RESHAPING MIGRATION NARRATIVES

UN Human Rights roundtable, Bangkok

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More in Common is an initiative begun in 2017 to address the threats of social fracturing and division, and to help build more resilient and united societies.

More in Common has conducted detailed analysis of public attitudes and communications around migration and refugees – often the most divisive and polarising debates in different countries.
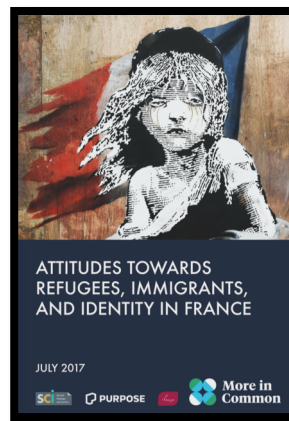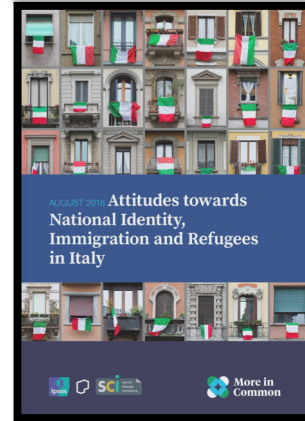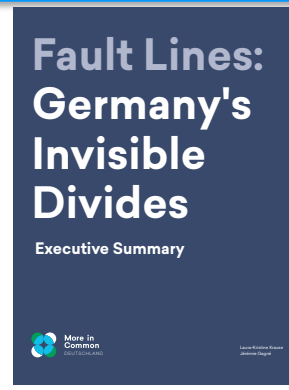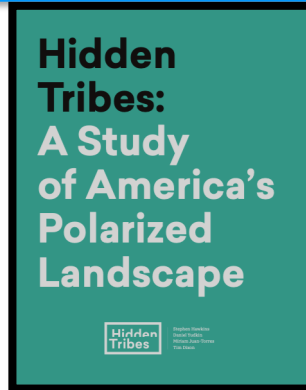
We have invested around $2.5m in detailed research that goes 'upstream' to understand the drivers of our social fracturing, working with social psychologists and the world's leading research firms.

Our model involves working with large-scale civil society, multilaterals and other institutions to apply and test insights that strengthen the evidence base around 'what works'.

Ten published reports and 48 institutional partnerships

All across the world there is a rise of 'us versus them' populism and societal polarisation, built around **fault lines of group identities**.

The fault lines differ from one country to another but the **'in-group' versus 'out-group' dynamics** are similar (e.g. anti-migrant narratives, 'people vs elites', nativists vs cosmopolitans, separatists vs nationalists, religious). Social media platforms are playing a key role in making these conflicts more combustible.
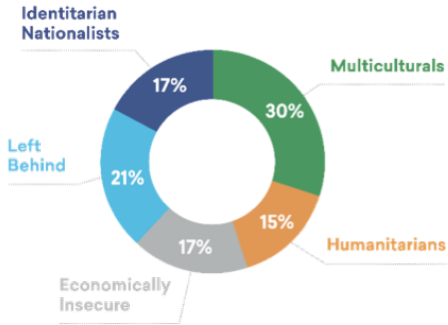
Solutions need to address the deeper drivers of polarisation: our human need for *belonging* and our natural orientation towards group identities and tribalism. This need for belonging is heightened when people feel more insecure and less trusting of institutions – which is true across much of the world, reflecting rapid economic, cultural and other changes.

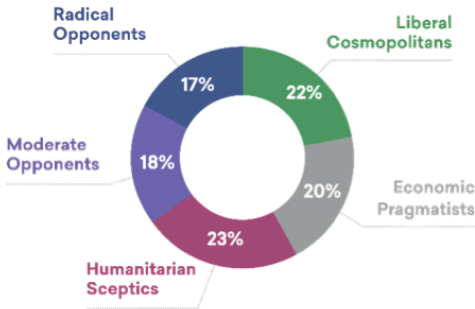# Understanding public attitudes through population segmentation
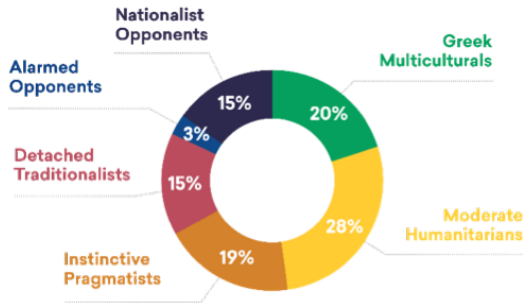## Most people are in 'middle groups', neither strong pro- or anti- migrant
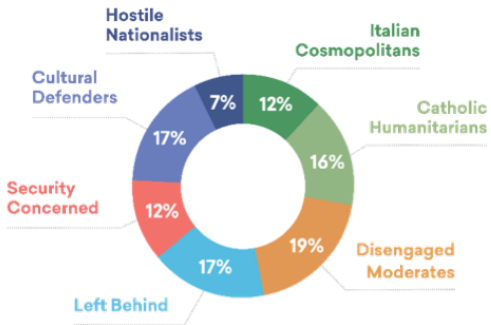
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France
- Identitarian Nationalists 17%
- Multiculturals 30%
- Left Behind 21%
- Economically Insecure 17%
- Humanitarians 15%

Germany
- Radical Opponents 17%
- Liberal Cosmopolitans 22%
- Moderate Opponents 18%
- Economic Pragmatists 20%
- Humanitarian Sceptics 23%

Greece
- Nationalist Opponents 15%
- Alarmed Opponents 3%
- Greek Multiculturals 20%
- Detached Traditionalists 15%
- Instinctive Pragmatists 19%
- Moderate Humanitarians 28%

Italy
- Hostile Nationalists 7%
- Italian Cosmopolitans 12%
- Cultural Defenders 17%
- Catholic Humanitarians 16%
- Security Concerned 12%
- Disengaged Moderates 19%
- Left Behind 17%

Netherlands
- Concerned Opponents 24%
- Confident Multiculturals 30%
- Disengaged 28%
- Engaged but Conflicted 16%

United States
- Devoted Conservatives 6%
- Progressive Activists 8%
- Traditional Conservatives 19%
- Traditional Liberals 11%
- Passive Liberals 15%
- Moderates 15%
- Politically Disengaged 26%

1. Most people in the 'middle groups' have some concerns about immigration

Many people in middle groups who believe in welcoming newcomers and who reject racism still have concerns about migration:

- **Loss of control of borders**, especially with unauthorised arrivals. Analysis of Americans' attitudes on immigration issues showed a strong relationship between people who value respect for authority and rules, and concern about immigration.

- **Worry about losing traditional culture and values** due to rapid change - "It feels like [my country] is disappearing". People worry that newcomers do not integrate, weaken their sense of community, traditions and national identity.

- **Terrorism and crime** – many people associate newcomers with increased physical threats.

- **Economic uncertainty** – at a time of austerity and uncertainty, people worry that migrants of all kinds may take jobs, undercut wages and put pressure on scarce resources (eg hospitals, schools, transport and welfare).

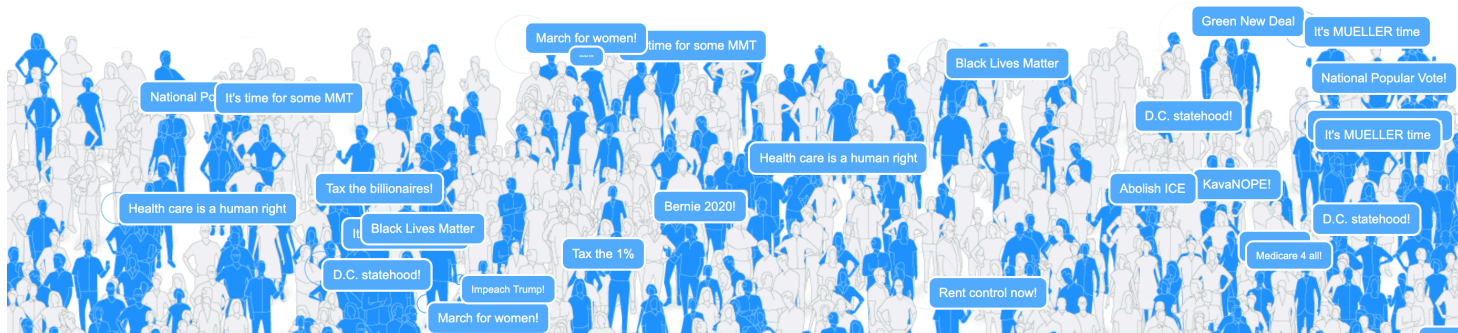More in Common

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The Democratic Electorate on Twitter
Is Not the Actual Democratic Electorate

By NATE COHN and KEVIN QUEALY   APRIL 9, 2019

A detailed look at the voters with the numbers to decide the 2020
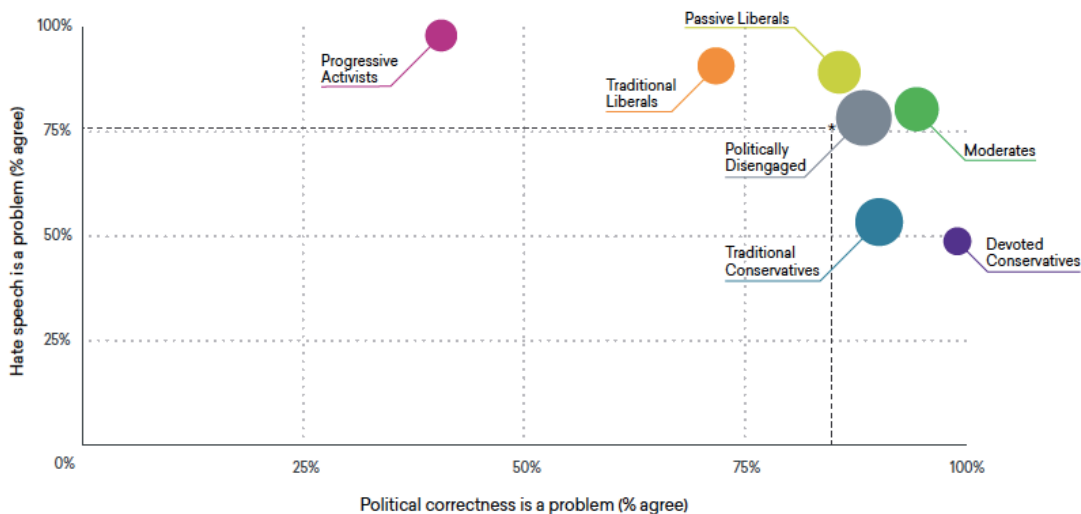Democratic nominee.

Democrats on social media
■ Progressive activists   ■ Other Democrats

3. Anti-racism messages that talk 'down' to people don't work

In the US and Europe, we have found widespread dislike of 'political correctness' and the policing of language about minorities – including among most people who think their society has a problem of racism.

size= % share of US population
--- US average

Five key insights:

## 4. Speaking to people's core beliefs can move us beyond polarization

Core Beliefs Orientation	Message Text	All	Strong Democrat	Lean Democrat	Not very strong Democrat	Independent	Not very strong Republican	Lean Republican	Strong Republican
Authority, Loyalty (In-group) and Care	America can be both strong and compassionate. We can protect our borders from criminals and terrorists at the same time that we welcome immigrants who respect our laws and embrace American values.	78	81	78	79	77	73	80	78
Fairness: Rights and Responsibility	Immigrants who came to America as children without legal permission should not be punished. But as adults they should be expected to learn English, to find work, to pay taxes, and to respect the law.	74	79	76	77	69	71	66	73
Care And Loyalty (In-group)	I believe that we can be compassionate towards people coming to our border while still being committed to our citizens. We should help people in tough situations, so long as American people who need help get it too.	72	83	81	74	69	61	64	63
Group Favoritism – Overcorrection	It bothers me that you can't talk about immigration without being afraid of getting called "racist". I don't care about skin color, but I do care about American values and being safe from gangs and crime.	68	47	49	59	75	81	88	89
Care Over Authority	When I see the way that children have been separated from their parents on the US border, I feel that our country has totally lost sight of what matters. We've stopped being human and it's shameful.	59	90	86	76	54	42	19	25

5. Stories that break down 'us versus them dynamics are powerful

For example, we have worked on expanding programs to expand community-led sponsorship of refugees. These programs build stronger public support for refugees and create thousands of local stories of successful integration. One example is a video of refugee sponsors in Newfoundland – https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=9&v=AJZPvfPlyNk&feature=emb_logo
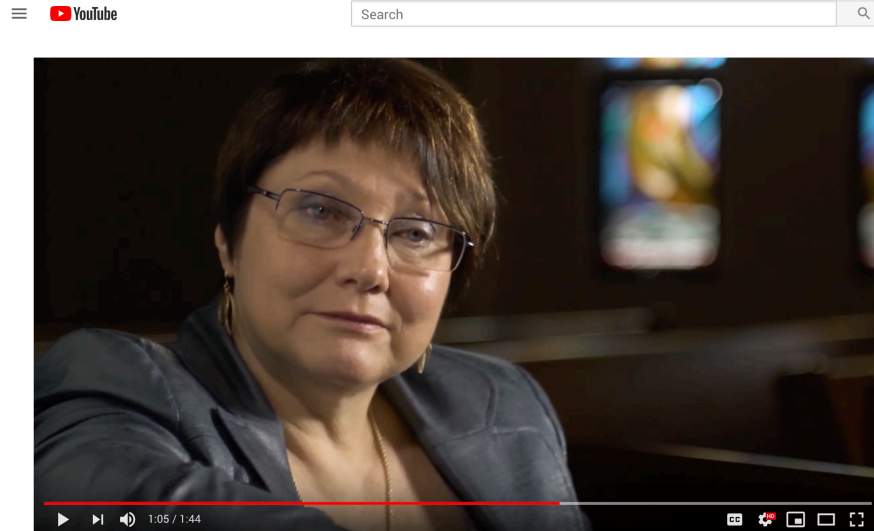
- To tackle the drivers of anti-migrant narratives, we need to break 'in-group' versus 'out-group' dynamics

- Communications that ignore the concerns or anxieties of middle groups often do not reach much beyond existing supporters.

- For middle groups, it is more effective telling stories of a 'bigger us' emphasising *what we have in common*, than emphasising only that we must embrace differences.

- The most powerful stories build on sources of shared, inclusive identity – such as patriotism, tradition, faith, family and community. Telling those stories is the hard but rewarding work of creative communications!

- More in Common is developing a 'Learning Hub' to capture and share insights from 'what works' so we can counter the 'us-versus-them' narratives that are dividing our societies.

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