

**The Influence of Domestic Political Equality and Membership of a Discriminated
Group on Trust in the National and European Parliament Across EU Member States**

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January 3, 2021

Abstract

The current paper studies whether domestic political equality and membership of a discriminated group influence trust in the national parliament, and whether these effects spill-over to trust in the European Parliament. To do so, existing data from the European Social Survey (n=38,691) is combined with domestic political equality scores created by Freedom House. The study provides new insights as previous research has focused on different geographies, specific marginalized groups, or only on either the national or European Parliament.

Results seem to indicate that domestic political equality has a significant positive relation with trust in national parliament. Additionally, members of discriminated groups show significantly lower trust in the national parliament than those individuals who do not consider themselves to be part of a discriminated group. The results also indicate a positive relationship between trust in national parliament and trust in the European Parliament. Additionally, it is shown that most of the effects of domestic political equality and membership of a discriminated group on trust in the European Parliament are mediated by trust in national parliament. Nonetheless, there are significant residual direct effects in which both domestic political equality and membership of a discriminated group negatively impact trust in the European Parliament. While membership of a discriminated group exercises a negative direct effect on both trust in national parliament and European Parliament, domestic political equality shows a positive direct effect on trust in the national parliament but a negative direct effect on trust in the European Parliament. This seems to indicate that individuals living in politically unequal countries are more likely to trust the European Parliament unless they have high trust in the National parliament, and vice versa. There also seems to be an indication that the basis upon which individuals are discriminated against influences trust in both national parliament and the European Parliament. While those discriminated based on nationality, age, disability, language and

'other unspecified factors' display decreased levels of trust in both national and European Parliament, those discriminated based on sexuality display increased levels of trust but only in the European Parliament. Individuals member of a group that is discriminated against based on race, ethnic group, or gender do not display different levels of trust in the national and European Parliament compared to those who are not discriminated against.

In order to ensure trust in the national parliament it seems important to strive for the social inclusion of individuals who are part of a group that is currently discriminated against. National parliament might increase the level of trust of citizens towards the parliament by maximizing domestic political equality. Furthermore, the European Parliament should aim to increase trust in the national parliament as this will likely translate into increased levels of trust in the European Parliament as well.

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Introduction

Throughout Europe there are varying levels at which groups of minorities feel discriminated against (European Commission, 2019). Although it seems that the extent to which these groups feel discriminated against is decreasing, over 50% of the European population reported that discrimination based on ethnic origin, skin color, or sexual orientation is still widespread in their country (European Commission, 2019). Research in the United States has shown that perceived discrimination against Latino individuals tends to result in alienation of this group, which then leads to decreased trust in the national government (Schildkraut, 2005). Similarly, research in Europe has shown that immigrants who have experienced discrimination have lower confidence in national public institutions compared to immigrants who do not feel discriminated against (Röder & Mühlau, 2011). These studies show a possible relation between equality, discrimination, and trust. This potential influence of discrimination and political equality on trust in European institutions, specifically the European Parliament, might be considered very topical as cases of institutional discrimination and polarization seem to occur throughout the European Union. For example, local Polish authorities establishing 'LGBTI-free zones', general increases of anti-immigrant and Islamophobic populism, and Hungary's decision to ban transgender individuals from changing their gender on official documents (Vieta & Poynting, 2016; Nowicka, 2018; European Parliament, 2020; Kende & Krekó, 2020; Savage, 2020). These frictions might have significant impact on the European Parliament, as it has previously been argued that discrimination and inequality might lead to decreases of citizen's trust, which is paramount for the survival of the institution (Dotti Sani & Magistro, 2016).

Nonetheless, there seems to be ambiguity regarding the extent to which experiences of discrimination and political equality influence trust in both national and European Parliament. Therefore, this thesis will aim to answer the question: *Do*

membership of a discriminated group and domestic political equality influence trust in the national parliament, and do these effects spillover to the European Parliament?

The current thesis adds value by looking at the effects of membership of discriminated groups on political trust within Europe. Thus far, this relation has largely been tested in North-America. In most cases where discrimination and trust have been researched within Europe the focus solely laid on discrimination towards migrants.

Literature Review

Previous research has shown numerous conceptualizations of trust, equality, discrimination, and how these different factors might relate to one another (Schildkraut, 2005; Nooteboom, 2007; Röder & Mühlau, 2011; André, 2014; Warren et al., 2014). Therefore, this literature review will delve into these different conceptualizations and its underlying research. Following this review of existing knowledge, a synthesis will outline the specific relations that will be tested in the current thesis.

Trust

Trust is generally considered as an attitude towards something or someone deemed as being trustworthy (McLeod, 2020). The distinction between trust and trustworthiness is that trust is considered to be an attitude towards something or someone while trustworthiness is seen as an attribute (McLeod, 2020). In other words, if an individual trusts an entity they expect that there will be a positive outcome from the interaction with this entity (Corbett & Le Dantec, 2018). Trust can both be based on emotion as well as on rationale (Nooteboom, 2007). Although these two fundamentals of trust might seemingly diverge, they often interact with one another in the formation of trust (Simmel, 1950, as cited in Nooteboom, 2007). In addition to being built on various underlying constructs, trust can also be conditional (Nooteboom, 2007). The complexity of the various ways in which trust might be constructed, along with the various conditions that might have to be met, makes it difficult to determine when individuals tend to trust something or someone (McLeod, 2020). Perhaps partially due to the complexity of trust, the concept is often divided into numerous distinct types. In the field of public administration the two most abundantly researched types of trust seem to be social trust and political trust (Levi & Stoker, 2000; Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005; Newton & Zmerli, 2011; André, 2014; Chevalier, 2019; Torcal & Christmann, 2019;). This is emphasized by the

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which also considers trust in governments to be built mainly upon social trust and political trust (OECD, 2013). In this consideration, social trust is defined as representing an individuals' confidence in their social community and political trust as an appraisal of the government and its institutions (OECD, 2013). In other words, social trust is directed towards other citizens while political trust is directed to an individual's government or its representatives (Bauer & Freitag, 2018). In looking at social and political trust, it is worth noting that the causal relationship between these two types of trust is still rather ambiguous (Newton et al., 2018). Whereas some studies indicate that social trust is an antecedent of political trust, other studies argue the relationship between these variables is the other way around (Levi & Stoker, 2000; André, 2014; Doti Sani & Magistro, 2016). Consequently, numerous scholars argue that it is not yet possible to conclude the specific directionality of this relationship (Newton & Zmerli, 2011; Newton et al., 2018).

Social Trust

Social trust is often considered to be based upon interpersonal relationships in which one individual trusts another to keep their interest in mind (Warren, 2018). Social trust can be built upon a variety of factors including shared norms between the truster and trustee, or trust based on the truster associating the trustee with something or someone familiar (Warren, 2018). Nonetheless, it is also argued that trust can be a heritable characteristic and that it is strongly dependent on environmental factors including education, socioeconomic standing, and equality (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005; Dotti Sani & Magistro, 2016; Cawvey et al., 2018; Newton et al., 2018).

Social trust can be narrowed down further into particular social trust and general social trust (Newton & Zmerli, 2011). Particular social trust is thought to relate to close and constant contact with known others (Newton & Zmerli, 2011; Dinesen & Sønderskov,

2018). Particular social trust is deemed to aid the development of general social trust (Newton et al., 2018). In turn, general social trust is considered to be trust towards unknown others which is an important component of social capital in society (Newton & Zmerli, 2011; Dinesen & Sønderskov, 2018). Both social capital and generalized trust are considered to be crucial in democracies as it enables cooperation, compromise, and reduces conflicts (Nooteboom, 2007; Newton et al., 2018; Warren, 2018). But, it seems this relation also works the other way around, as it has previously been argued by Rothstein and Uslaner (2005) that low social capital is often caused by low levels of trust and high levels of inequality among citizens.

As mentioned before, the relationship between various types of trust is seemingly complex and ambiguous (Cawvey et al., 2018). Nonetheless, it is widely agreed upon that social trust can assist in fostering political trust (Newton et al., 2018; Warren, 2018).

Political Trust

Political trust is considered as being the extent to which an individual believes their political governor(s) will act fairly and in their best interest (André, 2014). Numerous factors are deemed to influence individuals' political trust. Similar to social trust, political trust is also considered to be dependent on environmental and demographic factors (Farwell et al., 2019). But, especially important in political trust is that an individual must feel that their political representatives largely share their normative beliefs (Warren, 2018). Additionally, the truster must also be somewhat knowledgeable of the trustee or there must be a clear structure in which the trustee is being supervised by for example watchdogs (Warren, 2018). Listhaug and Jakobsen (2018) emphasize that political trust is also directly affected by the extent to which citizens are provided with direct democratic rights.

In terms of the relationship between voting and political trust, there are different beliefs. Some argue for a positive relationship between the two variables, in which voting positively influences trust, or in which trust positively influences the likelihood of voting (Hooghe, 2018). In contrast, Schafheitle et al. (2020) argue that there is no significant relationship between political participation and trust. However, this study by Schafheitle et al. (2020) used a sample of 617 German individuals, so it is debatable to what extent these findings are generalizable.

Political trust is an important condition for well-functioning democracies and institutions as it provides a sense of unity, increases voter turnout, and is necessary for the successful implementation of policies (André, 2014; Warren et al., 2014; Hetherington & Rudolph, 2018; Hooghe, 2018). Nonetheless, it has been found that political trust is declining in different countries all around the globe (Chevalier, 2019). According to Hooghe (2018) and Hetherington & Rudolph (2018), these decreased levels of political trust are often related to increased levels of populism and polarization.

Besides the different possible antecedents, there are numerous ways in which political trust can be narrowed down. For example, Norris (1999) subdivides political trust into five categories. These five categories are confidence in the domestic political community, confidence in the principles of the broader political regime, confidence in the performance of said regime, confidence in governmental institutions, and confidence in the political leaders (Norris, 1999). However, a more common practice is using political trust as a concept regarding trust towards political actors within a government, and institutional trust as a concept for trust regarding more impartial governmental actors such as the police (de Vroome et al., 2013; Warren et al., 2014; Warren, 2018; Farwell et al., 2019). So, the key difference is that political trust is often targeted at a specific representative of the government, such as a prime minister or president (Bauer & Freitag, 2018). In contrast, institutional trust is towards a more anonymous group of individuals

who can be replaced by other individuals at any given time (Bauer & Freitag, 2018; Warren, 2018). While the meaning of these concepts of trust diverges, both are considered important in democracies (Warren, 2018). There might be some variance between these different types of trust as governments seemingly strive to steer distrust towards representative political bodies, and away from institutions such as the judiciary system (Warren, 2018).

So, trust is generally seen as an attitude based on expectations and conditions (Corbett & Le Dantec, 2018; McLeod, 2020). Two key categories of trust are of interest for the current study: social trust and political trust. Whereas social trust emphasizes interactions with others, political trust is focused on political actors and governmental institutions (Newton et al., 2018). Both types of trust are influenced by environmental factors, demographics, and heretics (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005; Dotti Sani & Magistro, 2016; Cawvey et al., 2018; Newton et al., 2018; Farwell et al., 2019). But, political trust also includes the extent to which an individual believes their government represents their norms and interest (Warren, 2018). Nonetheless, both types of trust are crucial for democracies as they enable cooperation and compromise (Nooteboom, 2007; André, 2014; Warren et al., 2014; Hetherington & Rudolph, 2018; Hooghe, 2018; Newton et al., 2018; Warren, 2018). In addition to the aforementioned antecedents of social and political trust, different studies show that both domestic inequality and experiences of discrimination might negatively affect both types of trust (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005; Schildkraut, 2005). Therefore, the following part of the literature review will focus on these two specific factors.

Domestic Political Equality

In addressing domestic political equality, it is important to outline the various types of equality that might play a role in the political landscape. In their 2005 study, Rothstein & Uslaner conceptualized equality as encompassing both economic equality and equality of opportunity. In this framework, economic equality was considered to revolve around the equitable distribution of resources within society (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). Equality of opportunity was then defined as being the extent to which a government adopts policies that strive to provide equal access to all citizens in terms of public education, health care, job markets, legal protection, etcetera (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). Domestic inequality, both in terms of economic equality and equality of opportunity, generally leads to decreased social trust (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). An important caveat in this definition of equality of opportunity is that it intends to capture a state's intentions and actions, but not the actual outcomes (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). Nonetheless, this practice is also widely adopted in the measurement of domestic political equality, which is why the current thesis will adopt this same conceptualization (Freedom House, n.d.).

The extent to which a country is considered to be politically equal has shown significant effects on the quality of governance and democracy (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005; Newton et al., 2018). Moreover, some scholars argue that political equality is a condition for deliberative democracy to truly be democratic (Christiano, 1997). In contrast, there is also literature that suggests political equality is positively related to populism (Anduiza et al., 2019). This seems remarkable because it has also been shown that populism and polarization are strongly related (Schulze et al., 2020). In turn, polarization is thought to lead to decreased levels of social trust and political trust, and increased levels of democratic backsliding (Hetherington & Rudolph, 2018; Newton et al., 2018). Additionally, there are also indications that polarization directly leads to a deterioration of democratic values, which has been seen in various countries across Europe (Vachudova,

2019; Schulze et al., 2020). However, this proposed relation between increased political equality leading to increased populism and polarization can be traced back to Anduiza et al.'s (2019) reasoning, conceptualization, and measurement. More specifically, in their article they argue that populism generally appeals to the discriminated and traditionally politically excluded individuals in society (Anduiza et al., 2019). So, increased populism drives these individuals towards the political arena, which is then seen by Anduiza et al. (2019) as increasing political equality. However, following Rothstein & Uslaner's (2005) concept, this use of political equality does not seem entirely accurate, as the political equality before the increase of populism was already present but simply not utilized by the individuals who are discriminated against. Similar to the approach by Anduiza et al. (2019), Fatke (2014) argues that direct democracy might jeopardize political equality, as the participation of majority groups 'pushes away' minority groups. However, this again seems to be a confusing use of concepts, as research has long recognized an important distinction between equality and equity, in which equality assumes an equal starting point while equity is more indicative of equal outcomes (Cook & Hegtvedt, 1983; Landemore, 2014; Gaus & Seubert, 2016). Instead of political equality leading to populism or the marginalization of minority groups, most literature suggest that political equality has positive effects on levels of trust, which includes trust in the national parliament (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005; Newton et al., 2018). Additionally, it has been argued that political equality is positively related to social capital (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). This social capital has then been found to be one of the most powerful determinants of the quality of democracy (Fennema & Tillie, 1999). As mentioned prior, social capital is built upon numerous factors including social trust (Warren, 2018; Nooteboom, 2007). In addition to social trust, social capital also is based on shared norms, values, and other interpersonal links that promote cooperation within and amongst various groups (Nooteboom, 2007; OECD, 2007). Thus, as social capital is considered to revolve around

the extent to which different groups can cooperate, it seems sensible that domestic political equality indeed increases social capital (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005).

Discrimination and Trust

Similar to the concept of trust itself, the relation between discrimination and trust is rather complex as well (Wilkes & Wu, 2019). One of the reasons why this topic is often considered as being complex is due to the intersectionality of discrimination which recognizes that discrimination can occur on various bases simultaneously rather than being the result of one specific characteristic (Temple et al., 2019). An additional factor that complicates research is the plethora of effects that discrimination might have on personal identity and mental well-being (Schildkraut, 2005). It has previously been shown that individuals who perceive themselves as being discriminated against have an increased tendency to become both behaviorally and attitudinally alienated from the political landscape (Schildkraut, 2005). In Schildkraut's 2005 study, behavioral alienation was operationalized as political inactivity, and attitudinal alienation was seen as the extent to which an individual feels connected to a shared political enterprise. While it was shown that behavioral alienation can be overcome if perceived discrimination is paired with ethnic self-identification, the attitudinal alienation cannot be mitigated by any type of self-identification (Schildkraut, 2005). In instances where individuals become attitudinally alienated from the political arena it is thought that they also might experience decreased levels of trust in the national government (Schildkraut, 2005). The relation between discrimination and decreased levels of political trust has been found in a wide range of studies. But, research has mostly been abundant in researching the differences between immigrants and 'native' citizens in terms of trust (Michelson, 2003; Schildkraut, 2005; Dinesen, 2009; Röder & Mühlau, 2011; Kääriäinen & Niemi, 2014; Saleem et al., 2019; Wilkes & Wu, 2019). Nonetheless, research has also investigated discrimination based on

physical and mental disability (Temple et al., 2019), race and ethnicity (Mohseni & Lindström, 2008; Smith, 2010; Nunnally, 2012; Dinesen & Sønderkov, 2018), or multiple factors at once (Helliwell et al., 2018). These various studies provided different insights in terms of the effect of discrimination on trust. Some studies show a seemingly weak relation between discrimination and trust, while others argue “race is the most important determinant of trust” (Smith, 2010, p. 470). When it comes to the studies comparing trust levels between immigrants and native citizens, it is mostly argued that experiences of discrimination tend to lead to decreased social trust (Michelson, 2003; Saleem et al., 2019; Wilkes & Wu, 2019). However, other research indicates that most of the differences in levels of political trust between natives and immigrants disappear when economic and social resources are corrected for (de Vroome et al., 2013). In the case of discrimination on other bases than immigration, similar patterns seem to appear. In Australia, people who experienced discrimination based on a disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, or numerous other factors reported lower levels of trust in health care, justice systems, police force, and general others (Temple et al., 2019). Furthermore, these instances of discrimination are also said to lead to social exclusion and decreased trust (Temple et al., 2019).

So, it seems there is no consensus on the effect that discrimination has on social trust or political trust, and whether there might be differences between the different types and grounds of discrimination. Nonetheless, in instances where a relationship has been found, researchers argue that the decreased social trust is the result of a decreased sense of belonging due to discrimination (Röder & Mühlau, 2011; Nunnally, 2012; Wilkes & Wu, 2019). But, whereas this decreased trust might be the result of present-day discrimination, others argue that the decreased trust has already been embedded within certain minority groups due to discrimination that happened in the past (Nunnally, 2012; Saleem et al., 2019). Nonetheless, also in cases where decreased trust is attributed to

past instances of discrimination, it could be reasoned that this is indicative of alienation from the dominant group.

Aside from the article by Temple et al. (2019), research on the relationship between discrimination and trust seems primarily focused on immigrants and ethnic minorities. Nonetheless, other dimensions of discrimination also seem prevalent in the European Union, including discrimination based on sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, and more (Takács, 2006; Bloul, 2008). Especially as some of these types of discrimination can be highly politicized, it would be interesting to see how the discrimination of these minorities influences their political trust, both specific to the national parliament as well as the European Parliament. Additionally, as there seems to be evidence that different grounds of discrimination have different effects on political trust it would be interesting to research whether this is also the case for these various discriminated groups and their tendencies to trust national and European Parliament (Temple et al., 2019).

Intersectionality of Political Inequality and Discrimination

As explored in the previous parts of this chapter, both political inequality and discrimination can negatively affect the political trust of individuals. In this consideration it is important to realize that the negative effects of these inequalities and acts of discrimination are both at play for minority groups. Röder and Mühlau (2011) have argued that groups that are discriminated in society often have direct experiences with the inequalities that might be fostered by the national parliament. These inequalities could be inequality in terms of representation within the government, human rights, or other types of inequalities. So, not only do the bases upon which individuals are discriminated against intersect but so do the negative consequences of said discrimination.

Trust in National and European Parliament

Thus far, it has been shown that political trust is driven by many factors including discrimination and domestic political equality. In looking at the trust in national and European Parliament it is important to also consider the possible relation between these two. Broadly speaking there are two different theories regarding this relationship: congruence theory and compensation theory (Muñoz et al., 2011; Torcal & Christmann, 2019; Dominioni et al., 2020; Schafheitle et al., 2020). The congruence theory argues that there is a positive relationship between trust in the national parliament and the European Parliament (Muñoz et al., 2011; Torcal & Christmann, 2019). In contrast, the compensation theory argues that in nations where institutions are highly trusted the trust towards European institutions is relatively low (Muñoz et al., 2011; Dominioni et al., 2020). Both of these theories have been tested numerous times, with various outcomes. For example, Torcal and Christmann (2019) showed that low national political trust is thought to lead to a decreased trust in the European Parliament, which was also found by Gattermann (2013) and Flickinger & Studlar (2007). In addition to demonstrating the congruence effect, Torcal and Christmann (2019) also argued that these spillovers are stronger in the context of economic and political crises (Torcal & Christmann, 2019). Nonetheless, there has also been research that argues that the compensation theory provides more explanatory value for the relationship between trust in the national and European Parliament. For instance, one study showed that citizens who perceived their national government as being corrupt showed higher trust in European institutions (Obydenkova & Aripno, 2018). Similar effects have been shown during the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the average trust in national governments generally decreased while the trust in European institutions increased significantly (Eurofound, 2020).

While some scholars specifically focus on showing either the congruence or compensation effect, others argue that these are not mutually exclusive. It has been

argued that both of these effects can occur at the same time, but at different levels (Muñoz et al., 2011). While the congruence effect is shown largely at the individual level, the compensation theory appears when looking at the national level. More specifically, citizens who are more prone to being trusting often show high levels of trust in both national and European institutions. In the meantime, it shows that countries in which institutions are highly trusted, the trust in the European Parliament is relatively low (Muñoz et al., 2011). In other words, the general trust in national institutions seems to hinder the trust in European institutions (Muñoz et al., 2011). The notion that both the congruence and compensation effect can occur simultaneously has been reiterated by Dominioni et al. (2020). However, they also argue that it is not yet possible to determine the directionality of the spillovers in trust between the national and European institutions (Dominioni et al., 2020). Moreover, it is claimed that this relation could be bidirectional, asymmetric, and highly fluid over time and across different regions (Dominioni et al., 2020).

So, while most literature shows that there is a significant relationship between trust in national institutions and European institutions, there is no consensus regarding the nature of this relationship or its direction. Nonetheless, due to this relationship it seems reasonable to argue that it is not possible to consider trust in the European Parliament without considering trust in the national parliament.

Synthesis

It has previously been argued that domestic inequality, both in terms of economic equality and equality of opportunity, generally leads to decreased social trust (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). This decreased social trust is then considered to include decreased trust in the national parliament (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). So, in the current thesis this relationship is hypothesized as:

H₁: Domestic political equality is positively related to trust in the national parliament.

As noted throughout literature, experiences of discrimination are thought to lead to decreased trust in the national parliament, amongst others due to alienation and decreased social trust (Schildkraut, 2005; Röder & Mühlau, 2011; Nunnally, 2012; Wilkes & Wu, 2019). This provides the following hypothesis:

H₂: Membership of a discriminated group is negatively related to trust in the national parliament.

While domestic equality in itself positively influences trust in national parliament, it could be argued that this effect becomes more pronounced when the respondent is member of a discriminated group. This is largely expected due to the fact that these members of discriminated groups have first-hand experience of the (in)equality fostered by national parliament (Röder & Mühlau, 2010).

H₃: There is an interaction effect between domestic political equality and membership of a discriminated group, whereby there is a stronger positive effect of domestic political equality on trust in the national parliament when the respondent is member of a discriminated group.

In terms of the effects of domestic political equality and membership of a discriminated group on trust in the European Parliament seem to be two possible options. First, in line with reasoning from Torcal & Christmann (2019), there might be a congruence effect through which the low national political trust might directly lead to decreased trust in the European Parliament. However, it might also be the case that there is a compensation effect, as seen in Obydenkova & Aripno (2018), in the sense that the grievances in domestic politics could lead to a relatively high trust in International

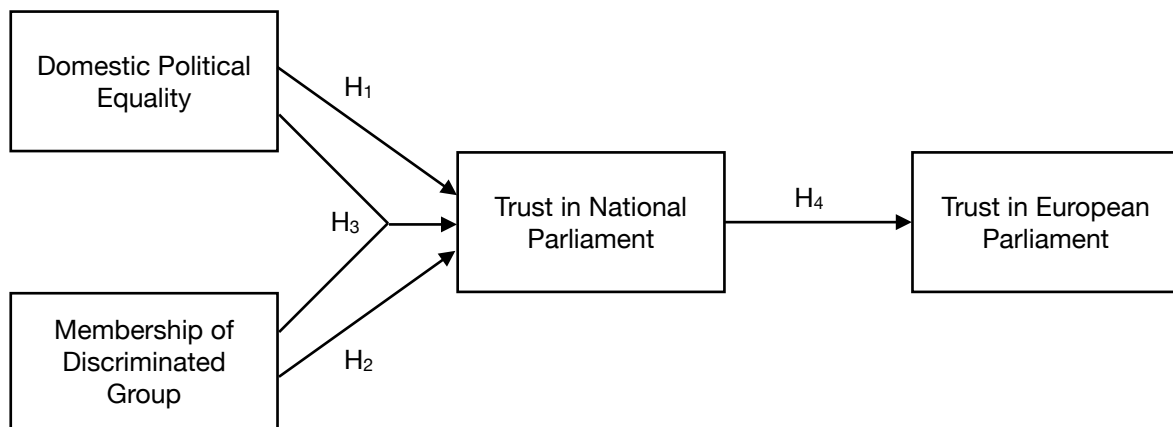
institutions, or vice versa. As reasoned by Muñoz et al. (2011), it seems that the effect observed might depend on the unit of analysis. As the current study will measure individual-level effects, it is assumed that the congruence effect will emerge. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H₄: The effects of domestic political equality and membership of a discriminated group on trust in national parliament positively relate to the trust in the European Parliament.

The hypotheses above lead to the conceptual framework as displayed in Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Methodology

Design and Data

The current study includes four key variables: membership of a discriminated group, domestic political equality, trust in the national parliament, and trust in the European Parliament. The current study is cross-sectional and uses secondary data. Primarily, data originates from the ninth round of the European Social Survey (European Social Survey Round 9 Data, 2018). Besides that, data for 'domestic political equality' is sourced from the Freedom in the World report by Freedom House (Freedom House, 2020). The European Social Survey (ESS) gathers data in biennial cross-national face-to-face interviews conducted with cross-sectional samples (European Social Survey, n.d. a). In the ninth round of the ESS, 31 countries participated, of which the data for four countries has not yet been released: Albania, Denmark, Iceland, and Romania (European Social Survey, n.d. b). From the remaining countries, five countries were excluded as these are not part of the European Union, which would likely cause different effects in terms of the construction of trust towards the European Parliament. These five countries are Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Thus, the current study includes the data from 22 countries, which is all EU member states excluding Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, and Romania. Across these 22 countries, the ESS has 38,691 respondents, all of which have been included in this study. The specific amount of respondents per country is provided in Table 1: Country Data. Whereas the data from the ESS has been gathered through surveys, the data from Freedom House consists of a rating for each country ranging from 0 (smallest degree of freedom) to 4 (greatest degree of freedom) (Freedom House, n.d.). This score is attributed to each country for a variety of categories by a team of over 165 analysts and advisors (Freedom House, n.d.). In this study, the data from Freedom House has been merged into the ESS dataset, in which the ESS labels for the countries were adopted. So, the entry of each

respondent now also includes a Freedom House score for the political equality in their country of residence. The country scores of Freedom House are provided along with the list of countries in Table 1: Country Data.

Table 1

Country Data

Country Name	Code in Dataset	Freedom House Score*	n
Austria	AT	3	2,449
Belgium	BE	3	1,767
Bulgaria	BG	2	2,198
Croatia	HR	2	1,810
Cyprus	CY	3	781
Czechia	CZ	3	2,398
Estonia	EE	3	1,904
Finland	FI	4	1,755
France	FR	3	2,010
Germany	DE	3	2,358
Hungary	HU	2	1,661
Ireland	IE	3	2,216
Italy	IT	3	2,745
Latvia	LV	3	918
Lithuania	LT	3	1,835
Netherlands	NL	3	1,673
Poland	PL	3	1,500
Portugal	PT	4	1,055
Slovakia	SK	3	1,083
Slovenia	SI	3	1,318
Spain	ES	3	1,668
Sweden	SE	4	1,539
Total			38,641

* Scores based on Freedom House category F4 "Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?" Score ranges from 0 (smallest degree of freedom) to 4 (greatest degree of freedom) (Freedom House, n.d.).

Variables

The current study includes both domestic political equality and membership of a discriminated group as independent variables. Trust in national parliament is included as

a mediating variable, and trust in the European Parliament is included as the dependent variable. In the analyses focussing on the group-specific effects membership of a discriminated group is narrowed down further using 9 different possible grounds of discrimination as well as one remaining category for factors lying outside of these 9 different grounds. These variables have been operationalized in various ways. The specific operationalization of variables is provided in Table 2: Operationalization of Variables.

Table 2

Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Operationalization	Values	Source
1. Domestic political equality	Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?	0 (smallest degree of freedom) - 4 (greatest degree of freedom)	Freedom House, 2020
2a. Membership of a discriminated group	Would you describe yourself as being a member of a group that is discriminated against in this country?	Yes (1), No (2), Refusal (7), Don't Know (8), No Answer (9)	European Social Survey Round 9 Data, 2018
2b. Membership of a specific discriminated group	On what grounds is your group discriminated against?	Colour or Race, Nationality, Religion, Language, Ethnic Group, Age, Gender, Sexuality, Disability, Other Grounds	European Social Survey Round 9 Data, 2018
3. Trust in national parliament	Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust. [...] [country]'s parliament	0 (no trust at all) - 10 (complete trust), Refusal (77), Don't Know (88), No Answer (99)	European Social Survey Round 9 Data, 2018
4. Trust in European Parliament	Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust. [...] the European Parliament?	0 (no trust at all) - 10 (complete trust), Refusal (77), Don't Know (88), No Answer (99)	European Social Survey Round 9 Data, 2018

From the possible values shown in the table above, all 'refusal', 'don't know', and 'no answer' have been excluded from the analyses. In addition to the variables of interest, numerous confounding variables are accounted for. These variables are years of full-time education completed, gender, and age. These specific variables have been included as it appears from prior research that these demographic variables might have an influence on the likeliness of individuals to trust national and European parliament (Dotti Sani & Magistro, 2016; Farwell et al., 2019). So, the current study includes these three confounding variables as these are often thought to explain a large part of the variety in trust in both the national and European Parliament. As established in previous literature, there is a plurality of variables that might also influence levels of trust. However, the current study does not include a wide range of covariates as the study solely strives to focus on the effect of discriminated group membership and domestic political equality on trust in the national and European parliament.

Analysis

The current study will utilize numerous regressions to test the hypotheses. Using regression allows investigation of the predictive value of the independent variables for the dependent variable. So, it will show whether membership of a discriminated group and domestic political equality significantly predict the political trust in the national parliament as well as the European Parliament. More specifically, the study includes three regressions. First, the predictive value of membership of a discriminated group and domestic political equality on trust in the national parliament is tested in one model. This will show whether there are any direct relations between the independent variables and trust in the national parliament. This model will also include an interaction term for the two independent variables. Then, a second regression will measure the predictive value of membership of a discriminated group, domestic political equality, and the interaction

between these two on trust in the European Parliament. This will measure whether there seems to be a significant relationship between the two independent variables and trust in the European Parliament. A third regression will include trust in national parliament along with membership of a discriminated group and domestic political equality as independent variables. This third model will show whether the predictive value possibly seen in the second model is mediated by trust in the national parliament. In addition to the regressions investigating the main hypotheses, additional models will be created to provide an initial overview of the possible group-specific effects on trust in the national and European parliament. Whereas the previous regressions included a measure on general membership of discriminated groups, these models will include a further specification on which grounds the respondent is part of a discriminated group. This distinguishes between groups that are discriminated against based on race, nationality, religion, language, ethnic group, age, gender, sexuality, disability, or other unspecific factors. The measure is split up into 10 different binary variables in order to enable the inclusion in a regression analysis. Due to the intersectional nature of discrimination, some individuals are member of numerous discriminated groups. However, this is not analyzed in the current study as the use of regression analyses treats the discriminated groups as being separate from one another without any overlap between groups.

In all of these various regression models, years of full-time education, gender, and age are included as covariates. Generally, the European Social Survey recommends the inclusion of a weight variable to adjust for selection probabilities and varying sample sizes across countries (European Social Survey, n.d. c). However, this weight variable has not been included in the current analyses as the underlying components of one part of the weight variable overlap with the gender, age, and level of education variables (European Social Survey, n.d. c). Furthermore, the second component of this weight variable is meant to adjust for the different relative size of the sample sizes between countries. But,

as the current study does not make any comparisons between countries this is not considered to be necessary (European Social Survey, n.d. c).

To be able to measure a potential interaction effect between membership of a discriminated group and domestic political equality, an interaction term had to be computed (IBM, 2020). This has been computed within SPSS through the multiplication of the two independent variables. This is common practice in creating an interaction term, and it is rather straightforward due to fact that one of the two independent variables is binary (IBM, 2020). However, with the inclusion of an interaction term the issue of multicollinearity arises (IBM, 2020). To avoid this, the domestic political equality, as well as trust in national parliament and trust in the European Parliament, have been centered. Then, the interaction term was created based on these centered measures.

To utilize a regression, various assumptions have to be met (Osborne, 2017). These assumptions are linearity, normality of residuals, homoscedasticity, and fixed independent variables measured without error (Osborne, 2017). All of these are considered as being met, except for linearity. However, the data does not appear linear due to the highly limited amount of possible values of both the independent variables. For example, membership of a discriminated group has only two possible values and domestic political equality has only 3 values that appear in the dataset.

Results

The current section of this thesis will outline the results of the analyses that have been executed. Different regressions were performed to see whether the independent variables (membership of a discriminated group and domestic political equality) can provide significant predictive value for trust in the national parliament and whether this effect spills over to trust in the European Parliament. The first part of this chapter will explore the relationships between the independent variables and trust in national parliament. Next, the potential spillover between trust in national parliament and European Parliament are discussed. Lastly, additional findings are provided that have not been hypothesized but might nonetheless be interesting.

Effects of Discriminated Group Membership and Domestic Political Equality on Trust in National Parliament

The model including the independent variables and covariates provides significant predictive value for trust in national parliament $F(6,36837)=578.18$, $p<.01$, adjusted $R_2=.09$, $n=36,844$. The individual independent variables also show significant influence. As shown in Table 3, both membership of a discriminated group and domestic political equality have significant effects on the trust in national parliament. More specifically, membership of a discriminated group seems to negatively affect trust in the national parliament while domestic political equality shows a positive effect. In addition to the coefficients shown in Table 3, estimated marginal means for the various variables are provided in Appendix A.

Table 3

Effects of Discriminated Group Membership, Domestic Political Equality, and the Interaction Between These on Trust in National Parliament

Variable	Unstandardized β	Std. Error
Discriminated Group Membership	-.60**	.05
Domestic Political Equality	1.23**	.03
Discriminated Group Membership * Domestic Political Equality	.14	.10
Gender	-.18**	.03
Age	.00**	.00
Years of Full-time Education completed	.08**	.00

* Sig. <.05

** Sig. <.01

Based on the data provided above it seems reasonable to argue that both H₁ and H₂ have been confirmed, as it indeed appears that discriminated group membership decreases trust in the national parliament, while greater degrees of domestic political equality seem to lead to increased trust in the national parliament. H₃ posed that there would be an interaction effect between discriminated group membership and domestic political equality on trust in national parliament. As shown in the analysis, the interaction does not show any significance, thus no supporting evidence for H₃ has been found.

Spillover of Trust in National Parliament on Trust in the European Parliament

To identify whether there is a spillover between trust in the national parliament and trust in the European Parliament, two separate models were created. The first model includes the independent variables, after which the second model also includes the trust in the national parliament. The first model seems to show that the independent variables provide significant predictive value for trust in the European Parliament $F(6,35286)=205.05$, $p<.01$, adjusted $R_2=.03$, $n=35,293$. As shown in Table 4, both

independent variables show significant effects in which discriminated group membership again affects trust in the European Parliament negatively while domestic political equality has a positive effect. However, similar to the previous model, there was no significant interaction between discriminated group membership and domestic political equality on trust in the European Parliament.

With the addition of trust in national parliament the model shows a large increase in predictive value $F(7,34982)=2558.29$, $p<.01$, adjusted $R_2=.34$, $n=34,990$. Adding trust in national parliament has seemingly led to the predictive value of both independent variables to decrease. As shown in Table 4, the regression coefficients of both variables have become smaller, but they have remained significant. It also shows that with the inclusion of trust in the national parliament, the direction of the effect of domestic political equality has shifted. So, it seems that, when accounting for trust in the national parliament, both membership of a discriminated group and domestic political equality negatively affect trust in the European Parliament. In addition to the coefficients provided in Table 4, Appendix A includes the estimated marginal means for the different variables and the different levels of these variables.

Table 4

Effects of Discriminated Group Membership and Domestic Political Equality on Trust in the European Parliament.

Variable	Model excluding trust in national Parliament		Model including trust in national parliament	
	Unstandardized β	Std. Error	Unstandardized β	Std. Error
Discriminated Group Membership	-.56**	.05	-.19**	.04
Domestic Political Equality	.49**	.03	-.21**	.02

Variable	Model excluding trust in national Parliament		Model including trust in national parliament	
	Unstandardized β	Std. Error	Unstandardized β	Std. Error
Discriminated Group Membership * Domestic Political Equality	.11	.10	.04	.09
Trust in National Parliament			.56**	.00
Gender	.14**	.03	.25**	.02
Age	-.01**	.00	-.01**	.00
Year of Full-time education completed	.06**	.00	.01**	.00

* Sig. <.05

** Sig. <.01

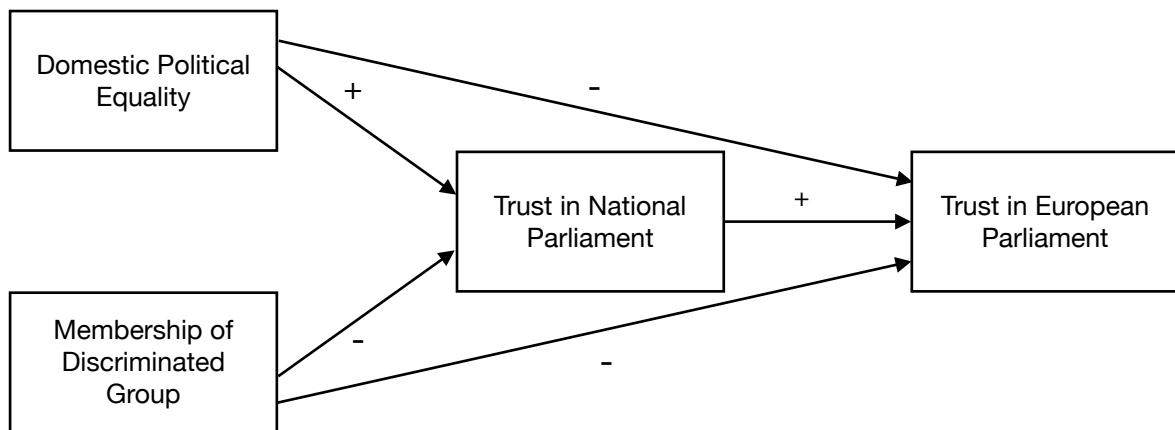
So, it seems that much of the effect of membership of a discriminated group and domestic political equality on trust in the European Parliament is mediated by trust in national parliament. Nonetheless, there are residual negative direct effects of both domestic political inequality and membership of a discriminated group on trust in the European Parliament when trust in the national parliament is included in the regression. The above shows evidence that there are significant effects of discriminated group membership and domestic political equality on trust in the European Parliament, both direct and mediated by trust in national parliament. This data regarding the mediating role for trust in the national parliament on trust in the European Parliament provides evidence for H₄. However, there are also additional direct effects from the independent variables on trust in the European Parliament that have not been hypothesized.

Conceptual Framework

In line with the evidence presented above, both hypotheses 1 and 2 are indicated in the conceptual framework. No supporting evidence was found for H₃, which is why it has been removed from the framework. Hypothesis 4 also remains in the model, and two additional lines are added to indicate the residual direct effect of domestic political equality and membership of a discriminated group on trust in the European Parliament.

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework



Group-specific Effects

To expand on the results provided above, the current study also provides initial insights into the group-specific effects on trust in the national and European parliament. These results show significant differences between the various discriminated groups. To ensure consistency with the previous regression, the models looking at the effect of these different grounds of discrimination on trust in national and European Parliament also include domestic political equality as a covariate, as well as the same confounding variables. The first model in general provides significant predictive value for trust in national parliament $F(14,37108)=253.97$, $p<.01$, adjusted $R_2=.09$, $n=37,123$. However, while some of these groups show significant effects, some do not. As shown in table 5, individuals who are discriminated against on the basis of nationality, language, age, disability, or other unspecified factors display lower average trust in the national parliament than individuals who are discriminated on other bases, or who are not discriminated at all.

Table 5

Effects of Different Groups on Trust in the National Parliament

Variables	Unstandardized β	Std. Error
Discriminated based on:		
Race	.15	.15
Nationality	-.33**	.13
Religion	.06	.13
Language	-.34*	.17
Ethnic Group	-.26	.15
Age	-.79**	.15
Gender	.03	.14
Sexuality	.22	.18
Disability	-.93**	.18

Variables	Unstandardized β	Std. Error
Other Factors	-.92**	.10
Domestic Political Equality	1.25**	.03
Gender	-.18**	.03
Age	.00**	.00
Years of Full-time Education Completed	.08**	.00

* sig. <.05

**significance <.01

Looking at the effects of membership of these groups on trust in the European Parliament shows interesting differences. Again, the general model provides significant explanatory value $F(14,35513)=93.75$, $p<.01$, adjusted $R_2=.04$, $n=35,528$. But, as shown in Table 6 (p.35) it seems that additional groups show differences when it comes to levels of trust in the European Parliament. While trust in national parliament seems to be affected by discrimination based on nationality, language age, gender, disability, or other undefined characteristics, trust in the European Parliament is affected by discrimination based on nationality, language, age, disability, other factors, and sexuality. Interestingly, individuals who are part of a discriminated group based on sexuality actually show the opposite effect from other groups, meaning that individuals within this group have higher trust in the European Parliament than those who are not.

With the inclusion of trust in the national parliament as a covariate, various shifts seem to occur. As expected, the general model still provides significant predictive value $F(15,35201)=1204.22$, $p<.01$, adjusted $R_2=.34$, $n=35,217$. But, some groups do not show significant differences anymore. More specifically, nationality, language, sexuality and unspecified factors still show significant effects, although now it appears that groups that are discriminated against based on age and/or disability no longer show significant effects. The data regarding these effects are shown in Table 6 (p.35). In terms of directionality, those who are discriminated against based on nationality, language, or

other unspecified factors display lower trust in the European Parliament compared to those who are discriminated on other basis or are not discriminated at all. In contrast, those who are discriminated against based on sexuality generally display higher trust in the European Parliament compared to those who are not discriminated against based on sexuality.

Table 6

Effects of Different Groups on Trust in the European Parliament

Variables	Model excluding trust in national Parliament		Model including trust in national parliament	
	Unstandardized β	Std. Error	Unstandardized β	Std. Error
Discriminated based on:				
Race	.23	.16	.19	.13
Nationality	-.51**	.13	-.32**	.11
Religion	.03	.13	-.02	.11
Language	-.50**	.17	-.28*	.14
Ethnic Group	-.31	.16	-.16	.13
Age	-.38*	.15	.10	.13
Gender	-.14	.14	-.17	.12
Sexuality	.43*	.19	.32*	.16
Disability	-.67**	.18	-.15	.15
Other Factors	-1.01**	.10	-.47**	.09
Domestic Political Equality	.50**	.03	-.20**	.02
Trust in National Parliament			.56**	.00
Gender	.14**	.03	.25**	.02
Age	-.01**	.00	-.01**	.00
Years of Full-time Education Completed	.06**	.00	.01**	.00

* significance <.05

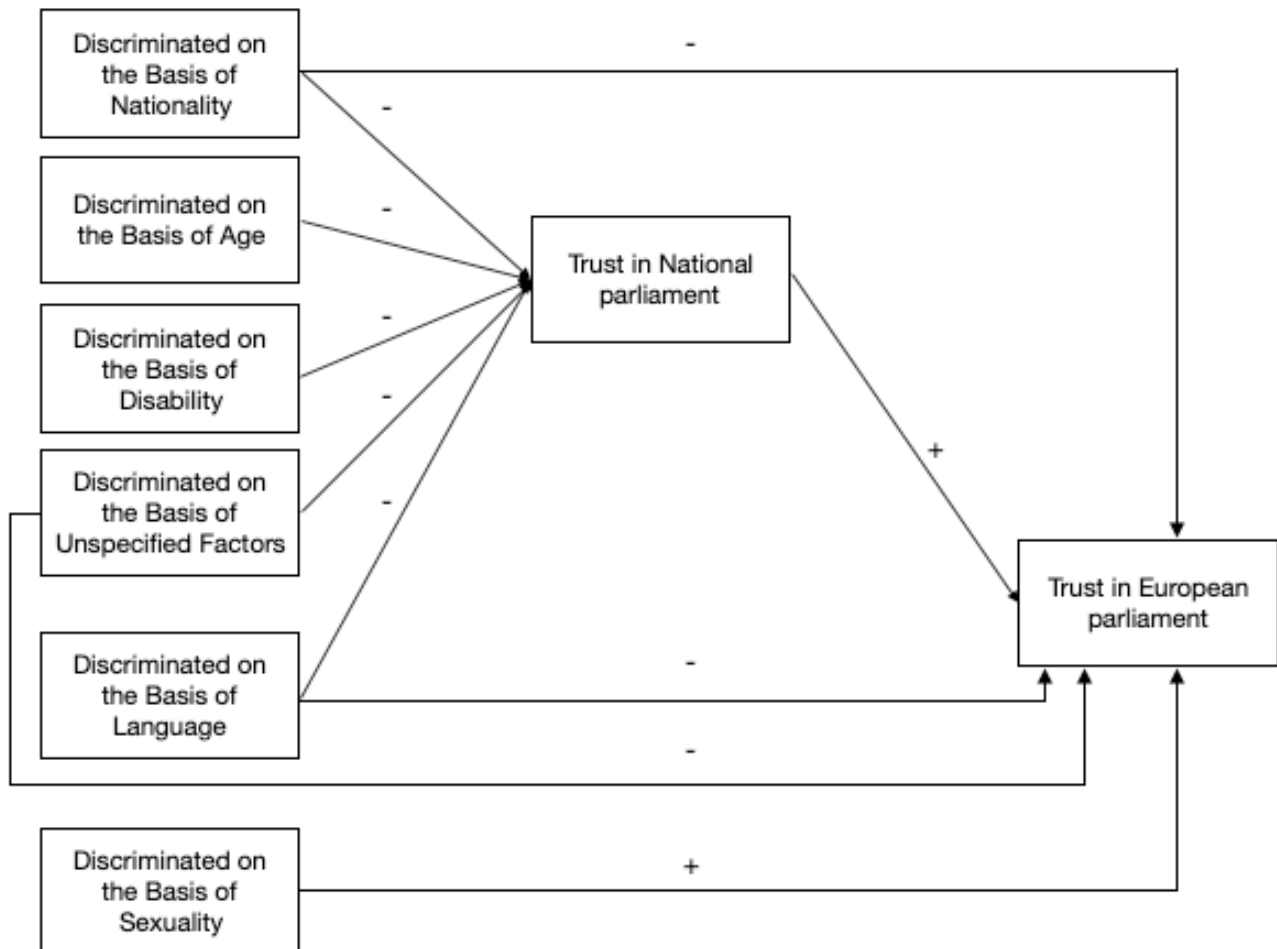
**significance <.01

So, it seems that there are significant differences between groups that experience different types of discrimination both for trust in the national parliament as well as in the European Parliament. It is shown that those discriminated based on nationality, age, disability, language and other unspecified factors display lower trust towards national parliament than those who are not discriminated on these bases. Additionally, there are direct effects of membership of groups that are discriminated against based on nationality, language, sexuality, or unspecific factors on trust in the European Parliament. In this, all except discrimination based on sexuality have a direct negative effect. It is also shown that the effects of discrimination based on age or disability on trust in the European Parliament is mediated by trust in national parliament. Interestingly, individuals discriminated based on race, ethnic group, or gender did not show any significant differences in trust in either the national or European parliament from those who are not discriminated against. These relations between the different grounds of discrimination and trust in the national and European parliament are visualized in Figure 3: Conceptual Framework of Group-specific Effects (p.37).

Besides the differences in the effects of different types of discrimination, the extent to which specific groups experience discrimination is also dependent on the country. This is illustrated in Figure 4 (p.38), which shows the percentage of respondents who identified as being a member of a discriminated group. Additionally, Figure 5 (p.38) shows the specific grounds upon which these groups experienced discrimination. The data displayed in these two graphs is also provided in Appendix B: Data on Discrimination per Country. More in-depth country specific graphs are provided in Appendix C: Visualization of Discrimination per Country.

Figure 3

Conceptual Framework of Group-specific Effects



Discussion

In terms of the effects of membership of a discriminated group and domestic political equality it was hypothesized that membership of a discriminated group negatively impacts trust in national parliament while domestic political equality positively influences trust in the national parliament. Evidence for both of these hypotheses has been provided. This finding regarding political equality is in line with the reasoning by Rothstein & Uslaner (2005) who argue that different types of inequality generally negatively social trust, which in turn also leads to decreased trust in national political institutions. Additionally, this effect of equality and fairness on citizen's trust has also been shown by Kääriäinen & Niemi (2014). A complexity in this relation arises when looking at the antecedents of inequality. Specifically, the most influential way to address inequality, and to make society more equal is through the implementation of policies. However, in order to create and implement these policies, governments require trust from citizens (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005).

The effect that has been shown for membership of a discriminated group on trust in national parliament also seems to be in line with the findings of others, including Michelson (2003), Schildkraut (2005), Röder & Mühlau (2011), de Vroome et al. (2013), Temple et al. (2019) and Wilkes & Wu (2019). But, it also contrasts some of the findings such as André (2014), who argues that no significant differences were found for most countries between people who are discriminated based on their migration status, and if differences did occur that these were positive. However, the results from the current study show that membership of a discriminated group generally tends to negatively impact trust in the national parliament. Additionally, the additional analyses showed significant negative direct effects of discrimination on the basis of nationality on trust in national parliament. Nonetheless, there are various reasons why this discrepancy might show. First and foremost, the current study has not compared the effects between countries.

Besides that, the study by André (2014) did not differentiate between various types of political trust while this study solely focused on trust in national and European Parliaments. Thus, it would be advisable for future research to distinguish between various types of trust while also looking at the differences between countries. Additional differences between the current results and previous research show when looking at literature that has focused on the role of race as a determinant of trust. Most existing research has argued that race is one of the most important antecedents of trust, and that there is a negative relationship between trust and marginalization based on race (Smith, 2010; Nunnally, 2012; Wilkes & Wu, 2018). While the current study does provide evidence that marginalization generally tends to have a negative impact on trust, the additional analyses show that individuals who are discriminated against on the basis of race tend not to show differences from non-discriminated groups for trust in national parliament, and actually show increased trust in the European Parliament. However, a convincing argument is provided by Wilkes & Wu (2018) why the effect of race on trust is currently not agreed upon unanimously. Specifically, they argue that members of minority groups are generally less trusting than members of majority groups, but that these effects are highly dependent on the specific group (Wilkes & Wu, 2018). Additionally, it is argued that these differences are also dependent on geographic context, the ethnoracial group, and type of trust investigated (Wilkes & Wu, 2018). Thus, in order to provide more generalizable findings, it would be advisable to make further distinctions between these various potential variables and research how these might moderate the effect of discrimination on trust. Regardless of the group-specific effects on trust, the general premise that members of minority groups often show decreased political trust might be reason for concern. As argued by Hooghe (2018), those with lower political trust might also be less inclined to engage with politics, thus increasing the risk of further

marginalization. Additionally, low levels of trust, marginalization and social exclusion are all associated with populist voting (Hooghe, 2018; Anduiza et al., 2019).

In contrast to the third hypothesis the results do not show any evidence of an interaction between domestic political equality and membership of a discriminated group on trust in national parliament, nor on trust in the European Parliament. The assumption that such an interaction effect would occur was largely based on Röder and Mühlau (2011) who argue that discriminated individuals might experience political inequality more directly than those who are not part of a discriminated group. Through this, the negative effects of political inequality on trust would be exacerbated for those who are discriminated. Nonetheless, the results of the current study do not suggest that such a relationship between political inequality and membership of a discriminated group exists. There are various explanations that might explain why this relation has not been shown. For example, it could be that the groups that suffer from political inequality might not be consistent with the groups that are considered as discriminated. More specifically, political inequality might, for example, arise between lower-class and upper-class individuals, but this does not necessarily indicate that the lower-class as a whole is discriminated against. Additionally, it could also be the case that members of a discriminated group do not consciously experience political inequality, or that these individuals are somewhat indifferent towards this type of inequality. However, additional research is required to shed light on the absence of this relationship. This future research might also touch upon the differences between different discriminated groups, as well as focusing on more narrow geographic regions.

As provided in the fourth hypothesis, there seems to be a positive direct relation between trust in national parliament and trust in the European Parliament. This indicates that, generally speaking, individuals who have higher levels of trust in national parliament will display higher levels of trust in the European Parliament. Subsequently it is also the

case that individuals with low levels of trust in the national parliament are also highly likely to display low levels of trust in the European Parliament. These results confirm the arguments outlined in various studies arguing that there seems to be a spillover of trust between the national parliaments and European Parliament (Flickinger & Studlar, 2007; Gattermann, 2013; Torcal & Christmann, 2019). More specifically, this mediating effect that trust in national parliament has shown between the independent variables and trust in the European Parliament seems to confirm congruence theory, which poses that individuals who trust national parliament are likely to trust the European Parliament (Muñoz et al., 2011; Dominioni et al., 2020). But, the results also show there are residual direct effect for both discriminated group membership as well as domestic political equality. Similar to its effect on trust in the national parliament, the effect of discriminated group membership on trust in the European Parliament is negative. But, the direction of the effect of domestic political equality shifts between national and European Parliament. More specifically, it has a positive direct effect on trust in the national parliament, but a negative direct effect on trust in the European Parliament once trust in the national parliament is accounted for. In essence, this provides reason to believe that increased political inequality will lead to increased trust in the European Parliament, unless the individual has high trust in the their national parliament. This seems to indicate the presence of a relationship that is similar to the compensation theory, which argues that trust in European institutions is often relatively low in countries where national institutions are highly trusted (Muñoz et al., 2011; Dominioni et al., 2020). However, the current study did not specifically hypothesize any residual direct effects for either membership of a discriminated group or domestic political equality on trust in the European Parliament. Therefore, additional research is needed to provide meaningful conclusion about these direct effects. Nonetheless, as hypothesized a large part of the effects of domestic

political equality and discriminated group membership on trust in the European Parliament seem to be mediated by trust in national parliament.

In addition to the general effect of discriminated group membership on trust in national and European parliament, the analyses have shown that group-specific effects on these types of trust are not homogenous. In line with arguments presented by Schildkraut (2005) and Temple et al. (2019) it seems reasonable to assume that these effects occur due to context as well as the different grounds of discrimination potentially having different effects. As argued by Schildkraut (2005), discrimination can have varying effects on personal identity and mental well-being. Thus, it could be the case that the different grounds of discrimination affect personal identity and mental well-being in different ways. Furthermore, Temple et al. (2019) have also highlighted the differences that occur between the different types of discrimination. More specifically, they emphasize that varying types of discrimination might have different effects on the extent to which individuals feel socially included and trust institutions (Temple et al., 2019). This heterogeneity of different discriminated groups in their experiences of social exclusion could be one of the factors that lead to the large differences shown for these groups in terms of trust in the national and European Parliament. For example, while individuals discriminated based on their disability might feel highly excluded from society, those discriminated based on sexuality might experience less social exclusion. An interesting result that seemingly contrasts previous literature is the finding that those discriminated based on race, ethnic group, or gender do not display different levels of trust in national and European Parliament from those who are not discriminated on these bases. This seems incompatible with the notion from Smith (2010) who argues that one of trusts' most important determinants is race. However, a possible explanation for the divergence between the findings in the current paper and Smith's argument is that trust know many different components and categories. More concretely, the current study has focussed on

institutional trust while Smith (2010) has focused largely on social trust. The findings on the varying effects of the different grounds of discrimination provide interesting initial insights. However, additional research is required to provide more conclusive statements on the underlying reasons that could explain the differences between the various discriminated groups, and also show whether variance might occur between the different types of trust.

So, the current study shows that both membership of a discriminated group and domestic political equality significantly influence trust in national parliaments. Whereas membership of a discriminated group negatively impacts trust in national parliament, domestic political equality seems to exercise a positive influence. These findings are similar to other studies that have been executed for specific discriminated groups or in different regions (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005; Schildkraut, 2005; Smith, 2010; Röder & Mühlau, 2011; Nunnally, 2012; Kääriäinen & Niemi, 2014; Wilkes & Wu, 2018; Saleem et al., 2019; Temple et al., 2019; Wilkes & Wu, 2019). Additionally, it has been shown that there is a positive relation between trust in national parliament and trust in the European Parliament, and that trust in the national parliament mediates a large portion of the effects of discriminated groups membership and domestic political equality on trust in the European Parliament. This finding seems to somewhat confirm what has previously been dubbed the ‘congruence theory’, indicating that citizens who trust national parliament are likely to trust the European Parliament and vice versa (Muñoz et al., 2011; Gattermann, 2013; Torcal & Christmann, 2019; Dominioni et al., 2020). However, evidence for the ‘compensation theory’ is also provided in relation to domestic political equality. More specifically, this argues that in instances where there is high domestic political equality individuals are less prone to trust the European Parliament unless they trust their own national parliament (Obydenkova & Aripno, 2018). Similarly, this also means when there is high domestic political inequality people are more likely to trust the European Parliament

unless they trust their own national parliament. Additionally, initial evidence is provided that shows that not all discriminated groups display the same tendencies in terms of trusting national and European Parliament, which merits further research and more group-specific approaches in restoring trust.

Implications

While the results of the current thesis provide insights that could warrant further research there are also more practical implications. First and foremost it seems important for the parliament, both national and European, to ensure that individuals who are part of a discriminated group are made to feel included, as social exclusion seems to lead to decreased trust for most discriminated groups. In doing so, special attention could be paid to those groups that have been found show significant effects on trust, such as those who are discriminated on the basis of nationality, age, disability, language, sexuality, or other unspecified factors. Additionally, national parliament should aim for domestic political equality for all, as this is thought to considerably increase trust in the parliament. This domestic political equality also seems important for the trust of citizens in the European Parliament. While the direct effect of domestic political equality is negative, the majority of the total effects of domestic political equality seems to be moderated through trust in national parliament. In this, domestic political equality is positively related to trust in national parliament and also positively related to trust in the European Parliament. This positive relationship between trust in national parliament and trust in the European Parliament shows that it is also important for the European Parliament that European citizens trust their own national parliament. It seems reasonable to argue that parliament, both national and European, need trust to fulfill their duties. But, studies have especially shown the dangers of a lack of trust, which is further marginalization of discriminated groups and increased risk of polarization and populism.

Both of these are thought to be related to further decreases of trust, indicating that these might point towards a downward spiral of further polarization, populism, marginalization, and further erosion of trust.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the current study provides interesting insights, several limitations should be kept in mind. Firstly, the operationalization of variables is arguably not ideal for the investigation of the research questions. For the operationalization of domestic political equality the current study relies on information from Freedom House. However, this metric created by Freedom House is largely indicative of a governments' actions and intentions, rather than the equality in terms of outcomes. It would be interesting to see whether the intended equality and actual equality show significant differences in their influence on trust. Besides the limitation of the domestic political equality metric, trust in both national and European Parliament is based on a single measurement, which is not optimal. As argued by Bauer & Freitag (2018), trust would preferably be measured based on several items. Additionally, the membership of a discriminated group variable merely indicates whether an individual is part of a group that is generally considered as being discriminated against, but not if the respondent actually does feel discriminated against. It might be more useful if an additional question to the respondents is to what extent they themselves feel discriminated against. Similarly, the self-reported nature regarding membership of a discriminated group is challenging because this seems subjective. For example, one respondent of a specific religion might feel that their religion is discriminated against, while another respondent of the same religion in the same country might not feel the same. Therefore, it could be interesting to include a more objective measurement to identify which groups are discriminated against in a country and to have a subjective self-identification measurement to see whether individuals feel like they are

part of that group. However, this also leads to another limitation, the self-reported face-to-face nature of the European Social Survey. In countries where discrimination towards certain groups is severe, respondents might not be willing to identify as being part of said group in a face-to-face setting. Some of the information for various countries as shown in Appendix B: Data on Discrimination per Country seems to show such an effect. For example, when looking at Bulgaria not a single respondent identified as being part of a group that is discriminated against based on of sexuality. While this could hypothetically indicate that discrimination based on sexuality does not happen in Bulgaria, this seems highly unlikely as Bulgaria has one of the lowest scores for LGBTI+ equality provided by The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) of all countries included in this study (ILGA Europe, 2020). Therefore, it seems more reasonable to argue that there is a possibility of false negatives for the membership of a discriminated group measurement. The current study was highly limited in influencing the operationalization of variables as existing data from the European Social Survey was used. Furthermore, the analysis of the group-specific effects on trust national and European parliament presents an important caveat that needs to be kept in mind. Specifically, the analyses have only considered the types of discrimination separate from one another while discrimination is generally considered as being intersectional. Thus, this current paper has only considered someone to be part of a single discriminated group rather than an individual being part of several discriminated groups.

In addition to tackling these limitations, future research could focus on using more expansive measurements and a survey created specifically for the purpose of the study. This different research methodology could also strive to create a higher degree of anonymity for the respondents, as this might significantly increase the validity of the membership of a discriminated group variable. It could also be valuable to research the same research question in a more longitudinal manner. This could show a more nuanced

look into the effects of the independent variables, as it is argued by some that trust towards others is highly influenced by both time and events (Gattermann, 2013; Wilkes & Wu, 2018). Furthermore, future studies could include more distinctions between countries and analyze to what extent specific groups are considered to be discriminated against across different countries. Moreover, including the trust in various governmental or political institutions could provide broader insights into the effects of political equality and discrimination on general political trust. It also seems interesting to expand on the finding that shows that domestic political equality has a negative effect on trust in the European Parliament dependent on trust in the National parliament. One suggestion to perform further research on this is by looking at specific countries or executing more in-depth research striving to uncover the underlying reasons for such a relationship. Another opportunity for future research is to delve into the directionality of the spillover between trust in national parliament and the European Parliament. Previous studies have shown different understandings of this relationship, and it seems that there is still opportunity to uncover the underlying mechanisms regarding the relationship between these two variables. Also, the construction of trust in general is still relatively ambiguous in terms of the myriad variables that seemingly aid or limit the formation of trust. This could be utilized in future research by including numerous covariates to try and create a more exhaustive model.

So, while there are different limitations to keep in mind the current study shows that there are significant influences of domestic political equality and membership of discriminated groups on trust in both the national and European Parliament. It also provides evidence that suggests a congruence type spillover occurs between trust in the national parliament and trust in the European Parliament, as well as showing that there seem to be residual direct effects of both domestic political equality and discriminated

group membership on trust in the European Parliament, which are indicative of the presence of a possible compensation effect.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Estimated Marginal Means of Regressions

Estimated Means of Discriminated Group Membership and Domestic Political Equality on Trust in National Parliament

Variable	Mean	Std. Error
Discriminated Group Membership		
No	4.43	.02
Yes	3.64	.07
Domestic Political Equality		
2	2.65	.07
3	4.19	.03
4	5.26	.07

Note: whereas the main analyses have been executed on the centered variables, these results are derived from the original values to provide a more meaningful mean.

Estimated Means of Discriminated Group Membership and Domestic Political Equality on Trust in European Parliament

Variable	Model excluding trust in national Parliament		Model including trust in national parliament	
	Mean	Std. Error	Mean	Std. Error
Discriminated Group Membership				
No	4.62	.02	4.87	.02
Yes	4.00	.07	4.86	.10
Domestic Political Equality				
2	3.77	0.7	5.21	.14
3	4.29	.03	4.69	.04
4	4.87	.07	4.71	.07

Note: whereas the main analyses have been executed on the centered variables, these results are derived from the original values to provide a more meaningful mean.

Appendix B: Data on Discrimination per Country

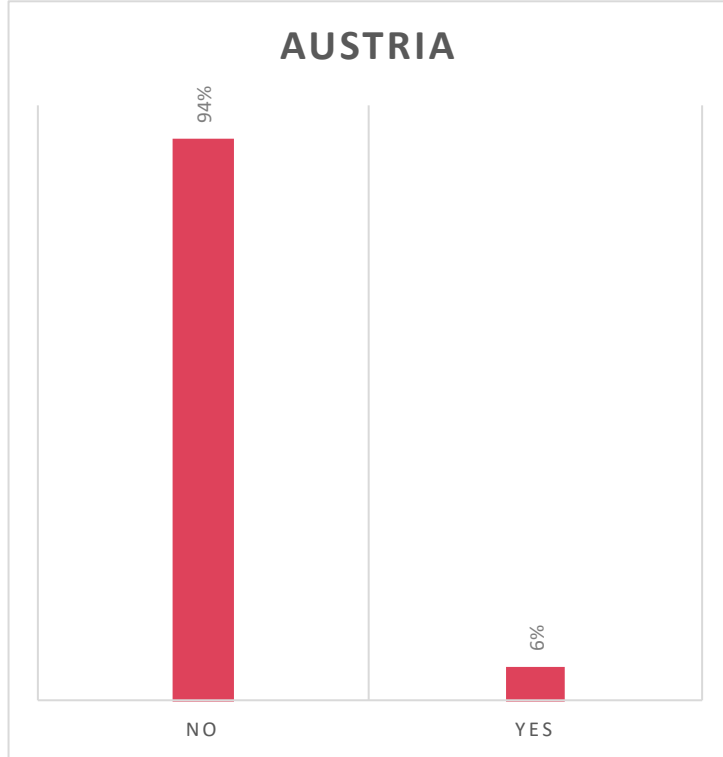
Country	Discriminated				Discriminated on the Basis of																					
	No	Yes	Colour or Race	Nationality	Religion	Language	Ethnic Group	Age	Gender	Sexuality	Disability	Other Factors	Undisclosed													
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage										
Austria	2344	94.29%	142	5.71%	11	4.47%	55	22%	46	19%	29	12%	21	9%	12	5%	24	10%	8	3%	8	3%	28	11%	3	1%
Belgium	1805	91.19%	155	8.81%	32	14.69%	33	15%	51	23%	6	3%	21	10%	6	3%	13	6%	16	7%	0	0%	33	15%	0	0%
Bulgaria	1900	92.48%	161	7.52%	22	9.57%	9	4%	25	11%	28	12%	83	36%	33	14%	2	1%	2	0%	0	0%	9	4%	3	1%
Cyprus	724	92.82%	56	7.16%	0	0.00%	7	10%	4	6%	2	3%	0	0%	15	22%	9	13%	3	4%	4	6%	21	31%	3	4%
Czechia	2290	96.51%	88	3.69%	17	14.53%	10	9%	1	1%	0	0%	10	9%	32	27%	11	9%	5	4%	12	10%	19	16%	0	0%
Germany	2194	92.24%	166	7.06%	22	8.76%	48	19%	31	12%	22	9%	22	9%	10	4%	24	10%	11	4%	13	5%	47	19%	1	0%
Estonia	1754	92.22%	148	7.78%	3	1.36%	64	29%	5	2%	65	29%	15	7%	18	8%	14	6%	14	3%	6	3%	16	7%	8	4%
Spain	1503	90.93%	150	9.07%	9	4.66%	25	13%	17	9%	12	6%	5	3%	11	6%	44	23%	25	13%	5	3%	37	19%	3	2%
Finland	1577	90.27%	170	9.27%	11	5.02%	3	1%	21	10%	19	9%	13	6%	30	14%	20	9%	15	7%	9	4%	78	38%	0	0%
France	1726	86.94%	263	13.16%	67	17.31%	98	9%	53	14%	8	2%	22	6%	24	6%	49	13%	21	5%	22	6%	83	21%	2	1%
Croatia	1646	91.90%	145	8.10%	2	1.16%	25	14%	23	13%	3	2%	6	3%	17	10%	1	1%	1	1%	14	8%	60	35%	8	5%
Hungary	1593	97.07%	48	2.93%	28	33.33%	8	10%	1	1%	3	4%	28	31%	3	7%	4	6%	1	3%	7	7%	5	6%	1	1%
Ireland	2061	93.51%	143	6.89%	11	6.29%	14	8%	30	17%	2	1%	14	8%	12	7%	30	17%	15	8%	9	5%	35	20%	2	1%
Italy	2595	98.13%	104	3.87%	18	11.32%	48	30%	27	17%	8	5%	15	9%	6	4%	8	5%	8	5%	6	4%	19	12%	3	2%
Lithuania	1731	96.69%	63	3.51%	2	1.07%	7	7%	4	4%	12	11%	14	13%	24	22%	6	6%	3	3%	22	21%	9	9%	4	4%
Latvia	817	90.08%	90	9.92%	2	1.57%	32	25%	3	2%	34	27%	10	8%	14	11%	5	4%	4	3%	10	8%	11	9%	2	2%
Netherlands	1520	91.35%	144	8.68%	33	15.71%	31	15%	34	16%	6	3%	12	6%	11	5%	19	9%	19	11%	8	4%	33	16%	0	0%
Poland	1431	96.23%	56	3.77%	0	0.00%	0	0%	9	14%	0	0%	1	2%	7	11%	7	11%	3	5%	12	13%	21	33%	3	5%
Portugal	965	94.08%	62	5.92%	14	18.92%	11	15%	9	12%	0	0%	2	3%	3	4%	11	15%	3	4%	2	3%	17	23%	2	3%
Sweden	1397	90.71%	142	9.29%	19	8.68%	19	9%	20	9%	10	5%	20	9%	20	9%	48	22%	18	7%	14	6%	31	14%	2	1%
Slovenia	1250	95.95%	61	4.68%	2	2.07%	3	4%	11	15%	3	4%	6	8%	3	4%	12	16%	5	7%	4	5%	19	26%	6	8%
Slovakia	1026	95.26%	51	4.74%	13	18.57%	5	7%	2	3%	4	6%	8	11%	19	27%	0	0%	0	0%	8	11%	7	10%	4	6%

Appendix C: Discrimination per Country

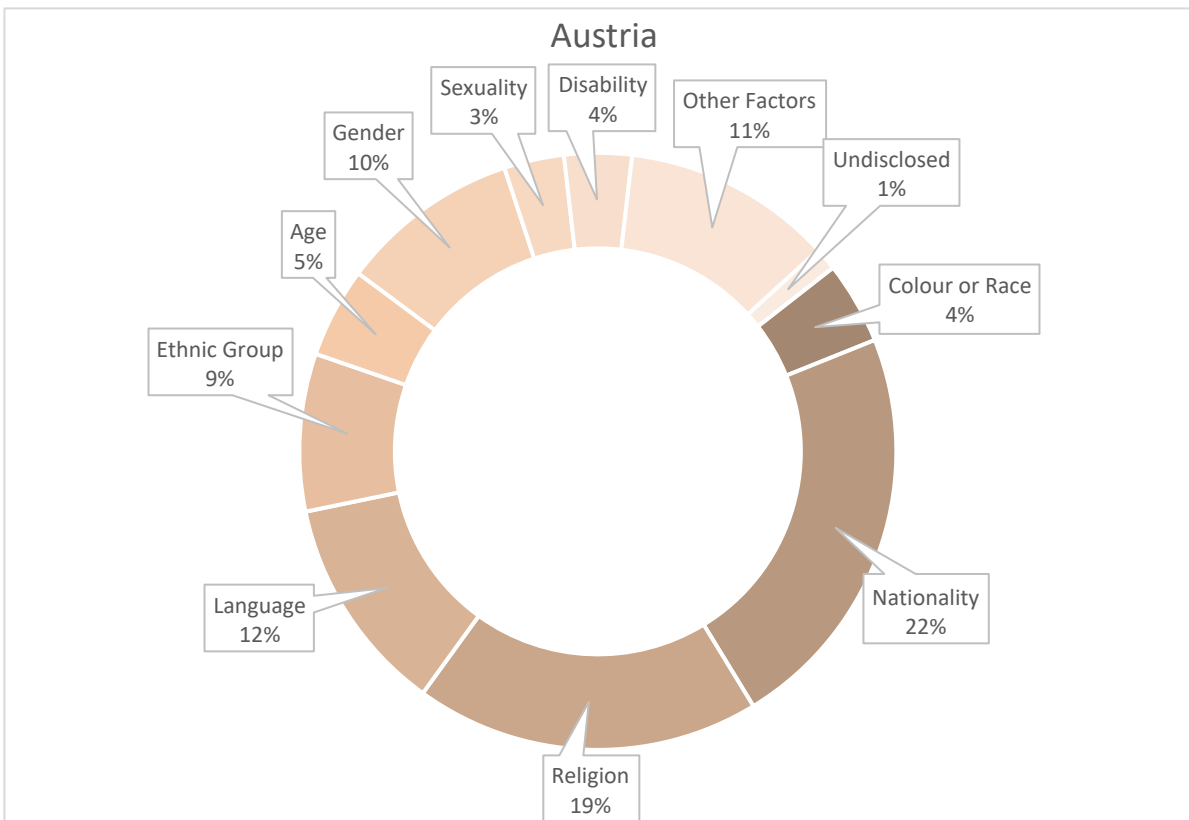
Austria

n=2,486

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



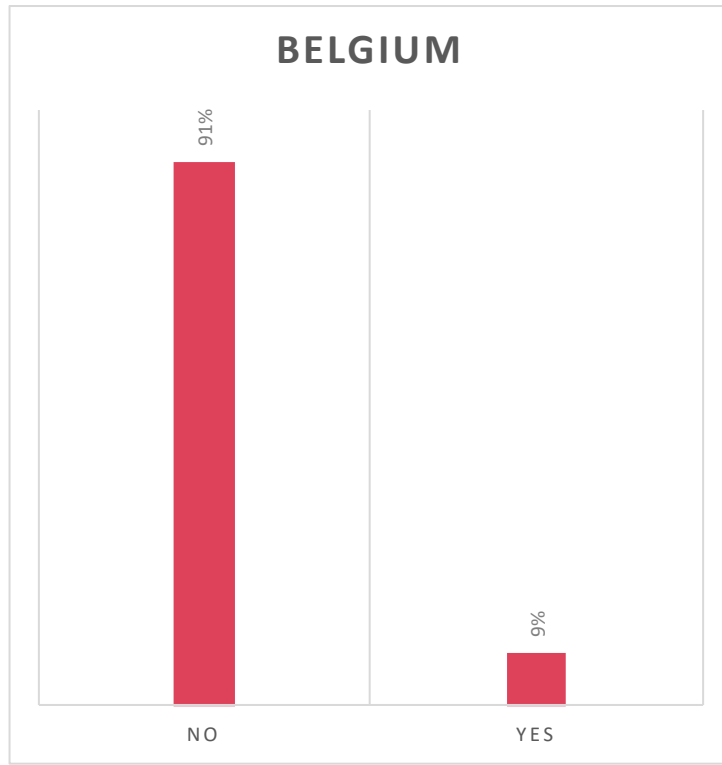
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



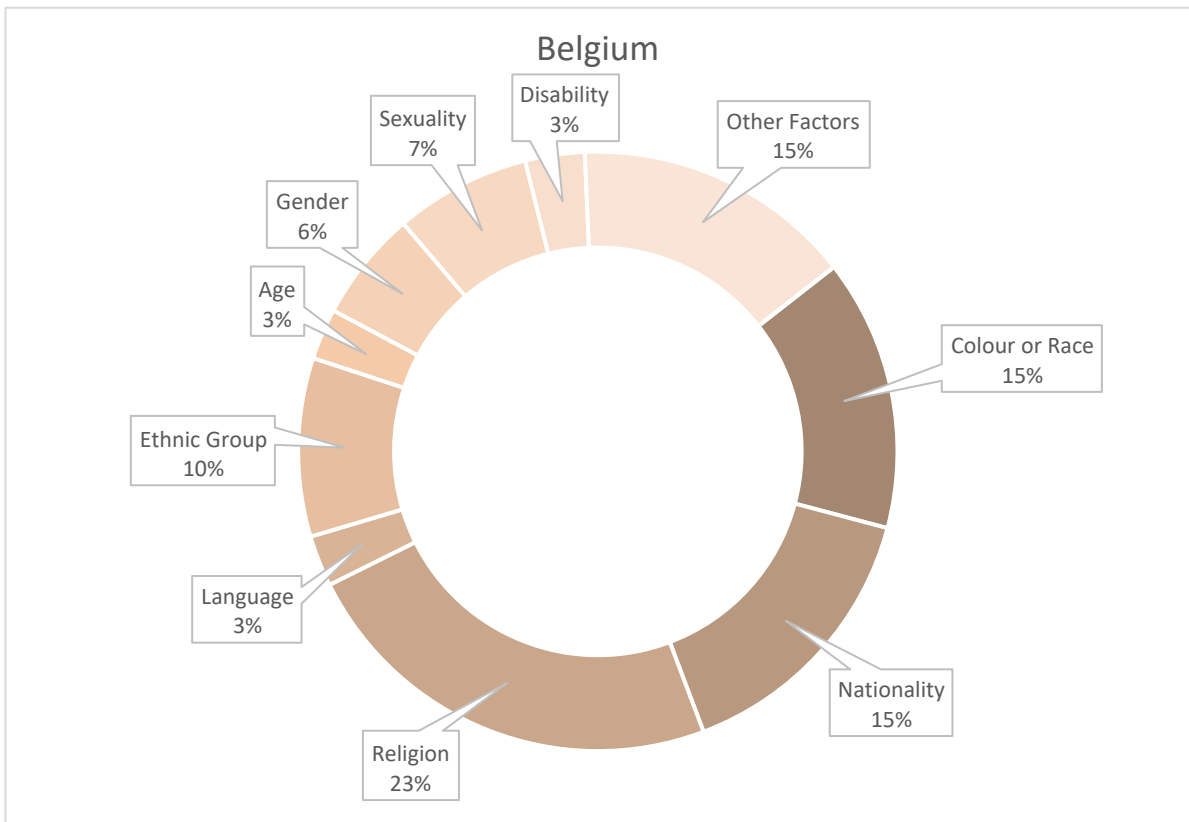
Belgium

n=1,760

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



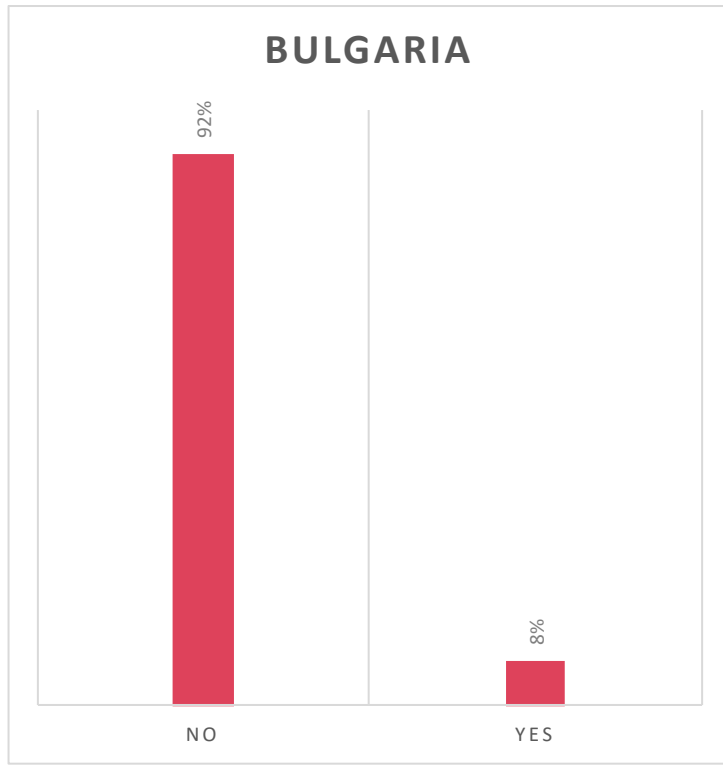
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



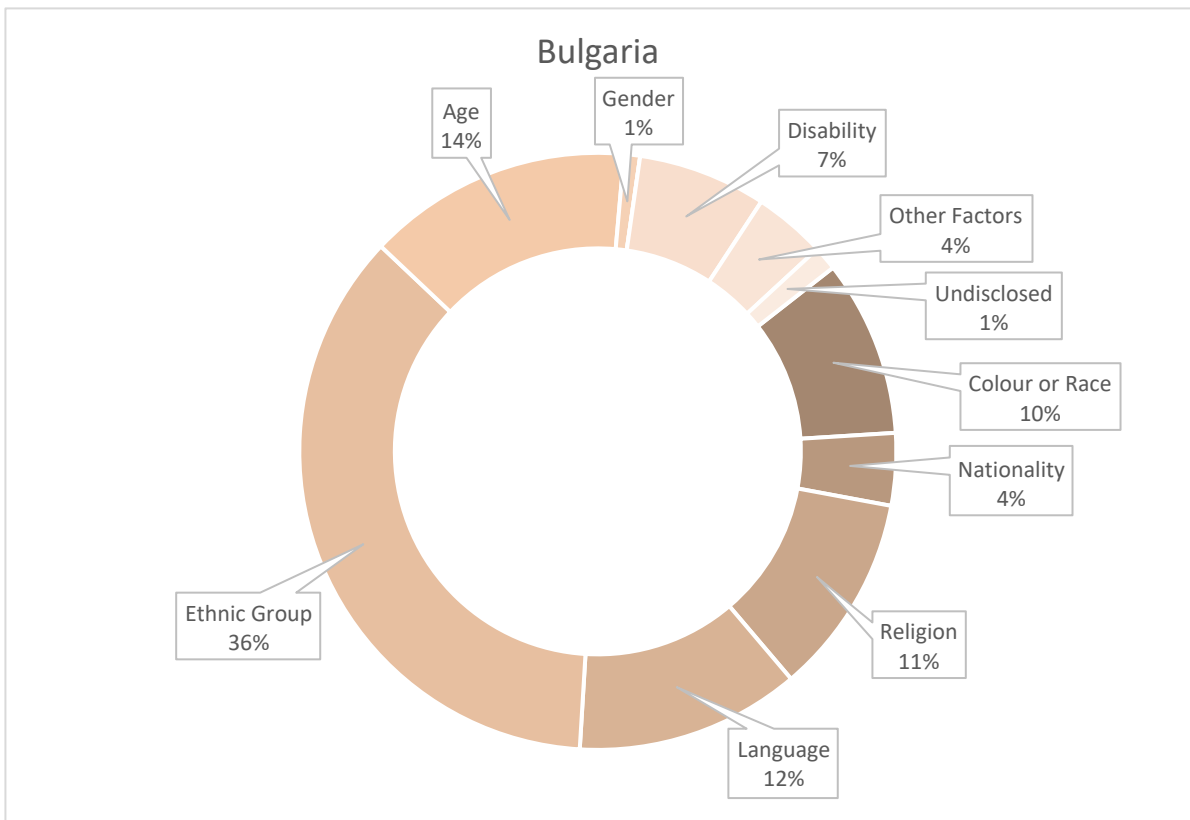
Bulgaria

n=2,141

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



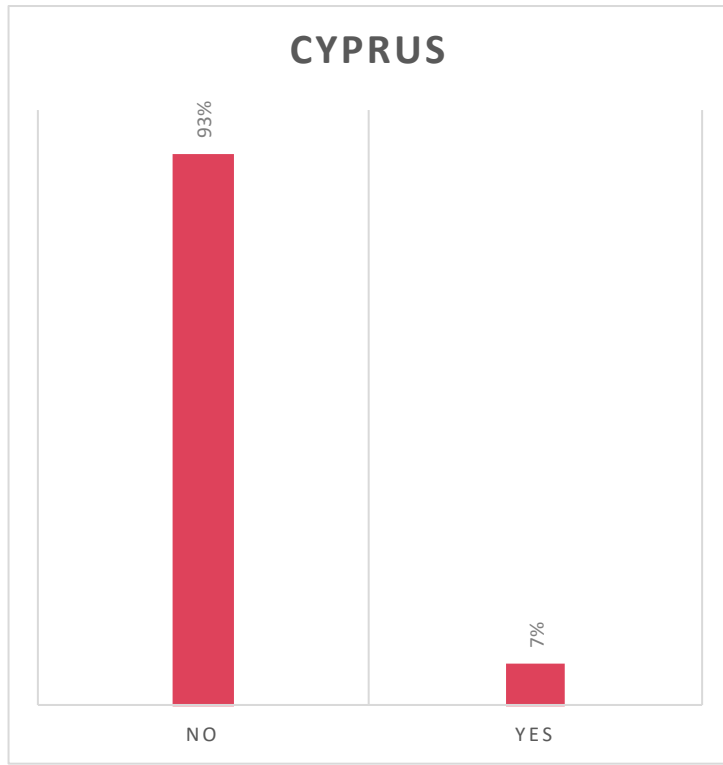
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



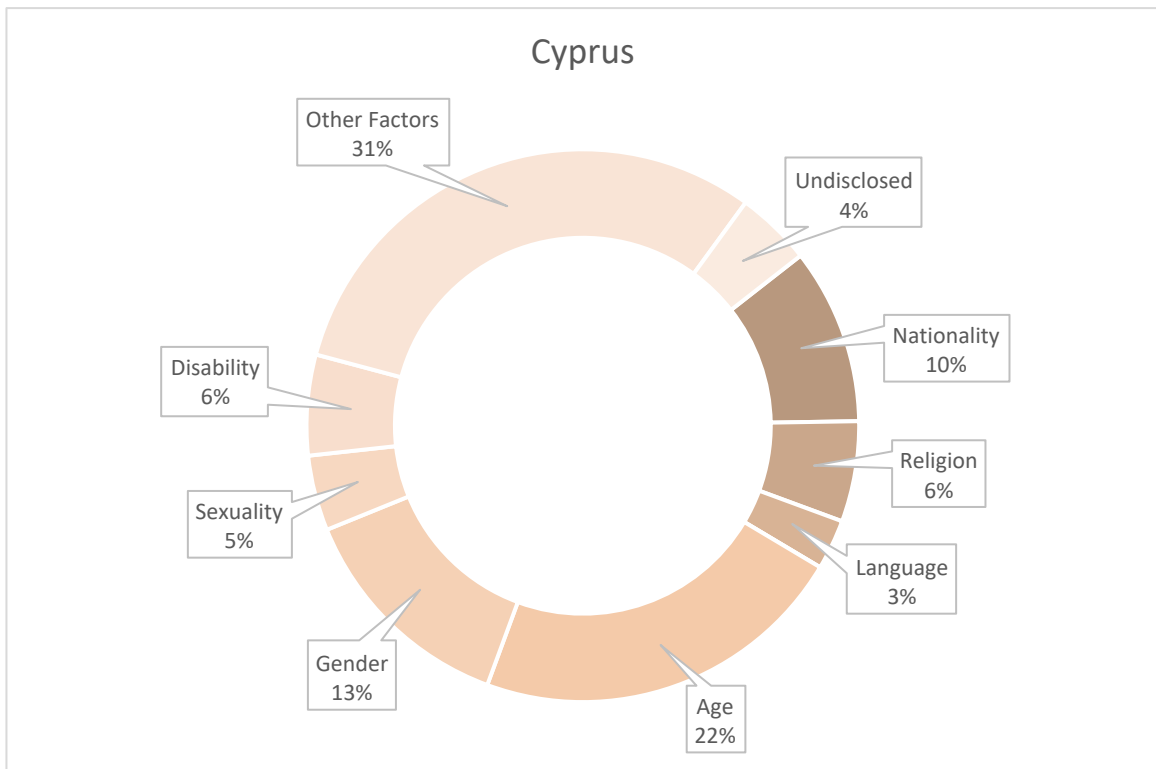
Cyprus

n=780

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



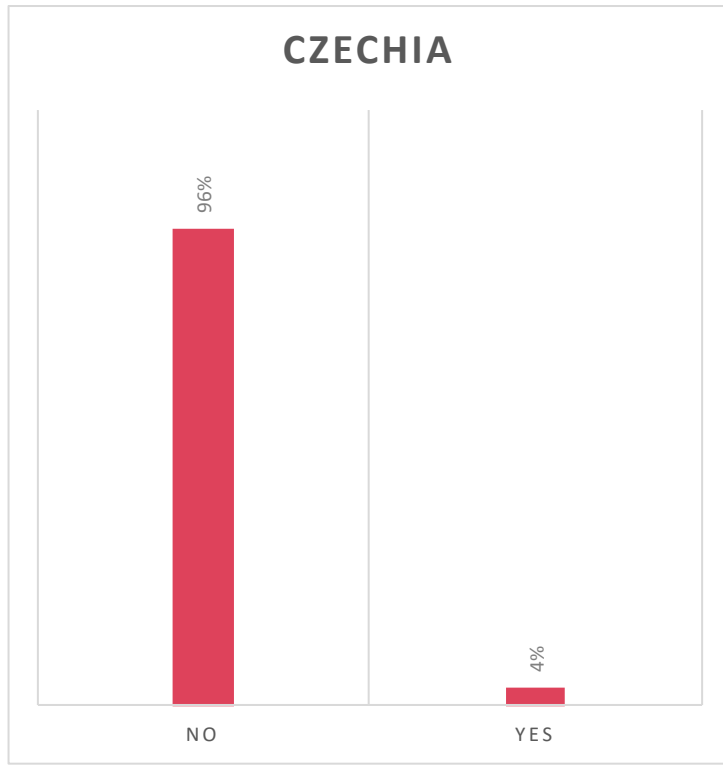
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



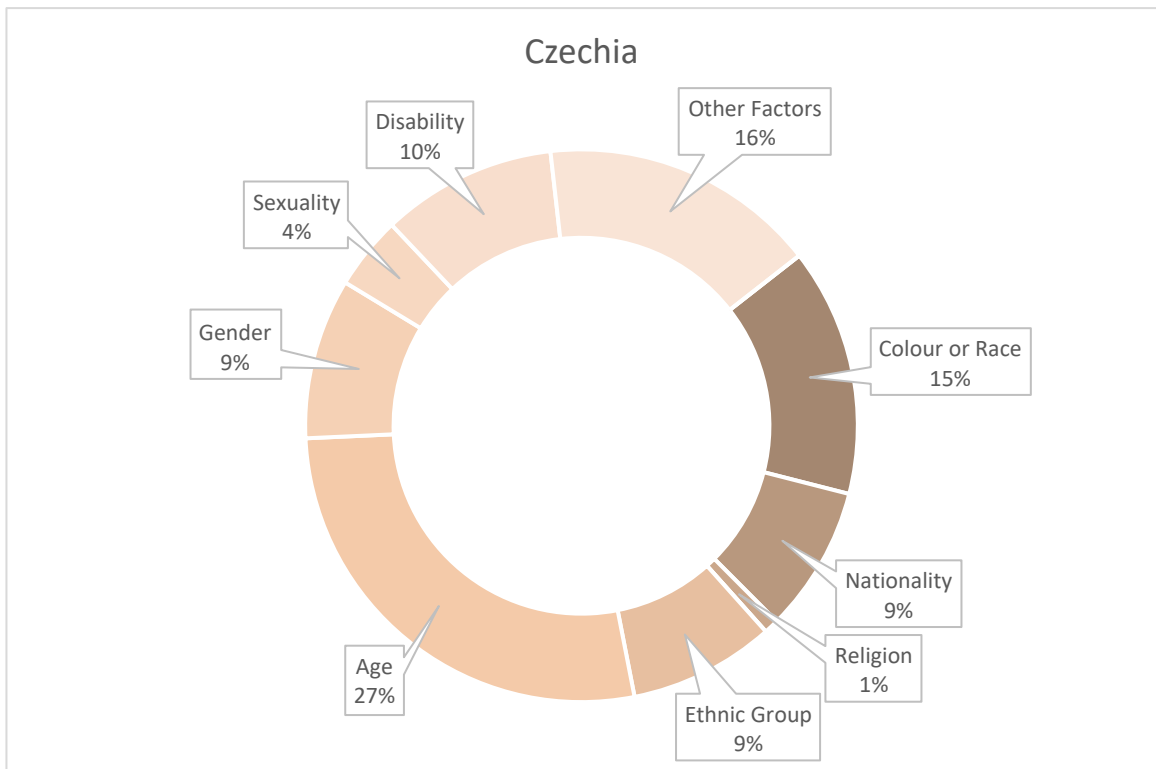
Czechia

n=2,384

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



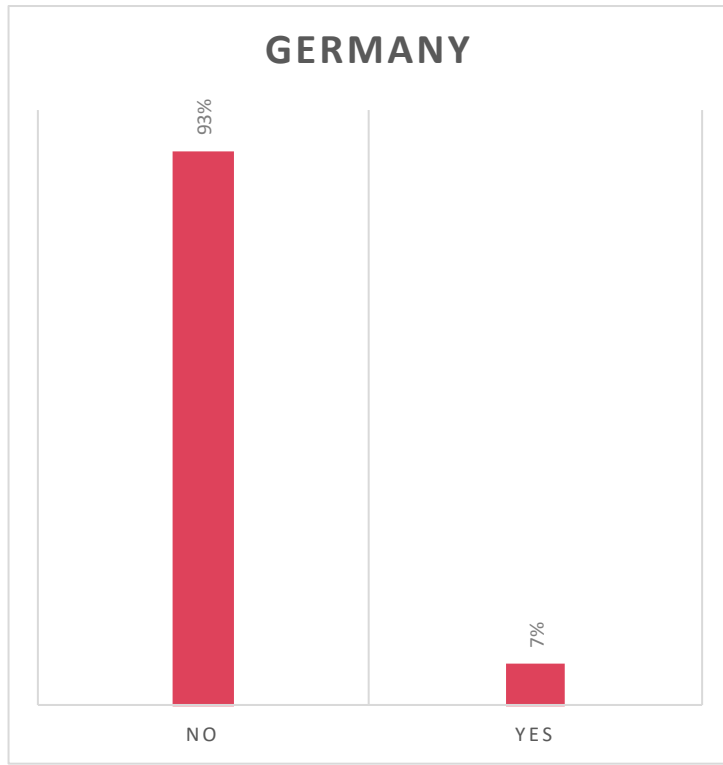
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



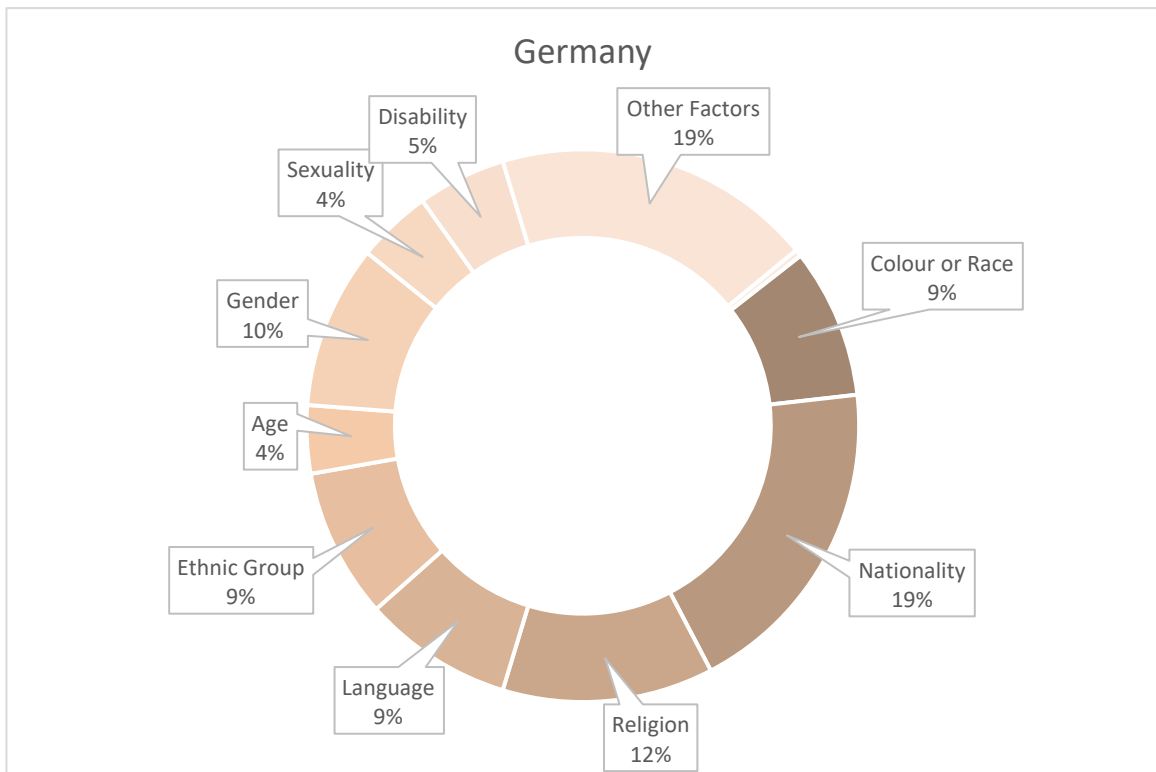
Germany

n=2,350

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



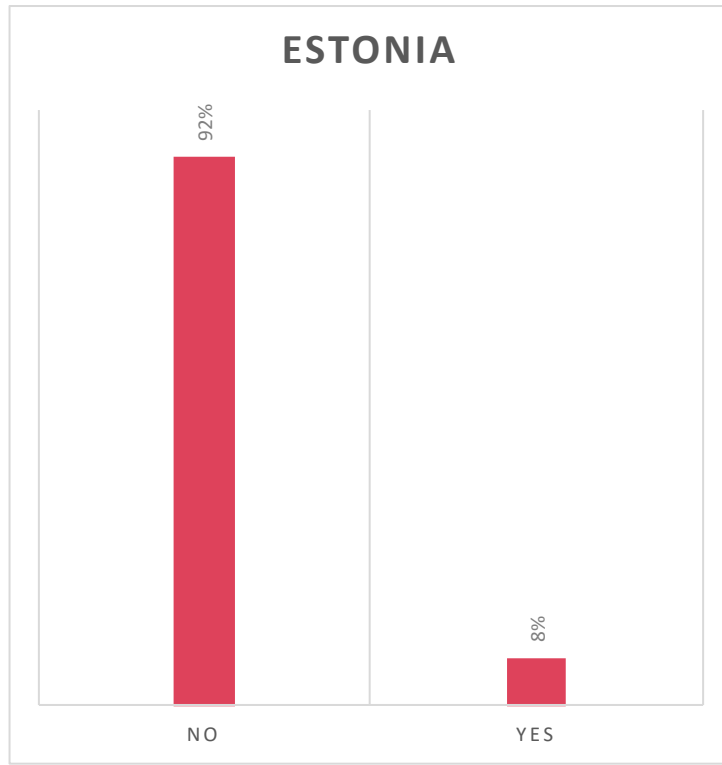
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



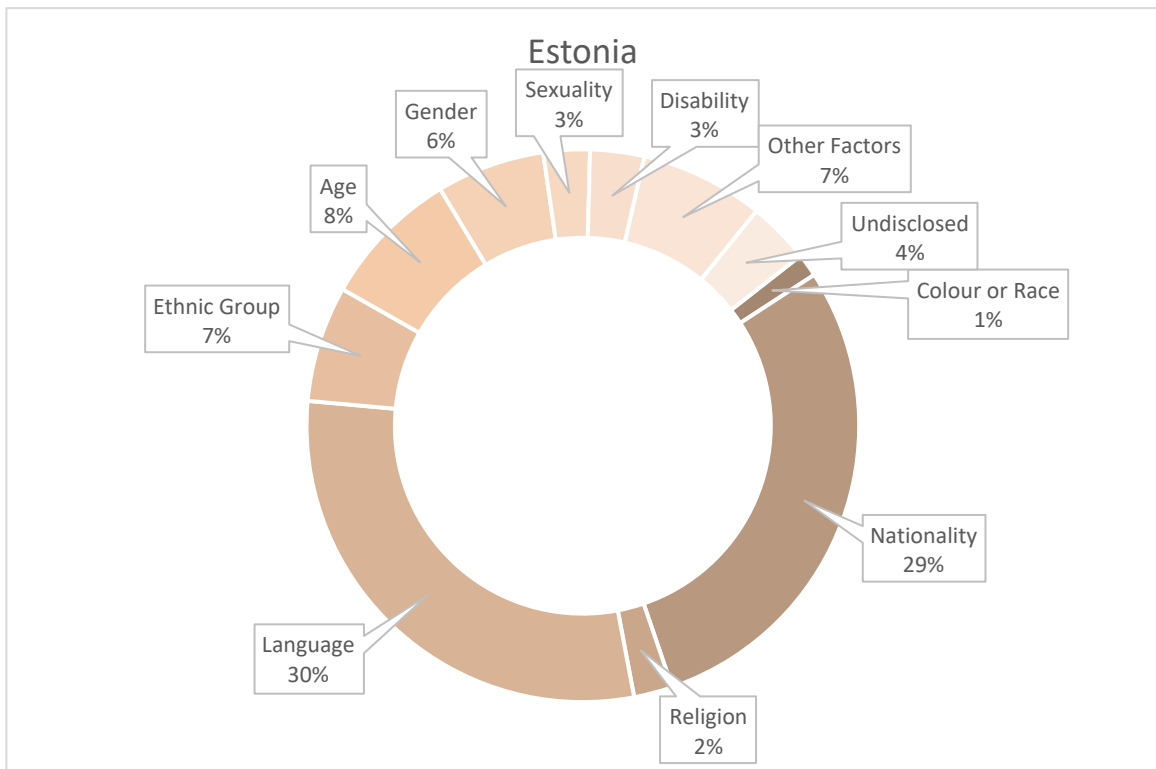
Estonia

n=1,902

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



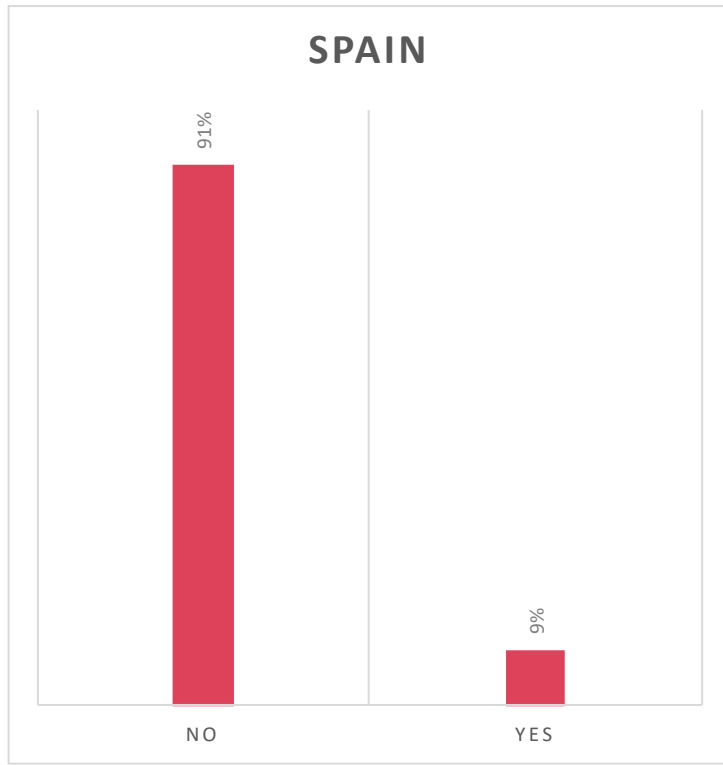
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



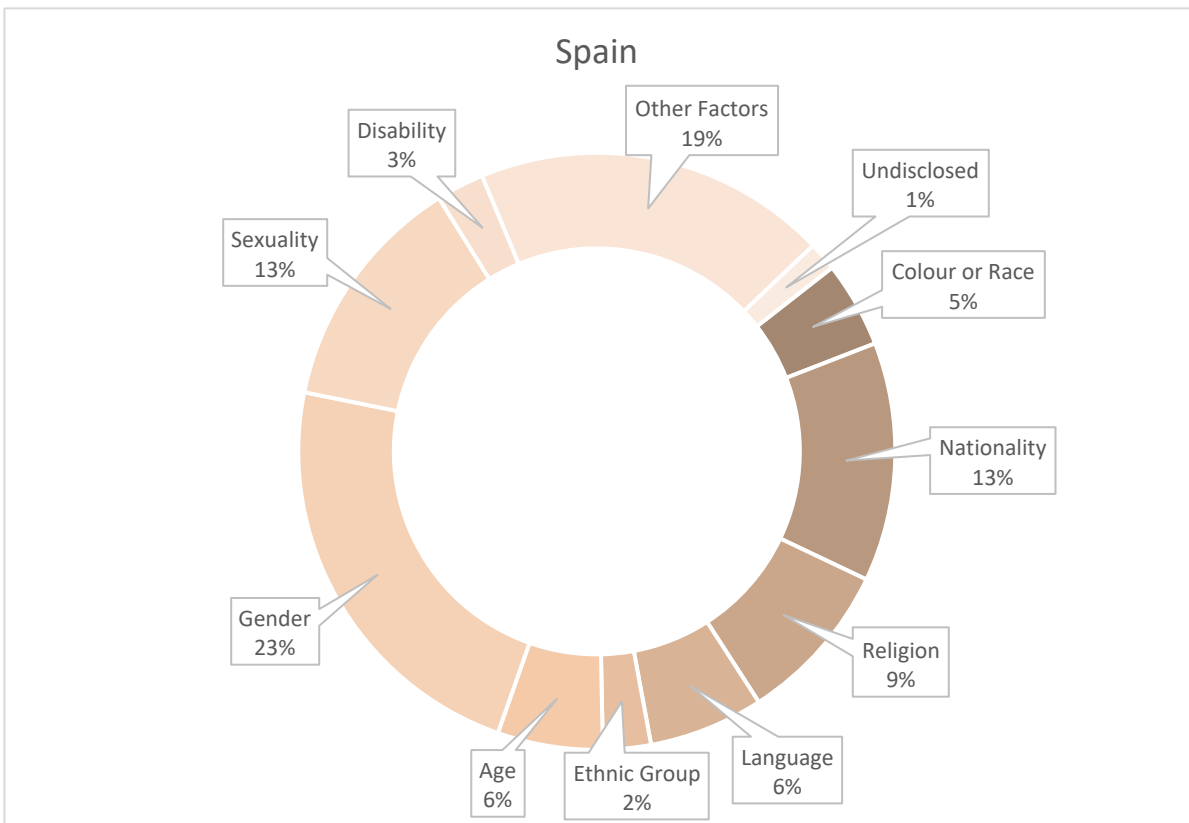
Spain

n=1,653

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



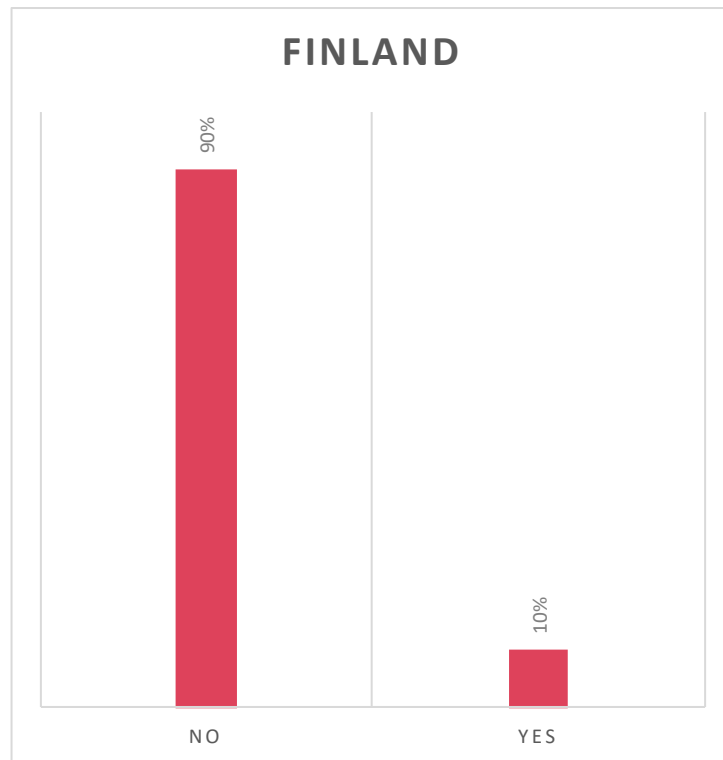
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



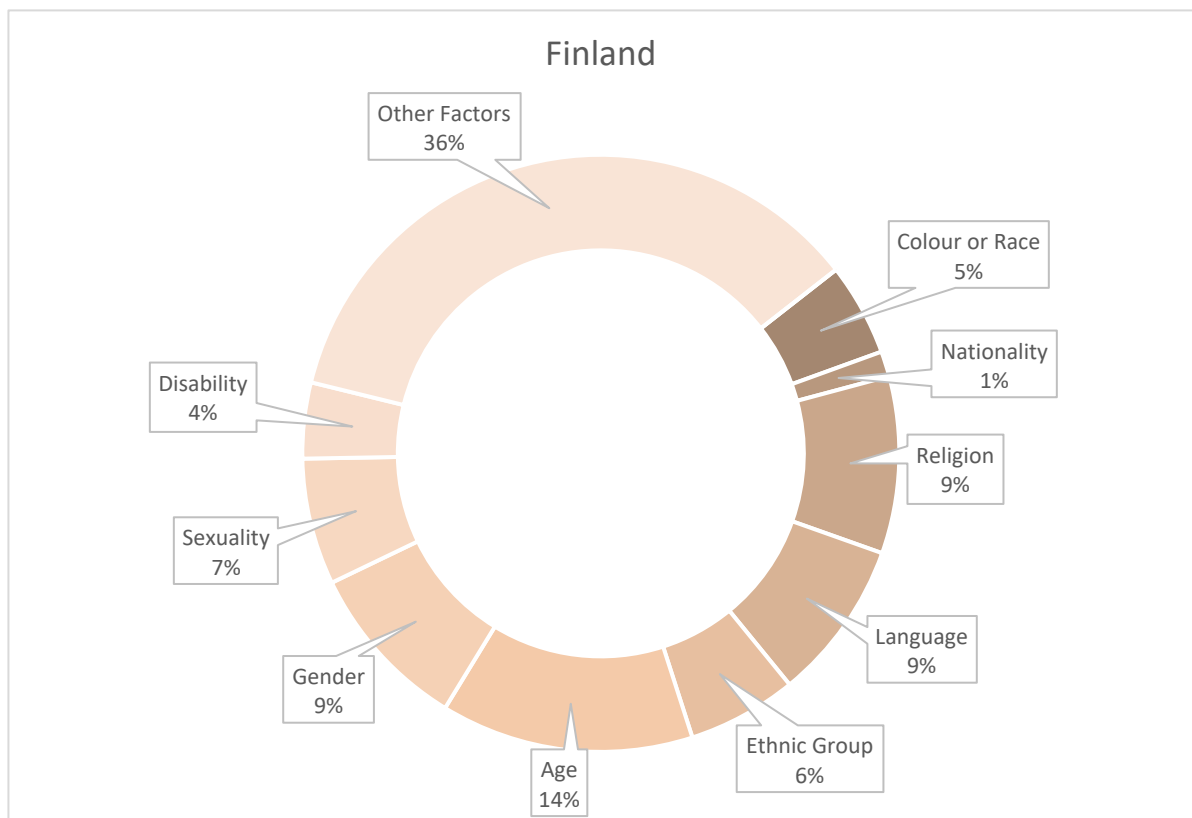
Finland

n=1,747

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



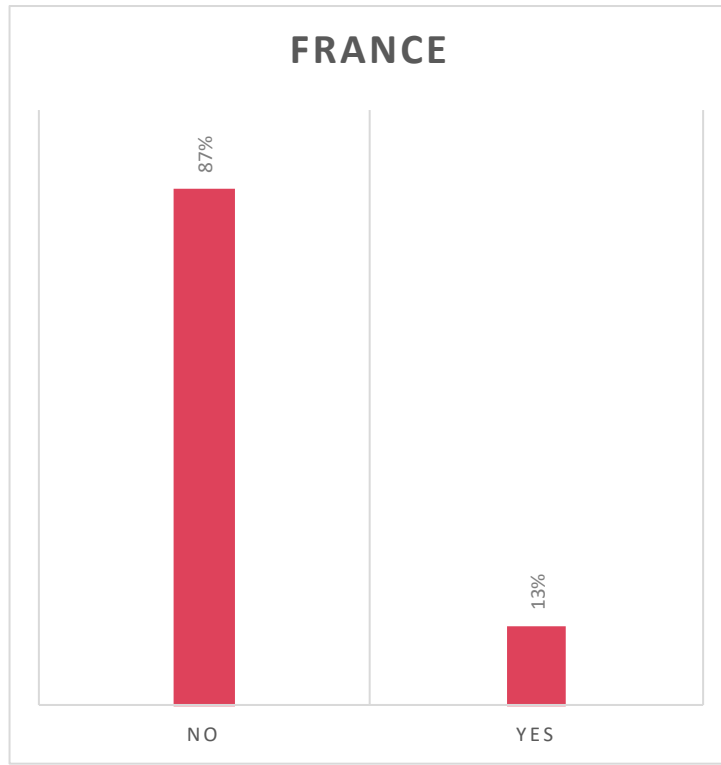
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



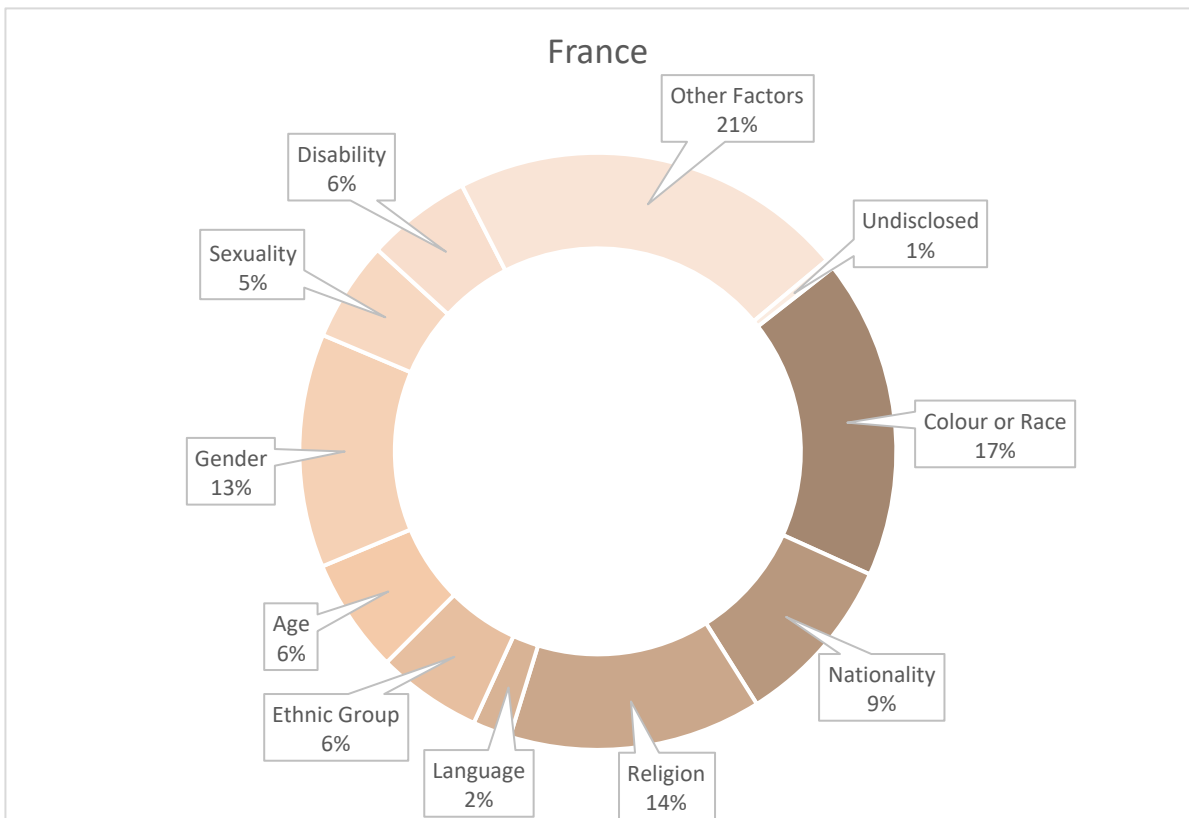
France

n=1,998

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



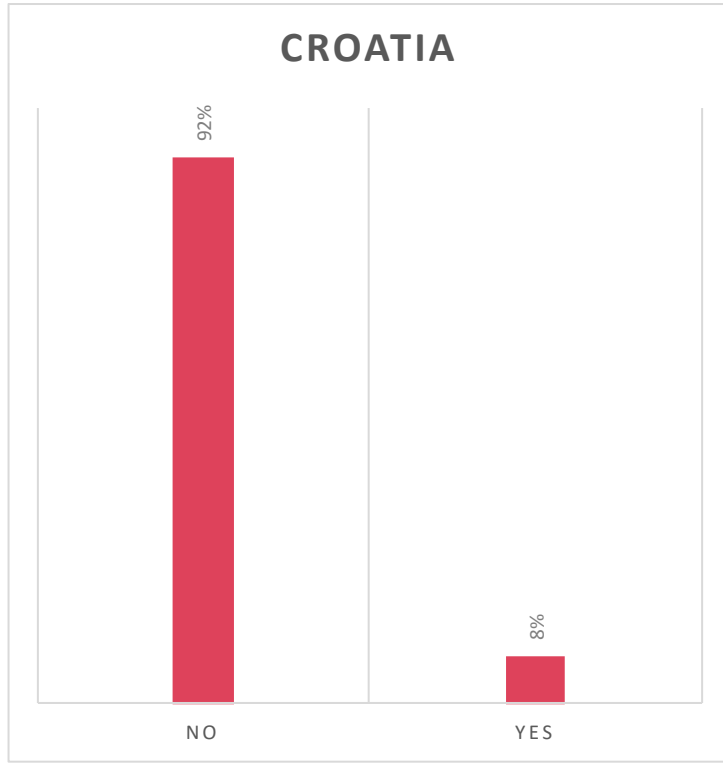
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



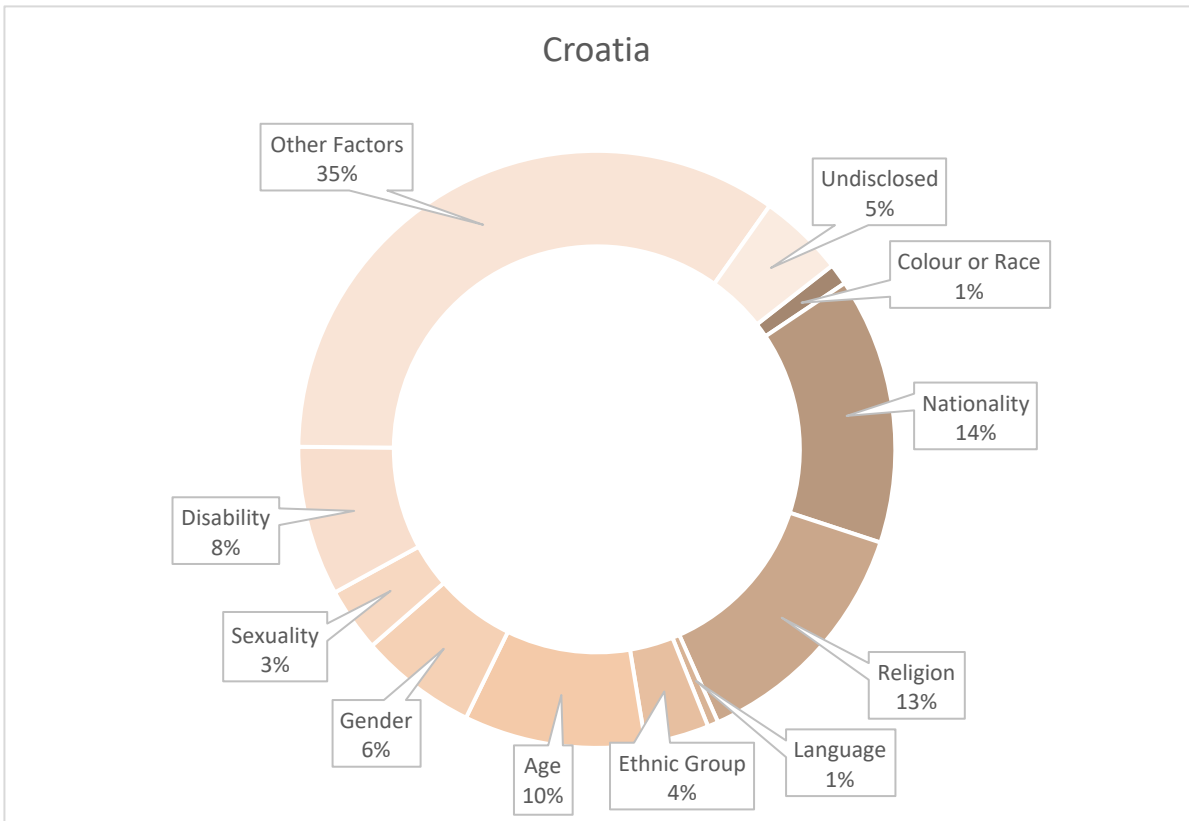
Croatia

n=1,791

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



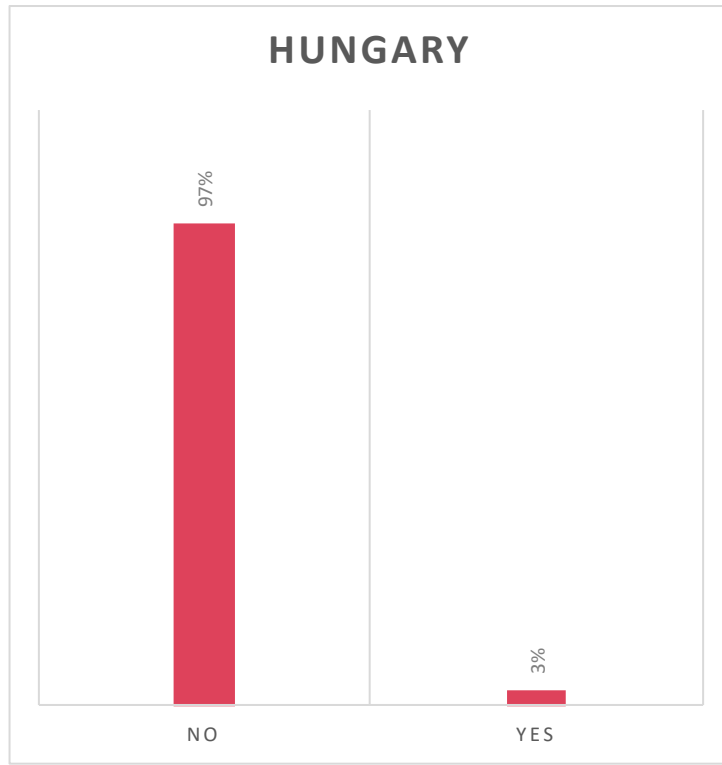
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



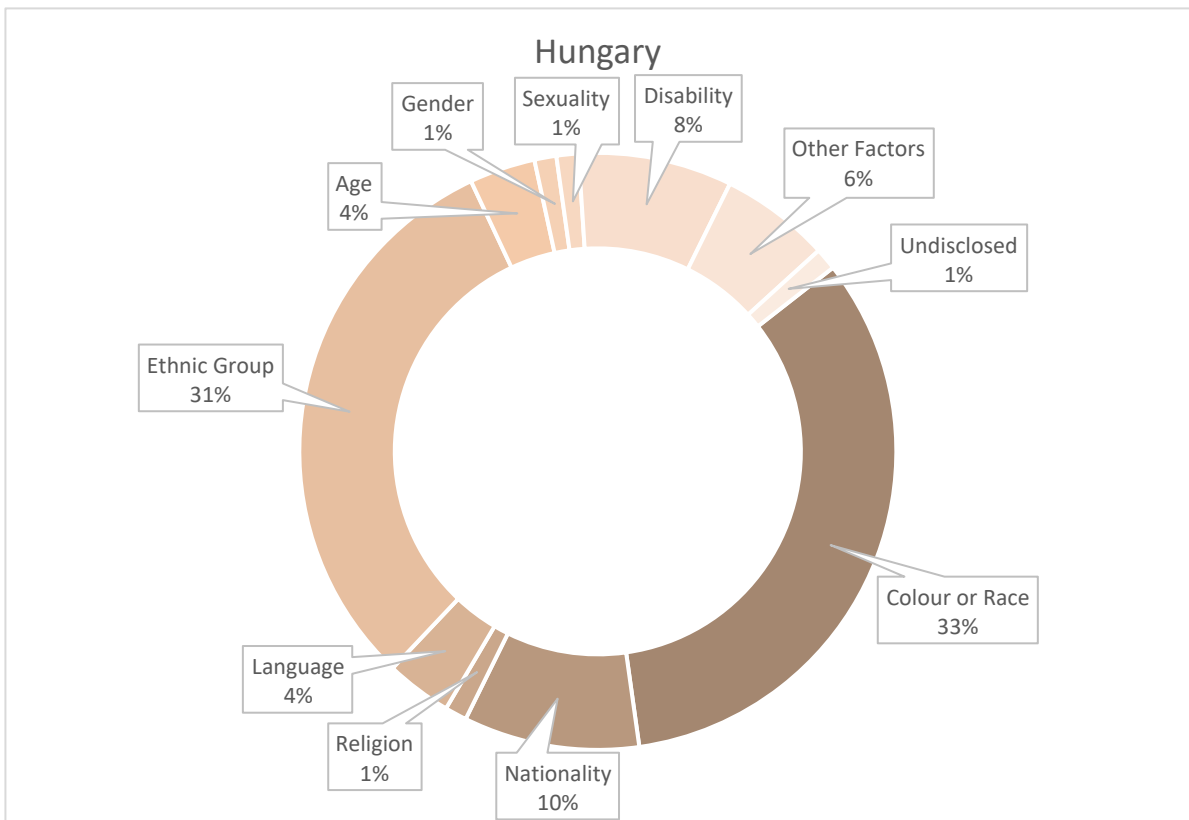
Hungary

n=1,641

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



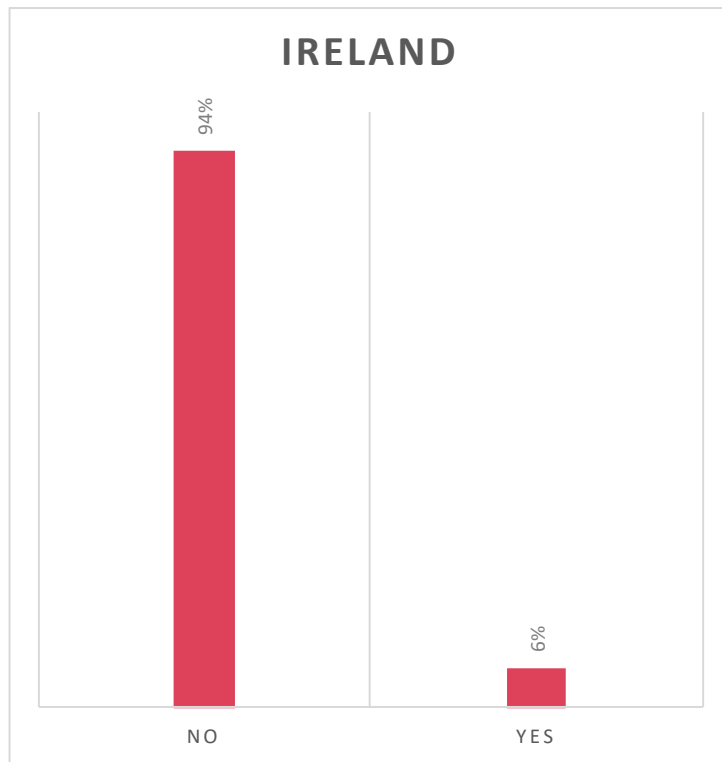
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



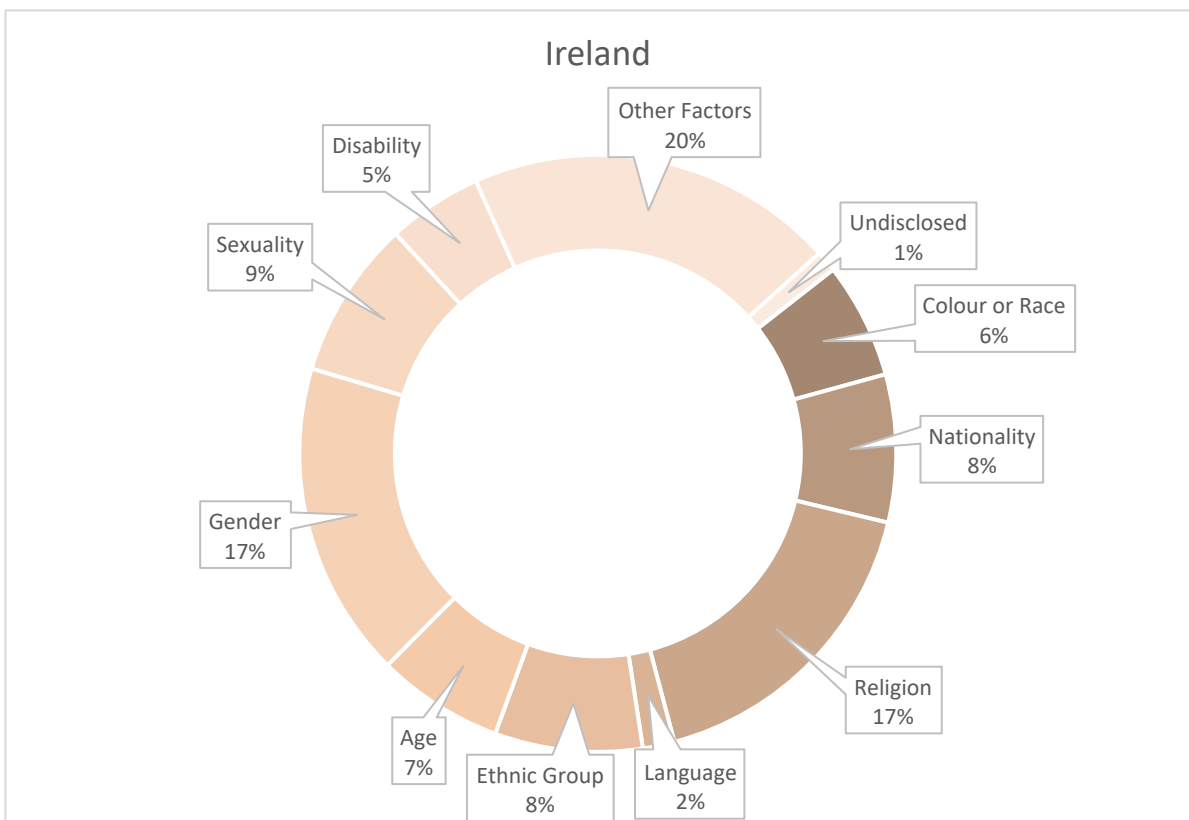
Ireland

n=2,204

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



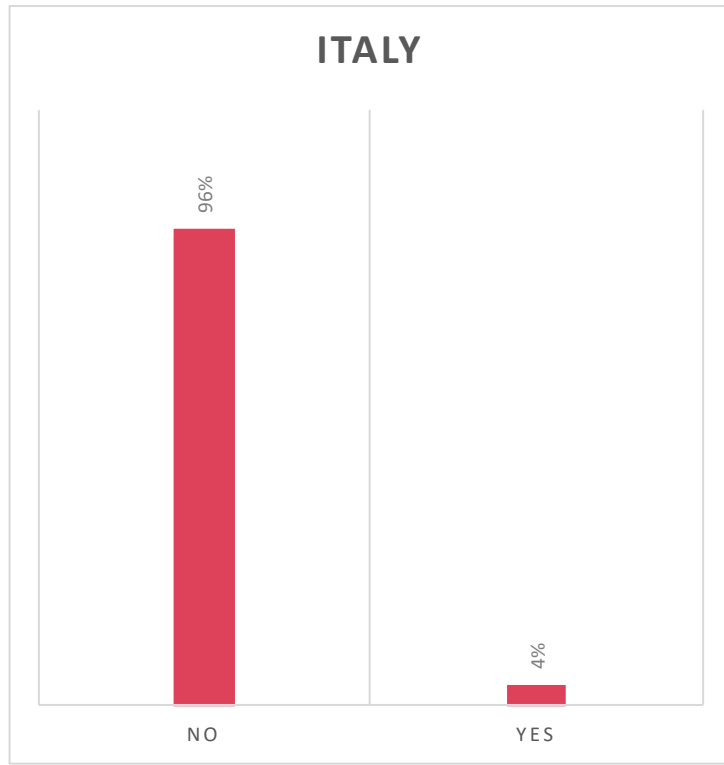
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



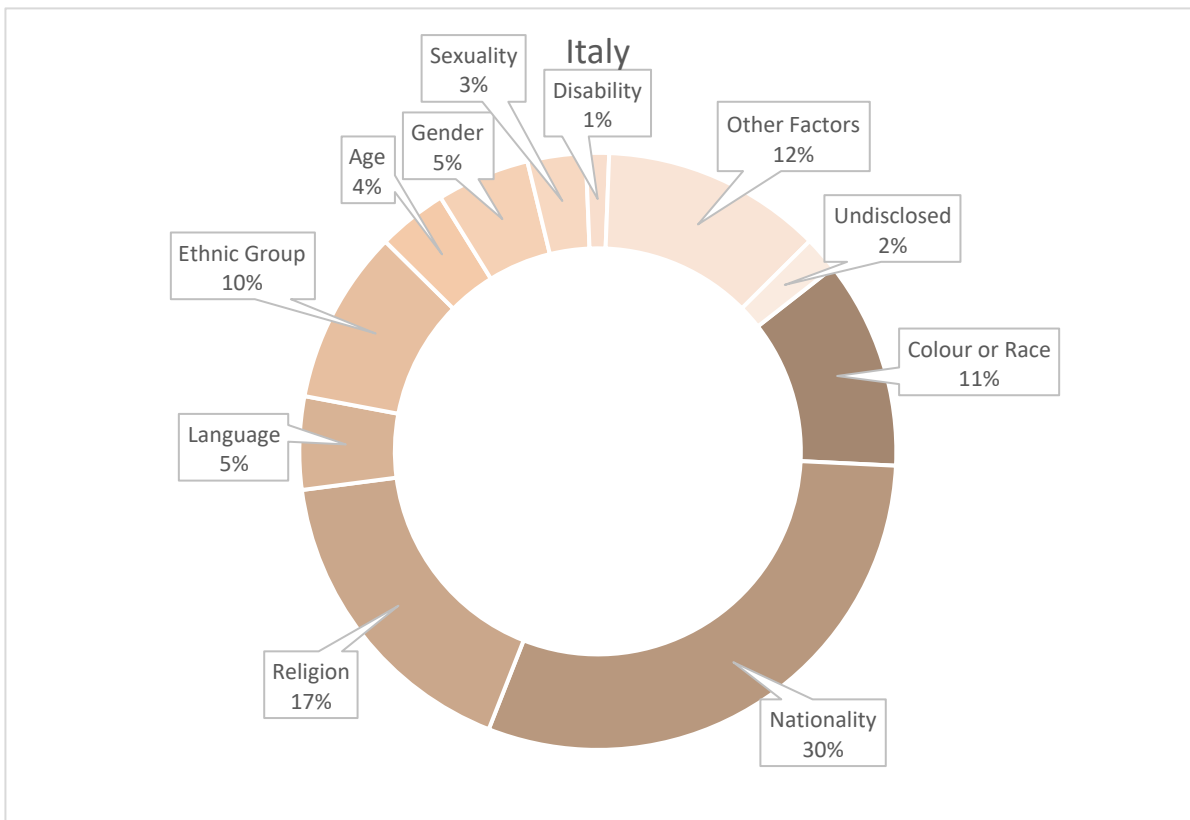
Italy

n=2,689

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



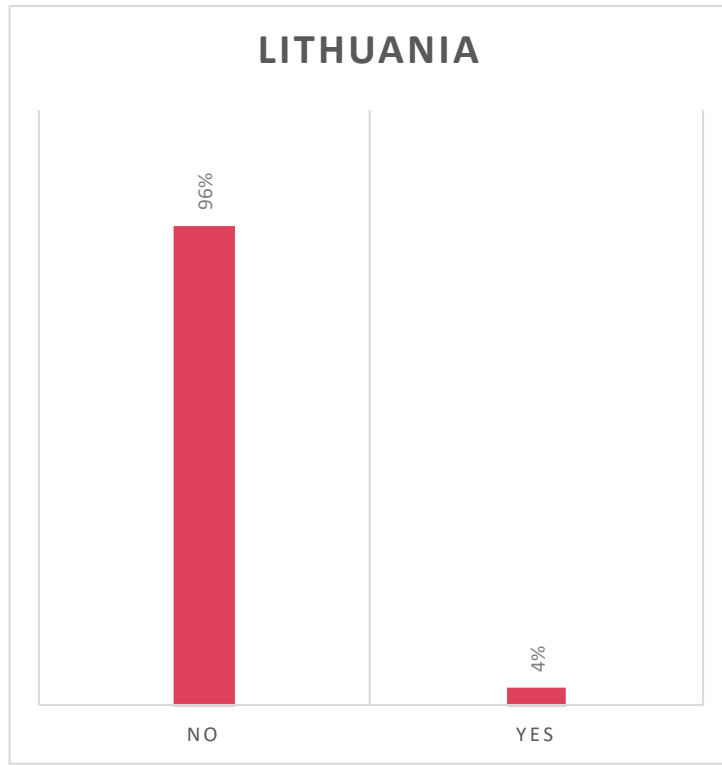
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



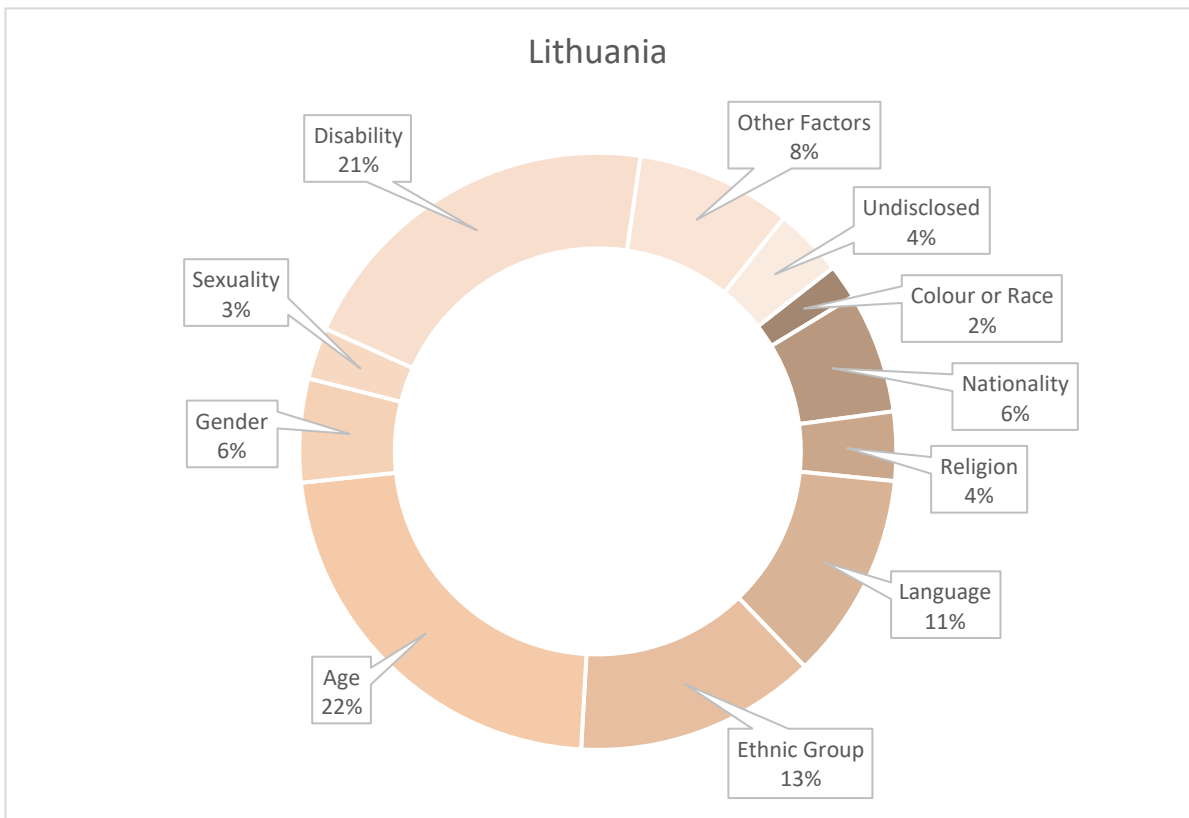
Lithuania

n=1,794

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



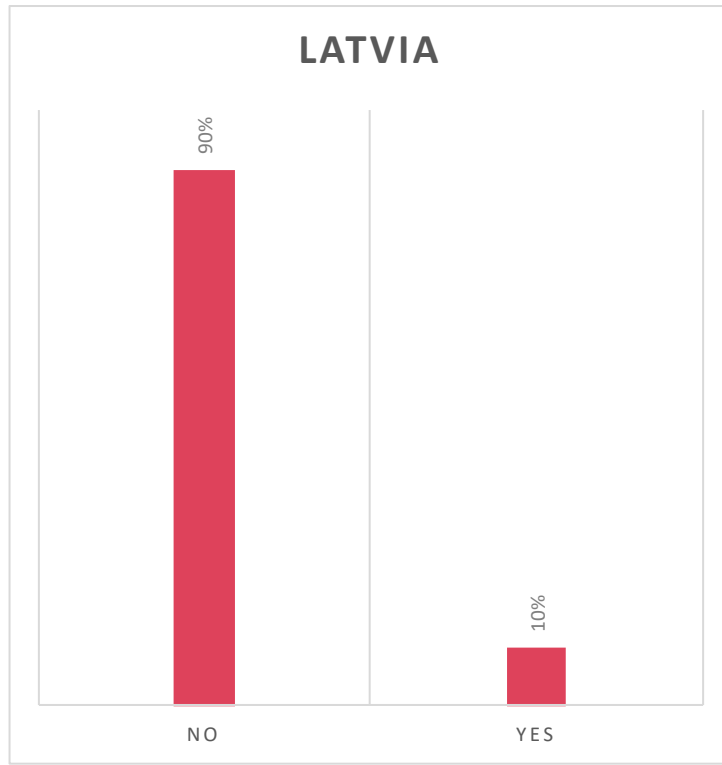
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



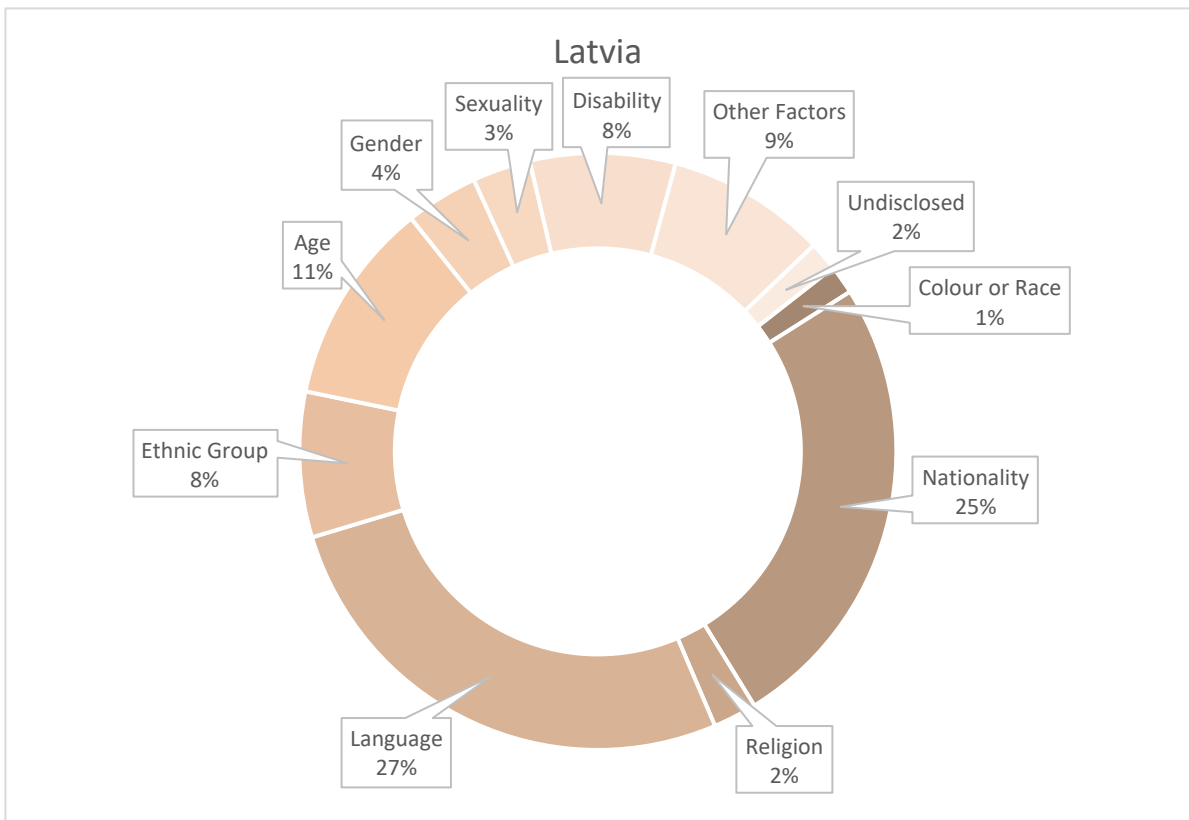
Latvia

n=907

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



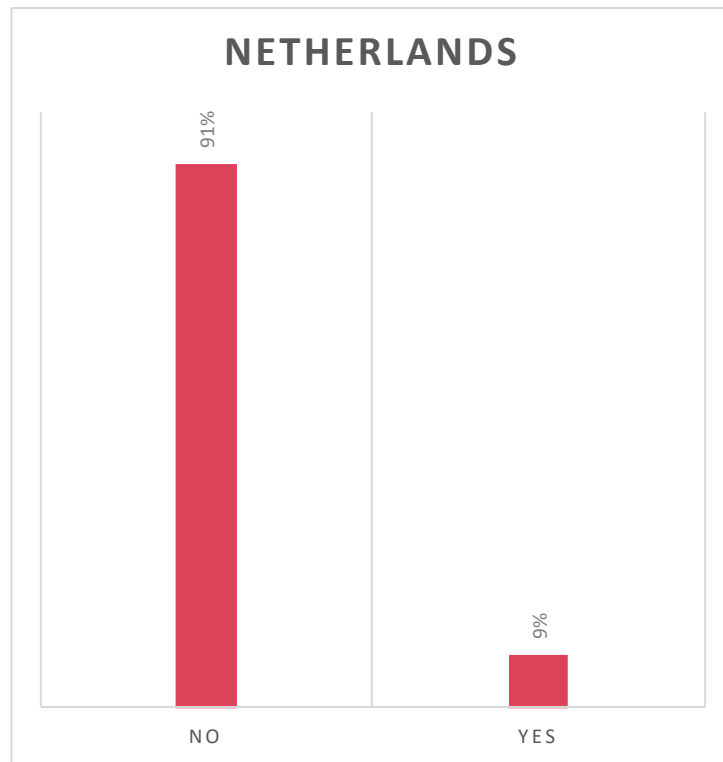
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



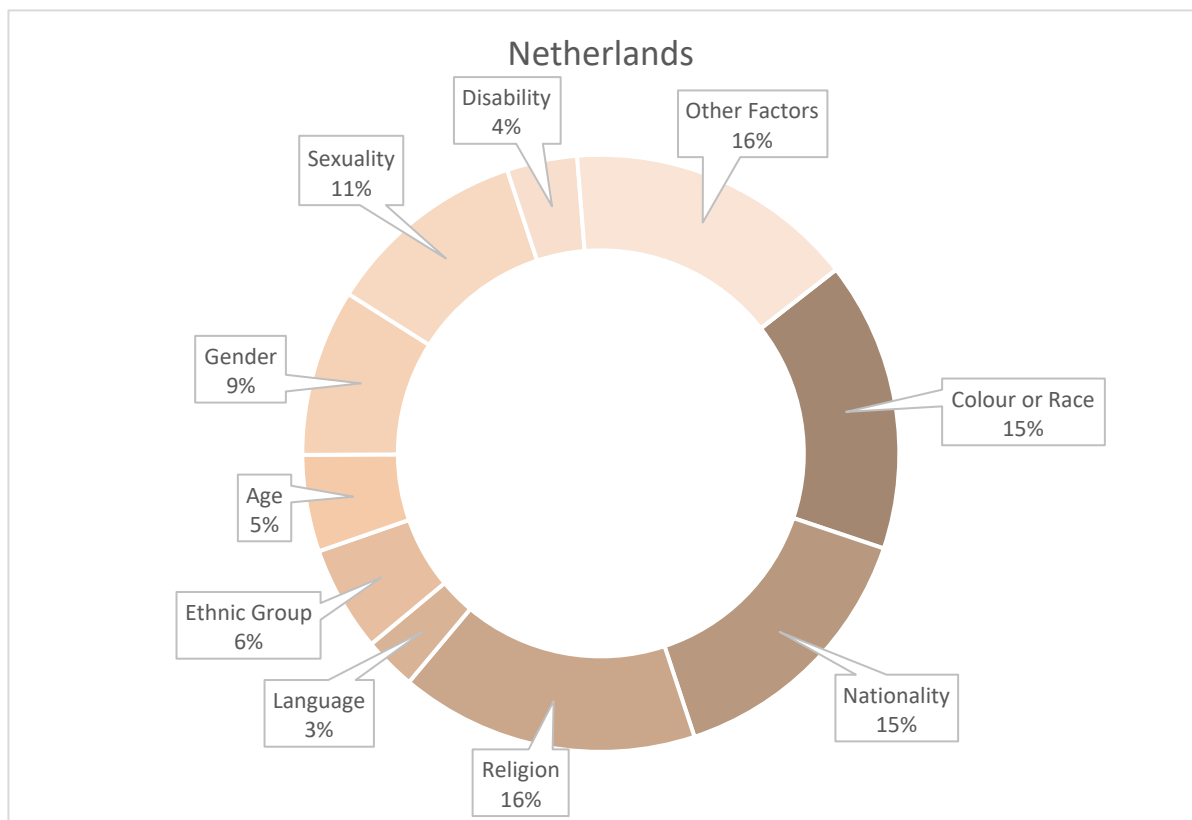
Netherlands

n=1,664

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



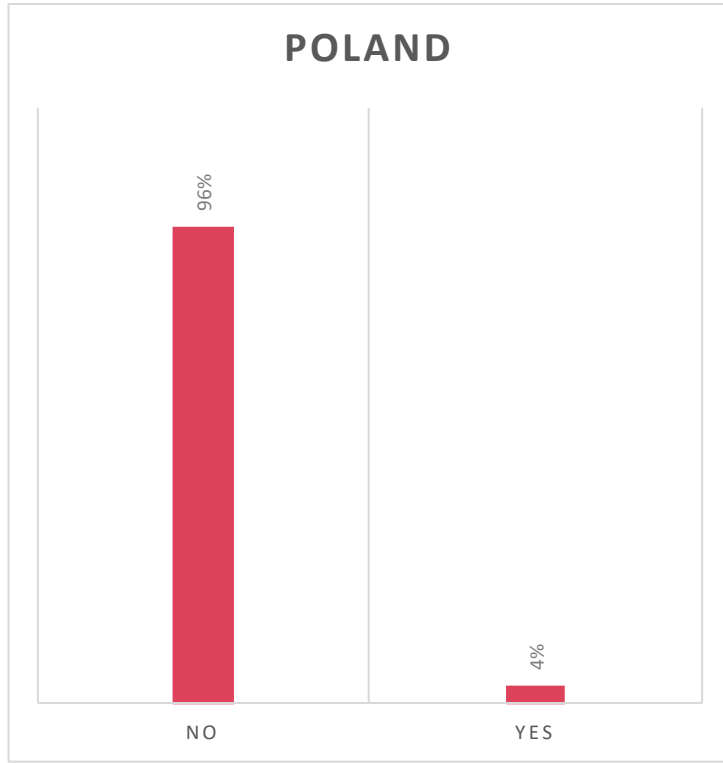
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



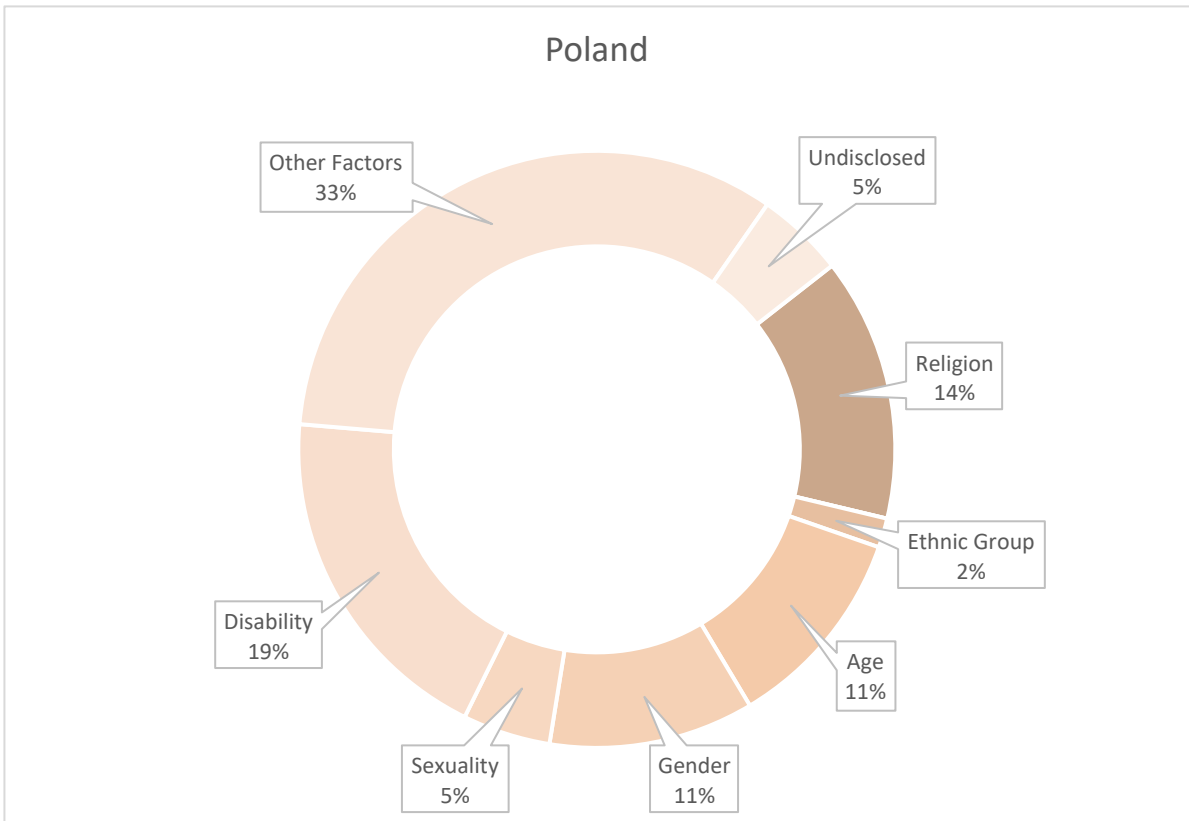
Poland

n=1,487

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



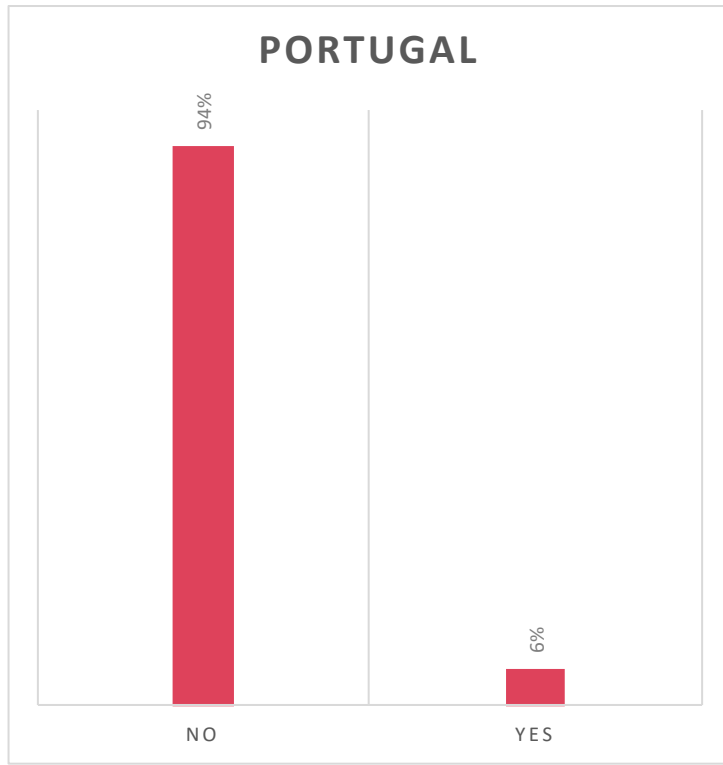
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



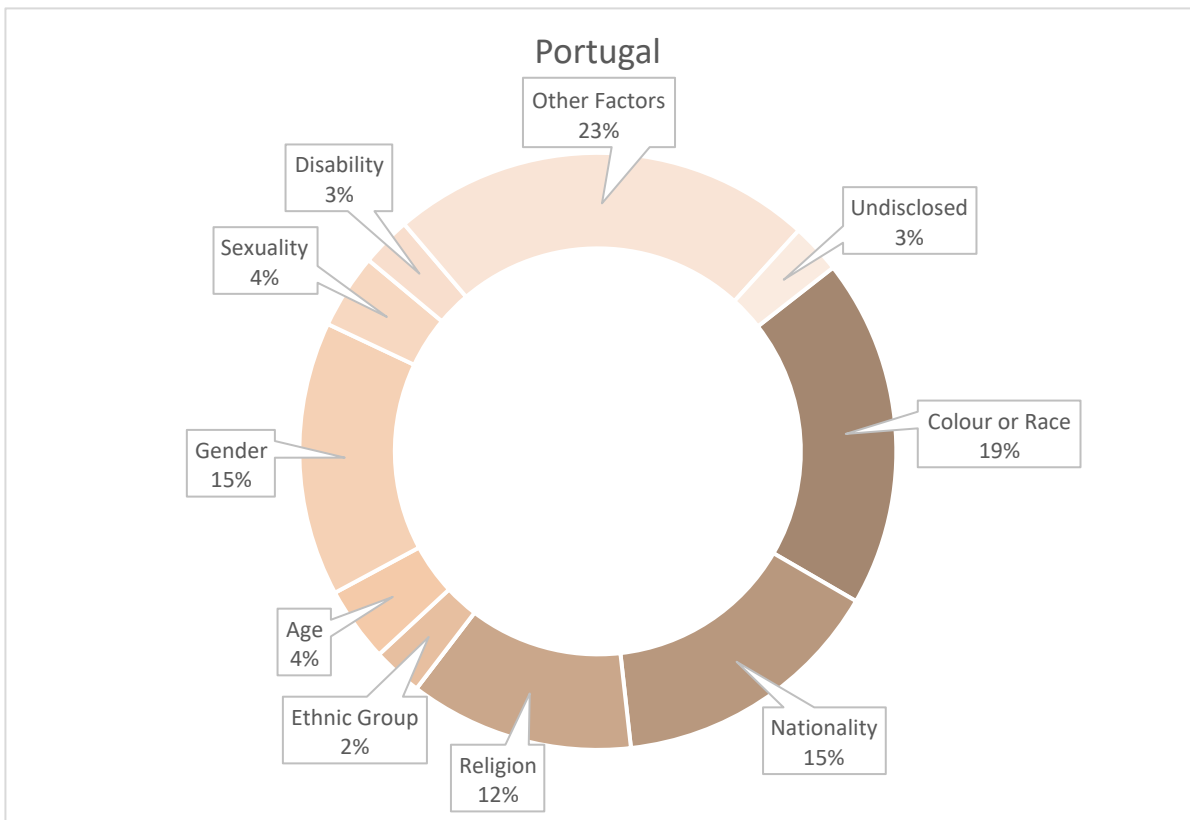
Portugal

n=1,047

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



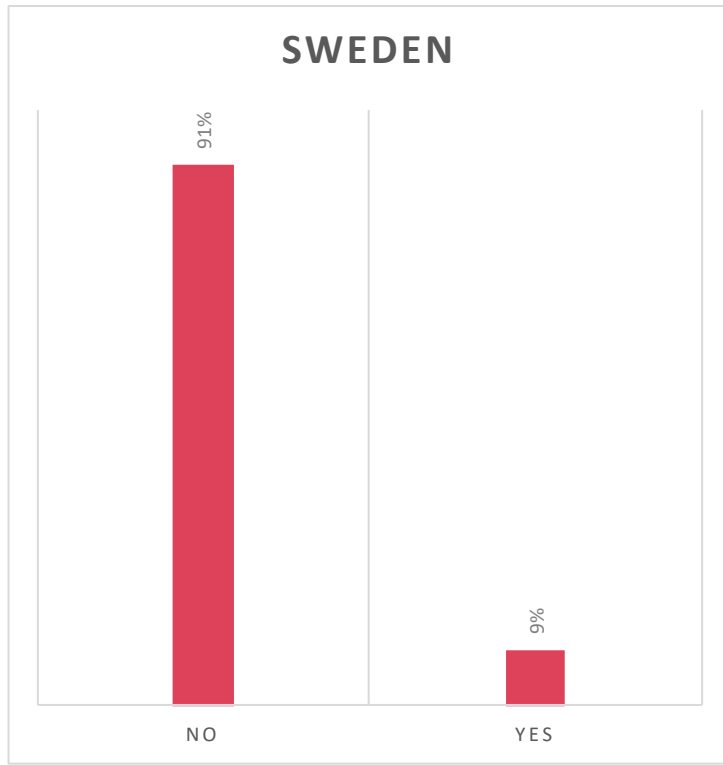
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



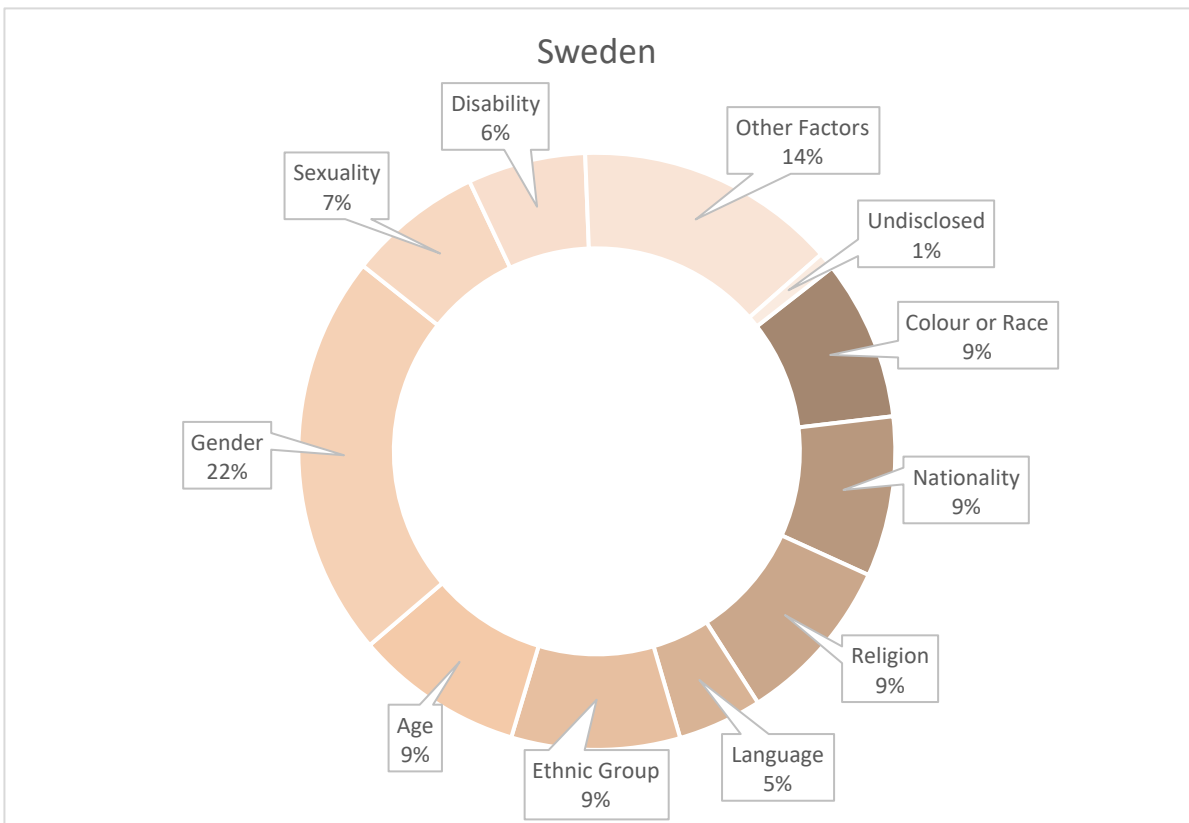
Sweden

n=1,529

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



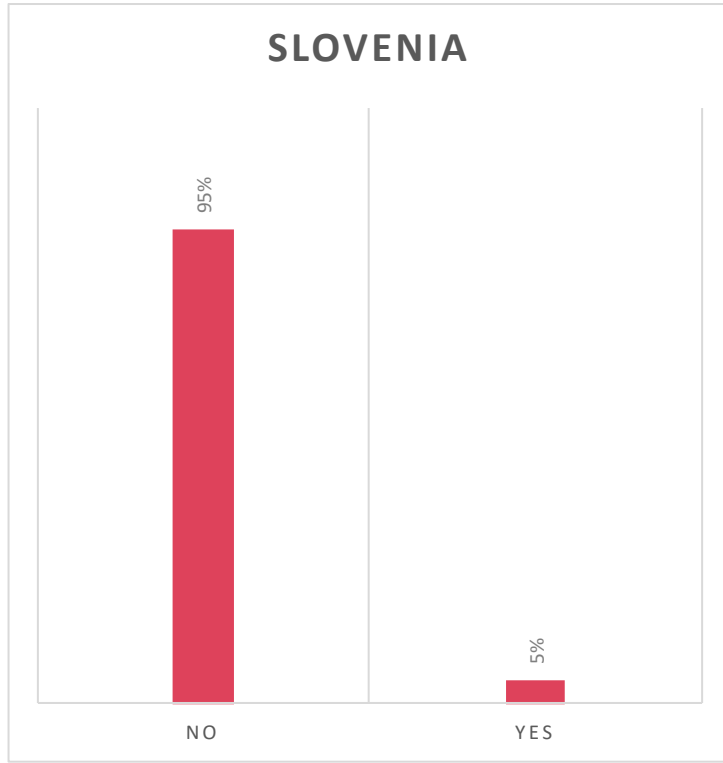
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



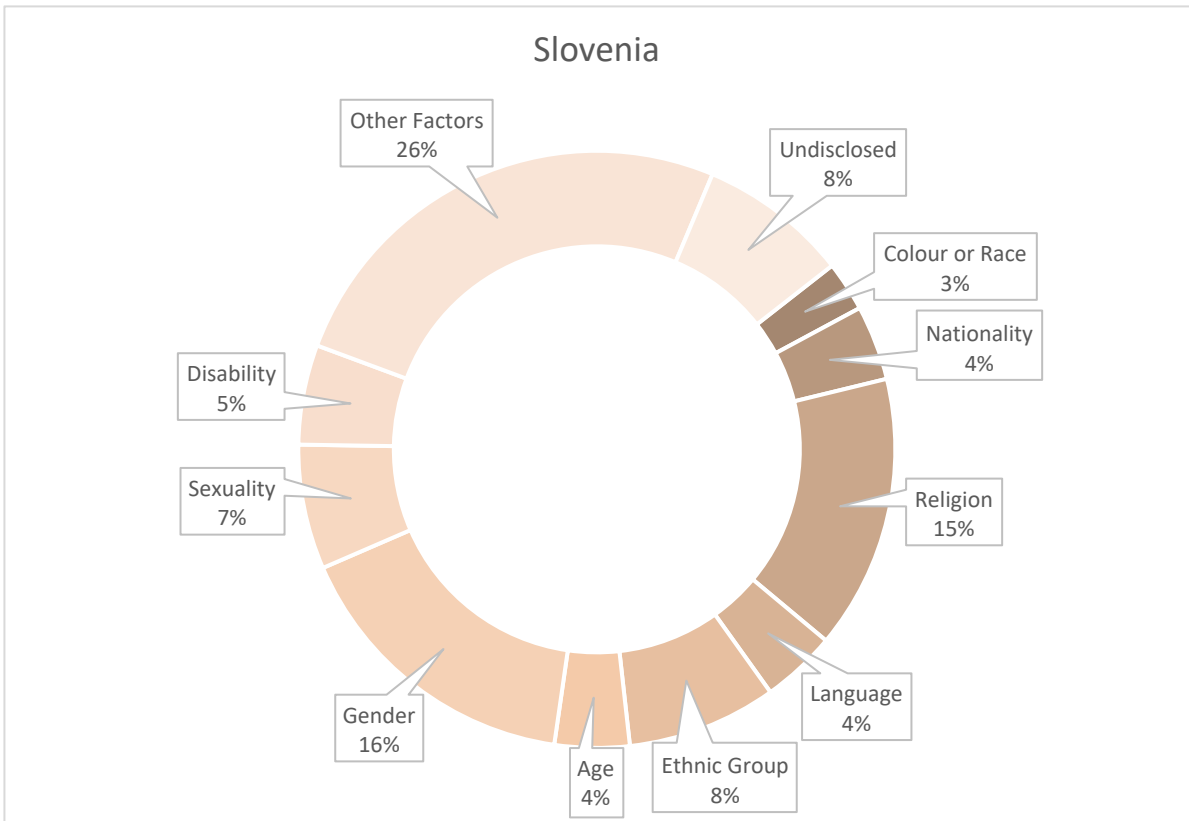
Slovenia

n=1,311

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



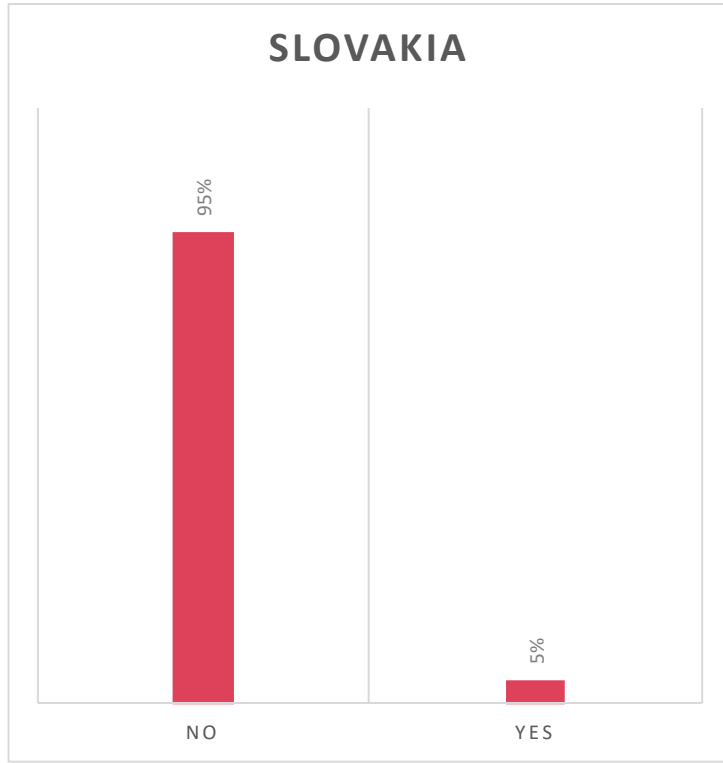
Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:



Slovakia

n=1,077

Do you consider yourself to be member of a discriminated group?



Grounds upon which individuals are discriminated against:

