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Future and Integration of the European Union: An Insight into the Intersections of Gender and Ethnic Groups in University Students

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Abstract

The future of the European Union is riddled with political uncertainty. From the consequences of Brexit, the rise of right-wing nationalism, the immigration crisis, and changing demographics, the EU is facing its biggest challenges since its inception and the euro crisis. The significance of political leaders and political representation who make key decisions cannot be overstated enough. It is a problem if these political leaders represent old, traditional Europe when, in reality, the EU is much more multicultural than it seems. In fact, the current issues that plague the EU are equally concerning for the next generation as they are for these political leaders. Given the nature of the issues and the changing policies of the EU, female university students who come from a racially marginalized ethnic background are perhaps the most distinct. The intersection of race and gender is important because the identity and presence of these groups in the EU is what spurs and ensures a multicultural and progressive Europe. Their presence and opinions are necessary to be acknowledged in EU research for this reason. Following a series of interviews in universities in France and the United Kingdom, it was found that ethnic females all consider unity and change as two consequential elements for the survival and success of the EU. In contrast, many males and white Europeans were more likely to say that the EU will crumble or stagnate. Moreover, every racially marginalized group indicated in this study is aware of the lack of racial representation in politics and many aspire to become future political representatives.

The small sample size of this research presents an initial limitation. Future research should include more participants from different European member-states to fully understand more of the opinions and importance that females from racially marginalized backgrounds contribute.

Keywords: European Union, Gender Studies

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

On the first day of the European Parliament meeting in Strasbourg, Magid Magid, a Green Party MEP from the UK was asked to leave the building. Another MEP from Réunion was one of the only people in a train carriage who was subjected to a police check. Both individuals hold prominent and influential positions in European politics, yet their similarities do not end there. They are both European and people of color. This intersection is often one that gets ignored in European political studies and also by European political leaders. The significance of race and gender, as I will later explain, is something that is missing from critical studies of the European Union (EU). In European institutions such as the Parliament or the Commission, political leaders focus perfectly well on a range of issues from the economy to green politics. Yet, the notion of race, its intersection with gender, and how the absence of this intersection is missing in EU institutions has rarely been considered. Moreover, it has never been considered when political theorists or European political leaders discuss the future of the EU.

The primary thing that is missing from the literature and in the domain of European politics is the perspective of racially marginalized people. These people from racially marginalized ethnic groups have an identity that is distinctly ‘European’ either because they have become naturalized citizens of the EU or because they were born in the EU. It is also important that this perspective takes a gendered approach because of the significance of migrant women

and also gender parity in EU politics. In order to try and isolate a group that may be most influential to politics, I have chosen university students who attend a social-sciences-focused school. I will later argue that this background holds a critical position in this research. Overall, the group that is centered in the research are first- and second-generation female immigrants of color from outside the EU who attend a social sciences focused university like Sciences Po and Queen Mary. The perspectives that this group will provide will answer the general question of what racially marginalized ethnic groups think about the future and integration of the EU paying particular attention to the intersection of race and gender in ethnic women. Since their identity presents an interesting background given the double layer of discrimination that they face, they should be more willing to embrace a progressive future that leads to ethnic integration in the EU.

The findings of this research suggest that ethnic women do display a difference in opinion with regards to the future of the EU. For them, they focus on unity and change as being key to the survival and success of the EU. On the other hand, men and white Europeans are more likely to give negative interpretations on what they believe is in store for the EU's future. On a whole, there is not a strong difference in how people view the EU's efforts with respect to ethnic integration. However, racially marginalized groups do notice the lack of racial representation in political leaders.

Throughout this research, the terms 'racially marginalized,' 'ethnic groups' and 'immigrant origin' may be used interchangeably. This is because, especially in the context of European research, they usually are comparable terms. Many of the people from an ethnic background have an immigrant origin where they are visibly non-Western. While not every immigrant in Europe is non-western, I still employ these terms to indicate a darker complexion.

An ethnic background or immigrant origin does not signify an origin from another European or EU country in this research. The ethnic integration referred to in this study is of foreign-born peoples not intra-EU integration. Many of the participants in this study will be second generation immigrants which means they may have parents who were born outside of the EU but they were born in a European member-state.

Significance

In general, critical race and gender studies of the EU are important because it raises important questions of how the EU can tackle their changing cultural landscape. The changing cultural landscape comes from the inevitability and the importance of the EU as an important destination for immigrants. The importance that this research raises by considering the voices of marginalized communities is not only to talk about the importance of representation. It is also to say that social justice regarding migration, race, and gender is not only a conversation that the U.S. should be having but also one that the EU should have, too. Even Magid Magid has affirmed¹ that representation matters because of its empowerment to a minority community but “simply more black or brown faces in high places will not solve deep-rooted issues for anybody” rather the EU needs to implement “a loud and proud, uncompromising and unapologetic vision for migration and for extending freedom of movement...cultural change across our continent, instilling new inclusive practices and stopping behaviors that normalize the concept of the ‘other’” (Magid Magid, “Being Asked to Leave the EU Parliament Wasn’t Fun,” *The Independent*). This is why this research has a particular emphasis on if minority women feel they are integrated into the community, not just whether they want to enter into politics. In reality,

¹ <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/magid-mep-greens-eu-parliament-racism-brexite-party-nigel-farage-a8987886.html>

marginalized people are not only of marginal importance. In order to understand this, it is necessary to understand how I use 'marginalized' to define this group. Marginalized groups are held down in society because they comprise the 'them' in an 'us versus them' scenario. They are othered in society because they are different from the norm. However, as I will argue and prove, they are consequential in the European framework because they contribute to society in terms of culture, labor force, and the overall identity of a nation. In addition, these marginalized peoples are immigrants to the EU but immigration is the solution for fixing Europe's demographic and work force problems (problems that are apparent now and will be exacerbated in the future). Since immigrants, women, and even the youth (although they attend a prestigious university) are on the fringe of society because they get limited representation, they will be referred to as "marginalized."

The other key term in this research is integration. I employ integration here on multiple planes of meaning. Usually, when integration is referred to in the context of the EU, it is about the regional integration of sharing sovereignty and imposing a common framework where member-states face a lot of the same regulations and policies. This can occur on a shallow scale which as Majone describes is "economic integration based on the removal of barriers to exchange at the border, with limited coordination of national policies." On the other hand, it can refer to a deeper integration which is a deeper analysis of how to coordinate "economic, political and scientific aspects of virtually all domestic policies, regulations, and practices" (Majone 88). In these times though, it is clear to see that the EU is running ahead with its differentiated integration policies. Differentiation is a mixture of integration and fragmentation where some EU members are allowed to move ahead in the integration process while allowing other 'slower' countries to take a step back. Moreover, this is to say that integration, used in this context, still

has the same denotation of how it is used in other research. However, I also use integration to signify the connotation of migrant integration. Migrant and racial integration is how well, if at all, immigrants and racial minorities are folded into the mainstream of EU life. I consider this analysis with the present condition that the EU is comprised of 28 member-states.

As stated before, it is worth studying marginalized groups because in reality they hold more than just marginal importance. At a baseline, though, it is specifically important to study marginalized groups in the EU because the factors of their identity raise contested topics in the EU. The issues that are important in the EU and issues that threaten to change the social fabric of the EU are important for many actors on the global stage. This is because the EU is a prominent actor in the international order and because one thing that threatens a country has the potential to affect the economy and political structure of the world order. This is because actors are always interconnected. For example, the Eurozone crisis in 2008 was a way in which the interconnectedness of the EU to other outside countries was emphasized. The crisis raised important questions of how international institutions help out a country, and how austerity is implemented.

As Adam Tooze remarks in his history of the crash, the euro needed to be saved by outside institutions and foreign governments which proved to be a strike towards European integration but also emphasized the importance of different actors in Europe's financial market. In May 2012, the US treasury's phone log showed an "ominous spike, with dozens of calls to Brussels, the IMF and Eurozone finance ministers." According to Tooze, the then-EU Commission president, Jose Barroso snapped after being asked if he considered the risks to North America that were coming from the Eurozone, that this crisis originated in North America and by their unorthodox practices in their financial market (Tooze, 433). This example of the

financial market is only meant to elucidate how important of an actor the EU is. Put simply, the concerns for the financial markets of the EU as residual effects from the Eurozone crisis and even from Brexit all show that things that are of consequence to the EU are of consequence everywhere as well. Indeed, as I will later show, the issue of intersectionality and the problems that arise with racially marginalized groups are a few things that are having a massive impact on the EU.

The angle from which a potential threat or change to the European framework comes from its issues with immigration and its changing demographics. Part of the reason why this research is timely and important is because of the changes that are happening in the EU now. The change in demographics is substantial because the consequences of its fluctuations have an impact on many aspects of ageing, health care, marital and family relationships, labor markets, the fiscal sustainability of social insurance programs, and schooling (Pritchett & Viarengo, 55). The EU is currently in the stage of what is called a “demographic suicide.” This phrase implies that Europe is systematically depopulating itself because of declining rates in cumulative fertility. The reasons for this vary. Maybe it is because having children is becoming a bigger expense, children are being replaced with ‘material goods,’ or that women have more rights in the work sector so they choose not to have kids. Any reason is acceptable but what it signifies is that declining fertility rates with increasing life expectancy means that the population of Europe is ageing. The solution to this issue, which brings along much contention is to solve demographic changes with immigration. The rate of immigration should be enough to substantiate any major fluctuations in the workforce.

Migration has always been an important aspect of Europe’s framework since much of its history has been linked to voluntary or forced migrations which have affected the social fabric of

the continent. Millions of refugees from the crisis arrived in droves to Europe. Furthermore, the largest number of foreign-born citizens is in Germany, UK, France and other 'core' countries. This was a shock to EU political leaders as they were not prepared for this large number of immigrants and had no idea on how to integrate them into society. The European Parliament's missions were amended to include the enlargement of the competences of the EU with respect to migration. Another way to see the shock that high immigration levels have made on the EU is from the rise of anti-immigration parties and policies, "in every country in Western Europe, new movements have emerged, anti-immigrant political parties have gained electoral strength and have altered the balance of political forces" (Baldwin-Edwards & Schain, 1). Still, the word 'immigrant' has a complex meaning as it can encompass anything from asylum-seekers to guest workers. Each category carrying its own certain connotation in social life. The proportion of foreign-born residents is an accumulation of high immigration flows over time that sparked with the last refugee crisis and the low birth rates throughout Europe.

Even though, this crisis of immigration, which I argue is important in EU's demographics, is more of a way for political leaders to express a loud negative reaction to foreign-born people. In this way, immigrants become politicized because the politics of migration leads to "conflicts between different visions and models of integration – conflicts that challenge long-accepted models of national identity and the nature of national integration" (Baldwin-Edwards & Schain, 8). Furthermore, there is a gendered aspect to immigration. As Kofman et al posit, forty-five percent of third country nationals living in Europe are women. They are not all necessarily refugees but enter the union as students, with work-permits, or for family reasons. While immigration is undoubtedly a large-scale issue in EU politics and has been made public throughout the world, the role of migrant women is nearly invisible. For example,

the gendered provision of welfare is an area where women are seen as caretakers, and this is exacerbated during migration, “they provide welfare through both their paid and unpaid labor. Many of the recent women migrants to Europe have moved to seek jobs in the welfare sector, particularly domestic work and caring of dependent children, elderly and disabled, as state provision of welfare is not keeping pace with the requirements of ageing populations across Europe” (Kofman et al., 2). The experiences of migrant women have often been ignored throughout literature, despite their importance. The literature that is present is solely focused on case studies or autobiographical materials which may not be best for deducing the social scientific importance of migrant women. Still, we can see how migrant women have been pushed into the vector of integration as crisis of national (and therefore supranational) identity are charged around them such as secularization in the public and private sphere with the headscarf, “Wihtol de Wenden (1996) sees the social and cultural dimensions of female immigration posing acute dilemmas between principles of universality, equality of rights, encouragement of individualism, tolerance and respect for other cultures and religious pluralism and identities” (Kofman et al., 18).

Another gendered aspect to the importance of immigration is how the definition of immigrant changes with regards to second-generation citizens. When immigrants from outside of the EU migrate to the EU, and have settled in a member-state for the necessary amount of years and more, they contribute to the framework of the EU. They do this by engaging in the community around them, the work force, and by creating a family. The children of these immigrants will grow up with a nationality of a European country, even if they have a different ethnic background. Still, it is reasonable to assume that they will grow up feeling distinctly ‘European’ similar to the way many children in the U.S. from a distinct ethnic background feel

distinctly American. The women from a foreign background who are producing these second-generation children, then, are playing an important role in continuing a new background of Europe by making ethnically different but European citizens.

As part of the importance of immigration and integration in EU studies and politics, this also concerns another aspect of people: youth. “Considering the high share of children, adolescents and young adults among refugees and asylum applicants, education is one of the most important fields of structural integration” (Koehler & Schneider, 1). Education is a universal right in democracy, and the inclusion of ‘immigrant’ children in the European education system also speaks to the ways in which a child can become more Europeanized. Maybe the older generation of first immigrant workers who migrate to the EU will have a harder time adapting to the EU and being fully integrated into the society. However, this does not extend for their child, “these [first] immigrants nevertheless work and earn money, they pay taxes and rent, and – most importantly – they send their children to school and support them in becoming educated and building up a professional perspective” (Koehler & Schneider, 16). This is all to say that university students and their perspectives on the European Union are the most interesting sector to look at. For one, it cannot be denied that second-generation children are attached to Europe, and arguably might be more integrated into society in a way that their parents never were. More specifically, university students who attend a school focused on the social sciences are even more important because it speaks to a generally assumed level of knowledge for EU politics. These students may become important figures in European politics or may contribute further to European political studies. So, it can be seen that the importance of immigration, migrant women, and university students who are either naturalized citizens or second-generation immigrants are especially important when considering matters of the EU. This

is true because some of the important matters that are essential to Europe's framework are encapsulated by this subset of people. If migrant women are producing this generation of second-generation immigrants, then their opinion is consequential for the future of the EU.

Furthermore, with the idea that the EU will become more united like a united states of Europe or disintegrate into different continental regions, it is important to consider the voices of people who are contributing the most to the changes in Europe's social and political life. Not only will this subset of people, perhaps, want to be more represented in European politics, they are also the cause of the changing face of Europe. Especially if immigration is becoming more salient and contributing to the workforce, then a significant portion of the European population will believe a certain way. According to European political sociology, younger people tend to be more 'liberal' in the sense that they are more accepting of immigrants and post materialist issues. For example, if the next potential generation of change all believe in negative attributes of the EU: lack of a coherent EU vision, lack of a military force as a threat to the EU's global position, 'Brexit' as a precursor to other member states leaving, and mounting racial discrimination. Then, their perspectives and doubts will only grow stronger as they join the workforce or enter politics. On the other hand, this cohort of young adults may believe that the EU will become more united despite Brexit. They could even believe that the lack of a racial census is inherently a good thing given that they were socialized in their childhood to not conceive race as an integral part of their identity. The thread between these thoughts and questions is what I hope to unravel with this research. Thus, the significance of the study is important for understanding race relations, immigration, gender and EU politics both now and in the future.

It is more than just racial representation in European Parliament or national assemblies, it is also the theories of race consciousness in Europe. In most of the countries in Europe, France,

for example, there is a ban on collecting racial data. This is because the state believes adamantly that there should be no differences between people. There is no racial divisiveness that separates people. People are 'French' no matter where they have come from. This is a complete façade though because racial discrimination manifests itself through mental health issues, housing discrimination, and school problems. Still, it is important to consider whether ethnic identity is a similarity across all countries with the same ethnic diaspora. It can be argued that applying the same race consciousness that exists for racially marginalized people in America is only to the detriment of people in Europe. It applies the same racial structure that is used in other places to a different setting with a different historical and political set up. After World War II, people felt uncomfortable with categorizing and discussing racial labels. This is often why it is considered impolite or, at worst, to ask someone about their ethnic background in France. Since this was one of my first questions in the questionnaire, I always watched the reaction of the person carefully. Usually, they laughed and exclaimed that it was an 'American question.' In Europe, the construction of the nation states plays an important role in how race is regarded. European states have generally been able to implement the idea that egalitarian treatment of all is essential and that this is achieved through a shared national identity. This is often why people talked about their nation-state with a mix of admiration and disdain. They acknowledged that their nation-state was important, influential, and relatively well-involved in the lives of citizens.

Still, when it came to discussing the future, most people focused on the negative aspects of their nation-state. There is a strange paradox happening here. People are aware of the racial disparities and differences, yet instead of embracing a race consciousness, they tend to ignore it. Moreover, only about 39% of the people in this study wanted to be involved in politics. The other people maintained that they knew the 'dark' side of politics and would never want to be

involved. Even though they arguably understand the ramifications of a lack of political representation and current racial discrimination that happen geographically and in places of privilege, there is not an overwhelming desire to fix the issue. This is quite chilling. It seems as if the potential future generation are disheartened by politics before they even have a chance to make their mark.

Chapter 3: Methodology

One of the best ways to ascertain feelings, opinions, and perspectives from people is to directly ask them. This is why the format of the interview was best suited for this research. It allows for an in-depth analysis on small sample sizes and the views of the participants are highlighted. Since I am arguing about the importance of the backgrounds of participants, using the method of an interview is useful because it allows for mutual learning, reciprocity, and empowerment. The interview format was structured. Since there are a lot of side tangents that may evolve from the questions, I choose to adhere strictly to the written questions (and included follow-up questions) so that all the responses could be coded similarly.

As stated before, the sample of university students that I looked at were in the UK and France. I made contact with several professors at different social science universities in different cities in each country. Once I established a solid connection to a professor and their class, I started the IRB and GDPR process. At the moment this study was done, the UK was still considered as a member-state of the EU, so I sought GDPR approval from one institution to serve as general approval for 'EU' research. I attained this approval from Sciences Po, Paris from the data protection officer and with the help of a professor there. Since I had a limited time in each country, I only went to one university in each city: Paris, France, Le Havre, France and London, United Kingdom. I reached out to professors at these universities who had done

previous work or previously taught a course related to the EU. The intention behind this was to find a professor who would be more likely to agree to pass along the information about this research to their students. In the end, the schedule conflicts and interest of the professors were random and therefore had no real effect on which classes were eventually picked.

For Sciences Po Paris, I made the first contact and then gained GDPR approval from this institution. I sent the professor an attachment of the project proposal, the questionnaire, and a potential class announcement that he could use to say in class or email to his students. Once the professors made the initial announcement in their class or sent an email out to the student body, I had several students from different cities reach out to me personally, expressing their desire to speak with me in an interview. Other than this, I interviewed all willing students who were present in class on the day of my arrival at each university in the time slot of one class. A number of students in each class expressed interest and one by one, they came outside of the classroom to speak with me in a quiet, seated area.

The number of interviews were limited to whoever was present in class that day. The interviews were also limited based on the geographical region. Some cities had better facilitation with the professor than others. In London, the professor taught his lecture and also taught smaller seminars later that day with the same group of students. Therefore, I was present all day and the professor always introduced me to the class. This might have had a greater influence than a teaching assistant.. There was no reason to believe that only certain ethnic groups or people volunteered to be in the interview because of the subject matter of the research. It seemed, at first impression, interesting to all people from Asian women to white males. Almost every single person, in every city and in every seminar volunteered to participate in the interview. If they were not able to participate, it was primarily due to time constraints. Still, all willing students

were told to follow up with me using my provided contact information if they were not able to complete the interview. There is also no reason to believe that any of the respondents went back to their classroom and discussed the interview. Their class was in session and the next interviewee was sent out of the room as soon as the last interviewee went back to the classroom.

It should be mentioned that there were certain limitations to the interview method that compromised the internal and external validity. First, there was a clear language barrier given that half the respondents were living in France. It should be noted though that Sciences Po is an international school, and a requirement of their program (and this particular class) was a sufficient knowledge of English. Still, there were instances where a French respondent needed several repetitions of a question in order to gain a full understanding. In another case, there was someone who strongly wanted to do the interview but did not understand English well. In this case, a classmate who had previously participated in the interview agreed to be a translator. The limitations that affect the external validity stem from the small sample size of this research. There was only a five-day² period where the interviews could take place during normal school hours. The seminars at Queen Mary were only one hour long while the seminars at Sciences Po were two hours long, and each interview ranged from about seven to twelve minutes per person. When I introduced myself and the background of the research, it also seemed like some people wanted to participate in the interview simply because they wanted to ask me questions about my major and home university. This was resolved by speaking with them for a few more minutes after the structured interview. The location of the interviews took place around the corner from their classroom still inside the building, in an area with chairs. Another effect on the interviews may have been my background. I am a black Caribbean-American female, and this may have had

² It was technically a six-day period but there was unexpectedly a teacher-student strike at Queen Mary for one of the days.

an effect on how people perceived me and my research. However, as previously stated, everyone in the classrooms seemed equally intrigued. I spoke to people who had no difficulty admitting that they were ‘leavers’ of Brexit or admitting that they voted for right-wing parties. Still, on questions regarding ethnic integration or representation with identity, people could have had some hesitance in answering the questions.

There were several revisions to the official questionnaire used. The questions were chosen in order to gain a wide variety of understanding about participants’ perceptions of themselves, political leadership, and the future and integration of the EU. In addition, the responses to the questions were interesting. Since these were all categorically made from an American perspective, the questions involved topics and phrases that some of the respondents might have never fully considered. For example, the first question is about self-identification with race. There were many times where the respondents laughed at the first question, not because they found the question silly, but because they had never been asked that question before. Naturally, I knew this before I had begun my research process. I consulted with different professors who have researched and taught in Europe. They all expressed that questions about racial identity are rarely asked, and definitely not discussed in public discourse. As I expressed in the beginning, this does not deter the importance of the question. Still, I mention this here only to give a potential lurking effect. The reaction to the first question may be influenced by my appearance as the interviewer. However, when I initially made this questionnaire, I did a pre-test on two different people who resembled my target population. Both of these pre-test participants were not included in the final data of this study, but they were used in the early stage to determine adequate wording of the questions. The first pre-test participant was a French female citizen from Martinique who attends École Normale Supérieure. The second pre-test participant

was a first-generation Ghanaian male (with a UK citizenship) who attended a school in London for engineering. They helped elucidate certain parts of questions that may be confusing or overtly abnormal to a regular British or French citizen. The way in which they answered the questions were similar to the way in which my own respondents answered the question. Thus, I can assume that the answers that I received are more or less reliable.

Since there were a lot of open-ended questions, the responses to some questions can change depending on circumstantial news and events that arise. For example, all of the respondents from London mentioned Brexit at some point. If this study was done before the initial referendum, I can imagine some of the answers may have changed. Additionally, this study was done at an interim point before the December general election. The conservatives had not won the election yet, and Brexit had not formally happened. This has probably also colored the answers. If this study was repeated, at a point where the UK had formally left Europe, the answers to some of these questions may change.

Each question was coded differently. Since it was mostly qualitative research, I tried to make categories in order to understand the information. With the first question about the ethnic background, I received forty-one different answers because many people interpret their ethnicity differently in their own terms. I grouped them into White (European), Black (African), Mixed ethnicity, Mixed European, Asian, and Hispanic/Latinx. All of the people who would be classified as white had both parents born in Europe. All the black participants were born or had two parents born in a country in Africa. The mixed ethnicity category means that a respondent had one parent with European origins and another foreign-born parent from Africa, Asia, Latin America or the Middle East. The mixed European category is separate from the white European category only to emphasize the intermarriage across countries. While they resemble the white

Europeans, I wanted to know if the background of two different European cultures would influence anything. The Asian category is a combination of all diasporas with some link to the continent, it includes the Middle East, Southeast Asia and regions of China. The last category, Hispanic/Latinx, was also an extra category to further break down the respondents. There were only two people in this category, one person from Colombia and another from Spain.

Most of the respondents were French or British citizens who had lived in that country their entire lives. The other respondents were either aspiring for citizenship or were European citizens on an ERASMUS exchange with the university. Another qualitative response was the fourth question which asks about voting in the last European Parliament or national election. The only two possible answers are yes or no, so I made a graph for how many people voted based on their gender and ethnicity. I also found it worthwhile to display the parties that people voted for based off their nationality in a table. For the other qualitative questions which necessitate a yes or no response, I made graphs depicting how many people said yes and how many people said no. For the question about feeling represented in politics, I made a graph that looks at the responses with a focus on racial representation and indicated how many people answered by talking about race in their response. In addition, for the question about wanting to be a future leader, I made a graph that depicted how many people said yes and how many people said no based on their ethnic category. The last question about the future and integration of the EU varied remarkably from each person. Since there was no real indicator that their responses were based off something particular in their identity, a summary of the responses was made. For the third question that analyzes the knowledge of the EU, I asked each person to rank how they perceived their knowledge of the EU to be on a scale from 0 to 5. I asked four true or false questions. In data analysis, I took the average of their self-identified marks and calculated it

based on ethnicity. Then, for the responses to the questions, I graded them as mini-quizzes by deducting twenty-five points out of one hundred points for each wrong answer. Then, I calculated the averages based on ethnicity and gender.

Although, there are eleven full questions in the study, not all of them have a specific graph or figure in the data analysis. This is not because the questions were not important. Their purpose was showing that these students were able to think critically about European politics. For example, there is no set coding of the data from the questions about the influence of the EU and the member-state on each other. This is not because the question is irrelevant. However, I needed to be sure that every respondent would have something to say so that they could be aware of the entity of the EU, not just of general facts about it. If they can explain and see the impact that the EU makes in their country and vice versa, then this shows that they have some awareness of the importance of the EU.

Chapter 4: Results

Since the questions were mostly open-ended, it was hard to perform one statistical or exact mathematical test. Instead, it is valuable to go through and discuss the relevant findings that give an overview of the opinions of university students on the EU. Some of the data has additionally been coded to see the differences of perspectives with regards to gender and race. As previously mentioned in Methodology, there is no exact coding on certain questions because the responses varied. This does not mean that those questions were irrelevant; in fact, it helped me gain an understanding of the respondent, their feelings on the EU, and their opinions as a whole about ethnicity and integration.

There were 41 participants in this study, 13 of the respondents were from Queen Mary University in London. 2 respondents were from Sciences Po in Le Havre, and the other 26

respondents were from Sciences Po in Paris. Table 1 represents the classification of ethnicities by the ethnic categories, and how many participants were in each ethnic category. All 41 respondents explained their ethnicity in an open-ended manner, often also talking about the background of their parents as prompted by a follow-up question. This resulted in 41 different responses so it was necessary to make a classification of six different ethnic categories. In addition, the focus of this research highlights the importance of the voices of marginalized groups. I interpreted people as racial minorities based on if they fell into the classification categories of Black (African), Mixed ethnicity, Asian, and Hispanic/Latinx. There were a mix of each ethnic category in both France and the UK, except for the Hispanic/Latinx category. There were only two participants classified in this category and they were both UK respondents.

| | |
|---|----|
| White (European Origins) | 20 |
| Black (African) | 6 |
| Mixed (mixed race with African, Middle Eastern, Asian) Example: Cameroonian and French | 6 |
| Mixed (mixed race with origins in two but different European countries) Example: French and Spanish | 3 |
| Asian (Central Asia, West Asia, and Southeast Asia) | 4 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Hispanic/Latinx (Spain, Colombia) | 2 |
|-----------------------------------|---|

Table 1: Breakdown of self-described ethnicity into six categories from both cities

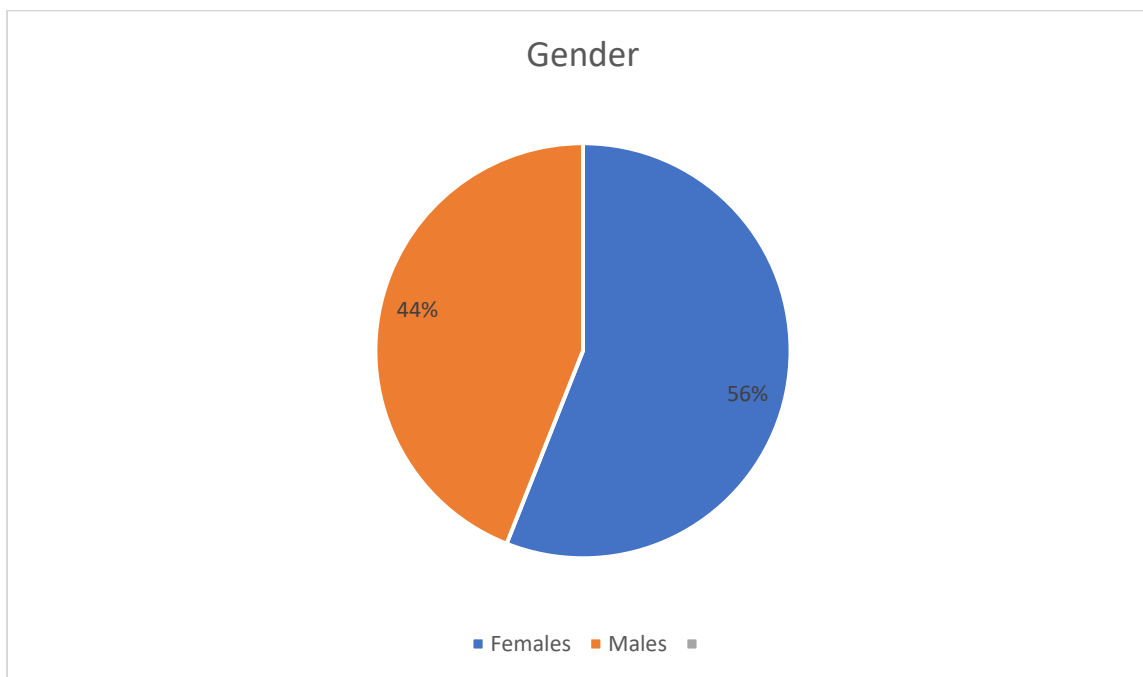


Figure 1: Gender Classification of all participants

Figure 1 represents the gender break down of the study. There were 23 females which represented 56% of the sample size, and 18 males which represented 44% of the sample size. It was necessary to include male voices along with the study, but the gender break-down is very similar to gender ratios in Europe today.

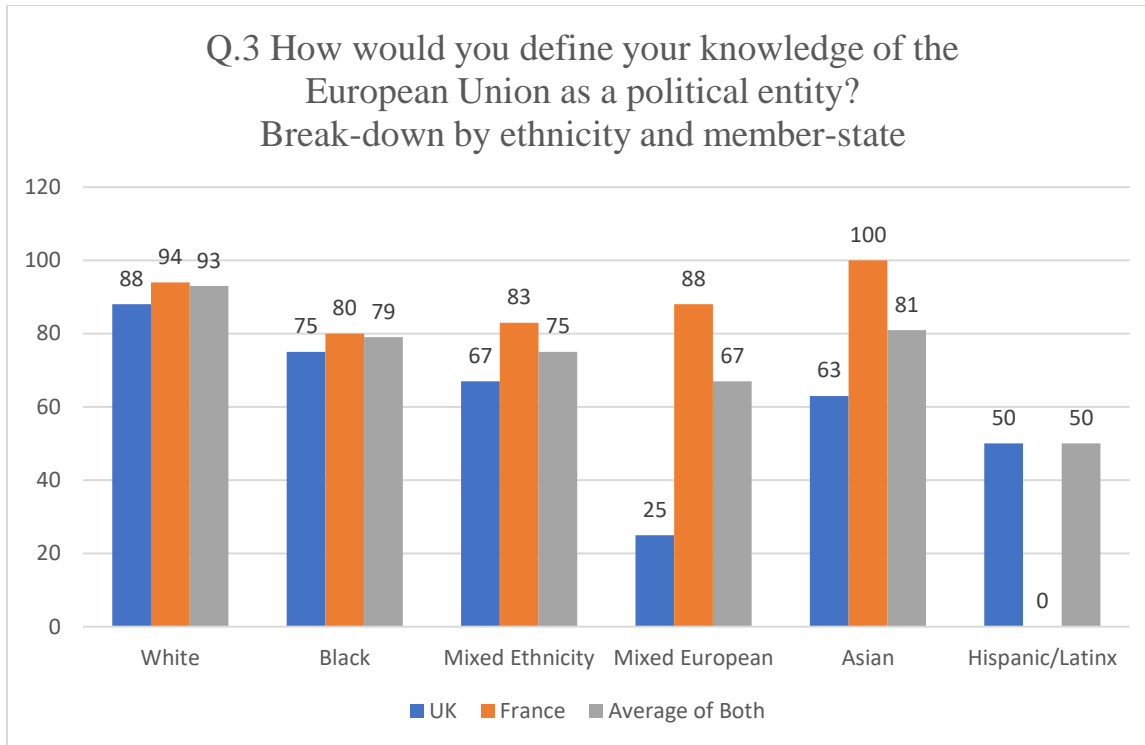


Figure 2

One of the first data sets to analyze were the responses to the knowledge question of the EU. First, participants had to rate themselves on a scale of 0 to 5, with 0 being no knowledge of the EU as a political entity and 5 representing an exceptional amount of knowledge about the EU. The white European category gave a self-rated average of 3.55³. The Black (African) category gave a self-rated average of 3.25. The mixed ethnicity gave a self-rated average of 2.88. The mixed European category self-rated themselves with an average of 3.33. The Asian ethnic category gave themselves a self-rating of 3.25, and the Hispanic/Latinx gave themselves a self-rated average of 3.25. Then, when I administered the short quiz of true or false questions about the EU, I graded the total scores out of 100. Each question was worth 25 points. Figure 2 shows the average percentages of each ethnic category in France, the UK, and then both countries.

³ All numbers presented in the data are rounded to at least three significant figures

Again, there is a 0 for the Hispanic/Latinx category in France because there were no people who fell into that category.

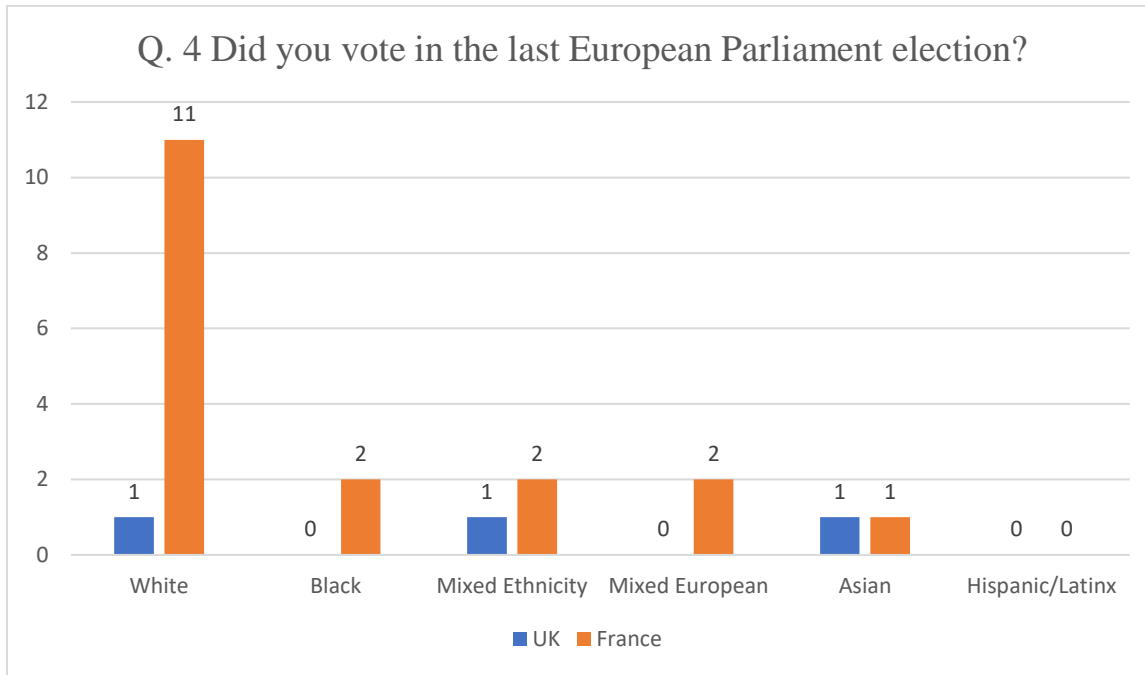


Figure 3

Figure 3 represents the data from the fourth question about whether or not they voted in the last European Parliament election. There is relatively low turnout as can be seen from the figure. However, there were many people who reported that they could not vote because they were not old enough or because there were complications with an absentee ballot. Someone commented that she did not vote because of ‘French bureaucracy.’ In Figure 3, it also breaks down whether or not they voted and what member-state they are from. Since it was also important to know who they voted for based on the ethnic background, other tables were calculated to see who people voted for based off their member-state and their ethnic background.

Table 2.1 represents the different ethnic categories and the parties that they voted for in the UK.

| Who did you vote for in the last European Parliament election in the UK? | |
|--|-------------------|
| White | Liberal Democrats |
| Black | N/A |
| Mixed Ethnicity | Labour |
| Mixed European | N/A |
| Asian | Green |
| Hispanic/Latinx | N/A |

Table 2.1

Table 3.1 represents the different ethnic categories and the parties that they voted for in France.

| Who did you vote for in the last European Parliament election in France? | |
|--|------------------------------|
| White | Left Party (Parti de Gauche) |
| | Green Party |
| | La République en Marche! |
| | Socialist Party |
| | Debout La France |
| | Les Républicains |
| | *Blank Vote |
| | La République en Marche! |
| | Les Républicains |
| | Green Party |
| | Socialist Party |

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Black | La France Insoumise |
| | Socialist Party |
| Mixed Ethnicity | La République en Marche! |
| | Socialist Party |
| Mixed European | Les Républicains |
| | La République en Marche! |
| Asian | Green |
| Hispanic/Latinx | N/A |

Table 3.1

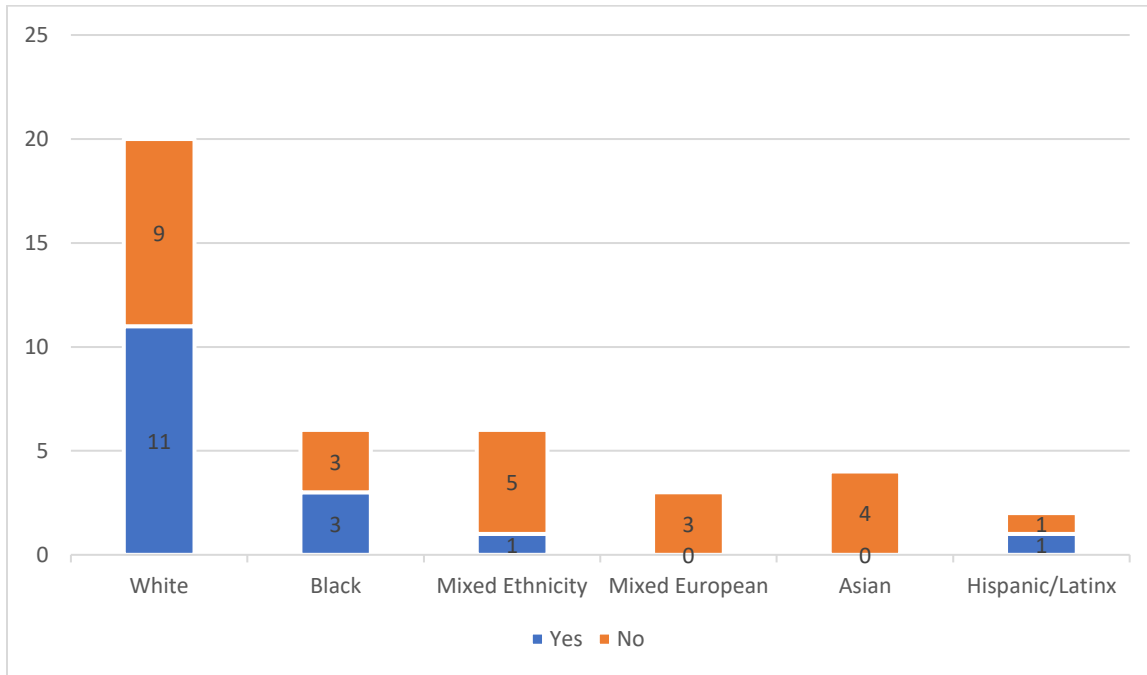


Figure 4: Classification by Ethnicity of who wants to be a future representative in politics

No one in France voted in the last national election because they all reported that they were too young. There were a few people who voted in the last British national election. Of the

two white respondents who voted in the last national election, one voted Liberal Democrats and the other voted Conservative. No Black or Hispanic/Latinx person voted in the last national election in Britain. One mixed ethnicity person voted for the Labour party and one mixed European race voted conservative.

When asked about the potential hurdles that they would have to face in life, almost all racial minorities answered that the hurdles they would face in life are related to their race. Four of the black respondents attributed their hurdles only to their race, three of the respondents in the mixed ethnicity group also attributed this only to their race. All Asian respondents mentioned that their race would be the most important thing to consider for future hurdles to overcome in life. Neither of the Hispanic/Latinx respondents mentioned race in their answer about future hurdles. These answers were consistent and do not present any difference between cities.

When people were asked about how they felt about the level of representation, they gave a range of answers. The most interesting aspect of the answers is categorizing how many people attributed representation to race and how many people attributed representation to gender. In Figure 8, it shows if people feel racially represented or not. If they did not mention race in their initial answer or in the follow-up, it is assumed that they have never considered the possibility of being *not* racially represented, and therefore it can be surmised that they do feel racially represented.

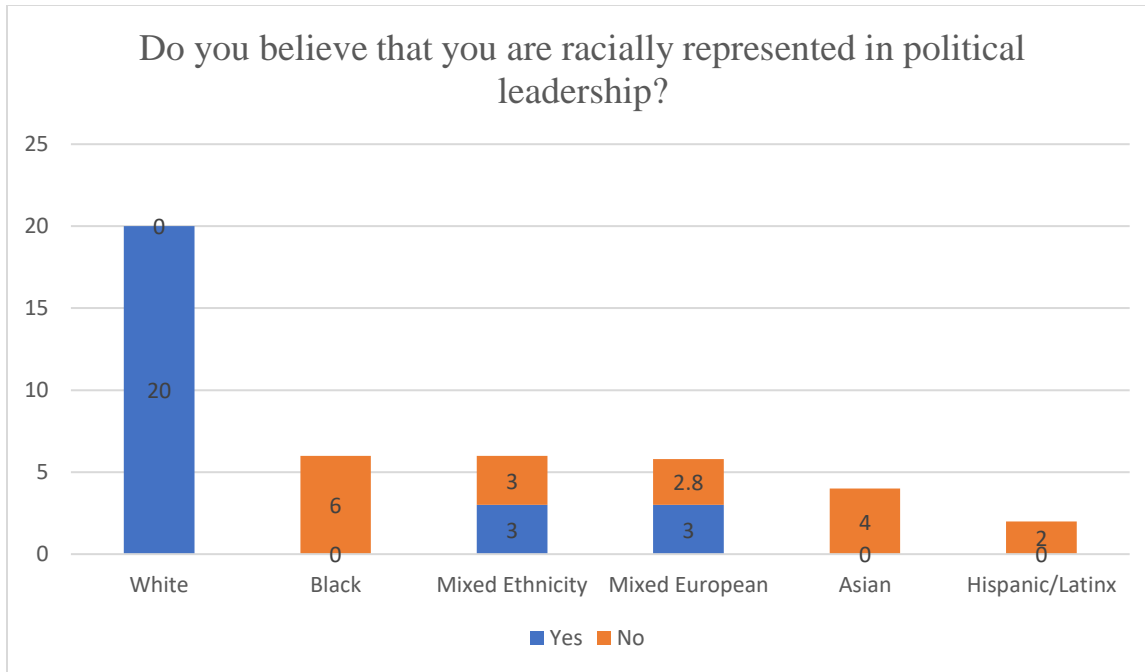


Figure 5

Another important aspect with who wanted to be a future political representative is the type of people who were interested in becoming a representative, not by ethnicity but by gender. In general, figure 6 shows that 9 women considered becoming a future political representative while only 7 men considered becoming a future political representative. Of the 18 males sampled in the interviews, nine of them were white males. Of the 23 females sampled in the interviews, seven of them were black or mixed ethnicity race. Five white males considered being a future political representative and only two women of the black and mixed ethnicity race women considered being a political figure.

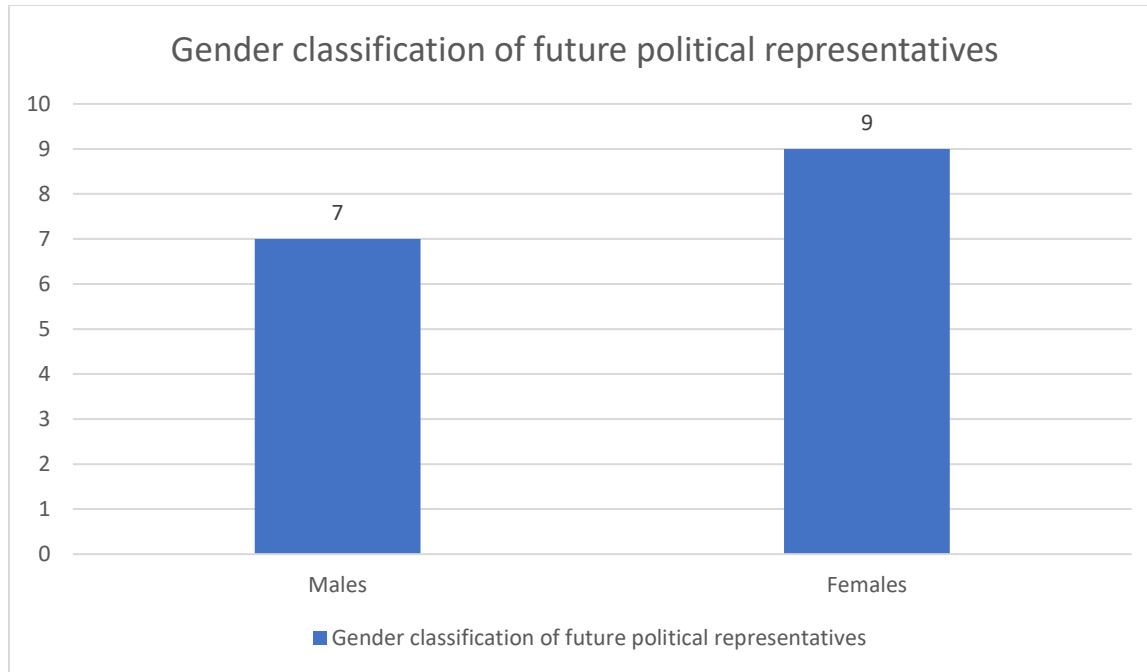


Figure 6

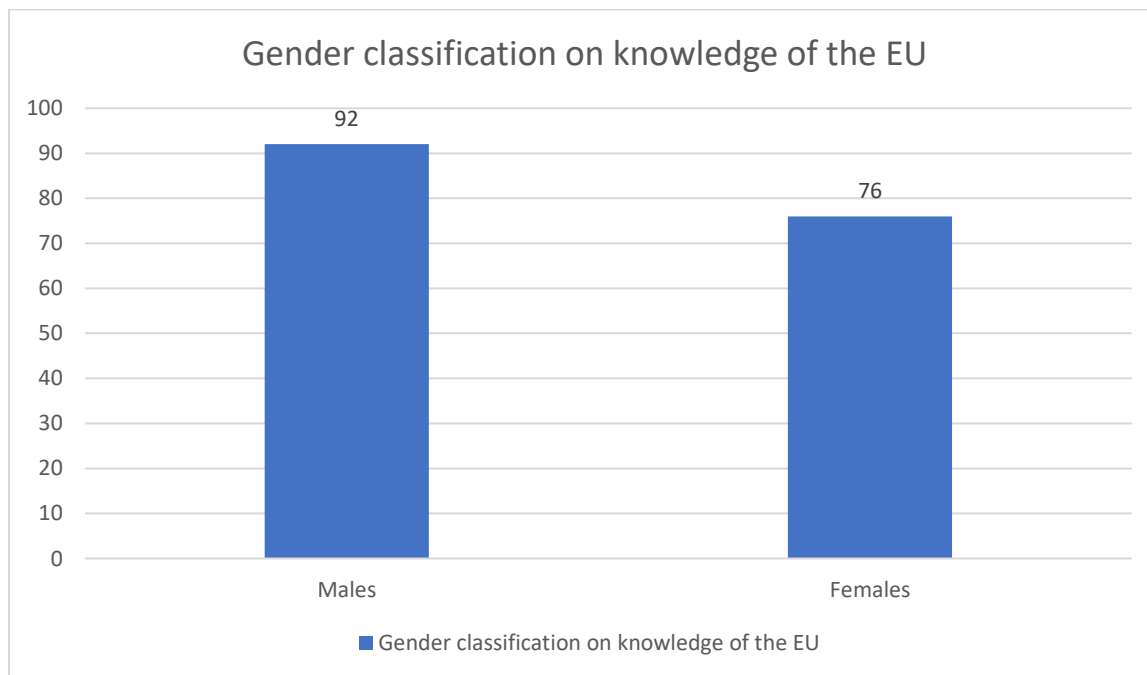


Figure 7

The results show a gap of knowledge about the EU between men and women across both countries. Figure 7 displays that males averaged a 92% on the true or false questions meanwhile females averaged a 76%. On the other hand, there also exists a disparity of knowledge between white females and ethnic females⁴. In the entire sample, there were seven black and mixed ethnicity race women and eleven white women, Figure 8 shows the gap of knowledge of the EU between both groups in terms of their average percentage scores on the four true or false questions.

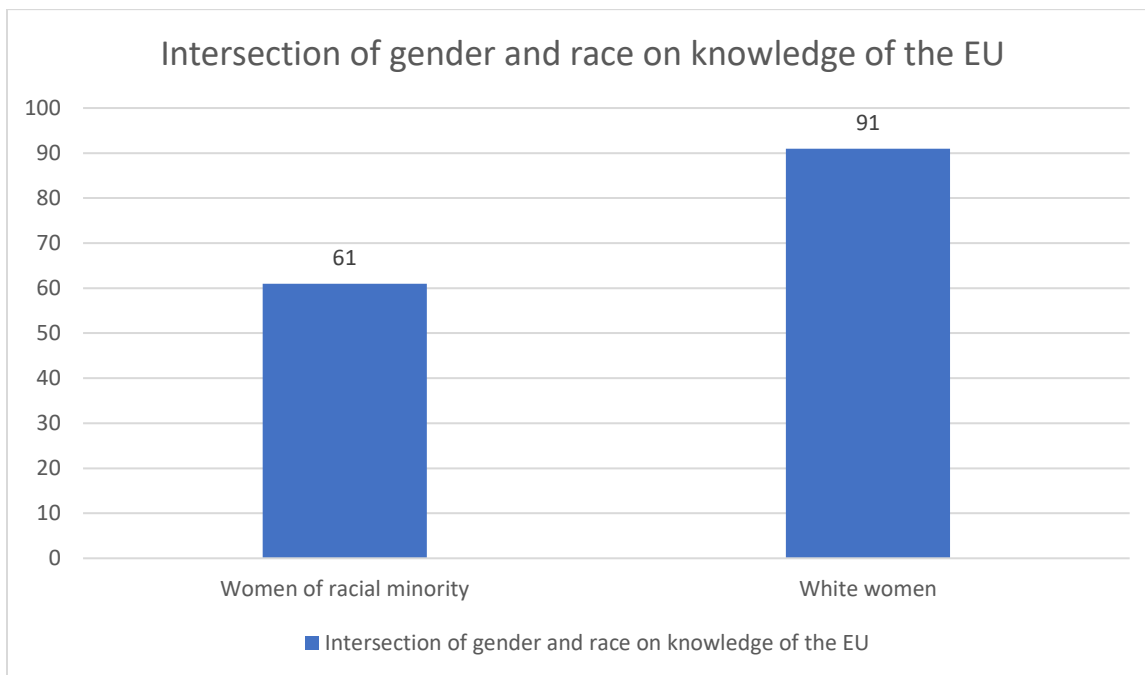


Figure 8

⁴ Gidengil, Elisabeth, "Beyond the Gender Gap," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 40:4 (December 2007), 815-831

Chapter 6: Conclusion

When people talk about the rise of the alt-right, they usually say they occupy a steady presence. They have not revolutionized the political structures, but they are a stable manifestation of Eurosceptic ideology. In a way, their steady, consistent presence is similar to how I see ethnic women. Only, I see their importance as a positive and progressive change for the EU. At two different and prestigious institutions, it was difficult to even find representation of ethnic women there. Still, I found a tiny proportion of them and tried to understand their voices in the multitude. What this entire sample of university students said about the future and integration of the EU was varied and equally important but singling out the voices of the female racially marginalized group was what really provided an interesting insight. In conclusion, female minority university students understand that their future hurdles in life and current lack of political representation are inextricably linked to their race and identity. Their thoughts on the future of the EU took different forms like all the other responses on the future of the EU and respective member-states. Yet, the common similarity between all of their responses is that they all mentioned the significance of unity in the future survival and success of the EU. They all acknowledged that unity was going to be one of the most important factors in ensuring the success and survival of the EU whether the unity evolves from social movements or integration of the other states.

All in all, listening to the perspectives of university students were especially enlightening. These students are arguably going to be the future leaders of the EU because of their caliber of education or because of the opportunities that are afforded to them at their university. Still, a significant proportion of them were jaded about politics because of a perceived evil. This perspective was especially prevalent in ethnic women. Only two of the women from an ethnic

background considered being a future political representative, and their reticence is due to racial and gender discrimination. Many of them do not aspire to be the new face of Europe but they still want to help it either through transnational organizations like NGOs, working as a diplomat, or working as a local civil servant. This type of dedication to the local cause is admirable. It shows that social movements stem from the people and people believe in real change not the façade of change.

The general tough stance on people's own member state may be a positive thing. If they are challenging their own member state to be better, then they can potentially use this as a conduit to the EU. After all, the surprise that many people expressed when they talked about the future and influence of EU was as if rediscovering that the EU is an entity designed to ensure safety and progressivity. In the future, it is especially important for more research to be done on ethnic women in Europe. They have always occupied an influential and important role in EU society, but also their background makes for an interesting analysis on the multiculturalism of Europe. Their background as a 'foreign immigrant' or as an 'ethnic European' means that the concept of being a European is changing. Furthermore, this type of research is essential in legal policymaking of the EU. Addressing intersectionality should be a key concern at the EU and member state level. The EU project is still believed in by many of the participants in this study and this means that EU laws have a duty to serve the European people. Clearly, this research was only a preliminary step to understanding answers to these responses and the sample of participants was low. In the future, it is essential to keep studying ethnic women, ethnic minorities in general, and this special subset of the youth in order to uncover the future of the EU.

If this research has helped progress in any way, then hopefully it was to bring awareness to the importance of the EU and the role of marginalized people. Many students were relatively educated about the EU, understood its role and influence in their member state, and had thought-provoking things to say about its future. They all talked about the EU as if it was an assured entity in the background of their country that kept the wheels running. Still, there was not an overwhelming appreciation for it. Maybe the EU *is* like a significant other in a break-up, as a French participant suggested. No one understands exactly how important something or someone is until they lose it. Still, its value should be appreciated soon, before it breaks.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

1. How would you describe your ethnic background?
 - a. Where were your parents born?
2. How long have you lived in this country?
 - a. Has it always been in the same country?
 - b. If not, how long have you been here where you are a citizen?
3. How would you define your knowledge of the European Union as a political entity?
 - a. True or False. Switzerland is part of the EU.
 - b. True or False. There are 25 member-states that make up the European Union.
 - c. True or False. The members of the European Parliament are directly elected by the citizens of each member state.
 - d. True or False. The president-elect of the European Commission is female.
4. A lot of people voted in the last European Parliament election (May 2019) but many people did not for various reasons. How about you?
 - a. If you did not vote in the last European Parliament election, why not?
 - b. Who did you vote for?
 - c. Did you vote in your last national election?
5. From your viewpoint and experience, do you believe that people like you are adequately represented in political leadership?
 - a. What makes you feel that way?
 - b. What identity (identities) were you thinking of when I said ‘people like you?’
6. To what extent do you think the EU has policies to integrate ethnic minorities in the mainstream?
7. Are you or would you ever consider being involved in EU politics as a representative in any governmental body?
8. Do you think there are any hurdles you will have to overcome in your future career with your identity in the EU?
 - a. How would you rate the potentially disruptive hurdles in accomplishing your goals?
9. How much influence does this country have in deciding how the European Union acts?
10. How much do European Union policies affect this country?
11. What do you think will be the future of the European Union in the next 30 years?
 - a. What do you think this will mean for this country?