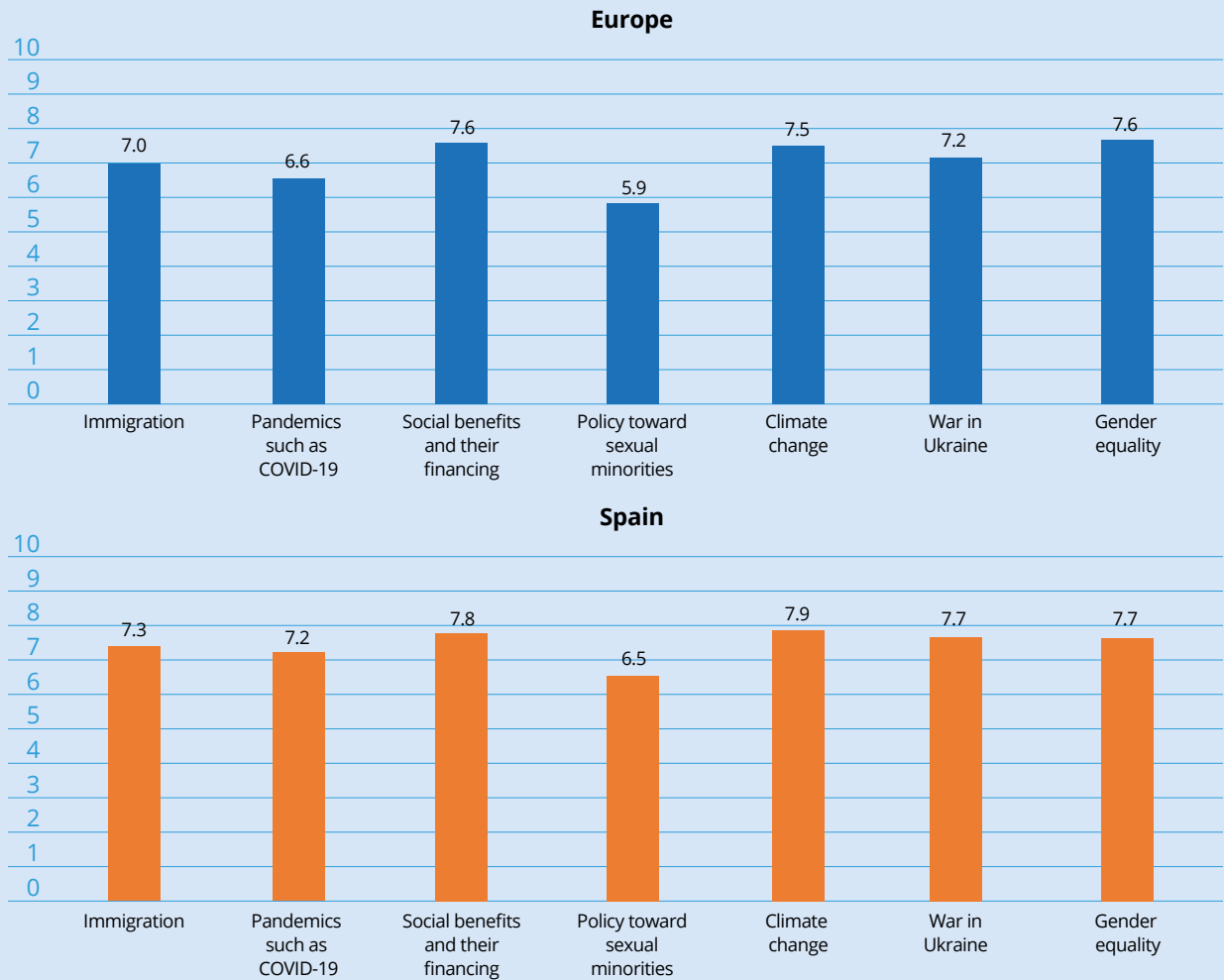


Note: Bars in this chart represent the percentages of individuals who lean in one direction for each of the seven different questions, meaning their response to each question fell within the range of either 0 to 4 or 6 to 10. The original wording of the individual positions can be found in Chapter 2. The results have been weighted to account for factors such as age, gender, education and region. The sample sizes are as follows: $n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Spain}} = 2,105$. Missing values are attributed to those who were undecided (response category 5) or those who provided no response ("don't know" or no response).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 9.3: Salience of various issue areas in Spain and Europe (average scores)

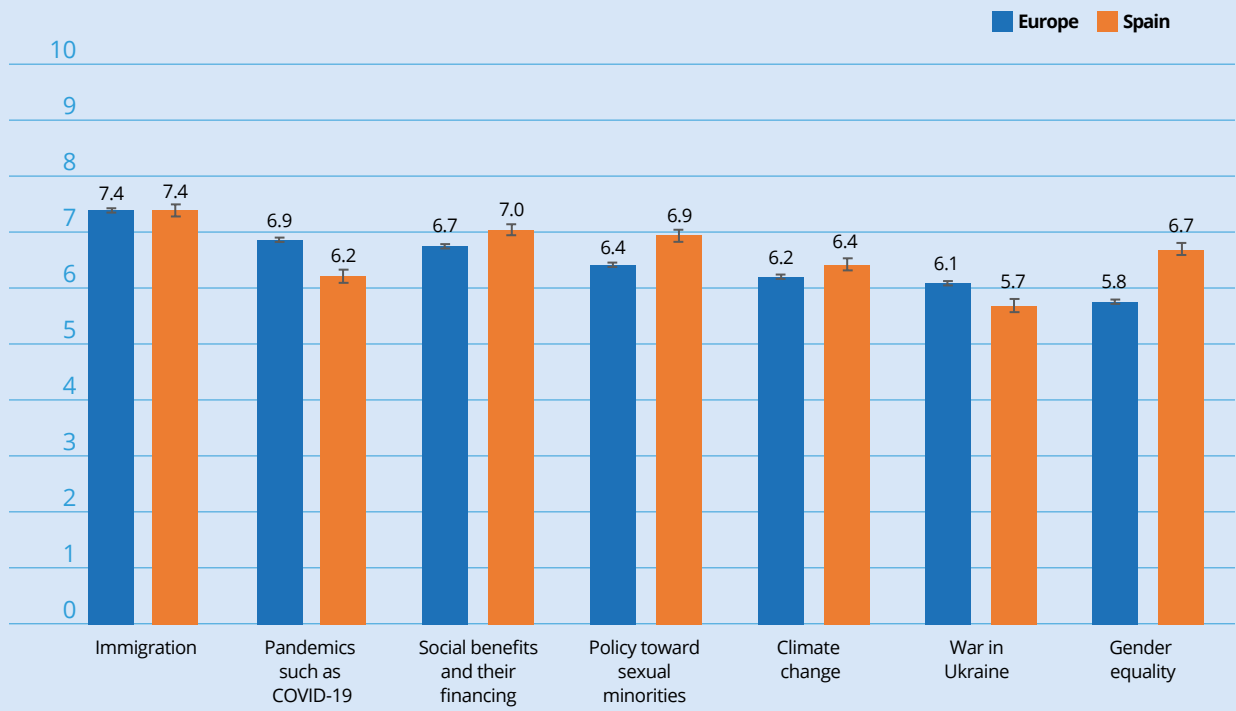


Note: The figures depicted here are average scores. Question: "How important are the following issues to you personally?" Respondents were asked to position themselves between "0 - Not at all important" and "10 - Very important." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{Europe} = 20,449$; $n_{Spain} = 2,105$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 9.4: Subjective perception of division by topic (average scores and confidence intervals)



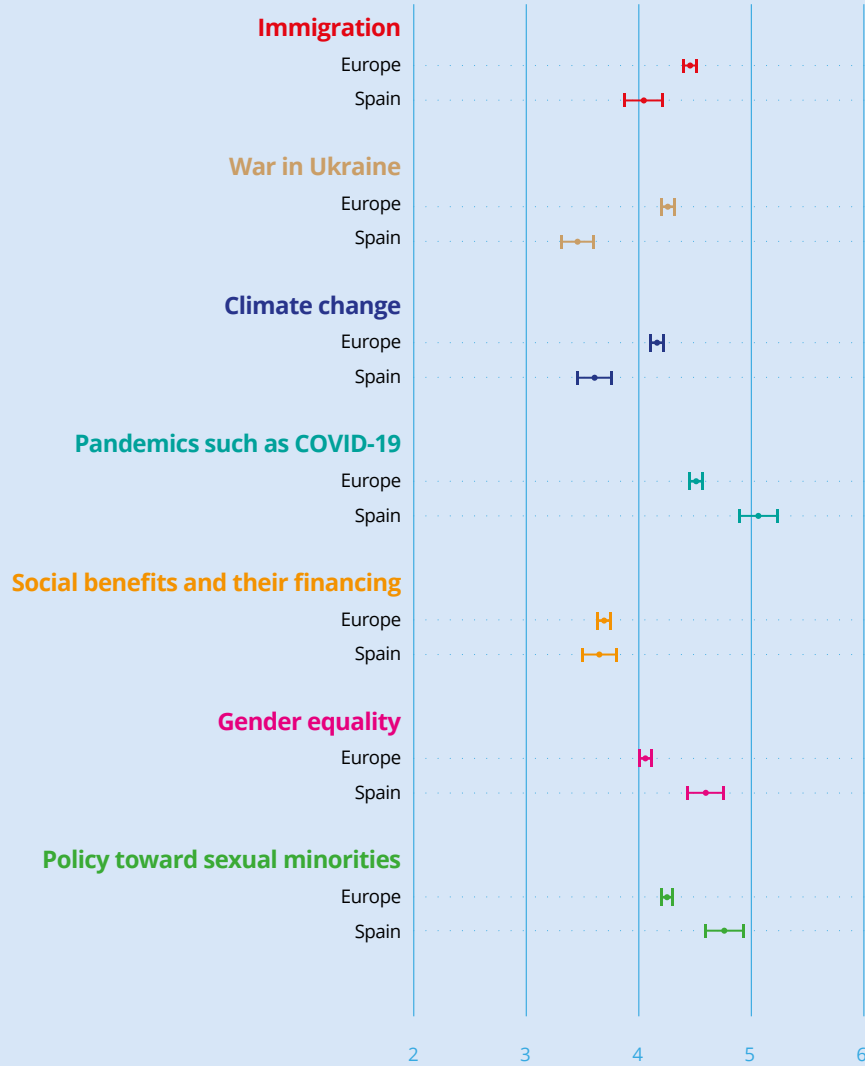
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

Question: "For which of the political issues addressed do you see a division in society? Please rate your answer on a scale from 0 (no division at all) to 10 (very strong division)." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region (n_{Europe} = at least 18,328; n_{Spain} = at least 1,887; missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 9.5: Affective polarization by issue (average scores and confidence intervals)



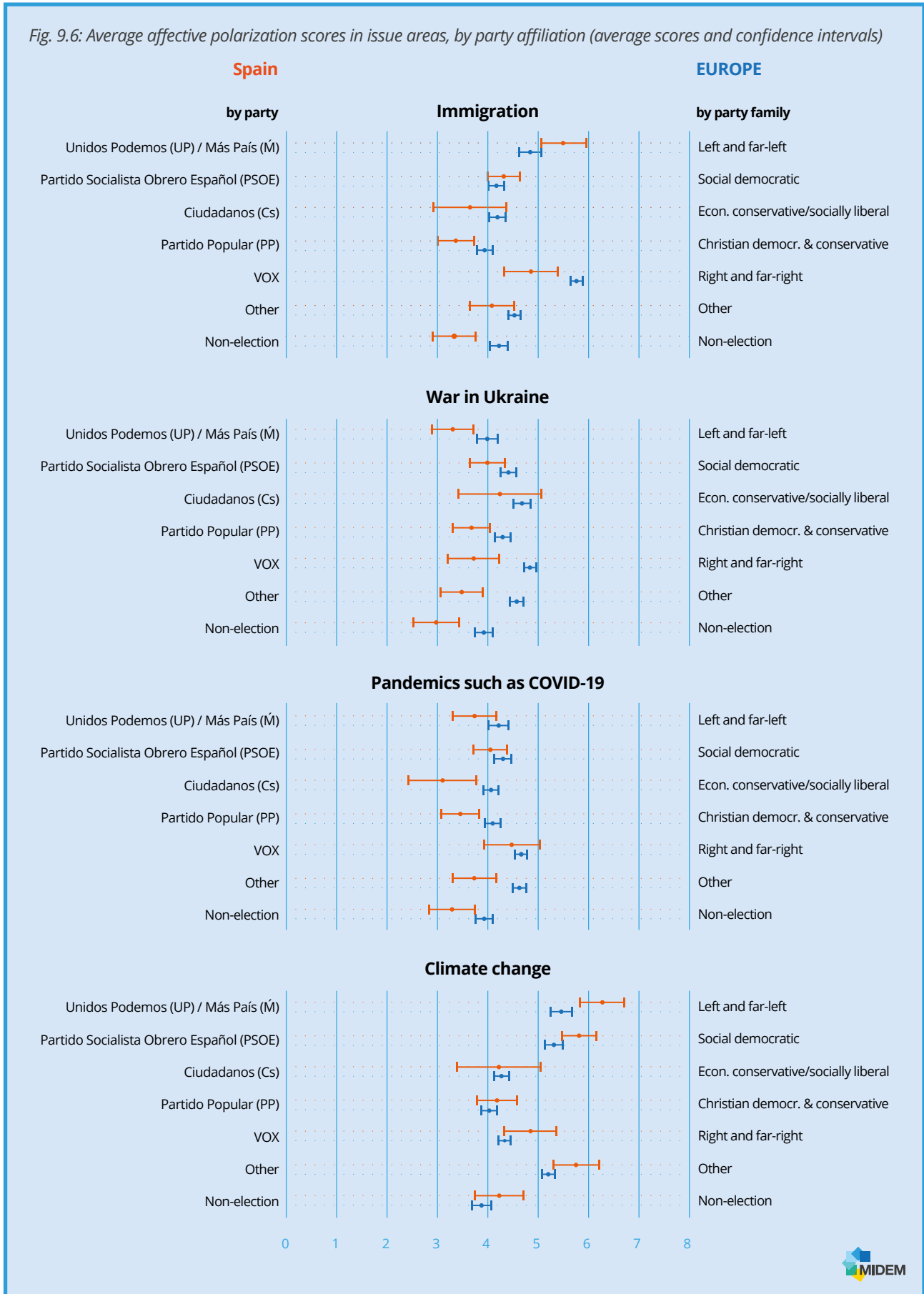
Note: The figure depicts average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

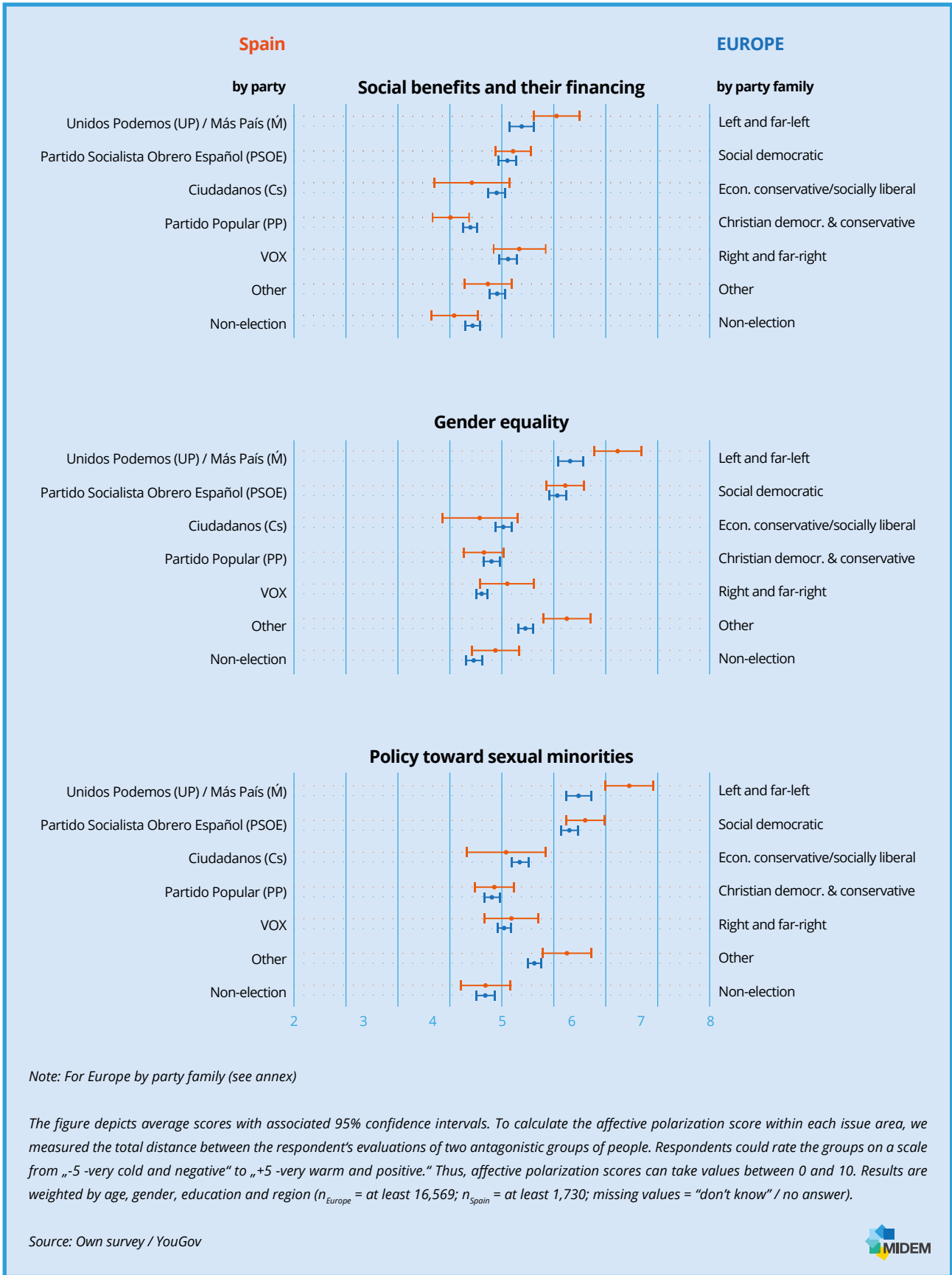
To calculate the affective polarization score within each issue area, we measured the total distance between the respondent's evaluations of two antagonistic groups of people. Respondents could rate the groups on a scale from "-5 -very cold and negative" to "+5 -very warm and positive." Thus, affective polarization scores can take values between 0 and 10. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Spain}} = 2,105$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 9.6: Average affective polarization scores in issue areas, by party affiliation (average scores and confidence intervals)

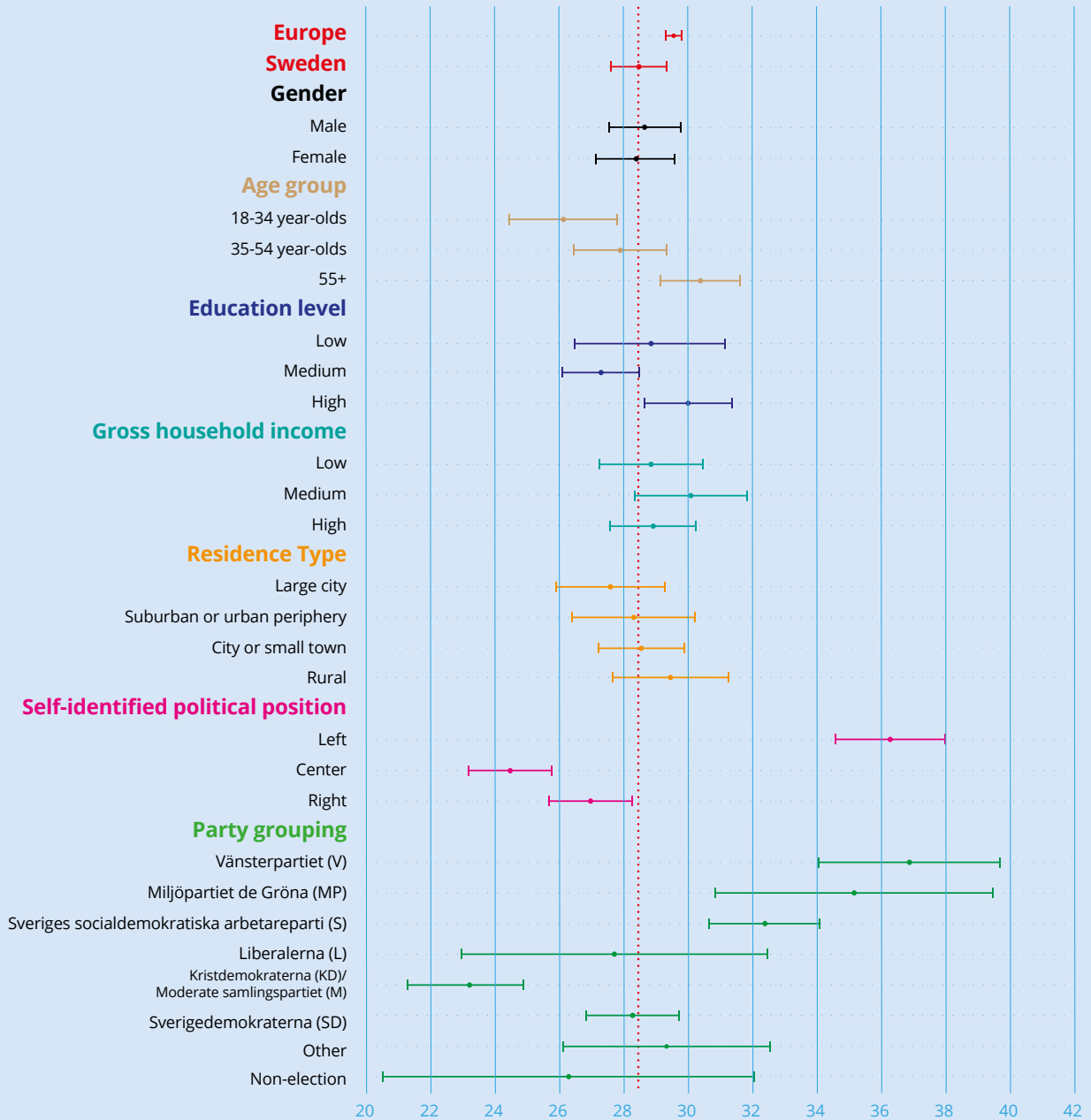




10

SWEDEN

Fig. 10.1: Polarization index in Sweden by region, sociodemographic features and political characteristics (average scores and confidence intervals)



Note: Dots indicate the average group values on the polarization index with associated 95% confidence intervals, within different segments of the Swedish population. The higher the value, the stronger the affective polarization.

To calculate affective polarization index values, respondents were asked to express their feelings toward two groups of people with opposing positions as a numerical evaluation. This was done for each of the seven issues. The distances between these two evaluations were calculated for each issue, and in a final step, the seven distance figures were added together. The index can thus take values between 0 and 70. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Sweden}} = 2,106$, except for gross household income and party groupings, where $n =$ at least 1,739. Missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 10.2: Attitudes toward various topics in Sweden and Europe (%)

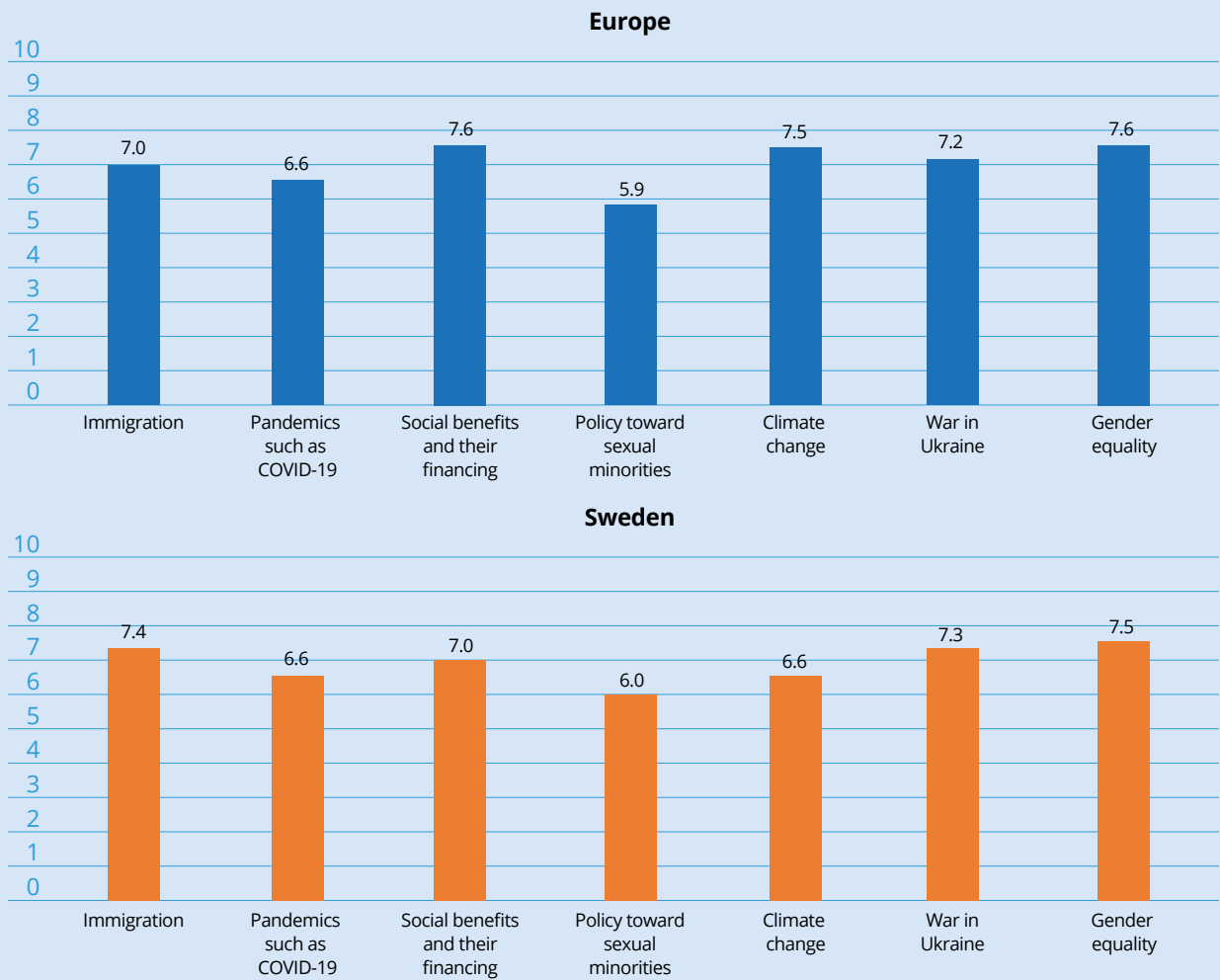


Note: Bars in this chart represent the percentages of individuals who lean in one direction for each of the seven different questions, meaning their response to each question fell within the range of either 0 to 4 or 6 to 10. The original wording of the individual positions can be found in Chapter 2. The results have been weighted to account for factors such as age, gender, education and region. The sample sizes are as follows: $n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Sweden}} = 2,106$. Missing values are attributed to those who were undecided (response category 5) or those who provided no response ("don't know" or no response).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 10.3: Salience of various issue areas in Sweden and Europe (average scores)



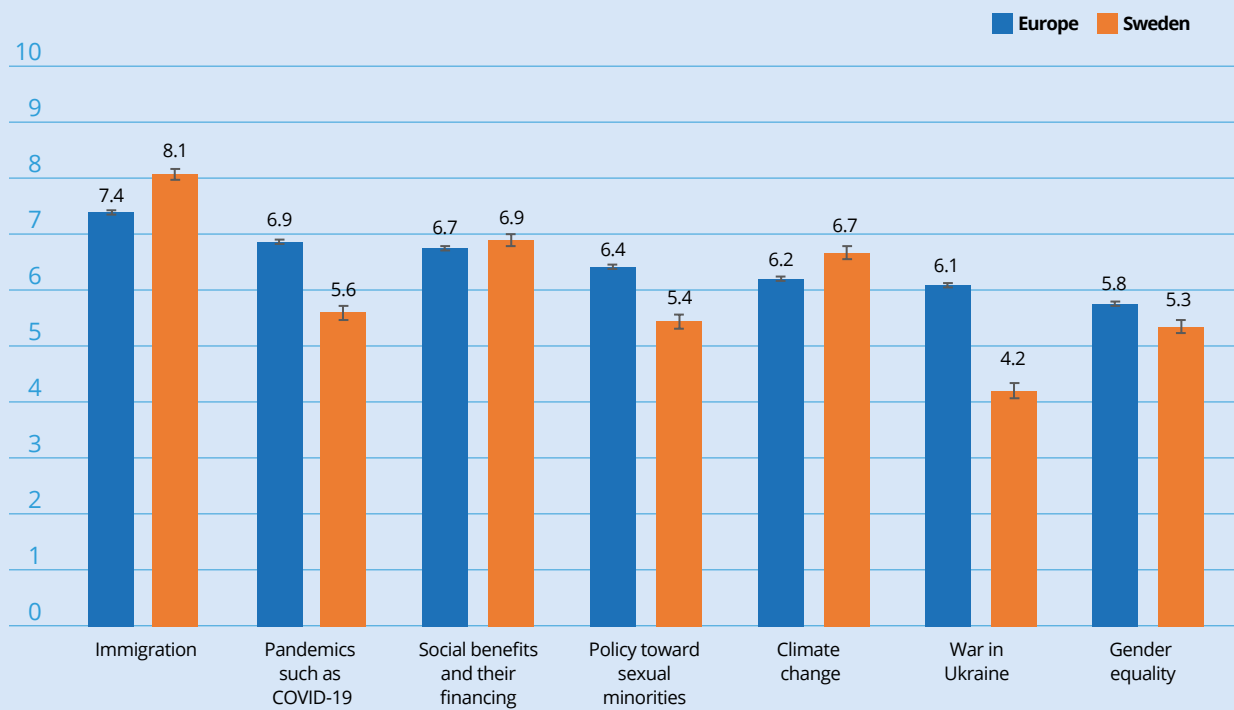
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores.

Question: "How important are the following issues to you personally?" Respondents were asked to position themselves between "0 - Not at all important" and "10 - Very important." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Sweden}} = 2,106$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 10.4: Subjective perception of division by topic (average scores and confidence intervals)



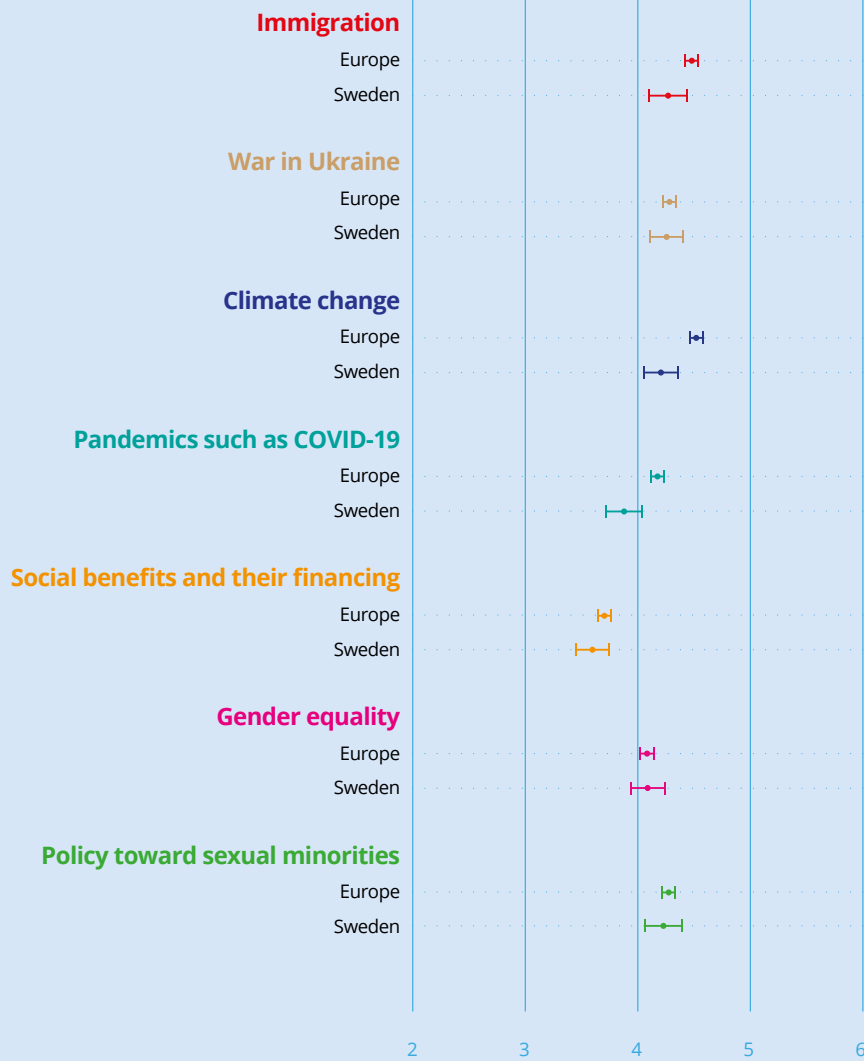
Note: The figures depicted here are average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

Question: "For which of the political issues addressed do you see a division in society? Please rate your answer on a scale from 0 (no division at all) to 10 (very strong division)." Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region (n_{Europe} = at least 18,328; n_{Sweden} = at least 1,777; missing values = "don't know"/no answer).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 10.5: Affective polarization by issue (average scores and confidence intervals)



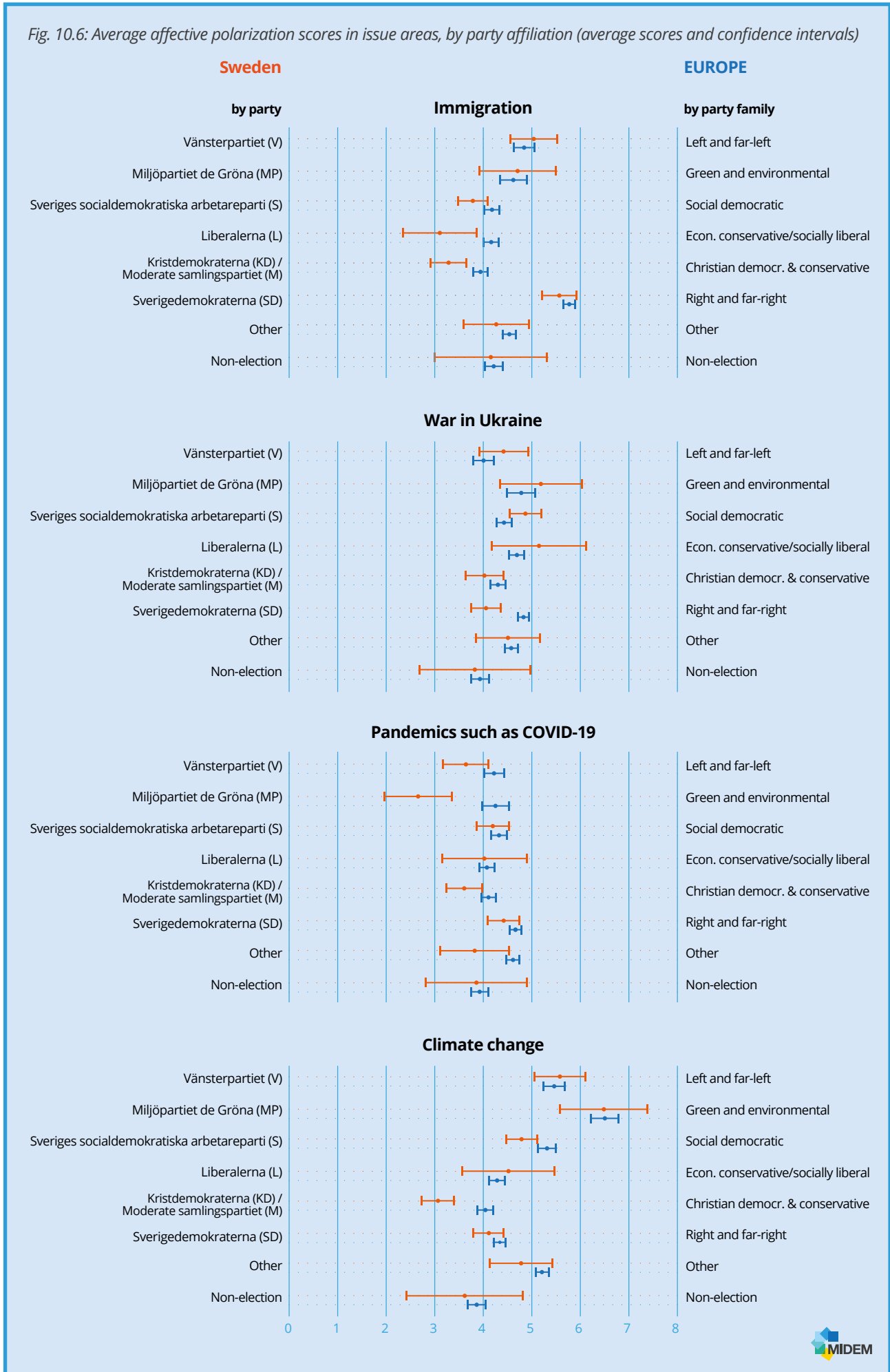
Note: The figure depicts average scores with associated 95% confidence intervals.

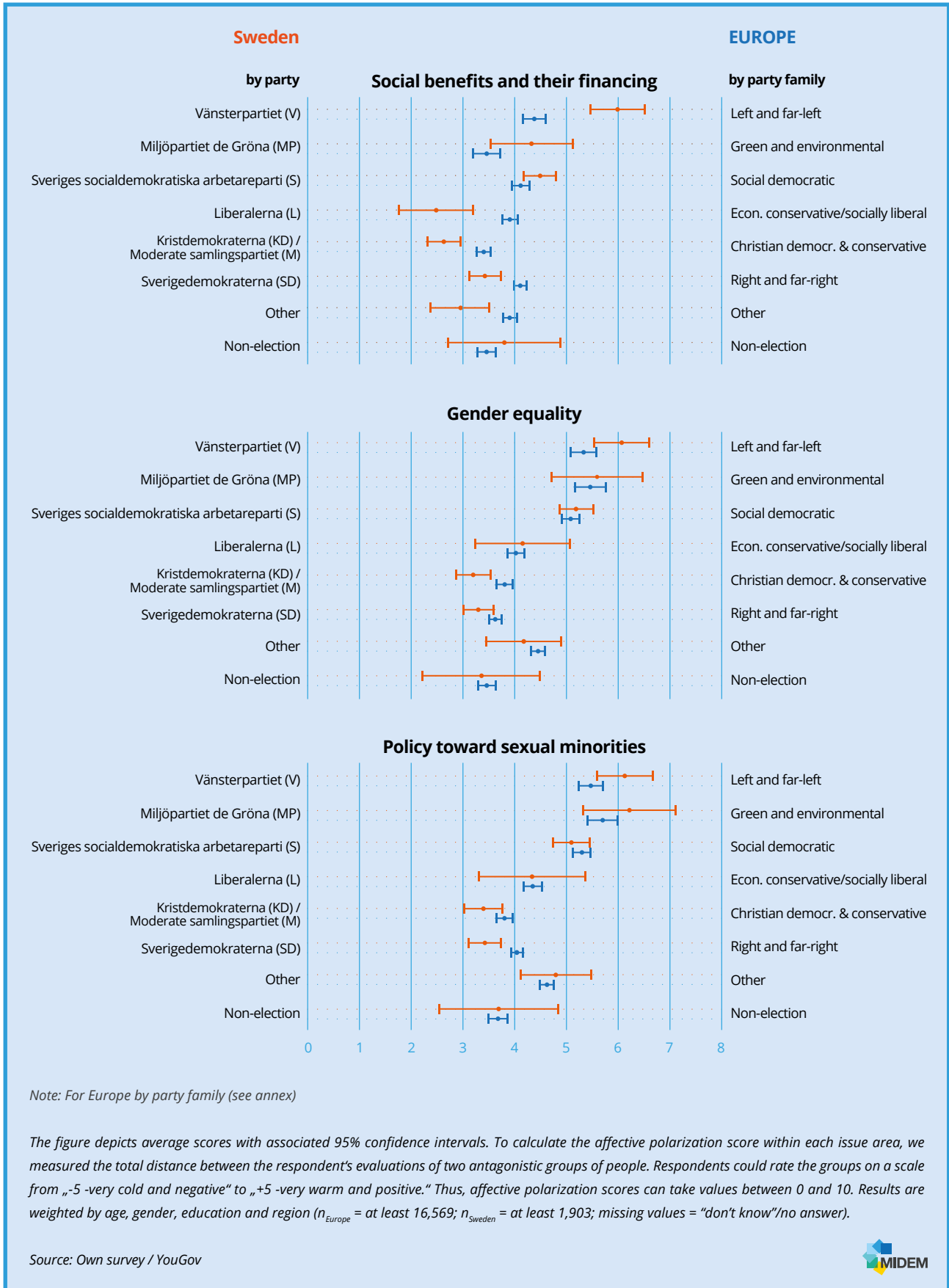
To calculate the affective polarization score within each issue area, we measured the total distance between the respondent's evaluations of two antagonistic groups of people. Respondents could rate the groups on a scale from "-5 -very cold and negative" to "+5 -very warm and positive." Thus, affective polarization scores can take values between 0 and 10. Results are weighted by age, gender, education and region ($n_{\text{Europe}} = 20,449$; $n_{\text{Sweden}} = 2,106$).

Source: Own survey / YouGov



Fig. 10.6: Average affective polarization scores in issue areas, by party affiliation (average scores and confidence intervals)





ANNEX

Party family	Country	Party
Left and far-left	DE	Die Linke
Left and far-left	FR	Mélenchon (FI)
Left and far-left	GR	Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras (SYRIZA)
Left and far-left	GR	Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas (KKE)
Left and far-left	NL	Socialistische Partij (SP)
Left and far-left	SE	Vänsterpartiet (V)
Left and far-left	ES	Unidos Podemos (UP)
Left and far-left	ES	Más País (M)
Green and environmental	DE	Bündnis 90/Die Grünen
Green and environmental	FR	Jadot (EELV)
Green and environmental	IT	Nuove Energie (NE)
Green and environmental	GR	Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 (MeRA25)
Green and environmental	NL	GroenLinks (GL)
Green and environmental	SE	Miljöpartiet de Gröna (MP)
Social democratic	DE	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD)
Social democratic	GR	Kínima Allagis (KINAL)
Social democratic	IT	Partito Democratico (PD)
Social democratic	IT	Liberi e Uguali (LeU)
Social democratic	NL	Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA)
Social democratic	PL	Lewica
Social democratic	SE	Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti (S)
Social democratic	ES	Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)
Liberal	DE	Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP)
Liberal	FR	Macron (LREM)
Liberal	IT	Italia Viva (IV)
Liberal	IT	Più Europa (+EU)
Liberal	NL	Democraten 66 (D66)
Liberal	NL	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VD)
Liberal	PL	Koalicja Obywatelska (KO)
Liberal	SE	Liberalerna (L)
Liberal	ES	Ciudadanos (Cs)
Liberal	CZ	Politické hnutí ANO 2011 (ANO)
Conservative and Christian democrat	DE	Union (CDU & CSU)
Conservative and Christian democrat	FR	Lassalle (R)
Conservative and Christian democrat	FR	Pécresse (LR)
Conservative and Christian democrat	GR	Nea Dimokratia (ND)
Conservative and Christian democrat	IT	Forza Italia (FI)
Conservative and Christian democrat	NL	Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA)
Conservative and Christian democrat	PL	PSL – Koalicja Polska (KP)
Conservative and Christian democrat	SE	Kristdemokraterna (KD)
Conservative and Christian democrat	SE	Moderate samlingspartiet (M)
Conservative and Christian democrat	ES	Partido Popular (PP)
Conservative and Christian democrat	CZ	SPOLU
Conservative and Christian democrat	HU	Mindenki Magyarországa Mozgalom (MMM)
Right and far-right	DE	Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)
Right and far-right	FR	Le Pen (RN)
Right and far-right	FR	Zemmour (REC)
Right and far-right	GR	Elliniki Lysi (EL)
Right and far-right	IT	Fratelli d'Italia (FDI)
Right and far-right	IT	Lega
Right and far-right	NL	Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)

Party family	Country	Party
Right and far-right	NL	Forum voor Democratie (FvD)
Right and far-right	PL	Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość (KON)
Right and far-right	PL	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS)
Right and far-right	SE	Sverigedemokraterna (SD)
Right and far-right	ES	VOX
Right and far-right	CZ	Svoboda a přímá demokracie (SPD)
Right and far-right	HU	Fidesz
Right and far-right	HU	Mi Hazánk Mozgalom (MHM)

Other	NL	Forum voor Democratie (FvD)
Other	PL	Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość (KON)
Other	PL	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS)
Other	SE	Sverigedemokraterna (SD)
Other	ES	VOX
Other	CZ	Svoboda a přímá demokracie (SPD)
Other	HU	Fidesz
Other	HU	Mi Hazánk Mozgalom (MHM)

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PROFILE

The Mercator Forum for Migration and Democracy (MIDEM) examines about the impact of migration on democratic institutions, policies and cultures and looks into political decision making processes in the field of migration policies- in individual countries and in a comparative view of Europe. A spotlight is put on the relation between migration and populism.

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- Crisis discourses on migration and integration
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- Practice-oriented research
- Advising policy-makers and civil society
- Establishing international networks
- Providing a forum for public debates

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