

Perceptions of the Portuguese Political Class on Intergenerational Justice

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1.

INTRODUCTION



The high number of older voters would not be problematic if they showed (intergenerational) altruism and, consequently, prioritised the preservation of life and environmental standards.

The Brexit vote – in which the younger generation had a significantly higher probability of voting¹ – once again brought the divide between boomers and millennials to the fore. In fact, concerns that the elderly could compromise the future of the young have been fed over the past two decades by a tendency towards public expenditure for the elderly, an increase in housing prices, precarious new jobs in contrast to the protection given to those on a permanent contract, the relative impoverishment of the new generation vis-a-vis that of their parents², and the depletion of natural resources, among others.

Notwithstanding, the balance between generations is not easy to correct given that the older generation is a more powerful electorate than the young. As a result of the lower fertility rates since the war and increased life expectancy, the age of the average elector has been going up constantly. In Portugal, for example, this average is expected to go up from 44 years in 2015 to 50.2 years in 2030. This is aggravated by the strong and widely documented correlation between voting and age, which means that the average voter is systematically older than the average elector. For example, in Portugal, approximately 43% of people aged between 18 and 24 years voted between 2000 and 2010 compared to an average 61% of the whole population³.

The high number of older voters would not be problematic if they showed (intergenerational) altruism and, consequently, prioritised the preservation of life and environmental standards. However, while justice and altruism influence behaviours and votes⁴, research provides substantial evidence on the correlation between age and the preference for the investment in expenditure on the older generation (rather than education, for example)⁵.

¹ Clarke, Harold D., Matthew Goodwin, and Paul Whiteley. “Why Britain voted for Brexit: An individual-level analysis of the 2016 referendum vote.” *Parliamentary Affairs* (2017): gsx005.

² Dobbs, Richard, et al. “Poorer than their parents? A new perspective on income inequality.” McKinsey Global Institute (2016).

³ Sloam, James. “Diversity and voice: The political participation of young people in the European Union.” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 18.3 (2016): 521-537.

⁴ See, for example, Hudson, John, and Philip Jones. “In search of the good Samaritan: estimating the impact of ‘altruism’ on voters’ preferences.” *Applied Economics* 34.3 (2002): 377-383; Mahler, Daniel. “Do Altruistic Preferences Matter for Voting Outcomes?” Working Paper (2017).

⁵ Cattaneo, M. Alejandra, and Stefan C. Wolter. “Are the elderly a threat to educational expenditures?” *European Journal of Political Economy* 25.2 (2009): 225-236; Cattaneo, M. Alejandra, and Stefan C. Wolter. “Are the elderly a threat to educational expenditures?” *European Journal of Political Economy* 25.2 (2009): 225-236; Busemeyer, Marius R., Achim Goerres, and Simon Weschle. “Attitudes towards redistributive spending in an era of demographic ageing: the rival pressures from age and income in 14 OECD countries.” *Journal of European Social Policy* 19.3 (2009): 195-212.

In the same vein, the elderly are less likely to support climate policies such as subsidies for renewable energies⁶. Moreover, the elderly tend to identify less with the interests of the young as geographical and social mobility loosens the ties between generations and the proportion of childless people increases⁷. Given the preferences of this large group of voters, political parties are reluctant to adopt measures that could be prejudicial to the interests of the older generation. This increases the general tendency of policymakers and citizens to be risk averse⁸ and to dismiss the future⁹.

The impact of ageing on policies has been explored in studies on the welfare state. They suggest that although the “power of older people” is important to the expansion and contention of the welfare state, there is a marked difference between countries. According to these studies, whereas the welfare states of Continental Europe (particularly in the South) tend to clearly favour the older generation, Scandinavian democracies tend to support the younger generations¹⁰. In Portugal, expenditure dedicated specifically to the elderly is five times higher than for other social groups¹¹.

Intergenerational justice has been the subject of widespread research and, notably, systemic philosophical analysis¹². Moreover, as we shall see below, the impact of ageing on citizens’ preferences and on welfare policies has been comprehensively covered. However, to the best of our knowledge, no attention has been given to the policy makers’ perceptions of intergenerational justice. In fact, the few studies analysing the preferences of policy makers¹³ (in Portugal and elsewhere) do not specifically address this matter.

⁶ Andor, Mark, Christoph M. Schmidt, and Stephan Sommer. “Climate Change, Population Ageing and Public Spending: Evidence on Individual Preferences.” (2017).

⁷ Van Parijs, Philippe. *Just democracy: the rawls-machiavelli programme*. ECPR press, 2011.

⁸ Tversky, Amos, and Daniel Kahneman. “The framing of decisions and the psychology of choice.” *Science* 211.4481 (1981): 453-458. Jones, Bryan, and Howard Rachlin. “Social discounting.” *Psychological science* 17.4 (2006): 283-286.

⁹ SHEFFER, LIOR, et al. “Nonrepresentative Representatives: An Experimental Study of the Decision Making of Elected Politicians.” *American Political Science Review* (2017): 1-20.

¹⁰ Esping-Andersen, Gøsta, and Sebastian Sarasa. “The generational conflict reconsidered.” *Journal of European social policy* 12.1 (2002): 5-21. Vanhuyse, Pieter. “Does Population Aging Drive Up Pro-Elderly Social Spending?.” *Browser Download This Paper* (2012).

¹¹ With regard to expenditure on the elderly, the numerator includes benefits related to old-age, in cash and in kind, survivors’ benefits in cash and in kind, disability pensions, pensions related to work accidents and illness, and early retirement for labour market reasons. As for non-seniors, the EBiSS denominator includes family benefits in cash and in kind, active labour market programmes, income support, cash benefits, unemployment benefits and compensations, and all education expenditure. In order to control the demographic structure, the social spending rate for the elderly/non-elderly was adjusted by means of each country’s old-age support ratio (the number of people aged between 20 and 64 and the number of people aged 65 or more). Source: Vanhuyse, Pieter. “Intergenerational justice and public policy in Europe.” *Browser Download This Paper* (2014).

¹² See, for example, Van Parijs, op. Cit., Myles, John. “What justice requires: pension reform in ageing societies.” *Journal of European Social Policy* 13.3 (2003): 264-269.

¹³ For example, for Portugal, see: Belchior, Ana, and André Freire. “6 Political representations in Portugal: Congruence between deputies and voters in terms of policy preferences.” *Political Representation in Portugal: the years of Socialist* 16.1 (2015): 192.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project has three objectives. First, to assess the Portuguese policy makers' perception of intergenerational justice. Do policy makers understand this injustice and, if so, what does it mean to them? Second, to gauge their support of (a) specific redistribution policies and (b) institutional solutions to correct the generational imbalance. Thirdly, to understand the difficulties faced by policy makers when approving policies on the distribution of resources among generations.

METHODOLOGY

To understand the perceptions of policy makers in all their complexity, our methodology combines qualitative and quantitative data.

First, our data collection included anonymous semi-structured interviews, which means the interviewer had a number of predefined questions but the order in which they were asked and the length of interview varied according to the respondent. We conducted 13 interviews from April 2018 to June 2018. The group of people interviewed includes senior politicians from each parliamentary party, who currently hold or have held a senior position either at national or local level (list of those interviewed in annex). They were contacted by a researcher (Daniel Cardoso) who conducted the interviews so that a large number of policy makers could be included. The specific aim was to glean a clearer understanding of the opinions and preferences of policy makers on intergenerational justice and the existing mechanisms that encourage – or, alternatively, hinder – the proposal and adoption of laws for the distribution of wealth over the different generations. Interviews lasted approximately 30 and 60 minutes, were anonymous, and were subsequently transcribed in full.

Secondly, we organised a survey of Portugal's current Members of Parliament (MPs). The survey was prepared in collaboration with experts in intergenerational justice and sent by email to all MPs. We achieved our target of making contact with approximately 30% (69) of the MPs, but only after sending several messages, proposing interviews by telephone or in person, and contacting colleagues and leaders of parliamentary groups asking them to encourage MPs to respond.

The results of this research are presented in the remainder of this report.

2.

INTERVIEWS WITH POLICY MAKERS

The present report outlines the main ideas obtained from the interviews with regards the policy makers' diagnosis of Portuguese society in terms of intergenerational justice. We also describe the causes they identified for the injustice in the distribution of opportunities and resources among generations; and the proposed solutions.

2.1.

WHAT IS INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE?

For many, intergenerational justice should be understood in terms of reciprocity: of the older to the younger generations and vice versa.

Most policy makers refer to the principles of **responsibility and reciprocity** to define intergenerational justice. One, for example, says that “no generation has the right to mortgage or pass on burdens to the next generation that will limit their opportunities” (PSD). Another, from the CDS-PP, also states that: “The problems are not necessarily the same but each generation (...) should have a feeling of responsibility towards other generations, and seek to give whatever they can to provide better conditions of social justice to the recipients”.

For many, intergenerational justice should be understood in terms of **reciprocity**: of the older to the younger generations and vice versa. For example, an interviewee from CDS-PP observes that an intergenerationally fair society is one where “every generation contributes proportionally towards a common goal” (CDS-PP). Similarly, an interviewee from PCP states “Consideration of intergenerational justice entails (...) the responsibilities (that a given generation) must assume not only with the elderly, but also with the younger generations”. Less than half of those interviewed (5) spontaneously mention future generations when defining intergenerational justice. For example, an interviewee from PAN explains: “(Intergenerational justice is) that sense of solidarity, the need to ensure certain living conditions, including those of today, for the future generations. In other words, not thinking only about the present generations, but also about future generations”.

On the other hand, the interviewees from more left-wing parties stress that the concept of justice among generations cannot overshadow the evaluation of the distribution of goods and resources among **classes**. According to an interviewee from the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), there is a limit to which the intergenerational approach can be taken because there is a point at which the class differences are determinant: “The working classes (...) come up against intergenerational injustice more dramatically (...) than the (other) classes. Similarly, an interviewee from the Left Bloc (BE) states that there is not much point using “generation” as a social category when considering society and social policies because it is difficult to match a specific social interest to one generation: “To use Bourdieu’s expression about youth: youth is just a word insofar as the class inequalities that affect youth are so great that when we compare a young labourer to a... let’s say, upper class youth of the same age, the young labourer is probably closer to his workmate, who is older, than to someone of his own generation at university”.

2.2. IS PORTUGUESE SOCIETY INTERGENERATIONALLY FAIR?

According to the policy makers interviewed, Portuguese society is not intergenerationally fair.

According to the policy makers interviewed, **Portuguese society is not intergenerationally fair**. In fact, some interviewees are very harsh in their characterisation of Portuguese society. An interviewee from PSD, for example, says that Portugal “is a profoundly unfair society in the articulation between the different generations (...) a generation that was selfish enough to achieve well-being without taking into account the need to create conditions to ensure the continuity of this well-being for younger generations”. An interviewee from PS says: “The Portuguese society is one that is intergenerationally very selfish”.

Many of those interviewed also note that the forms of injustice run across generations, and that **justice between generations depends on social protection**. For example, an interviewee from PS states that “there is class injustice right away, for example, in terms of income; there is gender injustice, injustice due to race and ethnic origin... so, I believe Portuguese society is touched by many forms of inequality, poverty, discrimination, oppression, that are very strong (...) We need to boost our social protection system, and defend public welfare as a fundamental part (...) of justice between generations”.

A member of the current government was the exception, claiming that, generally speaking, this is a time of intergenerational justice in Portugal. According to this government representative, youths have never had so many opportunities to access health and education as they do today. He/she added that “people often long for the old days, but there was nothing in the past. In the old days, we didn’t have the hospitals we have today, in the old days we didn’t have roads, we didn’t have means of communication like we have today... Basically, in the old days we didn’t have access to a number of factors that make our lives much more comfortable today than they used to be”.

Nevertheless, in general, the MPs believe **young people today have better educational opportunities** and are therefore the most qualified young generation ever. They also have a broader world-view and, unlike their parents or grandparents, they live in peace and in **democracy**.

It is interesting to observe that many of those interviewed also stressed that the **lack of research** hinders a good diagnosis of intergenerational justice. For example, an interviewee from (CDS-PP) made the following comment on social security: “In fact, the under-40s generation is convinced (...) they will not have a pension when they reach retirement age. But is this true or not? If they do have a pension, will it be more or less... what proportion

will they get? We don't know. Is our model really sustainable? We don't know. Because the discussion has become ideological, political, and not technical”.

Finally, it is worth noting that four politicians, from left and right-wing parties, feel that speaking of “intergenerational justice” can lead to **undesirable antagonism between generations**, as was allegedly the case during the bailout. As a PS representative said: “When Portugal was going through the crisis years, (...), a narrative developed of ‘young versus old’ and ‘old versus young’, mistakenly, in my opinion, (...) and that should not happen”. This opinion was shared by an interviewee from CDS-PP: “The crisis we went through in the last decade, with some measures (...) brought the worst possible outcome in the search for intergenerational justice, namely, the idea of intergenerational selfishness. It was something that had not been seen in decades. Young people accusing the old, and old people accusing the young.”

According to representatives of the radical left, intergenerational justice was politically used by the Passos Coelho government to reduce social rights and the welfare state. As an interviewee from PCP stated: “I am sure (... that) the intergenerational divide (was) used precisely to destroy rights generally for all generations and, here again, not only at a generational level but also at a social class level (...). One of the mechanisms used by that government (Passos Coelho) to attack social rights in general was precisely to set Portuguese against Portuguese, workers against workers, retired people against the active population, workers against the unemployed (etc.)”.

Our interviewee from BE made the same diagnosis: “What happened during the crisis was a pathetic use of a discourse aimed at turning generations against each other as if (...) the opportunities for the younger generation could be built on the destruction of social protection for the elderly. (...) defending instability, cuts in pensions, setting off alarms about the unsustainability of social security, and fostering visions of labour legislation to create precarious conditions (...) for older workers”.

2.3. WHICH PROBLEMS LEAD TO INTERGENERATIONAL INJUSTICE?

All those interviewed mentioned environmental and socioeconomic policies as factors that led to intergenerational injustice.

Environment

Several interviewees (particularly from PAN and PEV) stressed that Portugal is **depleting resources for the future generations**. For example, one interviewee from PAN observed: “Take the case of the Tejo, pollution in the Tejo, Vila Velha de Ródão, take the

case of the intensive olive groves in the Alentejo leading to the serious deterioration of the soils, the problems of drought, I think we have a series of circumstances that demonstrate that, in fact, we are not thinking about the future generations, but only about today's generations. And even in relation to these I also have many doubts”.

Similarly, an interviewee from PEV noted that there had been an enormous loss of biodiversity, with consequences for climate regulation, regulating floods and obtaining ingredients for medicinal products. In the same vein, various policy makers stressed due care had not been taken with water resource management and this will negatively affect future generations. In fact, one interviewee, from PSD, commented water could even be the cause of a future world war.

Another interviewee (PSD) pointed out that there was not enough monitoring of environmental matters: “In Portugal, the lack of monitoring is a serious problem, and we know that some polluting behaviour is systematically repeated without the inspection authorities imposing any kind of punishment, and we know that this also calls people's quality of life into question”.

However, one interviewee from PSD mentioned that Portugal had made great advances environmentally in the last decade: “In roughly six years, we have gone from being a country without a single waste treatment facility compatible with European regulations to one with treatment for all types of waste, (...) it's amazing! (...) Tell me anything that can be compared with the environment in the last thirty years, where there has been so much change in Portugal?”

The State's explicit and implicit debt

Meanwhile, the interviewees discussed the socioeconomic conditions that have weakened intergenerational justice in more detail. The most recurrent problem is **State debt**, which interviewees see as a pre-dated cheque to be paid by future taxpayers. Nevertheless, as one interviewee from CDS mentioned, if this debt is contracted to build infrastructures that will be used in the future, the intergenerational burden is less.

The interviewees put great emphasis on the problem related to the **implicit debt of social security**, that is, the total amount that, by law, the social security system is obliged to pay in the future. As one interviewee from CDS-PP explained: “The State's debt is, without doubt, high,” (But) (...) The majority of the State's debt is due to responsibilities it has already assumed with pensioners, pre-pensioners, and future pensioners and pre-pensioners (...) It means that here alone we have over 200% of the GDP (...), plus (the already existing) 120%, so we already have 320% and then nobody calculates for (...) the public health system’.

More specifically, many interviewees say that the “**pay-as-you-go**” **pension system** is overburdened due to a combination of the baby boom and the lower birth rate. As one interviewee (PSD) explained to us: “At the moment we are placed at 1.36 (as the birth rate...) And, on the other hand, the average life expectancy (...) increases every year (...) All the studies confirm (...) that the current value of contributions, projected 40 years, will

not be enough to pay pensions at each moment (...) there is a problem of equity because (this generation) contributed but will already not receive the same as the others received”.

The implicit debt of social security is largely related with the question of trust in the State. As one interviewee from PSD noted: “We are also going to start saving for retirement, but we want to be sure that the State will do its part, and (...) the younger generations (...) think that the savings they have made are not guaranteed, because the State cannot be trusted”. Another interviewee from the same party added that this implies a “**breach of the social contract**”.

Public and private saving

Some interviewees (PSD, CDS-PP) also mentioned the low level of **savings**, by both families and the State, as the cause of intergenerational injustice. According to the ex-leader of the CDS, saving is the econometric way of evaluating solidarity with the future generations: “Saving is renouncing immediate consumption for a differed consumption, for one’s own or another’s benefit. Normally, the other means the future generations. (...) Nowadays this question is completely distorted. There is no saving, only consuming”.

Social and gender inequalities

As already mentioned, various interviewees from different parties stressed that intergenerational injustice in Portuguese society is linked to the **broader problem of poverty and social inequalities**. For example, one of the interviewees (PSD) believed that the pay inequality between the older and younger workers is excessive: “In Portugal, the age-related pay inequalities are enormous (...) the criteria of seniority outweighs that of merit (...) From this perspective, the social inequalities have a generational dimension that have not been sufficiently studied”.

In a similar vein, an interviewee from the Socialist Party noted that there is a greater risk of poverty among children and youth than among the elderly, because the solidarity supplement was introduced for the latter, and this allows the risk of poverty to be mitigated. However, another interviewee (from PSD) stated that, in 30% of cases, this supplement is attributed to pensioners that do not need it because the system does not analyse the beneficiaries’ resources efficiently.

One interviewee (PS) rightly noted that the ageing of the population has a more negative impact on women: “there is a gender injustice that affects middle-aged or older women due to the fact that it is now common for **four generations** to coexist in families, and it generally falls to the women in these intermediate age groups to care for the elderly still living”.

Labour market

Some interviewees from different parties also observed that, as a result of policy choices, **younger people tend to have more precarious contracts than their older counterparts**. As one interviewee (PEV) explained: “At the labour market level, the

society we are leaving to the future is too uncertain. (...) Thanks to a set of decisions and legislative changes, (precarious work, job insecurity) (...) have become the rule in the labour market”. Another interviewee from PSD agreed: “take the most recent changes in labour legislation (...), there is an attempt to grant those already in the labour market security and stability, and this is demeaning for the ones that are starting out (...) For example, ultimately the decision to increase company internships from 3 to 6 months is clearly making the conditions of new workers even more precarious”.

Housing

In addition, two interviewees referred briefly to the difficulty young people have in accessing **housing**.

Land Use Planning

Most interviewees, from various parties, lament the fact that the Portuguese State has not fostered territorial cohesion due to their attempts to limit expenditure, and consequently, has imposed high socioeconomic and environmental costs on the current and future generations. As one interviewee from CDS-PP explained: “The economy is now governed entirely by the notion of economic return rather than social return. If I am going to have a branch of a public bank in the interior, that branch is obviously going to entail costs for others, but isn’t this a form of intergenerational justice among other things? Or a post office? (...) The same is true of old age, the closing of schools, the closing of public services, and the closing of companies providing services, non-investment, the isolation of families that live alone, in other words, the closing of instruments that are fundamental to peoples’ lives. Pedrógão (...) happened because it had been abandoned for years”

Another interviewee from PCP made a similar observation: “The average age of a large proportion of the local communities in our territory (...) is over 50. This means that (...) we will be faced with the problem of demographics and occupation of the territory, we need to look at this seriously, and take care to guarantee future generations the response to problems that, if not addressed today, those generations are unlikely to believe they are in a position to overcome”.

A third interviewee also expressed concern about this problem: “With the exception of Viseu, there is not a single average sized city in the interior that is able to attract young people to settle there, none. (...) Without people, we have nobody to watch over the territory, (...) we are increasingly subjected to, and above all with climate change (...), things happening to us like they did last year”.

Finally, one interviewee (CDS-PP) mentioned the fact that many old people now live alone in these isolated areas: “When we talk about the elderly, we talk about pensioners, but we don’t speak about the 500 thousand old people (...) who are isolated (...) living in isolated places (...) The geography and the people both in a situation of isolation. And society must respond to this generational injustice”.

2.4. WHY ARE THESE PROBLEMS SO HARD TO RESOLVE?

For almost all the interviewees, the main explanation for the incapacity to act is the absence of political incentives to do so.

We also asked policy makers what stopped them (or their respective parties) from resolving the problems they mentioned.

Lack of political incentive to do so

For almost all the interviewees, the main explanation for the incapacity to act is the **absence of political incentives to do so**. As an interviewee from CDS-PP eloquently explained: “Nobody wins elections talking about demography, nobody wins elections talking about the interior of the country (...) there must be broad consensus. (...)”. This interviewee cites Reagan who said: “governments do not govern for the future generations, they govern for the next elections”. In a similar vein, an interviewee from PSD said: “Essentially, whether it is in terms of the electoral policy logic, the party policy logic, or even the union policy logic, everything is oriented towards (...) adopting distributing policies for the ones that can later represent a return in electoral terms”.

An interviewee from PSD spoke of his experience: “I have to guide my political action by the electoral market and, very often, by the mediatic market, which is sometimes very strong (...) And so, (...) the policies tend, I would say, to be conceived and produced to attract a positive response (...) (...) It is the same thing for a municipal council, for example, that totally revolutionises basic sanitation, they will not win votes with it (...) On the contrary, people will be inconvenienced by it and afterwards it isn't seen”.

Almost all the interviewees agreed that, in fact, the electorate has a **short-term vision**. An interviewee from PEV told us: “(the sustainability of the social State model) does not concern people. What concerns people is the moment, the now”.

Lastly, there was a general feeling among the interviewees that **the young are not sufficiently represented** by the political parties, by the democratic bodies, by the trade union organisations and even by the young party members in the process and decisions on the main issues that concern them. One interviewee (PAN) stressed, however, that this is due not only to the under-representation of young people but also to their disinterest in politics.

In relation to this, another interviewee (from CDS-PP) also underlined that the main losers of intergenerational injustice – **the poor – tend to vote less and organise themselves less**; and, as such, their interests tend to be less protected by the political parties and trade unions: “Generational poverty is ruthlessly resilient. (...) First of all, because it is in the public policy, it pains me to say this but it is true (...) that persistent generational poverty is least considered. It is brutal to say this (...) it does not win votes. They do not go on strike, they do not organise demonstrations... (...) The poor have no social cohesion (...) Politically, the poor do not exist (...) Even the trade unions abandon the unemployed and the poor.”

Lack of knowledge and the wrong discourse

The interviewees stressed that the population in Portugal has, on average, a **low level of education** – which means they are even less likely to understand complex problems with a long-term effect. Generally speaking, interviewees regret that the electorate has a very limited understanding of the seriousness of the situation and, they also say that there is a **lack of studies** that provide an incentive for action (see below).

As one interviewee from CDS-PP explained: “The great lack of knowledge about how the pension system works means that people think that the pension system is a private account, they make their regular deductions and the money is there waiting for them (...) And so as a result of this lack of study, of knowledge, there is also a lack of major debate on the subject; this means it is usually claimed that anyone who raises the matter wants to make radical changes and place some generations at risk. And so it has become a kind of taboo in Portuguese society”.

Along the same lines, the interviewees note that it is difficult to face up to the problems of sustainability given that the **gravity of the situation has been underestimated** in recent years. According to one interviewee (PSD): “I think that the situation has become more complicated in recent years because the discourse was always that (...) social security was fine (...) and that people could trust in the State. And how can that discourse be changed now?”.

Politicisation of the topic

On the other hand, many interviewees regret the fact that all the attempts to resolve the above-mentioned problems have been “**politicised**”, that is, used by political opponents as their line of attack. The interviewee from PSD quoted above went on to say: “So there is a lack of knowledge. But also these people are often not the ones to blame, because (...) often when an attempt is made to raise the need to think of other sources of funding, this debate is immediately politicised (...) I am not defending it but the pension cap is a typical example. Some people from the left defended this (...) but once in government, anyone who even mentions the cap is immediately accused of wanting to cut pensions, etc. So we politicians, and I am including myself here, must learn to set some of the political struggle to one side when we are discussing these matters”.

2.5. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Almost unanimously, the interviewees stressed that there was a lack of studies and precise indicators to measure the level of intergenerational justice.

More studies

Almost unanimously, the interviewees stressed that there was a **lack of studies and precise indicators to measure the level of intergenerational justice**. Now only would these studies allow the design of suitable solutions but they would also raise society's awareness; this means it would be in a position to exert pressure and, therefore, parties would be given the **electoral incentives** to include sustainability issues on the agenda.

An interviewee from CDS-PP explained this very clearly: “(A political party) responds to a demographic and electoral context, if the society does not offer it any additional incentives. And so, (...) any instrument that places the rights of the majority or the most populous sectors of the population at risk, must either be grounded on studies and enjoy social and academic support or it will have little chance of lasting long (...) They are measures that are easily reverted by governments when they come into office. This is not a question of left or right. In fact, it is a question about which parties respond to electoral incentives. It is an illusion to think that they don't. For that, (...) society must supply and offer this impetus”.

Someone from PSD made a similar comment related to the ageing of the population: “I think the Portuguese know very little about the ageing phenomenon (...) These matters are studied very little (...) They are (...) political subjects, but first and foremost they are extremely technical and so should be studied as such (...) by people who know them well. And then (...) if they are underpinned by complex technical work conducted by experts (...) it will be easier (for our politicians) to justify a decision (...) (to have...) a broader support base, (...) we have to explain to people what is happening”.

Similarly, an interviewee from CDS-PP explained the importance of empirical studies that allow potentially unpopular measures to be adopted: “We need economic studies that (...) put a subject on the agenda and make the media talk about it, and this will provide the context in which a measure that may at first seem more controversial or counterintuitive is accepted because people realise that the results will be better”.

According to the PAN representative, more studies allow support for a group that could otherwise lose as a result of a specific measure: “People need to be aware of things, and

to be more sensitive to them. (...) If people understood what is going on (...) I don't think there would be such a gap between the various generations, because anyone, even older people, if it is explained that certain measures have to be adopted so that their children, their grandchildren can still have some quality of life, so that their family can have continuity, I think people will understand”.

New budgetary procedures

Besides suggesting more studies, some of the interviewees proposed solutions for the problems described above. One proposal was for the creation of a **generational budget** for the social systems so that the long-term consequences (20/30 years) of social expenditure could be understood (CDS-PP). However, another interviewee (PSD) did not think this was a reliable exercise because it is difficult to make 40 year demographic projections.

In relation to the budget, a member of the government noted the new government initiative whereby the younger generation participated in drawing up the annual State budget – something in which Portugal is a pioneer.

Measures for the sustainability of social security

The interviewees also spoke a lot about how demographic sustainability might be improved. One proposal was the introduction of **measures to increase immigration** (CDS-PP, PSD). As an interviewee from CDS-PP explained: “In global terms, (...) there have never been so many young people as there are today. (...) So from this standpoint, demographic questions should also be looked at in (...) global terms.

However, most of the respondents mentioned **policies in support of the family and incentives for childbirth** in order to make social security sustainable. On this topic, many interviewees referred to concrete policies such as a good public crèche and pre-school education network (PS, PSD, CDS-PP) or the allocation of a paediatrician for every child (PSD). One interviewee explained that these policies are expensive and the results are seen in the long-term: “Does this cost money? Yes, it does. (...) It costs 400/500 million... But this is an investment”. Similarly, other interviewees, from PS and PSD, mentioned the need to invest in education for youth and adults without qualifications who are already in active life but without any prospects.

An interviewee from PSD also proposed that the **“pay and go” Portuguese model could be modified in line with the Swedish model**: “The Swedish system (...) is also financed by the labour market, (...) but has automatic adjustment mechanisms, endogenous to the system, that do not allow the system to pay more than what it can. If we did this, we would have an intergenerationally fair system”. The interviewees from the right wing also mentioned the creation of complementary social security schemes.

Finally, the interviewees from the left (PCP) and the right (CDS-PP) said that **economic growth and the increase of productivity** was an important condition for the sustainability of social security. As one interviewee from CDS-PP noted: “economic growth is essential for any State social model with intergenerational solidarity (...); no State social model can survive without it”. Another interviewee from CDS-PP focussed on pro-

ductivity: “we can only counterbalance the demographic effect (with) the positive effect of productivity. (...) I mean, if the *per capita* increase in productivity (...) offsets the adverse effect of the worsening dependency ration, the system is balanced”.

Another interviewee, from PCP, shared the opinion that economic growth was necessary to make the social security system sustainable, adding that growth should go hand in hand with **wage growth and the reduction of precarious contracts**: “reducing the unemployment of the people who are in active life today, increasing salaries, and reducing job insecurity, (...) means guaranteeing social security has precisely the financial resources it needs to assure that intergenerational justice is achieved”. The interviewee from BE noted that the sustainability of the system depends on these conditions: “making sure wages increase, combatting job insecurity, guaranteeing more employment provides the solution (for the sustainability of the system) from the perspective of intergenerational justice”.

Investment in health

Various respondents also mentioned the problem of the ageing of the population in terms of health expenditure, and one interviewee (PSD) noted the need to **invest in health care and new technologies**.

Solutions for environmental problems

Many respondents (PS, PEV, PAN) agree that the **question of the environment and climate change** is a global challenge and these problems should therefore be resolved **in a European and multilateral framework**. Another interviewee (from PAN) mentioned that the government needed to exert pressure on Spain to close the **Almaraz power station**, as it had already exceeded its average life expectancy. The same person suggested it was important to encourage a cut in the production of pollutants by **raising the waste management rate**, for example: “our suggestion is that it should be doubled, given that it currently costs I think €7 to bury one tonne of waste. So it is a negligible amount and obviously no municipality has any incentive to encourage recycling or the separation of waste”.

An interviewee from PCP referred to the **incompatibility of the capitalist system with environmental preservation**: “The capitalist economic system is itself based on a logic that is not compatible with (...) sustainable development (...) The idea of using resources that are finite (...) to satisfy objectives of profit, which frequently exceed, and by far, the consumption of resources that would be necessary to satisfy only existing needs, is an irrational system from this standpoint”.

Guardian or Ombudsman

The Green’s representative suggested that policy measures could be evaluated relative to the goal of guaranteeing rights and justice to future generations. Equally, the interviewee from PAN observed that an ombudsman or guardian of intergenerational justice might be a good idea.

However, in terms of the future generations' representation, various respondents believed that it was neither necessary nor useful to create the figure of guardian or ombudsman. The interviewee from BE completely dismissed the idea of an ombudsman and considered that nobody could represent someone that did not exist because it was impossible to know the values and interests of the next generations. Another interviewee, from PS, did not think that anyone would give any importance to the reports of such a guardian or ombudsman.

2.6. **CONCLUSION**

Despite the ideological divisions, the policy makers are largely in agreement when it comes to their diagnosis and prognosis for the problems of intergenerational (in)justice and the need for more studies on the matter.

When defining intergenerational justice, the policy makers of all the parties made general reference to the principles of responsibility and reciprocity. However, the interviewees from more left-wing parties stressed that the justice concept could not overshadow the evaluation of the distribution of goods and resources between classes.

As for the evaluation of Portuguese society, the large majority of policy makers, from the left and the right, understood that it is not intergenerationally fair. Many interviewees also noted that the kinds of injustice cut across generations, and that intergenerational injustice is linked with the most important problems of poverty and social inequalities, which are considered excessive by most people in Portugal.

All interviewees mentioned socioeconomic and environmental policies as drivers of intergenerational injustice. However, it is the former – and the sustainability of social security in particular - that takes centre stage in the discussion. More specifically, the interviewees placed great emphasis on the problem of pensions which, in their opinion, are unsustainable due to the combination of the ever-growing number of pensioners (and life expectancy) and the low birth rate.

The question of territorial cohesion was also emphasised strongly. Most interviewees, from various parties, mentioned that the State ignores the problems of the interior of the country (isolation of the elderly, lack of services) and the related environmental risks (fires, etc.). As for the environment, a number of interviewees stressed that Portugal is depleting resources for the future generations. The problems of biodiversity and water resources were mentioned in particular.

We also asked the interviewees what it was that stopped them, that is, them and the other policy makers, from resolving the problems they had identified. According to almost all interviewees, the main reasons for this incapacity to act is the absence of any political

incentive to do so. The interviewees were almost unanimous in stressing the need for further study on the problems related to intergenerational justice; above all, to raise public awareness about it. This would allow civil society to organise itself, to exert pressure and thus motivate the parties to place sustainability topics on the agenda. In a similar vein, the policy makers stressed that the poor and the young – the main losers of intergenerational justice – “do not exist politically”; in other words, their lack of organisation, visibility and political participation makes policy makers ignore their preferences to the benefit of other groups.

The interviewees also spoke a lot about the possible solutions to improve demographic sustainability. The proposal that was referred to most often was the opening of more public crèche and pre-school institutions at an accessible price. Lastly, the interviewees underlined that environment and climate change questions could only be resolved at a European or world level.

To conclude, we observed that, despite the ideological divisions, the policy makers are largely in agreement when it comes to their diagnosis and prognosis for the problems of intergenerational (in)justice and the need for more studies on the matter.

2.7. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Thirteen policy makers were interviewed, including ex-ministers and ex-secretaries of state, MPs and members of all commissions whose parties are currently represented in parliament.

List of interviewees:

Ex-Minister of the Social Democratic Party (PSD)

Ex-Minister of the Social Democratic Party (PSD)

Ex-Secretary of State (PSD)

Ex-Secretary of State (CDS-PP)

Member (MP) of the Assembly of the Republic and ex-Mayor (PS)

Secretary of State in the current government (PS)

Ex-Minister of the Socialist Party (PS)

MP and member of the Policy Commission of the Left Bloc (BE)

Ex-Secretary of State of the CDS- Popular Party (CDS-PP)

Ex-Minister (CDS-PP)

Member of the Policy Committee of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP)

Member of the National Council of the Ecologist Party “The Greens” (PEV)

Member of the Policy Committee of the People-Animals-Nature Party (PAN)

3.

SURVEY OF MPs

In-depth interviews allow us to study a phenomenon in all its complexity. However, ideally, they should be accompanied by a more extensive survey to glean a full understanding of the viewpoint of a specific population. We therefore conducted a survey of the Portuguese Members of Parliament.

3.1.

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE SAMPLE

After contacting all MPs several times, we interviewed 69, that is **30% of the Members of Parliament**. As often happens in this kind of survey, the smaller parties are slightly over-represented (notably CDS-PP, 13% of interviewees vs. 8% of MPs), while larger parties are under-represented (notably PS, 30% of interviewees vs. 37% of MPs); notwithstanding, **overall the sample reflects the division of Parliament by party**. In addition, as is usual, **women are over-represented in the sample**, relative to their presence in Parliament (they represent 45% of the sample, but 35% of MPs).

By age group, there is a **slight over-representation of MPs aged between 35 and 64 years** (they represent 89% of the sample, but 83% of MPs).

3.2.

WHAT DOES INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE MEAN TO THE MPs?

Clearly, the predominant definition of intergenerational justice for the MPs is the “fair distribution of resources between current generations and the future generations” (77%). In fact, only a minority (19%) of MPs mentioned the distribution between different birth cohorts, while 4% did not respond. Therefore, the MPs believe that intergenerational justice should be understood as a long-term concern, paying attention to future generations, and not as a comparison between the resources of the different existing birth cohorts.

3.3.

IS INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE IMPORTANT TO THE MPs?

All the MPs who responded to the question “Is intergenerational justice important to you?” answered in the affirmative. In fact, it is a very important matter for 75% of MPs. In this regard, we did not observe any differences between party lines. When it comes to the role of intergenerational justice in political discourse, the MPs agree that it plays an insufficient (64%) or initial role (25%). Only 10% of MPs consider this role to be adequate; and none consider it very large or excessive.

3.4.

POLICY AREAS THAT MPs CONSIDER MOST IMPORTANT IN TERMS OF INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE

Despite some division among the respondents on the policy areas they consider most important from the perspective of intergenerational justice [Q4], employment (29%) and education (29%) are highlighted, followed by public expenditure and public debt (22%), natural resources (9%), and climate (9%). In accordance with our observations in the interviews, the MPs essentially see the question of intergenerational justice from the socio-economic perspective. Environmental problems come in second place.

Q4.

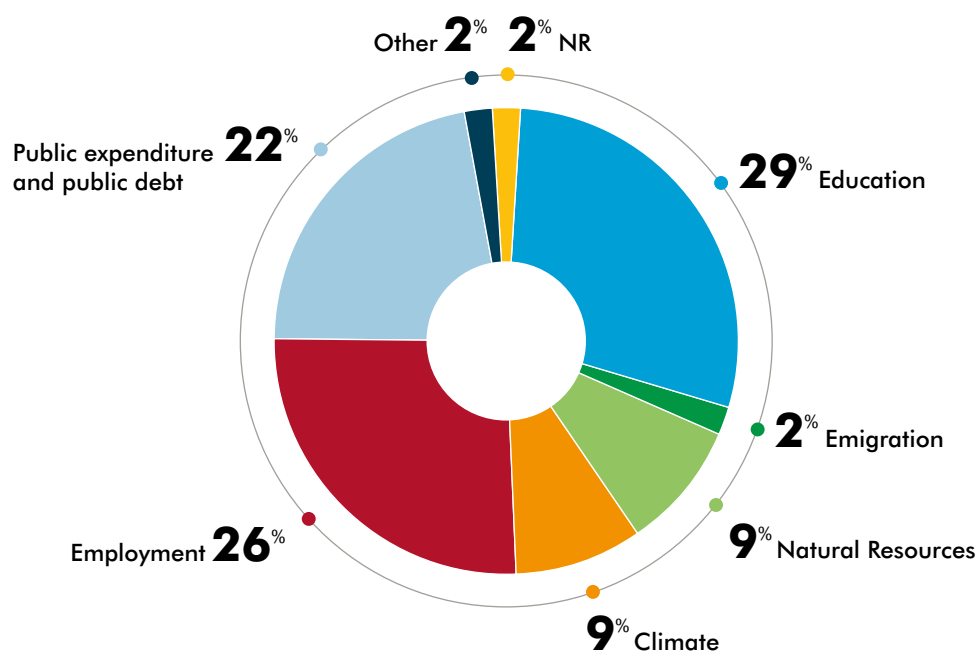
Most important policy: in 1st place

Figure 1: policy areas MPs consider most important from the intergenerational justice perspective

In fact, the principle of the socioeconomic dimensions of intergenerational justice is shared by almost all MPs, with the exception of the MPs from PEV and PAN. In light of their ideological background, it is not surprising that PAN tends to mention environmental problems more than their counterparts.

Q4.

Most important policy: in 1st place; by party

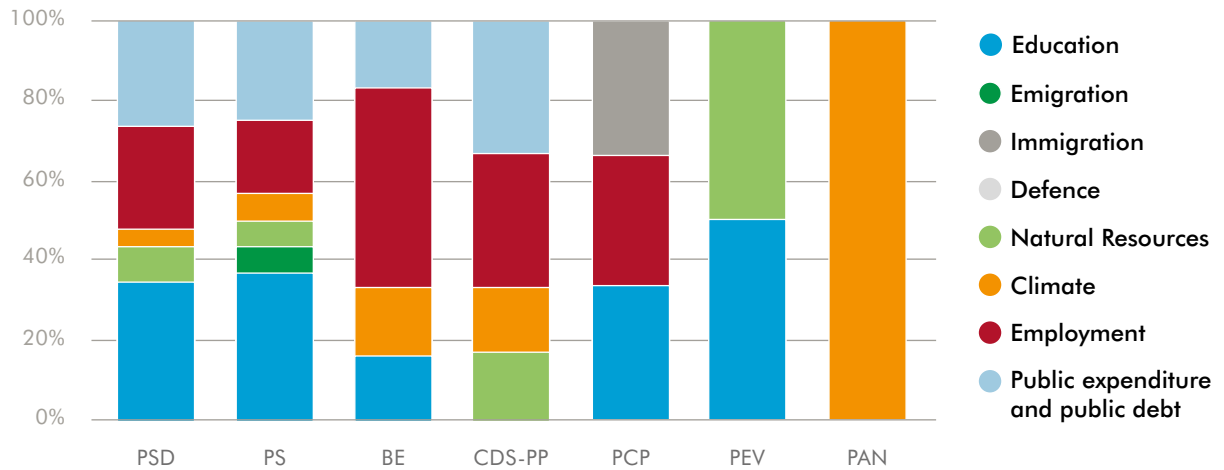


Figure 2: policy areas MPs consider most important from the intergenerational justice perspective (by party)

3.5.

WHAT DO MPs THINK ABOUT THE TRANSFERS BETWEEN GENERATIONS?

Most respondents believe that few resources have been transferred between generations and that this will tend to get worse for future generations [Q5.1 and Q5.2]. In particular, 58% of the MPs believe that the generations born before 1980 are transferring few resources to those born after this date (Millennials and Generation Z), vis-a-vis 38% who believe these resources are sufficient. As for the transfers from the present to the future generations, 72% think that few resources are being transferred.

We found that a smaller proportion of MPs from the centre (PS and PSD) consider that the transfer of resources from one age cohort to another is sufficient¹⁴. This can be explained by the ideological profiles of the radical left and of the conservative parties (as we saw in the interviews, the former do not like the idea of reducing the rights of the elderly; while the latter traditionally protect the interests of the elderly, who form a large part of their electorate). Nevertheless, all MPs are in agreement that the transfer of resources to the future generations will not be enough.

¹⁴ Given the small number of interviewees from PAN and PEV, they were not included in the following charts.

Q5.1.

In your opinion, are those born before 1980 transferring to those born later?

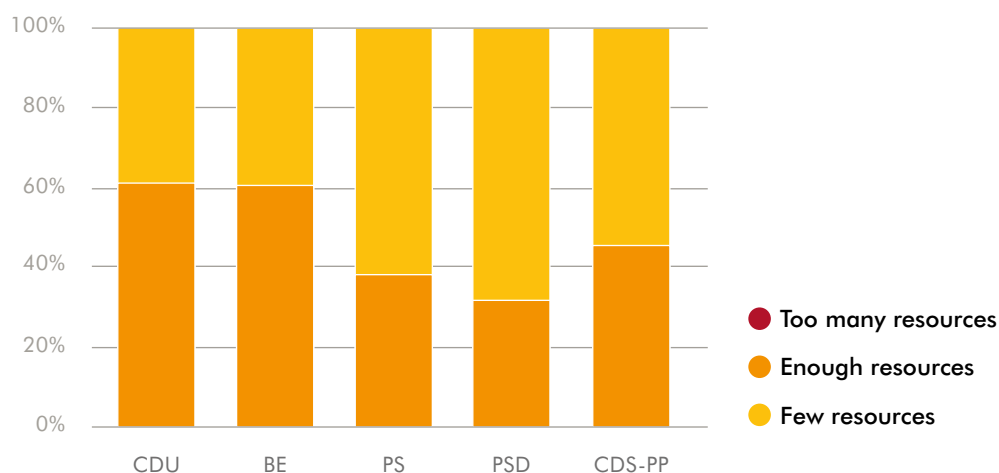


Figure 3: In your opinion, are people born before 1980s transferring to those born later (Millennials and Generation Z)?

Q5.1.

In your opinion, are those born before 1980 transferring to future generations?

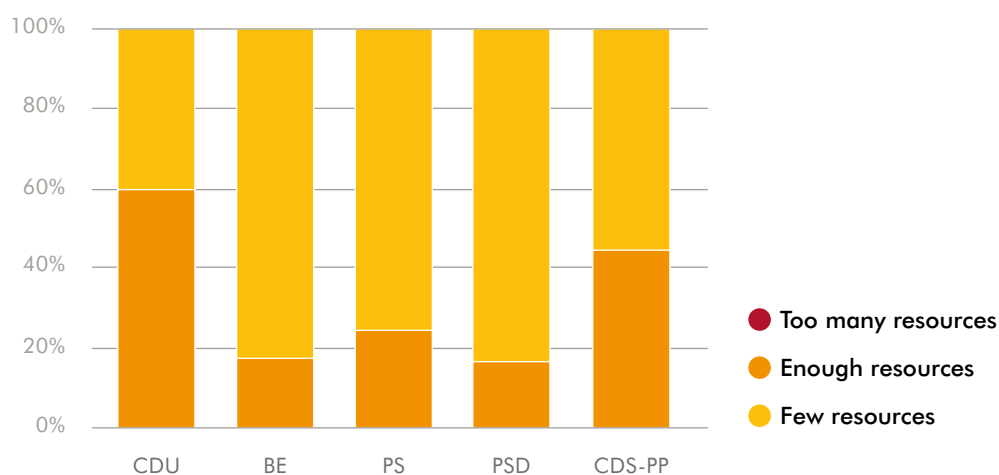


Figure 4: In your opinion, are people born before 1980s transferring to future generations?

In fact, the MPs are divided when it comes to the justice of the distribution of resources between the age cohorts; but there is unanimous concern about the justice between the present and future generations.

In addition, the MPs largely (45%) believe that the inequalities between those born before 1980 and those born after that date are greater than the inequalities between immigrants and non-immigrants in Portugal (Q6). Conversely, one third (32%) think that the inequalities between these two groups are similar, while just a minority (22%) believe them to be fewer. In this regard, there are no clear differences between parties.

3.6. HOW DO MPs DIAGNOSE THE SITUATION?

Table 1 shows the percentage of MPs who agree with a series of statements on intergenerational justice¹⁵. The sentences with which over 80/90% or less than 20/10% agree are in blue or blue bold, thus showing the statements that are the subject of broad/very broad discussion in parliament.

	%
Q7.1.1. What we inherited from the previous generation is relevant to our understanding of what we should leave to the next generation	81.5
Q7.1.2. At present, the Portuguese social security system compensates all birth cohorts fairly	7.7
Q7.1.3. The workers of today should fully fund, through taxes, enough social benefits to satisfy the basic needs of the elderly, even though this entails high taxation	46.2
Q7.1.4. The richest elderly should contribute more towards satisfying the basic needs of the poorest elderly	64.6
Q.1.5. It is more difficult to have a notion of the generational dimension of social problems than of the ethnic or gender dimensions	78.5

¹⁵ Only MPs who responded were considered. However, we included those that “neither agreed nor disagreed” in the total.

Q7.1.6. It is more difficult to talk about the generational dimension of social problems than about the ethnic or gender dimensions	63.1
Q7.1.7. It is dangerous to speak about justice between generations because it necessarily places the interests of younger generations in opposition to those of the older generations	15.4
Q7.2.1.1. The youngest generations, born after 1980 (Millennials and Generation Z), have the same opportunities to buy their own home as their parents	12.3
Q7.2.1.2. School diplomas and university degrees offer the same career prospects today as they did 30 years ago	6.2
Q7.2.1.3. Privileges of age on protection from dismissal discriminate the Millennials and Generation Z vis-à-vis other generations	46.2
Q7.2.1.4. The low birth rates could be improved if resources were transferred from pensions to family allowance	21.5
Q7.2.1.5. Family allowance is already high enough	3.1
Q7.2.1.6. The pensions paid are not high enough	6.2
Q7.2.1.7. The pensions received by the young of today when they retire will be high enough	4.6
Q7.2.1.8. The young were affected by the austerity measures taken in the last decade more than other population groups	38.5
Q7.2.1.9. Emigration is the result of injustice between generations	20.3
Q8.1. Those born before 1974 (25 April Revolution) will, in general, end up having a substantially better life than those born after	25
Q8.2. Those born before 1986 (adhesion to the European Community) will, in general, end up having a substantially better life than those born after	31
Q8.3. Those born before 2008 (financial crisis) will, in general, end up having a substantially better life than those born after	9.2
Q8.4. Those born until now will, in general, end up having a substantially better life than those who will be born in the coming years	13.8

Table 1: Percentage of MPs who agree with (diagnosis and value)

Therefore, what are the diagnoses on intergenerational justice presented in Portugal? First and foremost, our data show that the MPs largely agree that “what we inherited from the previous generation is relevant to our understanding of what we should leave to the next generation” or, in other words, intergenerational justice is linked to what we inherited from the previous generation. This is in line with the principles of proportionality and reciprocity mentioned various times in the qualitative interviews.

The Portuguese MPs also disagree strongly with the idea that it is dangerous to speak about intergenerational justice; however, most of them also consider intergenerational justice to be a difficult topic to understand. As for the comparison between age cohorts, most MPs think that the people born after the crisis and the future generations will not have a better life than those born before. On the other hand, the MPs are divided when it comes to whether the generations born before 1974 and 1986 are in a better situation than the others.

Most of the MPs (69.2%) also believe that the social security system is unfair, intergenerationally speaking; and only 4.6% of MPs think that the youth of today will be enough. This is in line with the results of the interviews.

The MPs also state that the young do not have the same opportunities as their parents did in terms of housing and career prospects. Moreover, they agree that the pensions and family allowance in Portugal are insufficient. On the other hand, the MPs are divided on some issues. They agree that the more senior workers are favoured, the young were affected more by the austerity measures than other age groups and emigration is the result of the injustice between generations.

When we analyse the MPs’ diagnosis of intergenerational justice, it is interesting to observe that marked differences are rarely found in terms of party groups. There are some exceptions, however. For example, it seems that CDS-PP set themselves apart from their colleagues on the issue of whether “the wealthier elderly should contribute more to satisfying the basic needs of the poorer elderly” – a much smaller proportion of MPs from this party agree with the statement. Yet again, this is related to the fact that a group of older people (relatively rich) makes up a large part of the CDS-PP constituency.

Q7.1.4.

Wealthier old people should contribute more to satisfy the basic needs of poorer old people? By party

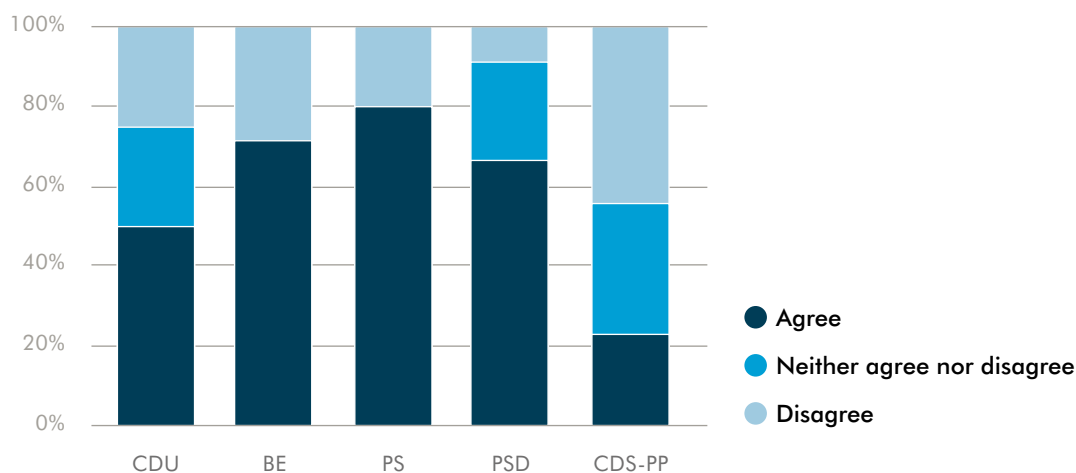


Figure 5: In your opinion, should wealthier elderly people contribute more to satisfying the basic needs of poorer elderly people? By party

3.7. ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC POLICIES

Table 2 presents the MPs' opinion on the value of the existing public policies for intergenerational justice.

	%
Q7.2.2.1. Exploitation of natural resources	29.7
Q7.2.2.2. Forest exploitation	26.2
Q7.2.2.3. Taxation of polluting products and activities	36.9
Q7.2.2.4. Investment in education	52.3
Q7.2.2.5. Size of public debt (currently 130% of GDP)	16.9
Q7.2.2.6. Housing management	12.5

Table 2: In the case of Portugal again, indicate whether the public policy areas referred to below are being managed in such a way that the future generations will inherit a situation that is at least as good as what the current generation inherited. Indicate your position for each policy area.

We found that there is overall agreement in parliament that two policies, namely, the size of public debt and housing management, were not designed with the future generations in mind. Nevertheless, the diagnosis on the exploitation of natural resources and forests, the taxation of polluting products and activities and the investment in education is less consensual.

We also observed a difference between the conventional and radical parties in relation to their assessment of past policies; the former (notably MPs from PS) tended to make a more positive evaluation of public policies than the others. More specifically, when respondents were asked whether there had been adequate forest management, nearly 50% of those from PS, 19% from PSD and 37% from CDS-PP agreed and the percentage was even lower for the radical left parties (0% for CDU and 16% for BE).

Q7.2.2.2 Forest exploitation

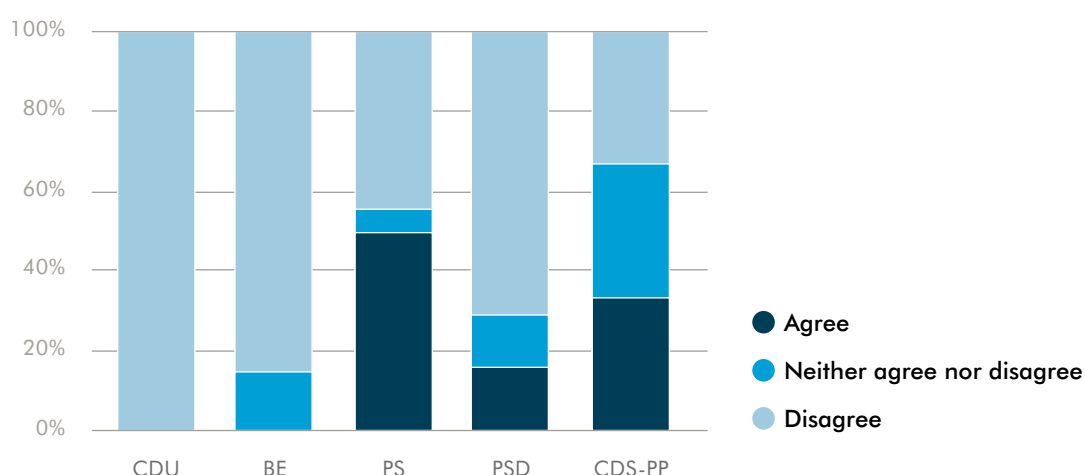


Figure 6: In the case of Portugal again, indicate whether the public policy areas referred to below are being managed in such a way that the future generations will inherit a situation that is at least as good as what the current generation inherited. Indicate your position for the exploitation of natural resources. By party.

The situation is the same for investment in education; 84% of the MPs from the Socialist party agreeing that it has been managed adequately, which is a much higher percentage than for the other parties.

Investment in education

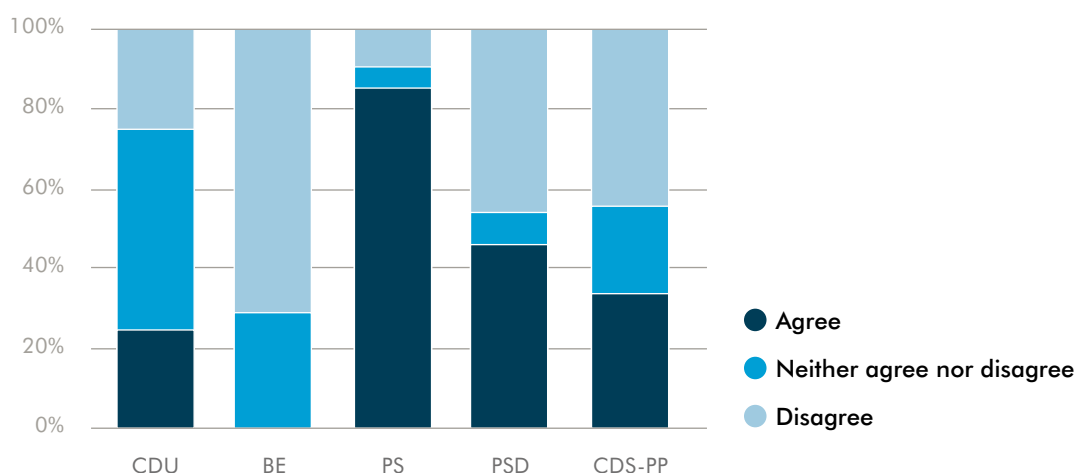


Figure 7: In the case of Portugal again, indicate whether the public policy areas referred to below are being managed in such a way that the future generations will inherit a situation that is at least as good as what the current generation inherited. Indicate your position for the investment in education. By party.

3.8.

WHAT COULD THE SOLUTIONS BE?

Table 3 shows the percentage of MPs who agree with a series of possible solutions to the inter-generational problems.

Q9.1. What is your position on the following policies?	%
Q9.1.1. Increasing taxes on highly polluting consumer goods, such as detergents or plastic recipients, and investing this revenue in the preservation of natural resources	93.8
Q9.1.2. Compensating family members for raising the younger generations and caring for the older generations, through tax benefits and Social Security (or some kind of credit)	83.1

Q9.1.3. Automatically adjusting the official age for retirement and benefits and pensions in line with the increase in average life expectancy; and adjust the investment in life-long training for the older age group	66.2
Q9.1.4. Introducing an inheritance tax in order to create an investment fund for future generations	38.5
Q9.1.5. Increasing public expenditure on high quality pre-school/primary education	89.2
Q9.1.6. Offering tax benefits to companies employing young people on permanent contracts	70.8
Q9.1.7. Obligatory planning of the financial sustainability of government measures, with a 40-year horizon based on social, demographic and economic projections	76.9
Q9.1.8. Creating the position of ombudsman/legal guardian of intergenerational justice (based on the existing position of ombudsman in Portugal)	48.4
Q9.1.9. Taking measures to increase the electoral participation of young people	87.5

Table 3: Percentage of MPs who agree with... (solutions)

We confirmed that the MPs are in agreement on the need to implement a series of measures: 1) Increasing taxes on highly polluting consumer goods and investing this revenue in the preservation of natural resources, 2) Compensating family members for raising the younger generations and caring for the older generations, 3) increasing public expenditure on high quality pre-school/primary education, 4) taking measures to increase the electoral participation of young people, 5) offering tax incentives to companies that employ young people on permanent contracts and 6) making obligatory financial sustainability plans with a 40-year horizon for government measures.

However, there is disagreement on whether it would be desirable to 1) automatically adjust the official age for retirement and benefits and pensions in line with the increase in average life expectancy; 2) introduce an inheritance tax in order to create an investment fund for future generations and 3) create the position of ombudsman/legal guardian of intergenerational justice.

For some of the questions on which the MPs disagreed, we found a division between the party lines. This is the case, for example, on whether or not to offer tax incentives to companies that employ young people on permanent contracts; this has the agreement of MPs from the centre and right wing more often than from left wing MPs.

Q9.1.6

Offering tax incentives for companies that hire young people on permanent contracts

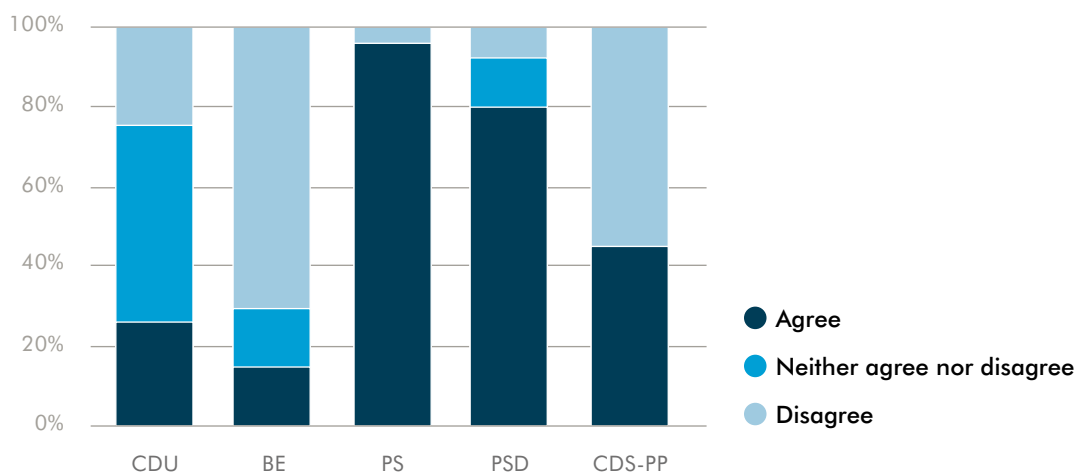


Figure 8: Should tax incentives be offered to companies that employ young people on permanent contracts? By party.

On a topic like the introduction of an inheritance tax, we also found a split between parties from the left and the right; only the former support the measures.

Q9.1.4

Introducing an inheritance tax to form an investment fund for future generations

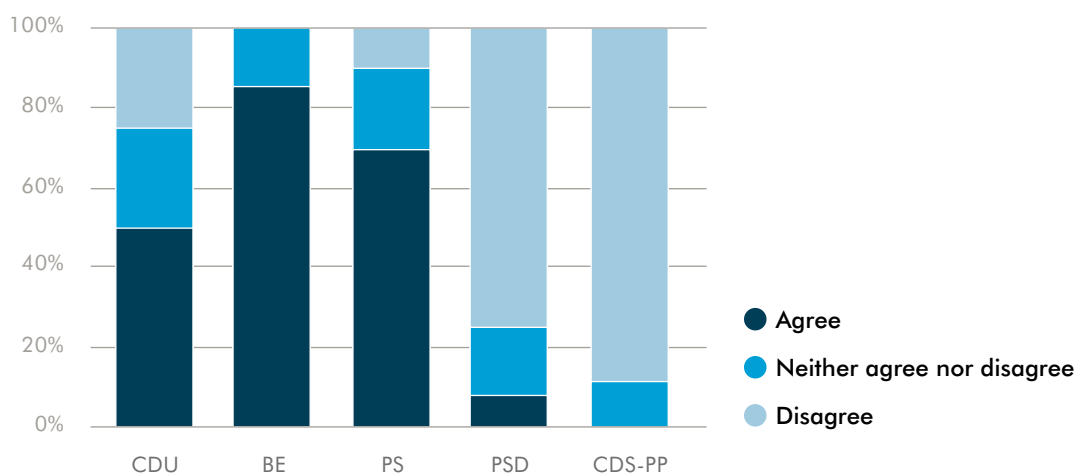


Figure 9: Should an inheritance tax be introduced to form an investment fund for future generations, by party.

Similarly, we observed differences between the parties on the automatic adjustment of pensions in line with life expectancy. Here, all parties from the radical left disagree, while most MPs from the centre and right-wing parties agree with the idea.

Q9.1.3

Automatically adjusting the official age of retirement and benefits and pensions in line with life expectancy; and adjusting investment in life long training for older people

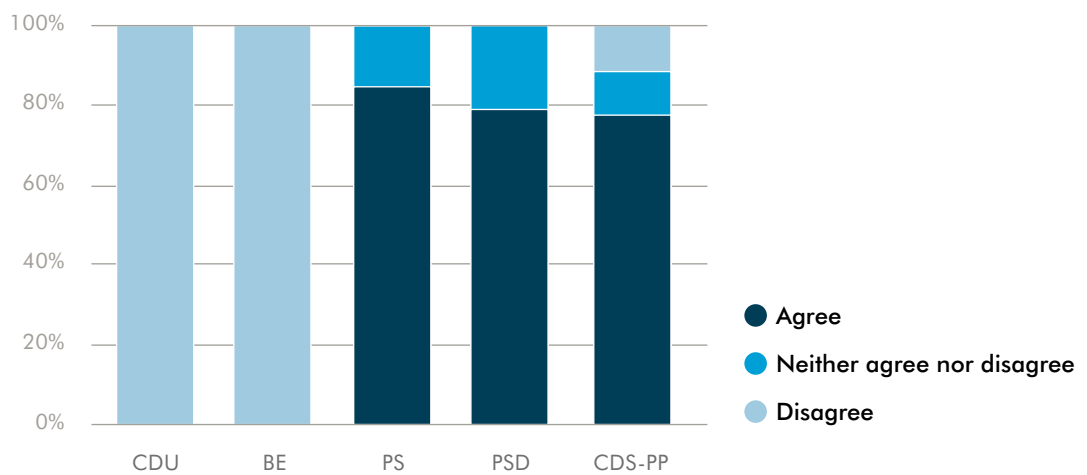


Figure 10: Should the official age of retirement and benefits and pensions be automatically adjusted in line with average life expectancy? By party

3.9.

WHICH POLICIES ARE CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT?

We asked the MPs to choose, state and order three measures they considered to be the most important [Q9.2.1]

The policies highlighted as the most important are 1) “Increasing public expenditure in high-quality pre-school/primary education” (22% as first choice); 2) “Obligatory planning of the financial sustainability of government measures, with a 40-year horizon based on social, demographic and economic projections” (17%) and 3) “Compensating family members for raising the younger generations and caring for the older generations, through tax benefits and social security (or some kind of credit)”, 15% as first choice.

In fact, in line with the main problems that the MPs associate with intergenerational justice, we found that the solutions are essentially socioeconomic.

Q9.2.1 Most important policy

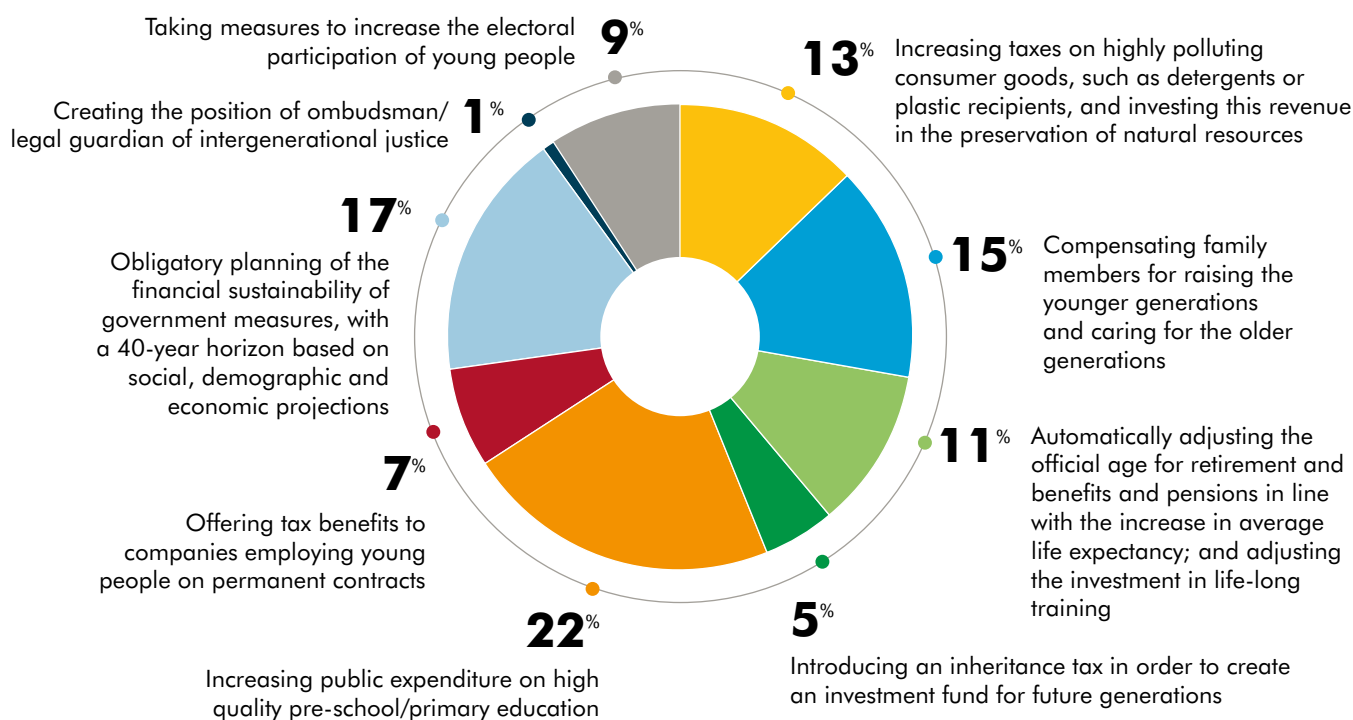


Figure 11: Policies that the MPs consider to be the most important (in first place)

Similar configurations are observed for the response on the second and third choices (Figure 12 and Figure 13).

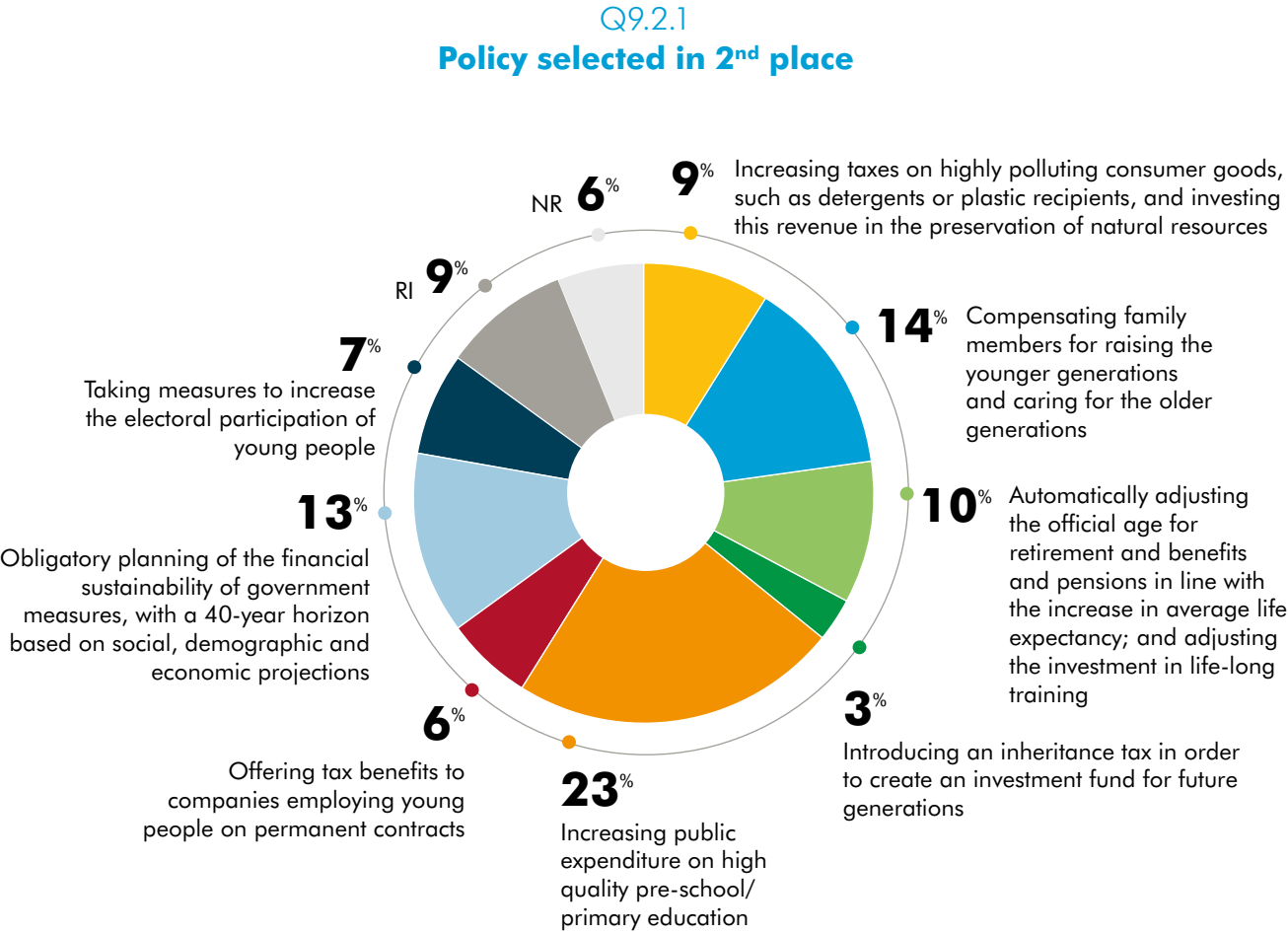


Figure 12: Policies that the MPs consider to be most important (in second place)

Q9.2.1

Policy selected in 3rd place

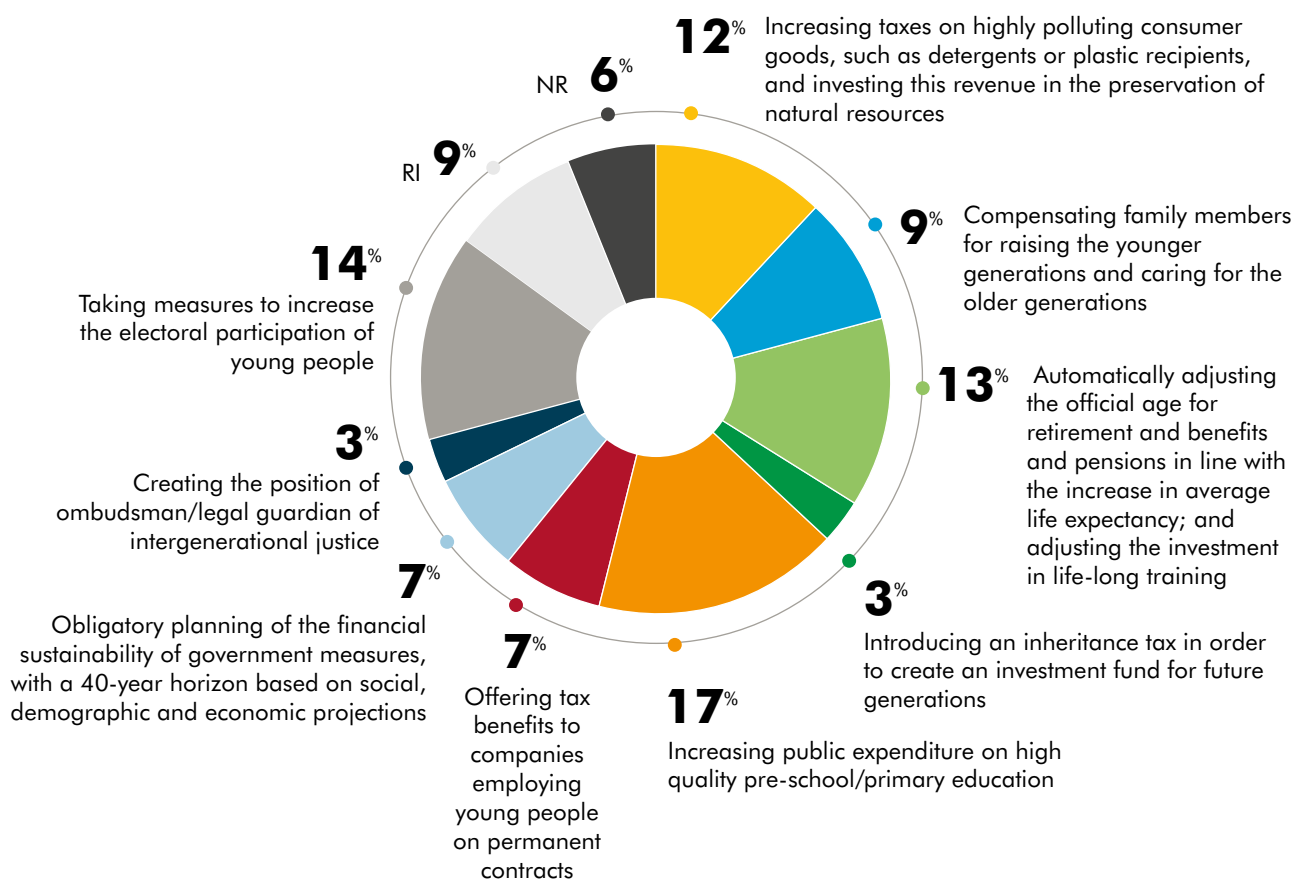


Figure 13: Policies that the MPs consider to be the most important (in third place)

3.10. ARE THESE POLICIES FEASIBLE?

In particular, we observed that the MPs believed these policies to be achievable as around 80% of the respondent said they considered the selected policies were politically feasible [Q9.2.2].

3.11.

HOW SHOULD PUBLIC EXPENDITURE BE CHANGED?

We asked the MPs to indicate the policy area for which expenditure should be increased. For the areas in need of greater public expenditure [Q10], emphasis is given to health (20%) and education (16%), followed by the environment (15% including transport), early childhood policies (13%) and housing (10%). Other policies were rarely referred to (Retirement pensions, Unemployment benefits, Police and Cooperation for Development – altogether, less than 7% of the total said expenditure should be increased).

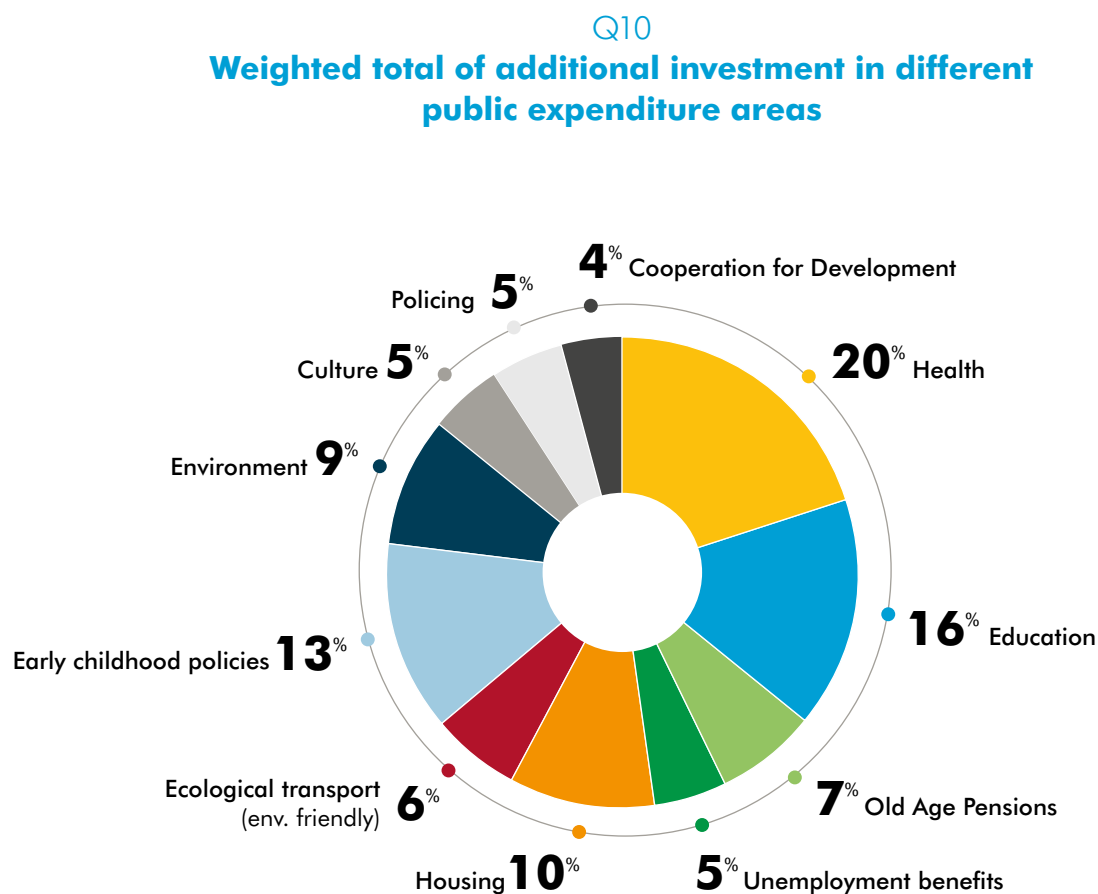


Figure 14: Weighted total of additional investment in different public expenditure areas

3.12.

ARE THE MPs INCLINED TOWARDS RISK?

Our risk analysis shows that the percentage of MPs inclined and not inclined towards risk is the same (11%), while the majority are placed in the middle.

3.13.

DO THE MPs PARTICIPATE IN A DECISION OR LEGALISATION ON INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE?

Finally, we observed that most MPs (57%) believe they have never participated in a decision or vote on intergenerational justice. Among those who had done so, mention was made of health legislation (e.g. the tax on sweetened drinks), pensions (e.g. transparency of the annual information on the expected value of pensions, one-off increases in pensions via State Budget), taxation (tax cut/rise on houses), environment (GMO, production of nuclear energy, waste management, etc.) and housing (youth housing). One MP stated that while leader of a youth part, he/she had proposed creating the position of Ombudsman of Intergenerational Justice.

3.14. CONCLUSION

We found that MPs from the different parties are in broad agreement on the diagnosis of intergenerational justice. For example, the vast majority consider intergenerational justice to be an important question and that it is not sufficiently addressed in the political arena.

Some conclusions can be drawn from this section. First, and perhaps surprisingly, we found that MPs from the different parties are in broad agreement on the diagnosis of intergenerational justice. For example, the vast majority consider intergenerational justice to be an important question and that it is not sufficiently addressed in the political arena. Only a small minority agreed with the statement that discourse of this kind can be dangerous. The large majority of MPs also think that the current generation will not transfer enough resources to the future generations. In the same vein, only some MPs believe that the pensions of today's youth will be sufficient. The MPs also claimed that the opportunities for the young are not the same as those their parents had when it comes to housing and career prospects. From a similar point of view, we also observed that the MPs – from all political camps – are in agreement on the most pressing areas of action, namely employment, education and public debt policies. Moreover, we confirmed that there is consensus in parliament on the fact that two policies – the size of the public debt and housing management – have not been managed with the future generations in mind.

We observed greater interparty variation on the prognosis for action. But despite this variation, the MPs agree that a series of actions are necessary, the most important of which are the increase in public expenditure on high quality pre-school/primary education, the planning of the financial sustainability of government measures for a 40-year horizon and subsidies for family members who raise the younger generations and care for the older generations. On the other hand, we found a variation between the party lines on several measures, such as the introduction of an inheritance tax (left vs. right), and the automatic adjustment of pensions or financial incentives for companies hiring young people on a permanent contract (traditional parties vs. radical left).

