Priorities of Progress
Understanding citizens' voices

An Economist Intelligence Unit report commissioned by Nitto Denko

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About the report

Citizens don't often think about resource constraints when they vote or talk about the kind of society they want to live in. Many want free education and healthcare, security, high incomes, low taxes, a clean environment, and affordable housing. However, resource constraints mean that societies need to prioritise their focus areas. And citizens' opinions have become an increasingly relevant policy input as governments seek to restore trust in institutions and better serve their populations.

How do citizens feel about the state of society today? What are the most important priorities in the eyes of citizens? While cultural, historical, economic, technological and geographical factors shape people's views about how one wishes the society to change and progress, there are also common issues that cut across various boundaries.

Priorities of progress: understanding citizens' voices is an Economist Intelligence Unit report commissioned by Nitto Denko that sheds light on citizens' priorities among issues that range from healthcare, education, social protection, public safety, R&D, to the environment and transport infrastructure. The report builds insights from a 50-country citizen survey and interviews with a panel of experts and measures survey responses against publicly available spending data. The

study aims to contribute to the current debate on how well societies are meeting the needs of their populations, how citizens feel about their country's progress, and how closely this progress aligns to their preferred vision of society. The findings do not necessarily reflect the views of the sponsor.

We would like to thank the following for generously sharing their time and expertise for the project.

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Introduction: building inclusive societies

For most of human history, our daily concerns were visceral and immediate: food, shelter and safety from nature's threats. As we evolved into societies and civilisations, from the Agricultural Revolution to the industrial and post-industrial age, questions about ideals—the right way to organise society, allocate responsibility for social wellbeing, and divvy up resources—became central to life, economic production and politics. This spanned from how we build cities and educate our children to the motivations driving scientific progress and global institutional structures. For historian Yuval Noah Harari, author of *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* and *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*, our history and our future revolve around the stories we tell. And these, in turn, are shaped by values, ideals and expectations that are all constructed.

The modern era, from the Enlightenment to the French Revolution, from the rise of modern science to the warring ideologies of the 20th century, have all been characterised by ruptures in societal expectations—and led to debates about what the ideal society should be. The French Revolution took aim at religious power and feudal systems, institutionalising secular individualism. The Scientific Revolution questioned the theological frameworks synonymous with social structures, as Nicolaus

Copernicus, Galileo Galilei and later Charles Darwin challenged religious conceptions of the cosmos and nature. Their findings had implications not just for science but for society as a whole. Once the empirical basis of religious worldviews was challenged, so too were the social hierarchies erected on them. Yet even in the 20th century, the political systems that emerged from scientific modernity clashed over the question of how society should be organised and improved. The Cold War clash between communism and capitalism was a global phenomenon, taking place as countries emerged from colonial rule after the second world war and looked for the ideological foundations on which to build their fledgling states. Touchstone social struggles through the modern age, from the abolition of slavery to the end of colonialism, from women's suffrage to the civil rights movement, are all debates over what the ideal society should be.

When Francis Fukuyama famously announced "the end of history" in 1989, he argued that liberal democratic capitalism had surpassed all other social models and proved the most durable and resilient system. If not the ideal society, it was the least bad. The construction of a rule-based global economic order based on its values and principles, embodied in institutions like the EU, the IMF, World Bank and the World

Trade Organisation, seemed to naturalise liberal democracy as the culmination of historical struggle. While it contained diversity, from the individualism and freedom emphasised in the Anglo-American model to the "Rhine model" based on consensus and collective success,[1] the so-called Washington Consensus of the 1990s seemed to have won out.

Yet today, the world finds itself at a crossroads. Countries in Asia have achieved economic success pursuing a different social and economic model. In the West, mainstream political parties have lost ground with a slew of surprising electoral results, from Britain's vote in 2016 to depart from the EU to the election of Donald Trump as president in the US in the same year, showing that wealthy societies are more divided than once thought in terms of the differing assumptions about what the ideal society is and how to get there. Likewise, developing countries are also experiencing splintering views.

Understanding the citizenry

Data and surveys produced by a range of organisations show that behind today's polarisation and ideological fracturing are a range of anxieties. What worries the world, a survey by Ipsos Mori, recently found that 58% of people polled believed their country to be "on the wrong track".[2] Afrobarometer, which measures public attitudes in Africa, found that only 38% of respondents thought the economy in their country was being managed well by the

government.[3] In Latin America, one influential poll found that support for democracy was waning due to people's dim view of governance among elected officials.[4]

Trust in government is at a low ebb in the rich world. "The overall trend, for more than a decade, is an erosion of trust in public institutions in most countries, both in the OECD and elsewhere, and younger people are experiencing [a] deeper erosion of trust," says Marcos Bonturi, director of public governance for the OECD. While there is no single reason, economic hardship in the post-financial crisis world is clearly a big factor. Some of the worst-hit countries are among those experiencing the biggest trust declines, notably southern European countries such as Spain, Portugal and Greece. Trust in government, and optimism about society as a whole, is unstable and changeable. A corruption scandal, for instance, could make the public more negative, says Alessandro Bellantoni, who is the deputy head of Public Governance Reviews and head of the Open Government Unit at the OECD. But it would be foolhardy to reject so much worrying data and the questions it gives rise to.

At the same time, some data also shows citizen optimism about a range of challenging issues, especially when it comes to forward-looking expectations. A 2017 survey found that 64% of global citizens believe we can address climate change if we take action now, with only 11% believing it was too late.[5] Individual countries depart significantly from the gloomy average when asked to assess their country's present

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1 http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/102425899600200206?journalCode=trsa
2 https://www.ipsos.com/en/what-worries-world-march-2018
3 http://www.afrobarometer.org/data
4 https://www.dw.com/en/democracy-in-latin-america-is-on-the-defensive/a-19526469
5 https://www.climateoptimist.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Ipsos-Survey-Briefing-Climate-Optimism.pdf

Economist Intelligence Unit survey highlights

State of the nations

- Aligning with other current poll data, the survey found that only 29% of respondents are content with how their society is being run, and less than half (43%) are content with the "way society has treated me".

- Economic opportunity is a predominant anxiety: 34% are dissatisfied with economic opportunity in their lives, making it the biggest single source of frustration next to healthcare, with which 30% are dissatisfied.

- Countries with the more positive citizens include **China**, where 70.2% are "content" with how the country is being run, while **Thailand** (54%) and **Ethiopia** (54%) are also hitting majorities. At the other end of the scale was **Nigeria**, where 80% of people do not feel content with the running of their country. Others with majority malcontents include **Peru** and **Italy** (76%), **Russia** (68%), **Colombia** (66%), and **Hungary** (62%).

The road ahead

- There was more optimism about the future. The survey showed an even split about whether humanity is moving towards a better society overall, with 34% agreeing and the same share disagreeing. There was slightly more optimism at the country level, with 40% believing their country to be moving towards a better society versus 35% that did not.

- The largest majority, 40.5%, said they expect their country to have made some progress towards a better society, and only 21.4% expect their society to change for the worse.

- Chinese respondents were the most optimistic, with 91.4% believing their country will have made progress towards being a better society in the next ten years, and only 3.3% fearing changes for the worst. Other countries optimistic about the future include **Australia** (67.3%) and **South Korea** (69%). Countries with a gloomier outlook include **Germany**, where 47% expect changes for the worst. Moreover, 44% of **Swedes** and **Japanese**, as well as 40% of **Hungarians**, expect the future to be more negative.

- There are generational divides on future trends: 50.7% of **Millennials** (born between 1981 and 2000) believe humanity is moving towards a better society, compared with only 44% of **Gen X** (1965-80) and 28.7% of **Baby Boomers** (1946-64). Asked about their expectation of progress towards a better society, the largest share of Millennials expected considerable gains, more than three times higher than Baby Boomers.

state. One survey found that 93% of people in both Peru and Colombia expect 2018 to be better than 2017, with the figure at 88% in China and 87% in India.[6] It is also possible for people to rate the current state of their country or even the world negatively yet expect this to change in the future; one US-based study found that 54% of people felt negatively about the current state of the world but 86% were optimistic about the future.[7]

This wellspring of public opinion and poll data, whichever direction it points, are crucial for all social stakeholders—government, non-state actors, the private sector and civil society—to understand one another better. Polls, enabled by the ubiquity of social media, mobile phones and internet-based engagement platforms, give us a richer picture of social attitudes and provide the tools to engage people in shaping decisions that affect them. This can enable the co-production of policies, programmes and even scientific research to align with what people want and need.

To contribute to the current debate over how well societies are meeting the needs of their populations, and what populations themselves think about the direction their country is taking, The Economist Intelligence Unit undertook a poll including 50 countries, taking in the views of 3,221 citizens. This report, combining a global expert interview panel with a worldwide survey, examines how citizens feel about their country's progress, how closely it aligns to their vision of an ideal society, and what factors mediate public opinion and the decisions that shape their circumstances. This analysis is crucial today as it becomes clear that macroeconomic indicators like GDP do not tell us what we need to know about people's felt sense of wellbeing.

6 https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2018/01/19/the-countries-most-optimistic-about-2018-infographic/#6e9db6a032a1
7 https://content.lifeisgood.com/7-surprising-results-national-optimism-survey/

Developing countries: more optimistic than rich economies?

The survey indicated a generally more positive outlook in the emerging markets of Asia and Africa than the OECD region

- Asked whether they were content with the way their country was being run, only 22% of Europeans and 18.8% of those in North and South America agreed, compared with 40.6% of those in Asia-Pacific and 33.1% in Africa and the Middle East

Compare and contrast:
Figure 1: Percentage of respondents who feel their country is moving towards a better society

72%	Vietnam	US	38%
83%	China	Germany	12%
78%	Indonesia	Italy	12%
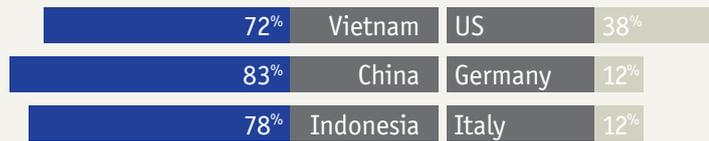
Figure 2: Percentage of respondents dissatisfied with opportunities for education

Europe	20%
Asia-Pacific	17%
North and South America	33%
Africa and the Middle East	8%
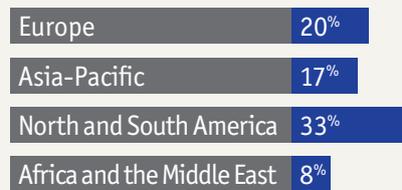
We, the people

People's contentment with their society's direction is not based entirely on material basics, important as these are. Factors like fairness, relatedness, meaning, purpose and autonomy are all crucial. Inequality—meaning not just different income levels but uneven access to political representation and life opportunities—leads to a sense of disempowerment or even irrelevance within society that comes from it, which can be profoundly harmful to people's wellbeing, for instance.

Reductions in absolute poverty are not enough. Materially, the world's population is better-off today than at any time in history. Millions have come out of poverty. Infant mortality has fallen sharply thanks to advances in medicine. Infectious diseases are being cured or no longer take human lives. Killer diseases like HIV and AIDS are now mostly controllable. Income growth has been widespread across almost all countries, helped by innovation and technology, especially mobile phones and access to the internet. Historians like Steven Pinker and Hans Rosling point out how much less violence and misery there is in the world today compared with the past. Mr Rosling's *Factfulness* contrasts data about how much better life is today with people's seeming sense of negativity and foreboding.

Researchers are paying more attention to the diverse factors that shape people's contentment and happiness in society. John Helliwell, editor of the *World Happiness Report*[8] recalls growing awareness among economists and policymakers about the limits of macroeconomic data as an indicator of social progress or wellbeing. Factors like "the presence of positive social connections, meaning and purpose, engagement with others, a sense of 'flow' in daily activities, and a sense of trust and trustworthiness in your environment, are all important," he says. "Would your neighbours return your wallet if you lost it in the street? Are you going to face a friendly, helpful face in the public administration office, or someone who is simply pushing forms and trying to get you out the door? Although at the micro level people knew these things mattered, what they didn't really understand is how fundamental they are."

Governments are taking more of an interest in subjective wellbeing and happiness. The idea of Gross National Happiness was first floated in the 1970s by the fourth Bhutanese king and, since then, a scientific discipline has emerged to quantify and rigorously track wellbeing, both subjective and objective, in ways that can tell us more about a society's health than crude metrics like GDP or income. The UK government has been formally monitoring wellbeing since 2010, while the UAE has a minister for happiness. Understanding people's wellbeing, and their sense of whether their wider society aligns

8 http://worldhappiness.report/

with their own priorities, does not just require attention by governments. It also necessitates a deep dive into what people see as their ideal society and the specific ingredients that make it.

Engagement by governments in wellbeing and happiness is crucial because, for the most part, survey respondents see the central government as the most important institution responsible for bringing about improvements in society, as voted by 68.4% of respondents. The family was thought to be the second most responsible, according to 51.8%. Municipal government was selected by 32.9%, while the private sector was only seen as the most responsible by 15.4%. Just 8.4% thought non-government organisations (NGOs) were the most responsible for bringing about social improvements. Interestingly, countries that viewed the family as less responsible for social change, like South Korea, Sweden and China, overwhelmingly thought that the central government was instead the critical institution (see Figure 4).

While the private sector was not seen by many as the primary institution responsible for bringing about change and improving society, there were nuances when data are analysed according to demographics.; 20.3% of Millennials placed business as the most responsible, compared with 18.5% of Gen X, 18.6% of Baby Boomers and 19.5% of the Silent Generation. Millennials were also the demographic group with a smaller majority placing the central government as the most important actor; 63.3% voted it thus, compared to 71.7 % of Gen X and 72.1% of Baby Boomers, although an even lower share of the

Figure 3: The family as first or second most important institution responsible for creating a better society: percentage agreeing.

Colombia	74%
Philippines	70%
Brazil	69%
Morocco	68%
Sweden	24%
South Korea	21%
China	12%

Figure 4: Central government as first or second most important institution responsible for creating a better society: percentage agreeing.

Sweden	94%
South Korea	92%
China	88%
Morocco	46%
South Africa	36%
Switzerland	34%
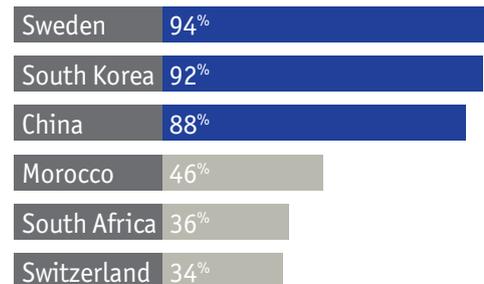
Silent Generation, 61%, placed the central government as the most critical. Relatively, Millennials placed more importance on local or municipal governments and international organisations compared with both Gen X and Baby Boomers. This may indicate a demographic shift, with younger people looking to non-traditional sources for social change, and not assuming that central governments should lead the process or be most responsible for it.

Chapter 1: Taking society's pulse

Globally, there have been extraordinary advances in medicine and life expectancy; a child born today, with few geographical exceptions, can expect a longer life than any time in history. Once lethal diseases like polio, smallpox, influenza and malaria have either been eradicated or there are therapies or vaccines available. Access to clean water has improved the world over. Yet new health challenges are emerging. One is the rise of non-communicable diseases in developing countries, as they begin to suffer from more "affluent" diseases like diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease, sometimes simultaneously with the risk of continued infectious and tropical diseases. But there is also a rise in mental illness, suicide and anxiety, especially among young people. The opioid crisis in the US, and high rates of substance abuse and suicide, also shows that basic material security does not guarantee wellbeing.

"No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable," opined Adam Smith, the founding father of economic liberalism, showing how important social protection is even in liberal economic thinking, which generally advocates for a smaller state. Social protection, while not a universally clear policy domain, is defined by the International Labour Organization as meaning that people and families have security in the face of vulnerabilities and contingencies, access to health, and the ability to work in safety.[9]

The Economist Intelligence Unit survey confirms these are top priorities for citizens across the world. Healthcare was the domain people would allocate the largest percentage of government spending; on average, respondents placed 17% of the public budget on healthcare, followed by 15.8% on social protection and education. On a country basis, the highest emphasis placed on healthcare was from respondents in Hungary and Portugal. Here, 80% and 78% respectively considered health a top three goal. Plenty of citizens are dissatisfied with healthcare services in their country currently, especially in North and South America. And across regions, a majority believe improvements in healthcare would have the biggest impact on them over the next decade, most notably in Africa and the Middle East (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Respondents who feel improving access to and quality of healthcare would make the largest impact on them in the next decade: regional breakdown

Europe	55%
Asia-Pacific	57%
North and South America	48%
Africa and the Middle East	62%
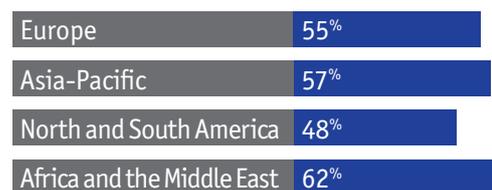
Although quality healthcare is an unsurprising priority, the devil is in the detail. Some countries, like the UK, have publicly funded healthcare that enjoys generally widespread popular support, but the US has deep-rooted divisions about private versus publicly funded healthcare, with talk of health reform often descending into partisan bickering.

Mollyann Brodie, senior vice-president for executive operations at the Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation, believes there is more common ground in the US than might seem the case, once you strip policy interventions of their politically charged semantics. She cites the public debate over "Obamacare", also known as the Affordable Care Act. While there was large support among Republican voters to repeal Obamacare "as soon as [the Republicans] started talking about the details of their replacement plan, and the facts came out in terms of what it would actually mean to people, it was taking away things that a lot of those supporters really valued. And so you immediately saw poll results where Republicans were very lukewarm on some of those plans, and it was one of the reasons why they were unable to pass it." Even if voters call for a repeal of Obamacare, once they realise who will lose health insurance, or how pre-existing condition protections would change, they feel differently, Ms Brodie says. Kate Pickett, professor of epidemiology at the University of York, cites a similar dynamic in social policy discussions. "If you ask most Americans 'would you like to live in Sweden' they say 'no, they are socialists'. But if you present them with a graphical representation of wealth distribution and ask them which they prefer, over 90% would pick Sweden," she says.

Of course, polls and social surveys cannot be the sole determinant of policy choices over complex factors like healthcare, Ms Brodie cautions. "It doesn't mean the public's always right. It doesn't mean the politicians should follow everything the public says. It often tells you where leadership is necessary, where understanding is necessary, where good journalism is necessary to correct misimpressions or misinformation. But to me, this is about giving people who don't always have a voice in the political system a seat at the table. You can't govern constantly by the basis of what everyone says on a given issue, but at the same time, there needs to be some level of respect given to poll data and taking it seriously in policy decisions." That is becoming harder, however, as in the media climate today. "There's only so much depth and complexity that people will tolerate in this instantaneous news environment."

Other experts also warn about the forces which could undermine a well-informed public dialogue. Violence and safety issues, for instance, can be whipped up by the media, as it is a story which sells well and plays to people's deepest fears, and by actors in the private security industry looking to exaggerate the threats faced. "There are more interests in investing in perception of non-safety than the opposite," says Gabriele Jacobs, professor of organisational behaviour and culture at Rotterdam School of Management and an expert in public safety.

Inequality: the lightning rod for modern times

Health and wellbeing were commonly thought to be synonymous with basic material needs like immunisation, child mortality and access to clean water. Less appreciated has been the importance of factors like inequality, which can impact people's wellbeing in complex ways, even when their basic material needs are met.

Academic research on the effects of inequality on health and wellbeing has been published since the 1970s, but it has become a mainstream public concern in the past decade. "There has been an explosion of interest on the impact of inequality since the financial crisis," says Kate Pickett at the University of York. "Now we see it being taken up at the IMF, the World Bank, World Economic Forum, at various UN levels, and inequality reduction is one of the Sustainable Development Goals."

Inequality is not just important as a social concern, but an economic one too, researchers say. "Inequality is bad for growth", says Richard Wilkinson, professor emeritus of social epidemiology at the University of Nottingham and a collaborator with Ms Pickett on two books connecting inequality with health and social outcomes, *The Spirit Level* (2009) and more recently *The Inner Level* (2018). "It goes with lower social mobility, more people in prison, more mental illness, [and] lower maths and literacy scores in kids. All of those look like a terrible waste of talent."

A core finding from the current wellbeing research field is the importance of social connections and "relatedness" to wellbeing. The Economist Intelligence Unit survey examined views about whether and how societies should balance individual versus collective wellbeing, which is a crucial consideration for policies for more equal societies. A majority (59.5%) believed that an ideal society emphasises all citizens' needs over that of individuals, with the highest consensus in Africa and the Middle East, where 65.2% agreed. Only 16.3% disagreed worldwide, and just 5.6% strongly disagreed.

Figure 6: I believe an ideal society should emphasise all citizens' needs over individual freedoms: regional survey breakdown

Region	Percentage
Europe	51%
Asia-Pacific	64%
North and South America	61%
Africa and the Middle East	65%
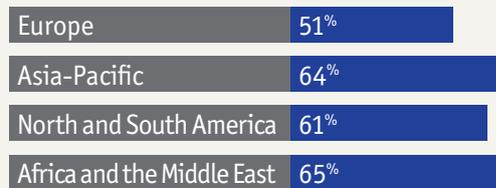
Worries about inequality were also evident in other survey data points. When asked what social or economic goals should be prioritised over the coming decade, social protection was identified the top priority by 55.9% of respondents. Quality of, and access to, healthcare was second at 55%, and education came in third, picked by 50.6% of respondents.

Improving healthcare was the factor that would have the biggest impact on survey participants, personal lives, as chosen by 55%, with social protection selected by 51.4% as one of the top three factors impacting their lives. Countries that wanted social protection to be prioritised as a goal for the next ten years include Germany, where 72% selected it as a top three goal, as well as China (70.2%), and Cambodia and Denmark (both 68%).

Corporations also have a role to play in the debate over inequality and fairness. The private sector accounts for the majority of jobs, and people spend as much or more time working as any other activity, meaning how companies operate in terms of culture and practices can profoundly affect people's wellbeing and contentment. Companies can worsen inequality dynamics, in areas like excessive executive pay, and may find themselves implicated in wider discussions about the ideal society when it comes to policies on issues like diversity in hiring, or the status of workers in emerging sectors like the gig economy, which has attracted criticism from some governments who feel such workers are being exploited. Companies can also play a leadership role in challenging inequality dynamics through alternative practices or innovations like shared ownership, a well-known example of which is a UK retailer, John Lewis.

Chapter 2: Science, technology and skills of the future

Humans have always been makers; or homo faber, in the language of evolutionary science. But it took millions of years from our manipulation of flint and creation of fire to the remarkable technologies we use every day, when the smartphone in your pocket is more powerful than a supercomputer from the 1980s. Our lives are increasingly enmeshed in artificial intelligence (AI) and ubiquitous sensors, as the Internet of Things deepens in our cities, homes and workplaces. The dawn of 5G connectivity, expected in the next two to three years, will turbocharge digitisation and the information society even further.

Science and technology has always been bound up with values and ideals about society as a whole. From the Scientific Revolution to the Enlightenment, pioneering intellectuals were not just thinkers—they were revolutionaries and radicals. Galileo, Copernicus, Newton and Darwin all challenged fundamental religious beliefs in European society and set the epistemological basis for a secular, instrumentalist modern world in which nature has been bent to human will.

But how much priority do citizens themselves place on science and technology research and development (R&D)? Do they feel it benefits their daily life, and do they think more or less

public resources should be spent on scientific endeavours? Experts caution that the public is not always vocal in its support of science—and especially the need to invest public resources in it. "If you look at how many words are dedicated to science in political discourse, politicians do not talk about it, they know it's not one of the top issues of their constituents. Where it becomes valuable is where science is a tool to one of those other things that people value," says Edward Volpe, executive director of Science Counts, an advocacy group.

People's opinions about the value of science matters, because public money has historically been a crucial stimulus for technological progress, from cryptography and the internet to cures for diseases like malaria. Everyday technologies link more closely to state spending, and even military research, than many people might know. Radar, electronics and semiconductors, jet aircraft, atomic power, GPS and the internet itself all came from US federal-funded R&D or government research agencies.[10] A "research triangle" involving government, academic institutions and the private sector has been central to technology development and the US's historical leadership, according to Walter Isaacson's *The Innovators,*[11] while commentators including Ha-Joon Chang and Mariana Mazzucato

Science and technology: survey snapshot

- Research and development (R&D) was only selected as a top three priority for the coming ten years by 16.3% of participants.

- When asked how they would allocate government budgets, science and technology R&D received only 9.8% of the pie from North and South America, the lowest regional share. Africa and the Middle East and Asia-Pacific respondents allocated 11.8% and 11.7% respectively.

- Respondents were favourably disposed to technology overall: 60% said technology had changed society for the better compared with 14% who disagreed. Meanwhile, 59% expect technology to change society for the better in future, versus 14% who disagree. And 68% said technology had made their life better, with only 8% disagreeing.

- The countries with the most pro-R&D views were Denmark, where 30% ranked it as a top three priority for the country to be a perfect society in the next ten years, as well as Nigeria (36%) and Egypt (28%).

- Overall, people's views of technology's positive impact on their life were broadly the same across age groups: 45% of Millennials agreed that technology had made their life better, compared with 45.4% of Gen X, 41.1% of Baby Boomers and 39% of the Silent Generation. However, Millennials were over-represented in the group that strongly agreed with this statement, at 30.3%, compared with 23.2%, 18.5% and 12.2% in the other groups respectively. Millennials were also more optimistic about technology making their lives better in the future, with 35.9% strongly agreeing with that prediction compared with 26.4% of Gen X, 20.2% of Baby Boomers and 22% of the Silent Generation.

have taken pains to show how crucial the state has been in driving R&D and technological innovation in other regions, including East Asia.[12]

"The top problem is this pervasive perception that the role of government in scientific enterprise is a minor one, that they are not responsible for more than half of the backing," says Mr Volpe. "Our studies found that only one in four Americans believe the role of the federal government is irreplaceable. That means three out of four believe if the federal government

12 https://www.jstor.org/stable/40722165

were to get out of the business of science then industry, philanthropy and key entrepreneurs would step up and pick up the work. Nothing could be further from the truth."

In part, this perception is a credit to the progress that private enterprise has achieved. Many innovations transforming our daily lives, from smartphones to big data to electric and autonomous vehicles, are led by commercial enterprises, stimulated by market competition. But the private sector often builds on state-funded innnovations in basic science, and governments can be a vital source of grants and R&D support. It is crucial that the public appreciates the contribution businesses and governments make to scientific and technological progress when they work together.

Getting the language right

In drumming up public support for science, language and framing matter a great deal, says Mr Volpe. For disadvantaged communities, science needs to be shown to help their immediate problems, but even well-educated, affluent populations generally supportive of science can be turned off if the communication strategy is not aligned with their values.

"Some people do not see science as a national competitiveness issue, but as a global activity. So if scientists in China cure cancer, that is a win for everybody. A social group like educated progressive liberals see science as a mechanism

for improving the world, and do not support the idea of science as a race. So when you talk about competitiveness, you turn off a population segment that is most supportive of science in general," Mr Volpe argues.

Public support for science is not just a means of lobbying for public funding—it can also be an input into science policy in exciting but ethically complex areas like AI or genetic modification. In doing so, science groups must get beyond broad questions about whether the public supports "science" or "technology" and instead focus on use cases, says Tom Saunders, principal researcher in the innovation team at Nesta, a UK charity.

"When we ask the public questions like 'how do you think we should use AI?' or 'how should we use machine learning for automated decisions in health?', they have nuanced views. In low risk applications they are fine, but they were more worried about higher risk applications, and in health, they cared about issues like having a physical person involved in service delivery but were not worried about the health system knowing lots about you—they are used to that."

It is not easy to garner public opinion on an ongoing basis, and it is even more difficult in technical but important applications like quantum computing, says Mr Saunders. So stakeholders, from governments to science organisations, need to find creative engagement strategies. "Often public engagement can be a survey or tick-box exercise, a consultation at the end of

the process," says Mr Saunders. "Early on, you may have a minister developing a new funding programme, say for AI in health, and you consult with business, funders, regulators—but the public usually get nowhere near that process."

There are multiple methods for engaging the public in science policy questions, from surveys to focus groups, but the challenge is making sure a wide range of voices are captured to avoid problems like selection bias, meaning only certain people, with the time, resources and inclination, participate in such processes. Tom Saunders implores governments and science NGOs to think innovatively about ways to engage the broader public community in a way that will be rewarding, engaging and meaningful for them. "We're looking at creative approaches to public engagement on science and technology, exploring technologies like games, storytelling, arts and digital to make the process more engaging," he says. That is crucial for the country's national science agenda in areas like AI. "The UK wants to lead the world in ethical AI. To do that, we have to involve the public in the question. It can't just be a conversation between experts."

Tech in rising economies

Science and technology are no longer led by Western countries—and social views in developing nations are crucial in shaping how and whether these countries can be innovators in their own right, and directing how science and technology are applied to society. The big developing economies of India and China have a very strong science and technology ecosystem in areas like AI and digital, but smaller economies are building their own science capacities. The Philippines has launched an indigenous space programme to help monitor agricultural land and guide responses to humanitarian disasters, for instance. Across Africa, leapfrog innovation is helping people overcome infrastructure constraints. Mobile money took root in Kenya with M-Pesa in 2007, a path-breaking collaboration between Vodafone and Safaricom, and the world over cell phones have given people access to financial services. The region has continued to expand its mobile-led approach, for everything from energy bills to climate data for farmers. "We've been tracking ownership of cell phones, laptops, and use of [the] internet and, in terms of movement of numbers, the use of mobile phones is galloping from when we started tracking. More and more people [are] using it for more things other than before, with South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria in the lead," explains E Gyimah-Boadi, co-founder of Afrobarometer.

The results of The Economist Intelligence Unit's survey demonstrated positive views about technology in many developing countries, with often greater optimism about its impact and future pathways than developed economies. The percentage of respondents who strongly agree that technology has changed society for the better was largest in the likes of Thailand and Vietnam (both 32%), South Africa (38%) and Indonesia 34% compared with only 5.7%

in Canada, 6.9% in Germany and 11% in South Korea, a technology-intensive economy.

Skills of tomorrow

In a global knowledge economy, science and technology are determinants of economic success both for individuals and for countries. Those with limited natural resources and small populations have used STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) as an engine of growth. Estonia and Israel are two eminent examples of small economies that have spent heavily on R&D—and on their education system—culminating in leadership positions beyond what their economic, geographic or demographic size would suggest. Israel has more Nasdaq-listed companies than any nation other than the US. Known as a "start-up nation", Israel has produced world-leading companies from Waze to Mobileye and is a leader in AI, digital, cyber-security and medicine.[13] Estonia, home to just over 1m people, produced disruptor brands including Skype, which revolutionised internet communications, and fintech innovator Transferwise, which is bringing frictionless information flows to opaque and high-cost cross-border currency markets. It is also a leader in the utilisation of technology for public services, including using distributed ledger technology, and its digital public services are among the most efficient and effective in the world.

To leverage science and technology in this way, the education system is critical—producing the

skilled experts of tomorrow. Education systems are crucial in shaping an individual's life chances, as well as the affluence of the wider economy. A positive feedback loop—a wealthy socioeconomic context ensuring good quality schools, healthcare and world-leading infrastructure—means that once a country is in a leadership position in technology and science, it is likely to stay there.

Unsurprisingly, then, education quality is a major factor in people's perception of their societal health and rate of progress. One way public and private opinions about education quality are informed is through rankings and benchmarks, led by the likes of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment rankings. Other, smaller indices have also cropped up, focusing on current issues like how well school systems provide "future-proof" skills in an age of automation. The Economist Intelligence Unit, commissioned by Yidan Prize in 2017, explored how a set of countries impart a set of critical skills—interdisciplinary, creative and analytical, entrepreneurial, leadership, digital and technical, and global awareness and civic education[14]—and ranked New Zealand, Canada, Finland, Switzerland and Singapore as the top five out of the 35 countries studied.

How well an education system meets people's ideals is a function of a wide range of factors that include curriculum design, teaching and testing methods, and even physical health. Moreover, nutritious food and physical activity both impact

13 https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2018-04-19/independence-day-israel-s-first-70-years-surprised-the-world
14 https://dkf1ato8y5dsg.cloudfront.net/uploads/5/80/worldwide-educating-for-the-future-index.pdf

Education reform: never let a crisis go to waste

Public opinion about the quality of an education system is informed in part by benchmarking projects that rank countries' education performance. The most prominent of these is the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranking, a triennial international survey that assesses the skills and knowledge of 15-year olds around the world in science, mathematics, reading, collaborative problem-solving and financial literacy. More focused rankings include the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

Countries' performances in global benchmarks often prompt public debate, especially among those seeing their national position fall. "Germany fully expected that TIMSS would show that they were among the world's leaders and when they discovered that that was not the case, not even close, it caused an enormous amount of concern and in significant measure a redesign of their education system," says Marc Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy. "The disparity in performance between their system and the others measured by PISA became not just a matter for professional concern, but widespread public and political concern."

Mr Tucker believes that bad performances on benchmarks, or other kinds of shock, can provide the impetus for societies to emphasise education reform. "Almost all of the countries that are far ahead had a shock at one time or another, which caused them to go back and rethink their whole education system. This is a really interesting finding because it's very hard to change education systems, which are rooted in cultures, and parents are very loathe to change them. In a way, to change something as complex and rooted in culture as an education system, a large number of the people have to believe that it's more dangerous to continue what they're doing than it is to try something quite radically new."

Mr Tucker cites Finland as an example. "A very large portion of Finnish exports went to the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union fell apart, the Finnish economy went into a tailspin. The leaders of all the parties gathered together to figure out what to do. It was a national emergency, and they concluded that their only hope was to create a high-tech economy and build on the beginnings they had [in] telecommunications. They realised that was not going to work unless they created a school system that could supply a high-tech economy with [a] highly educated workforce to the top world standards, and they made it appeal to the young people."

children's wellbeing and academic performance. People also care about issues like bullying, a worldwide phenomenon with far-reaching implications on victims' health. Surveys indicate that bullying worries parents more than any other issue in countries including the US and UK, while China recently passed national legislation to crack down on bullying.[15] The curriculum content also matters. One survey in Northern Ireland, asking what three words came to mind when describing the education system, found that "sectarianism" and "divisiveness" were among those cited.[16]

Many factors shape how an education system functions. Partly, it is down to funding and resources, but teaching methods also matter. Some school systems emphasise conventional hierarchical methods, and focus on memorisation and rote learning, with others opting for more progressive options like pupil-led learning or project work. Specialist networks like the Montessori and Steiner schools provide education for families disenchanted with traditional mainstream schooling. Ultimately, each individual will have their own viewpoints on what an ideal education system looks like. The task for countries as a whole is to offer enough variety to enable different people to find appropriate institutions that meet their expectations.

The formal education system produced young adults up to school-leaving age or to the university level. Yet the pace of technological change means people now need lifelong learning to stay ahead. This suggests companies might have more of a role to play in educating young people, while the education system, conversely, may need to support adults throughout their professional life. Companies are playing a role as partners to the education system. School-business partnerships give young people exposure to career options in the years before they decide on their tertiary education or professional route. Companies also invest in the education system of their headquarters or home, like the grants and funding support given by Hoover to North Canton Hoover High School.[17] Local businesses can also offer internships to senior school students so they can get a taste of working life in their school breaks.

The private sector is also playing a greater role in making life-long education possible. Tech firms like Udemy and Coursera have brought education to millions of people through massive open online courses. Companies are working with schools and universities on everything from apprenticeships to co-developed courses, especially in STEM fields. There could be a role for tech companies offering secondments or placements to civil servants, to help them learn more about the innovations that they, as government decision-makers, are responsible for regulating.

15 https://www.economist.com/international/2018/10/06/parents-worry-more-about-bullying-than-anything-else
16 https://www.ief.org.uk/debrief/education-reform-must-heart-campaign/
17 https://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin323.shtml

Chapter 3: The environment takes centre stage

The environment and climate change have been on the public agenda for decades, with the Rio Earth Summit back in 1992 an early effort to present the growing scientific evidence of climate change. Yet while few factors are as essential to societal wellbeing as our environment, we are still failing to make the kinds of changes needed to cut global emissions. An October report by the IPCC issued dire warnings that time is running out to avoid catastrophic and runaway climate change.[18]

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, a global treaty signed in the early 1990s, has provided the platform for global action on the environment. In 2015 the participating countries signed the Paris Agreement, committing to limit global temperature increases and publish country-specific measures to reduce emissions. But the deal is a hybrid of legally binding and non-binding provisions, which, for critics, is too weak for what is needed.

Evidence of climate change is undeniable. Vulnerable low-lying countries, from Bangladesh to the Maldives, are already experiencing its effects, as are water-scarce regions, from East Africa to California. The summer of 2018 saw wildfires and heat-waves from Athens to Japan. Hurricanes and typhoons are occurring with increasing regularity. Air pollution is a public health worry in cities across the world, with India particularly hard-hit; recent WHO data ranked 14 Indian cities among the world's 20 most polluted.[19] The WHO director-general, Dr Tedros Adhanom, said that 3bn people around the world are "breathing deadly smoke every day," including from polluting cooking stoves and fuels in the home.

Polls show widespread anxiety about the environment as evidence mounts of our destructive impact on the planet. One 38-country poll in 2017 found that 61% of people saw climate change as a big threat.[20] Data show that younger people are more worried than their elders; a US survey found that 70% of young Americans aged 18-34[21] worried a "great deal" or "fair amount" about climate change, compared with 56% of those aged 55 and older.

The Economist Intelligence Unit survey, however, did not return a strong verdict on the environment as a priority issue—at least in terms of public spending. When asked how they would allocate budgets if they had the power, the environment received the second smallest share: only scientific R&D was lower. The quality of the natural environment did not stand out as a worry either, with 45% claiming to be

18 https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/global-warming-must-not-exceed-15c-warns-landmark-un-report
19 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-43972155
20 https://www.economist.com/leaders/2018/08/02/the-world-is-losing-the-war-against-climate-change
21 https://news.gallup.com/poll/234314/global-warming-age-gap-younger-americans-worried.aspx

satisfied and only 24.9% dissatisfied with their natural environment.

Figure 7: The environment should be a top priority for the next decade: percentage agreeing

Colombia	64%
Vietnam	60%
Ireland	56%
Malaysia	24%
Thailand and Indonesia	16%
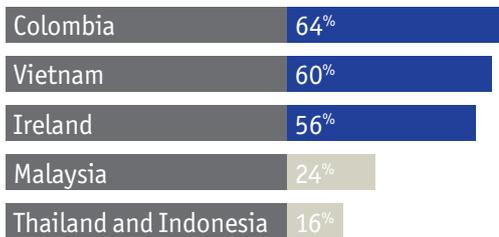
NGOs have been crucial in raising awareness about climate change and encouraging greater citizen engagement to pressure governments. Yet the task for them is not easy. People might feel the issue is too big for them to influence, or may consider the effects to be remote.

"Even if the science tells us that something is important, that's never enough in its own right to get the public interested and to cause outrage about it," says Craig Bennett, CEO of Friends of the Earth. Often, specific environmental issues garner a greater response from the public than high level advocacy about climate change overall—take plastics pollution in the ocean, for instance, or air pollution in cities.

No-one can fully determine which environmental problem will reach the public and media agenda. Mr Bennett recalls that Friends of the Earth have been concerned about plastic pollution for years, but it took specific catalysts to take the issue mainstream. He cites a Blue Planet documentary

episode, narrated by David Attenborough, which included shocking footage of plastic waste including albatross parents feeding their chicks plastic.[22] "This was shown in many, many countries, with a global audience in the millions, and suddenly it became the trigger for public concern," recalls Mr Bennett.

While welcome, the problem is that other important issues have yet to hit the public agenda in the same way. "A third of soils globally are thought to have become degraded in the last 40 or 50 years because of industrial agriculture, and we're not really talking about it. Yet, obviously, that's very serious. At some point that will catch the imagination and people will suddenly get obsessed about it. But you can't always predict how these things are going to work. You have to invest in an issue for quite a long time and then suddenly there will be something that triggers it, some tipping point with public concern."

Public outrage can lead to tangible changes in policy, according to researchers. Projects like Eurobarometer, the European Social Survey and the World Wellness Survey now give us detailed data about popular opinions on the environment. Interested to know whether this mapped on to real policies, Tobias Böhmelt, a professor at the University of Essex, working with collaborators, compared public opinion data with actual policy changes in Europe. They found encouraging results that governments responded to public attitudes through tangible regulatory changes.

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22 https://www.radiotimes.com/news/tv/2018-08-29/blue-planet-2-plastic-waste-final-episode/

Save the bees: a campaign masterclass

Despite the failures of the international community to agree a legally binding commitment to avoid climate change through emissions reduction, there is encouraging evidence that, when issues are made tangible and relate to people's real lives, they actively engage. One surprising case study is the fate of bees. These vital insects perform crucial ecosystem services, responsible for 80% of pollination. Seventy out of the top 100 human food crops are pollinated by bees. Greenpeace claims you have a bee to thank "for every one in three bites of food you eat."[23] Worryingly, evidence suggests bee colonies are collapsing around the world due to pesticides, drought, habitat destruction, air pollution and global warming.

While bees might seem an obscure species for public outrage, in reality there has been major public concern about their plight throughout the world. "The campaign on bees is a perfect way of opening up the debate about the loss of abundance of nature and the need to tackle that," says Craig Bennett, CEO of Friends of the Earth. "Bees became the ambassadors for that much bigger story. It's been one of the most extensive campaigns we've run in years in terms of public engagement, with literally hundreds of thousands of people engaging with Friends of the Earth directly around the bees campaign and UK members of parliament telling us that they've had more letters from the constituents on bees than any other issue. It was spectacularly successful in just shifting the zeitgeist to worry about the loss of abundance in nature."

"We wanted to look at how public opinion influences policies from a macro perspective but using individual-level survey data," says Mr Böhmelt. In democratic contexts, policies "should ultimately converge with what the median voter wants, so the question is, what does the median voter want?" Their findings showed a significant and positive effect of public opinion on the rate of renewable energy policies by European governments.[24] "When you look at changes and shifts in public opinion, you see that if there is an upward shift towards more pro-environmental views, countries are much more likely to implement environmental legislation," says Mr Böhmelt.

23 https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/sustainable-agriculture/save-the-bees/
24 http://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/aa8f80

Chapter 4: Ask the public? Participatory budgeting, governing by poll and engaged democracy

Cutting across all of these domains—from health and education to the environment—is a common theme: public opinion is crucial as a policy input. While garnering data comes with methodological and operational challenges, an increasingly connected world should make it easier for state, non-state and commercial actors to collaborate with civil society and work out areas of consensus and remedy problems or areas in which countries fall short of people's expectations.

Public desire to be involved in the decisions that shape society is strong, especially in regions where, for many decades, the people were not able to make their opinions known. In the post-war period, as its countries emerged from colonial rule, most of Sub-Saharan Africa experienced military dictatorship and authoritarian governments, giving way, with some exceptions, to more electoral democracies over the past two decades. This transition has suffered many false starts and backsliding, of course. The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index shows that the majority of African countries lack a free media and notes that despite increasing political participation, scores for civil liberties and government functioning have deteriorated over the past five years.[25] What is not in doubt,

however, is peope's desire for democracy as a system. "When you listen to discussions and debates in the international community there is a sense that citizen commitment to democratic politics is on the wane. That is not the case for much of Africa," says Mr Gyimah-Boadi. "While there are country variations, on average you are getting seven out of ten citizens saying they prefer the democratic form of government given all alternatives. They reject all alternatives quite summarily."

Wherever citizen engagement takes place, the outcome is the same: increased trust in public institutions a sense of ownership and greater inclusiveness, in society as a whole. "There are ways to transform electoral democracy into deliberative democracy, where citizens play a role in shaping the formulation of the problem and identifying solutions," says Mr Bellantoni at the OECD.

That trust is not just important at a macro electoral level. It is also essential for the day-to-day services of the frontline public sector in areas like policing and public safety, says Gabriele Jacobs at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. "The challenges of public safety is starting to be so diverse that police cannot handle

25 https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/Democracy_Index_2017.pdf

this any more on their own, as we've seen in debates around terrorist attacks in Europe, for instance. When we look at core threats, the police needs the public to get information, and similarly when it comes to issues like the prevention of radicalisation of potential terrorists who are home-grown, this responsibility can't be taken by police alone—it requires schools, communities, social services, health services, and so on."

Citizen engagement finds its most tangible form in innovations like participatory budgeting, in which people can shape resource allocation in ways reflective of their views on what society should prioritise. Its origin was fiscal experiments in Porto Alegre, Brazil, back in the early 1990s, when public delegates were involved in setting budget allocations, and has since been used countries as diverse as Canada and South Africa.[26]

So-called budget advocacy can foster inclusive societies, says Julie McCarthy at the Open Society Foundations, giving people a say on the "policies and processes by which public money is allocated and expended, and allowing civil society to weigh in on those decisions. This means having a say on which issues should be prioritised through the budget, such as health, education, and infrastructure, as well as which baskets of rights, like disability or maternal health, should be emphasised."

Participatory budgeting can rebalance priorities where people feel current allocations do not align with their own ideals. But budget engagement can also sharpen people's awareness about the importance of public financial resources for shaping social outcomes, which may, in turn, lead them to take more interest in broader governance issues like tax. "We are hoping that people will not just advocate that more of the pie is going to their issues, treating the fiscal envelope as fixed, but that they also ask questions, from a domestic tax policy perspective, about why the pie is so small in the first place," says Ms McCarthy.

The business sector is critical to any discussion over financial openness and public budgeting because their payments to governments, whether taxes, natural resource contracts or public procurement deals, are a major contributor to the public budget. Initiatives like Publish What You Pay and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative are attempts by independent bodies to ensure that corporate payments to governments are transparent, to increase accountability and public oversight. By illuminating the flows of money over natural resource deals, for instance, it becomes easier for civil society to trace payments, map relationships and work out whether the appropriate resources are being allocated to the needs of the country. Companies that wish to align themselves to more open budget-setting can play an active role in such initiatives.

Trust the process

Greater public participation in policy decisions has constraints and challenges. First, one has to be careful to avoid "consultation fatigue" says Mr Bonturi. "Citizens can only take so many

26 https://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPOWERMENT/Resources/14657_Partic-Budg-Brazil-web.pdf

Budget advocacy in action: evidence from South Africa

Participatory budgeting and social audits are no abstract mathematical exercise, since public funds profoundly impact social and economic outcomes and people's involvement leads to tangible change. Julie McCarthy, director of the Fiscal Governance Program at the Open Society Foundations, highlights Khayelitsha and Wattville, marginalised townships in South Africa, as instructive case studies of the power of participatory budgeting and "social audits", which reviews the performance of public projects.

"In sanitation, civil society has come together and carried out social audits looking at existing facilities, and finding portable toilets left in disrepair by contractors, or a lack of lights to keep people safe at night, whether from falling in or from violence, especially sexual violence," she explains. In Khayelitsha, the social audit revealed that 1% of the sanitation budget was going to support 20% of the population. In Khayelitsha's informal settlements, the report resulting from teh audit shows that 26% of the toilets do not work, 15% are blocked, 12% do not have water and 6% lack a sewage pipe. According to IBP, "In some cases, as many as 10 to 26 families were sharing a single toilet."[27]

"Through that budget analysis, they were armed [with the facts needed] to do advocacy. In Watteville, this led to the government convening key officials, contractors and community organisations. On the basis of that, 120 inadequate portable toilets were replaced, toilets were made available for disabled users, and the auditor general in Gauteng took notice of this and committed to support the scale up of social audit as a mechanism to achieve faster and more effective improvements in sanitation throughout the towns."

Now, the supply-chain management department in Wattville uses the results of these audits to change the way they tender for contracts worth around US$100m, which affect about two-thirds of population in that area, says Ms McCarthy. She cites other examples, including the Indian state of Maharashtra, where non-government organisations and unions contested a cut in social spending that had been proposed as part of a programme that would reduce breakfast, supplementary nutrition and immunisation; they restored allocations to around 85% of their previous levels.

questions on different issues." Countries cannot always be governed by opinion poll either. Sometimes a government or politician might need to lead public opinion rather than following it. And between the three pillars that make up an open government by the OECD's reckoning

27 https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/link-between-functioning-toilets-and-justice

—information, consultation and engagement—there might also be trade-offs, with some policy issues more amenable to one form of open government than another. But, argues Mr Bellantoni, one thing is clear: "citizens get tired of being continuously solicited if they don't see the results of their engagement." Any government, central or local, wishing to engage the public must do so as part of a clear, transparent and iterative process.

"What matters to people is not just the outcome but the process," says Christiane Arndt-Bascle, head of programme for

measuring regulatory performance at the OECD. "For citizens to perceive the process as fair, there are factors governments need to take into account that shape that. They need to have a feeling they have a voice in the design and enforcement of regulations. And there needs to be an explanation of the process and decisions taken. Often consultation processes are just pro forma and the decision has already been taken and there is no explanation of what happens to the comments." Less than a third of OECD countries systematically publish a response to public consultation comments online, for instance.

Figure 8: Priorities ranking: how global citizens would prioritise public budgets

	OVERALL	EUROPE	ASIA-PACIFIC	AMERICAS	AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST
Improving the quality of and access to healthcare	#1	#1	#1	#2	#1
Social protection (supporting low-income households, the elderly, disabled, sick, unemployed or young persons)	#2	#2	#2	#4	#3
Improving the quality of and access to education	#3	#5	#3	#1	#2
Public order and safety	#4	#4	#5	#2	#4
Quality of transport	#5	#3	#4	#5	#5
Protecting the environment	#6	#6	#7	#6	#6
R&D (assisting innovation such as technology and the IoT, of products and procedures)	#7	#7	#6	#7	#7

Perception and reality

To understand more about how citizens feel budgets in their countries should be spent,

The Economist Intelligence Unit asked survey participants to apportion percentages of a fixed budget across seven policy domains (public order, environment, health, education,

Figure 9: How do government priorities align with overall citizen priorities in each region?

AMERICAS	RANK	DIFFERENTIAL
Peru	1	19
Chile	2	40
Argentina	3	50
Brazil	4	52
US	5	55
Colombia	6	57
Canada	7	69
Mexico	8	75

EUROPE	RANK	DIFFERENTIAL
Hungary	1	31
Italy	1	31
Spain	1	31
Portugal	4	32
Belgium	5	36
Ireland	5	36
Netherlands	5	36
Switzerland	5	36
UK	9	38
Poland	10	41
Turkey	10	41
Denmark	12	42
Sweden	12	42
France	14	43
Germany	14	43
Russia	16	174

ASIA-PACIFIC	RANK	DIFFERENTIAL
Australia	1	13
Cambodia	2	14
Taiwan	3	18
Vietnam	3	18
Philippines	5	21
China	6	22
Japan	7	24
Indonesia	8	30
Singapore	9	32
Thailand	10	36
India	11	43
South Korea	12	46
Sri Lanka	13	47
Malaysia	14	57

MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA	RANK	DIFFERENTIAL
Morocco	1	3
Egypt	2	7
Saudi Arabia	2	7
Nigeria	4	10
UAE	5	14
Tanzania	6	15
South Africa	7	19
Kuwait	8	30
Oman	9	31
Kenya	10	32
Ethiopia	11	36
Qatar	12	38

social protection, R&D and transport).

In some countries, there was very close alignment between how citizens would allocate budgets and how they are apportioned in current budget plans, with others showing a far greater differential. The chart on the previous page shows how seven key domains were ranked by the people in each region, with one meaning the largest budgetary allocation and seven the lowest. The data show that healthcare dominates across the board, as a number one allocation throughout, and number two in the Americas. Public safety, by contrast, was a far higher priority in the Americas, at second, compared with fourth or fifth in other regions. The environment was also a low priority throughout the group, a concerning finding given the severity of climate issues today.

To understand how government spending budget allocations reflect social priorities, The Economist Intelligence Unit compared citizens' views with the actual budget allocations based on publicly available data. The ranking below shows how closely government spending and citizen preferences align. A low differential means government spending was close to how citizens prioritise spending, while a high number indicates a larger spread.

Overall, Asia's top regional priority was for social protection, as to be expected in a continent with still large levels of poverty, but Singapore and Malaysia's budget spend was fifth, the widest divergence. In South America, Peru's public spending profile most closely matched the region's

priorities in all categories except education and healthcare, while in Colombia, although the government spend allocation diverged on every category, it also put more emphasis on the environment (at #4) than the region's priority for the category (at #6).

Hungary has the closest alignment between spending and citizen preference. Citizens put healthcare as the number one spending priority of the seven options, while the allocated budget puts it second (social protection is first). Education was a fourth priority, compared with the allocated spending that puts it third. Of all countries measured, Morocco had the closest alignment of all, with a mere three points of difference. Healthcare was the first citizen priority and the top government spending category, and social protection came third in the citizen allocation, versus second in actual figures.

Regional institutions and transboundary priorities

Not all social priorities are set, or resolvable, at the national or governmental level only. Regional institutions also play a role in shaping resource allocation, and setting norms and standards that impact people's lives. While these might seem distant from the everyday, some commentators believe they can be more citizen-centric institutions.

Thomas Parks, Thailand country representative at the Asia Foundation, thinks the Association of

South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) could shape aid and development policy in the region, which is still home to millions of people near or below the poverty line. While it has historically worked on a government-to-government level, ASEAN is in essence a network that is well positioned to shape norms and standards in areas like development assistance. "When so many development programmes are now regional rather than bilateral, there is less structure around how these are rolled out," says Mr Parks. Thailand, which assumes leadership of ASEAN next year, wants it to play more of a role in development aid, raising questions about how best this can be delivered and made consultative, he says.

"ASEAN has been trying to become more people-centred for the last five or ten years, and to become more open and create platforms to engage with citizens and non-state groups," says Mr Parks, noting some successes, like engaging the private sector as part of the ASEAN Economic Community. "If ASEAN wants to play a bigger role in aid and development, they need to be in the centre of shaping development and what it should look like, what it should not look like, and most of that is happening outside of governments. There are real prospects for ASEAN to do this."

NGOs are a second non-state actor with a part in setting social priorities. Although survey participants did not consider NGOs to have the biggest responsibility to bring about social change, they are unique in being able to focus on issues that cut across countries, and focus on international factors that impact people's

daily lives. Ms McCarthy at the Open Society Foundations says that social justice issues are often transboundary, from tax avoidance and illicit financial flows to trade deals.

If NGOs want to make a difference, they need to operate on multiple scales—top to bottom—especially in sensitive areas like gender inequality, which can be shaped by many social, cultural, legal and historical factors. "You need to work at an institutional level and on the ground where change plays out," says Jane Sloane, director of the Women's Empowerment Program at the Asia Foundation. "In China, we work with companies addressing issues of sexual harassment in the workforce, but also with government in relation to domestic violence policies, to get traction. In Sri Lanka, we are working at an institutional level to influence [a] gender-responsive court system and with local organisations, to bring them to the table so they are able to share how [the] current system plays out, such as whether women can give evidence and the bias and discrimination they face. We are thus a broker in bringing parties to [the] table and having [the] trust of government to support policy and reform at government level."

While NGOs will often struggle to get heard—and may not be able to influence policy on every campaign—there is positive evidence that their work makes a difference. Mr Gyimah-Boadi recalls an example in the African case, where Ghana's chief justice cited Afrobarometer data as an inspiration for reforming a corruption tainted judiciary following scandals about bribe-taking.
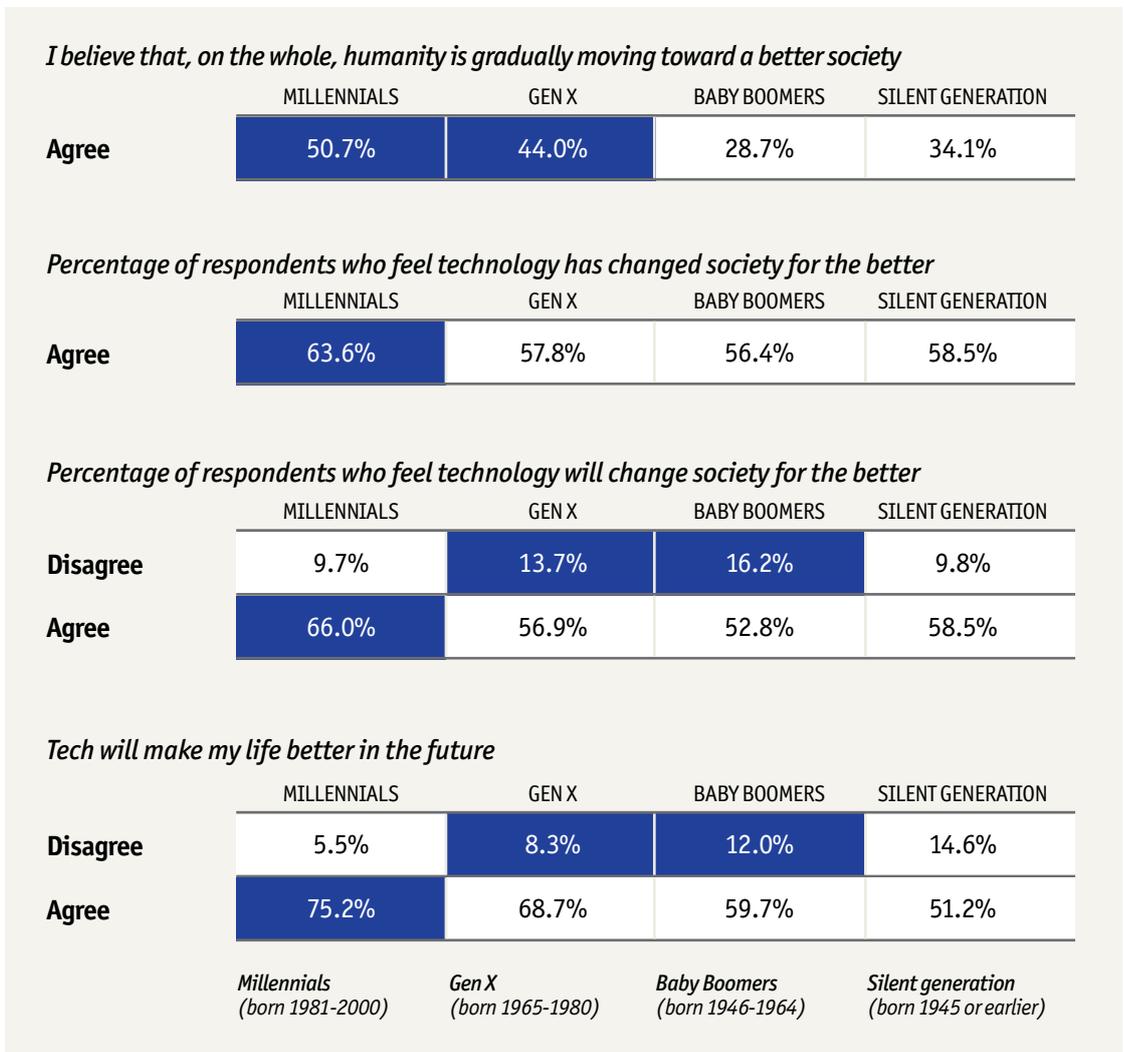
Companies can also play an active role supporting the issues that NGOs mobilise around, where appropriate. There has, for instance, been growing attention to the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people around the world, and companies—as employers—are increasingly aware of their own role in either supporting or inhibiting LBGTQ rights in different markets through their own policies and practices, from hiring to diversity training.

Business leaders have noted that as younger employees become corporate managers, they will bring their own values in ways that could help

Figure 10: The Millennial optimists

I believe that, on the whole, humanity is gradually moving toward a better society

	MILLENNIALS	GEN X	BABY BOOMERS	SILENT GENERATION
Agree	50.7%	44.0%	28.7%	34.1%

Percentage of respondents who feel technology has changed society for the better

	MILLENNIALS	GEN X	BABY BOOMERS	SILENT GENERATION
Agree	63.6%	57.8%	56.4%	58.5%

Percentage of respondents who feel technology will change society for the better

	MILLENNIALS	GEN X	BABY BOOMERS	SILENT GENERATION
Disagree	9.7%	13.7%	16.2%	9.8%
Agree	66.0%	56.9%	52.8%	58.5%

Tech will make my life better in the future

	MILLENNIALS	GEN X	BABY BOOMERS	SILENT GENERATION
Disagree	5.5%	8.3%	12.0%	14.6%
Agree	75.2%	68.7%	59.7%	51.2%

Millennials *(born 1981-2000)*	*Gen X* *(born 1965-1980)*	*Baby Boomers* *(born 1946-1964)*	*Silent generation* *(born 1945 or earlier)*

LGBTQ staff, while companies are also looking at LGBTQ as a customer group they can serve.[28] Corporate philanthropy can make possible aid and development support at new levels, disbursing billions of dollars for social causes. One of those at the fore includes the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, but many business entrepreneurs, from Michael Bloomberg and Warren Buffett to Jack Ma and Aliko Dangote, have provided major funding that can help the work done by NGOs. Companies can also pool funding together to support NGO budgets. WaterAid, a global charity active in 28 countries from Ethiopia to Nicaragua, has corporate partners ranging from engineering firm Arup to financial services giant HSBC.

Perhaps as a response to the rise of corporate philanthropy in the modern age, Millennials generally have a more positive view of business as a stakeholder that can drive change in society, relative to their older peers, according to the survey. Having grown up witnessing the apotheosis of the entrepreneurial age, they have grown up alongside world-changing brands like Google and Amazon. They have been exposed to the environmentalism of companies like Tesla. And they have seen how today's tech titans, like Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos, are investing in areas once only possible by governments, like space travel.

Their tech-saturation may be one reason why they are relatively more optimistic about the future overall—with 50.7% believing humanity is moving towards a better society compared with 44% of Gen X, 28.7% of Baby Boomers and 34.1% of the Silent Generation. Simultaneously, the highest

percentage of Millennials believed technology has changed society for the better, at 63.3%, compared with 57.8% of Gen X, 56.4% of Baby Boomers and 58.5% of the Silent Generation. They felt this would continue in the future, with 66% expecting tech to change society for the better (see Figure 10).

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28 https://eiuperspectives.economist.com/sites/default/files/Pride%20and%20Prejudice%20whitepaper_0.pdf

The road ahead

While our survey showed that large numbers of people were worried or unsatisfied with their current country's social and economic conditions, there were signs of optimism about the future, with particularly notable generational differences. For instance, 50.7% of Millennials (those born between 1981 and 2000) believe humanity is moving towards a better society, compared with only 44% of Gen X (1965-80) and 28.7% of Baby Boomers (1946-64). Asked about their expectation of progress towards a better society in their country, the largest share of Millennials expected considerable gains, more than three times higher than Baby Boomers. They were evenly split when asked about how satisfied they were with economic opportunities, 33.6% dissatisfied versus 35% satisfied.

As the international community sets ambitious targets, from the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals to the climate pledges laid out in the Paris Agreement, it will be crucial for all societal institutions to play a role in the process. As a new generation of leaders enters the fray with their own ideals, and as countries have more and more evidence of best practices and case studies of how best to find consensus on societal models, the dramatic events, political shocks and social ruptures of recent years will hopefully be seen as a painful step towards a new social contract.

Figure 11: In ten years' time, what progress do you believe your country will have made towards a better society?

	MILLENNIALS	GEN-X	BABY BOOMER	SILENT GENERATION
Considerable progress for the better	25.4%	14.6%	7.6%	9.8%
Some progress for the better	42.9%	40.4%	36.7%	46.3%
No change	11.4%	18.2%	19.4%	17.1%
Changes for the worse	10.2%	15.0%	22.1%	7.3%
Expect situation to become much worse	5.6%	6.1%	7.8%	7.3%

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