

STUDENTS TALK CLIMATE

Applying Climate Outreach's segmentation model to students
in further and higher education

June 2023



STUDENTS
ORGANISING FOR
SUSTAINABILITY
UNITED KINGDOM

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ABOUT THE RESEARCH

About the research

[Britain Talks Climate](#) is an evidence-based toolkit designed by Climate Outreach to support organisations to engage the British public on climate change. Underpinning the toolkit is a segmentation model, based on [More in Common](#)'s core beliefs approach.

16 'golden questions' are used to categorise people into one of seven segments, with the toolkit offering [guidance](#) on how to frame communications to engage each segment on climate change.

This research has been carried out with the general public in the UK, and in August 2022, we used these questions in a new survey with students in further and higher education across the UK.

The survey was sent to students who are NUS TOTUM cardholders and answered by students across the UK in August 2022. We received 1655 responses. The data from the survey was then inputted into the Climate Outreach segmentation calculator to find out the breakdown of segments for the respondents.

The seven segments: snapshot profiles



Progressive Activists

Opinionated, confident, outward looking and restless for change, this segment is probably the most familiar to climate campaigners. Progressive Activists are very engaged across a wide range of issues, with climate change central among them. From voting, to protesting and signing petitions, members of this segment are boldly **progressive** in their politics (with the most left-wing views on social and economic issues) and consistently **active** in their own lives (politically and personally) on climate change.

But the Progressive Activists are also exhausted by the division in politics, and the most likely to feel that the **country is divided**. They are the **most likely** to believe *the system is rigged to serve the rich and influential*, and share a **disaffection/fatalism about society** with **Disengaged Battlers** and **Loyal Nationals**, despite having very different demographic profiles. Progressive Activists are **united in their belief that inequality is a major problem** - sexism, racism, and economic injustice.

Demographically, this segment trends the **youngest**, has the highest proportion who are **university educated**, and a large number of **high-earners**. This segment overwhelmingly **supports Labour** and **voted to remain in the European Union (EU)**.

- 37% of students
- 13% of British public

Backbone Conservatives

Firmly conservative in their social and cultural views, **strong supporters of Brexit** and the historic achievements and reputation of Britain in the world, and the **most authoritarian** of the segments, Backbone Conservatives, as their name would suggest, are **core Conservative voters**. They mirror the Labour-voting Progressive Activists on the left of the political spectrum in terms of their ideological focus and drive.

Older, relatively well off, and relatively well educated, Backbone Conservatives are the **most likely to say they are proud to be British**.

- 10% of students
- 15% of British public





Civic Pragmatists

Solidly left but not activists, this **progressive, practical and moderate** segment are **anxious about the future** - and are one of the segments **most concerned that the world is becoming a more dangerous place**.

Civic Pragmatists are **community-oriented**, being the most likely to donate to charity (94%), and share **socially left beliefs** with Progressive Activists. They are equally convinced that inequality and racism are serious problems in the country and are almost as proud of embracing diversity and of advancements in gender equality. During a focus group, one participant described their segment as “**liberal, creative, kind, caring, calm and realistic**”. This is also a majority ‘Remainer’ segment.

- 19% of students
- 13% of British public

Established Liberals

A mostly **Conservative Party-voting** segment with **right-leaning views about the economy** (a majority support austerity measures), Established Liberals nonetheless **skew towards the left on social/cultural issues** (expressing pride in the diversity of the country) and are characterised by their **comfortable, trusting and untroubled perspective**, linked to their **financial security**.

Of all the segments, they feel the **least threatened or vulnerable**, are **firmly meritocratic** (believing people tend to get what they deserve in life) and are among the **least likely to agree that the country is getting worse**.

- 12% of students
- 12% of British public





Disengaged Battlers

Britain Talks Climate reveals two 'Disengaged' segments that at first glance seem to fall on each side of the political spectrum: Disengaged Battlers on the left, and Disengaged Traditionalists on the right. But a closer look - using a wider range of measures - reveals a more complex picture, and a clear sense that an **absence of political engagement underpins both of these segments in different ways.**

A relatively **young segment**, Disengaged Battlers are typically **urban and**, although educated to a medium level, they tend to be **financially insecure.**

- 5% of students
- 12% of British public

Disengaged Traditionalists

Disengaged Traditionalists are **alienated, disillusioned and sceptical** - about progress, about society in general, and to an extent about **climate change**. Like Disengaged Battlers, they feel excluded and frustrated, and unrepresented politically, and they feel that other segments have been prioritised over them.

This segment is more likely to be **male** (10% above mean). The largest age groups within Disengaged Traditionalists are **millennials and baby boomers**. They tend to describe themselves as **working class**, to be of **lower social grades** and to have **low to medium levels of education**.

While demographically similar to Disengaged Battlers, this segment **skew right on both social and economic issues**, and express authoritarian tendencies, showing the second highest level of support, after Loyal Nationals, for *a leader who is willing to break the rules* (47%, compared to 38% average). Despite their perceived disconnection from the mainstream of society, they are, after Backbone Conservatives, the most likely to say that ***things in this country are going in the right direction***. In this sense, they have a tenacity and '**survival**' instinct that represents a form of optimism (but a very different one to the comfortable internationalism of Established Liberals).

- 2% of students
- 18% of British public





Loyal Nationals

The second largest grouping (along with Disengaged Traditionalists, at 18%), they make up 17% of the total population. They feel **angry and threatened**, and take broadly '**populist**' **political views** on a range of issues, leaning **left economically** (with anti-big business views, and favourability towards the redistribution of wealth), but **right on social issues** (having more **authoritarian perspectives on governance, crime and punishment**).

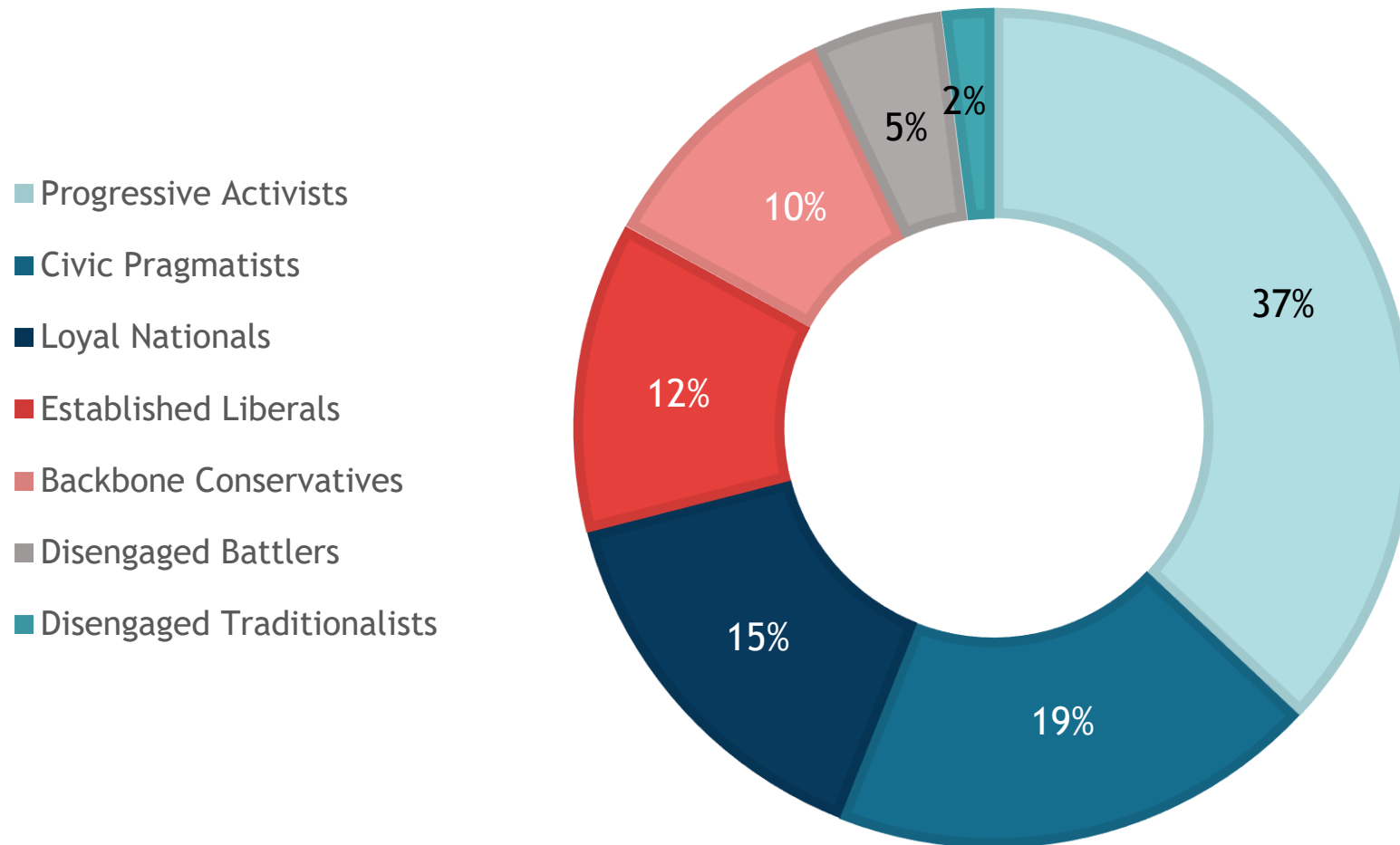
This is **one of the oldest** segments (second to Backbone Conservatives). They have a **low or medium level of education**, are the **lowest earning**, are the **most likely to describe themselves as working class**, and are **second most likely to be of the lowest social grade** (after Disengaged Battlers).

- 15% of students
- 17% of British public

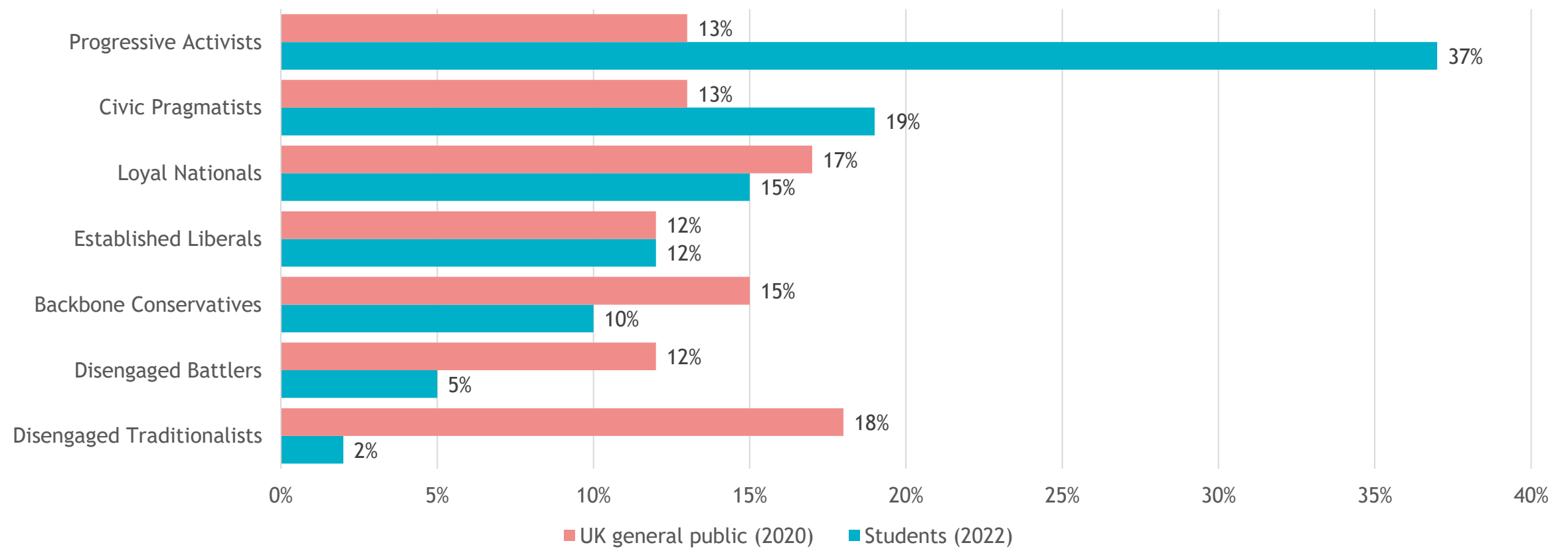
You can read more detail about each of the seven segments online at the [Climate Outreach website](#).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Based on Climate Outreach's 'golden questions', students in further and higher education fall into the segments as follows...



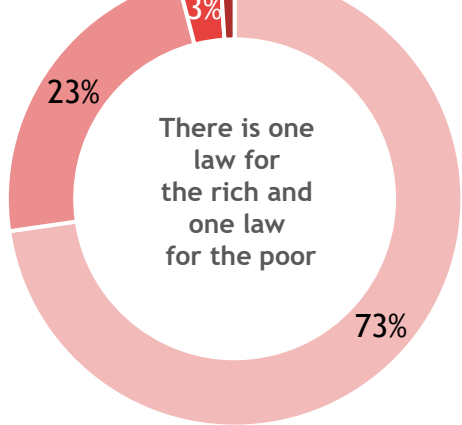
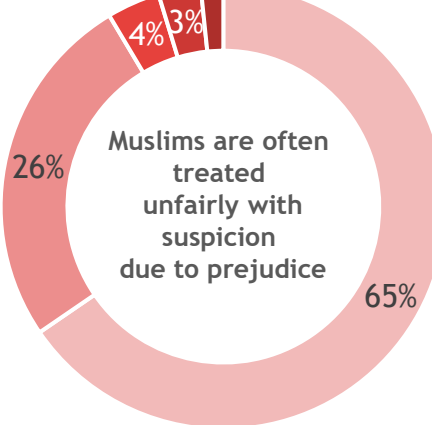
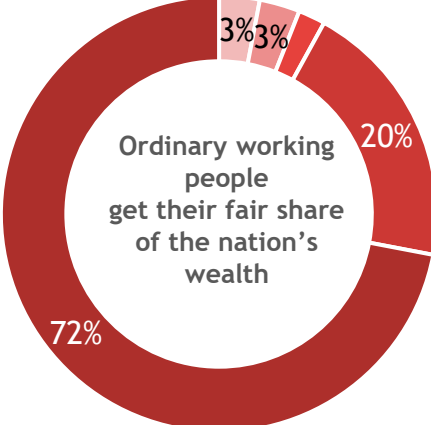
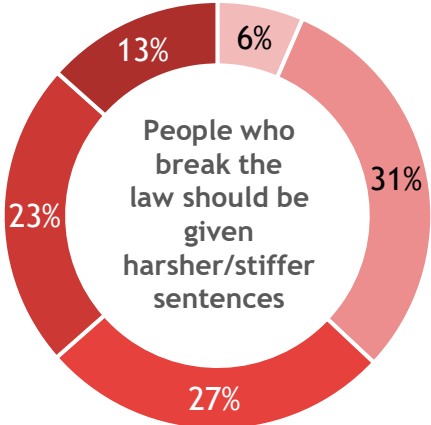
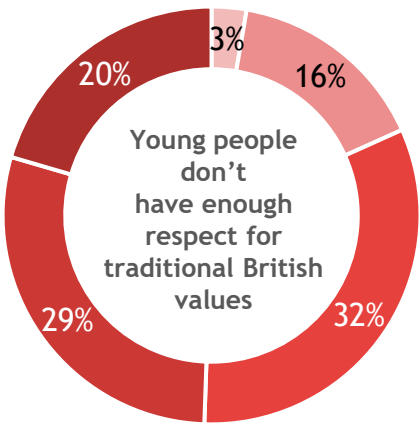
Comparing our survey findings with research carried out by Climate Outreach in 2020 with the general public we can see differences in the proportions within each segment



Progressive Activists - 37%

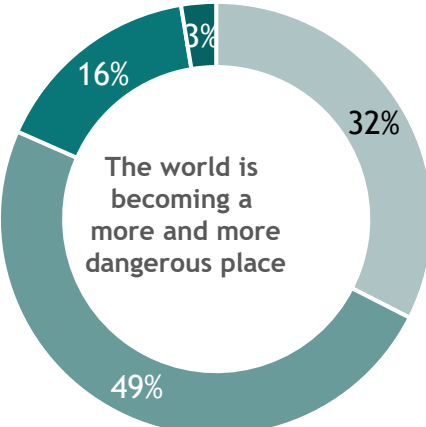
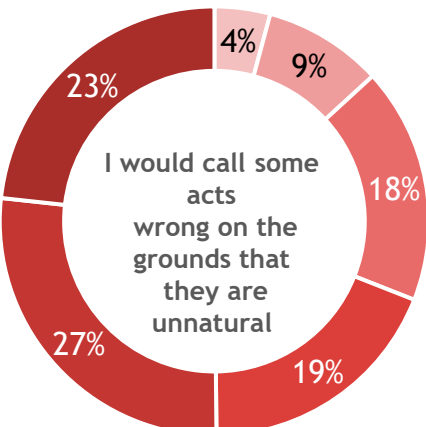
Values and beliefs

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



- 1 - Strongly agree
- 2 - Somewhat agree
- 3 - Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 - Somewhat disagree
- 5 - Strongly disagree

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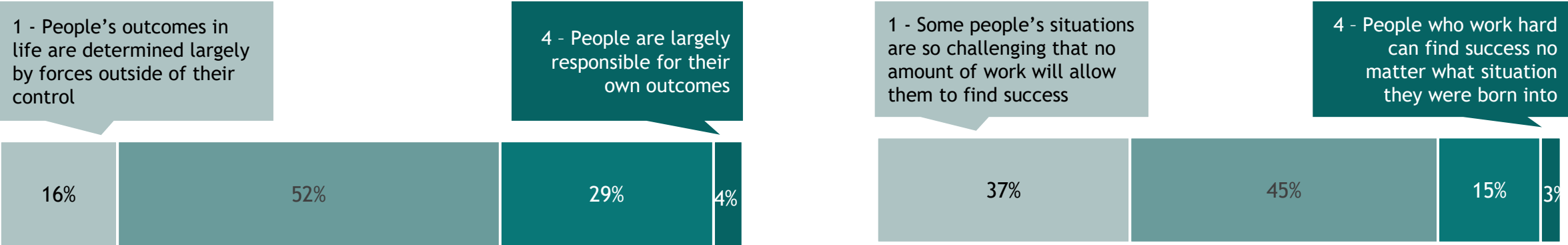
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For the following pair of traits, which one do you think is more important for a child to have using the scale below, where 1 means it is much more important for them to have the first trait, and 4 means it is much more important for them to have the second trait.



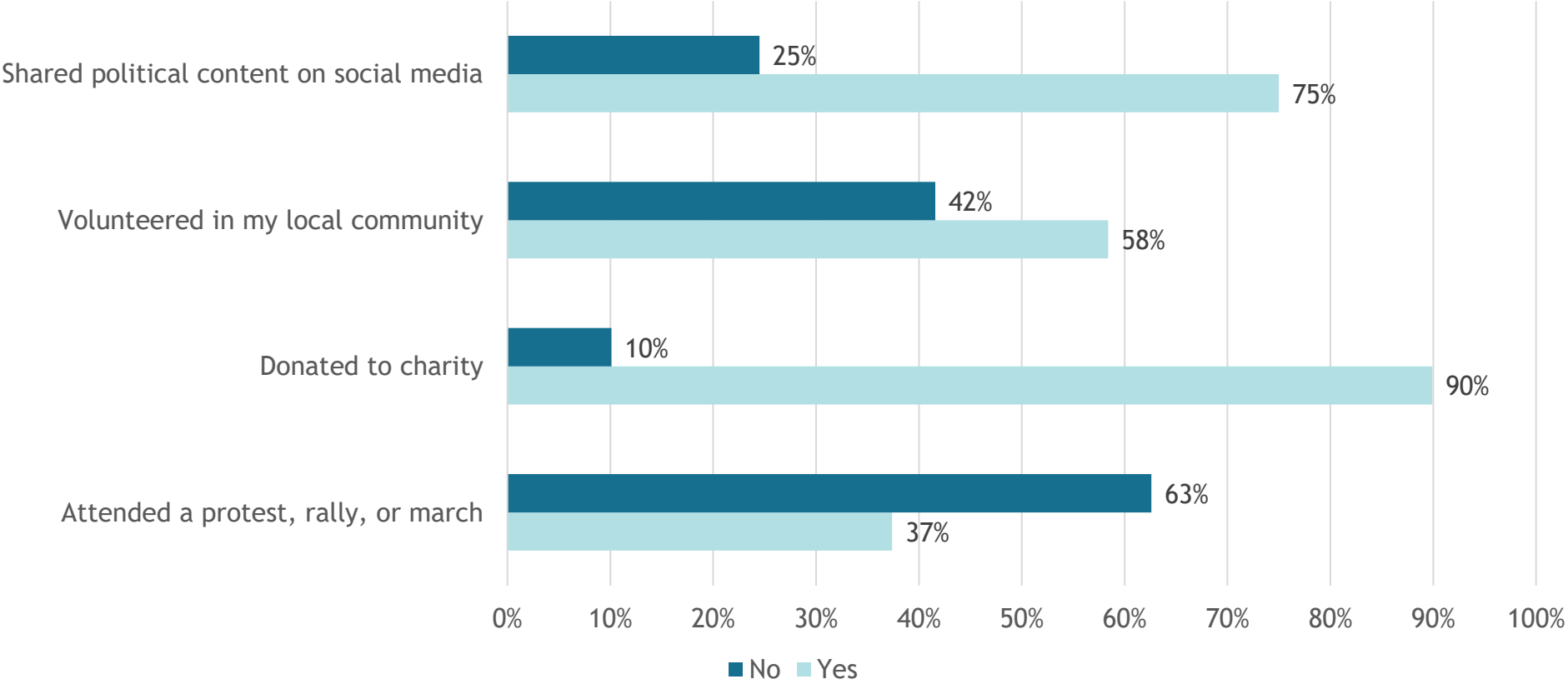
Views on control over how life turns out

Please say how well the following statements reflect your views using the scale below, where 1 means you agree completely with the first statement, and 4 means you agree completely with the second statement:



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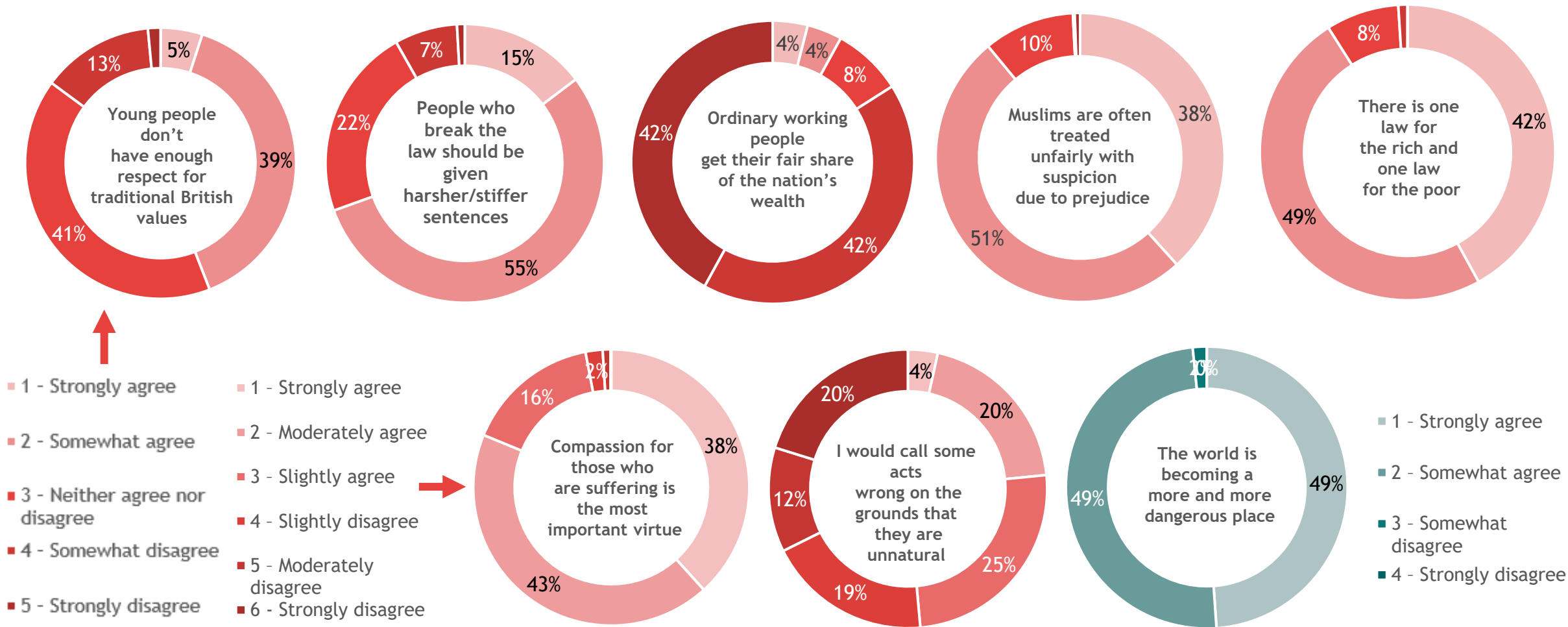


CIVIC PRAGMATISTS

19% OF STUDENTS

Values and beliefs

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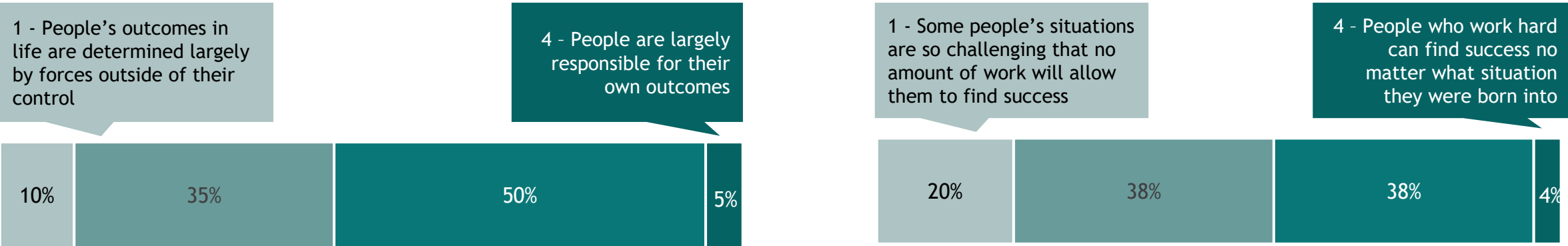
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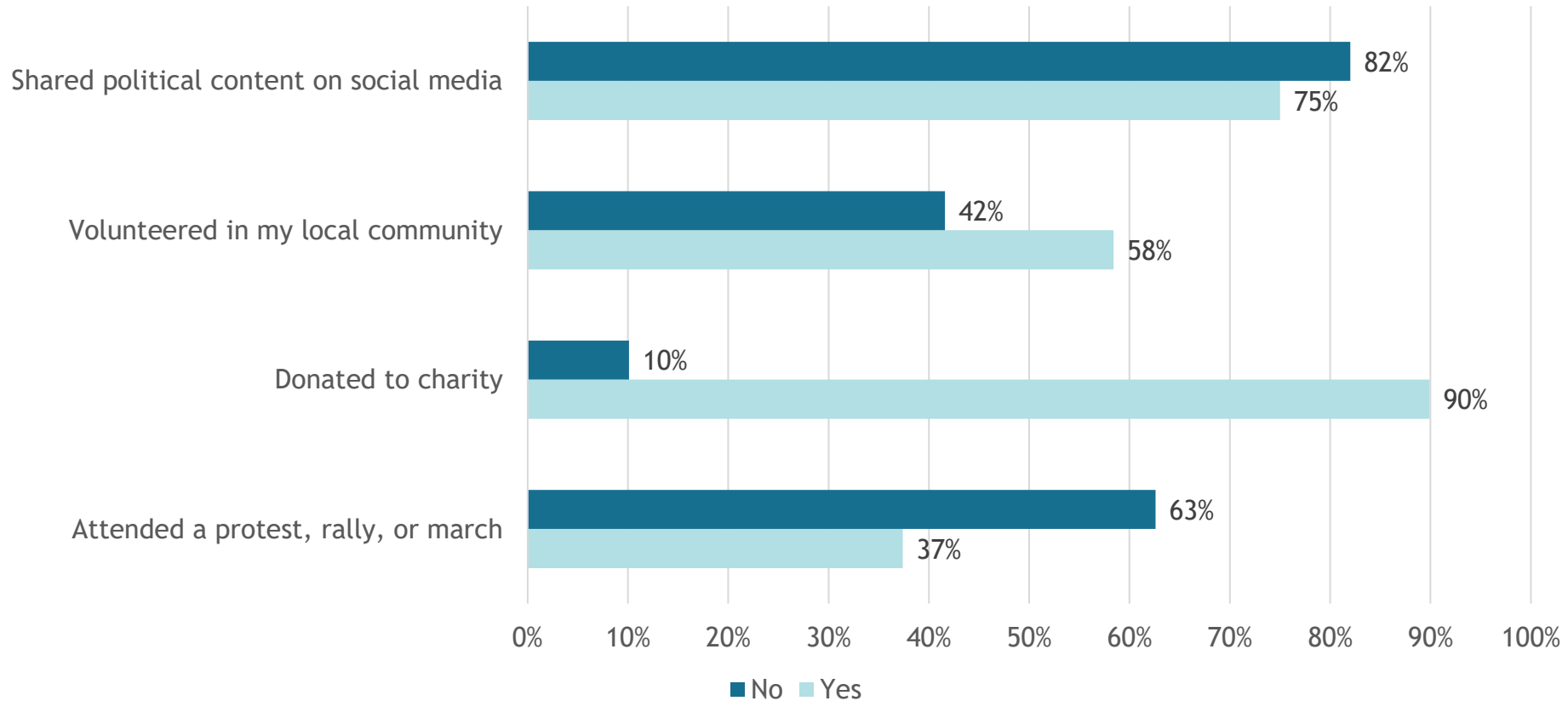
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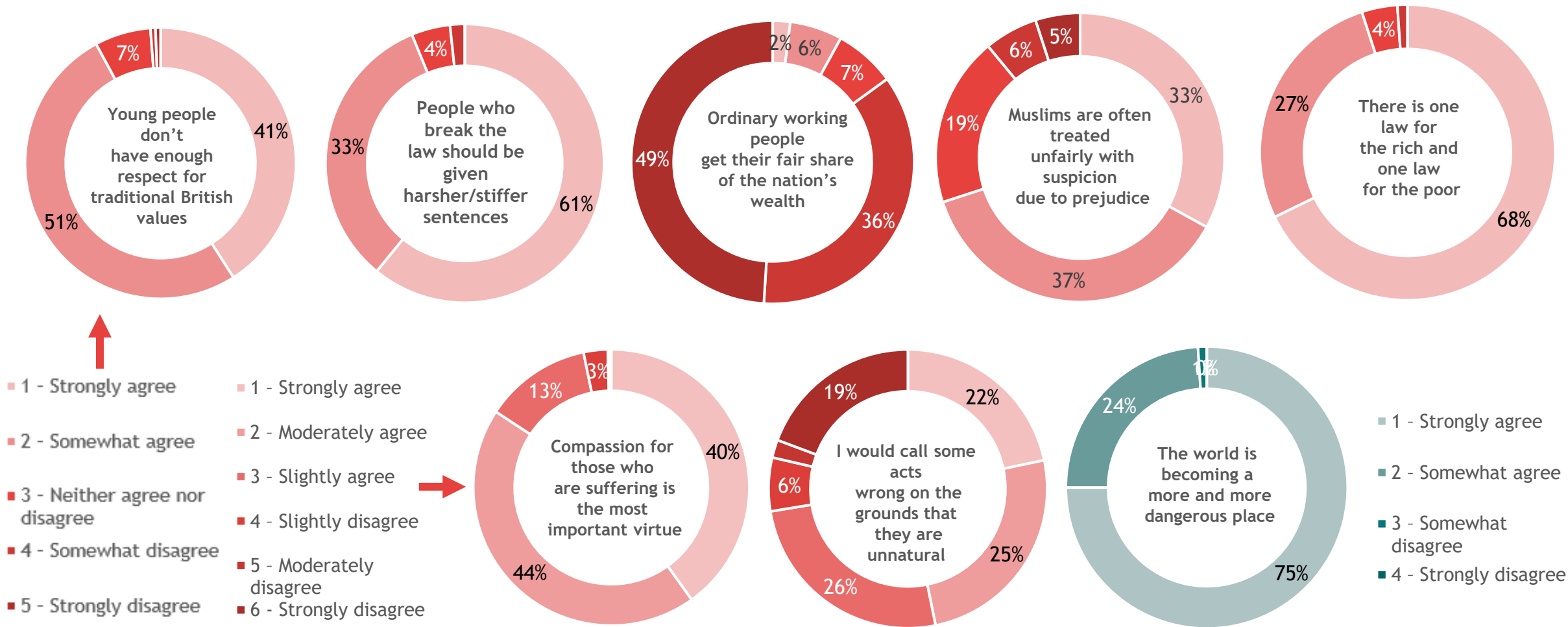


LOYAL NATIONALS

15% OF STUDENTS

Values and beliefs

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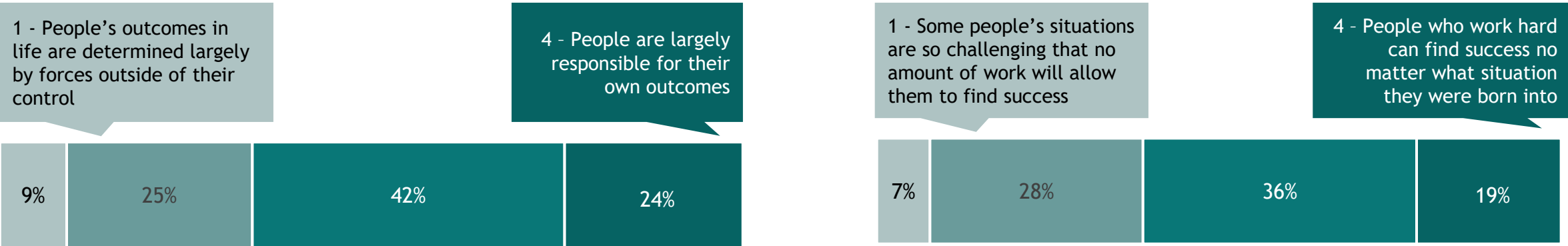
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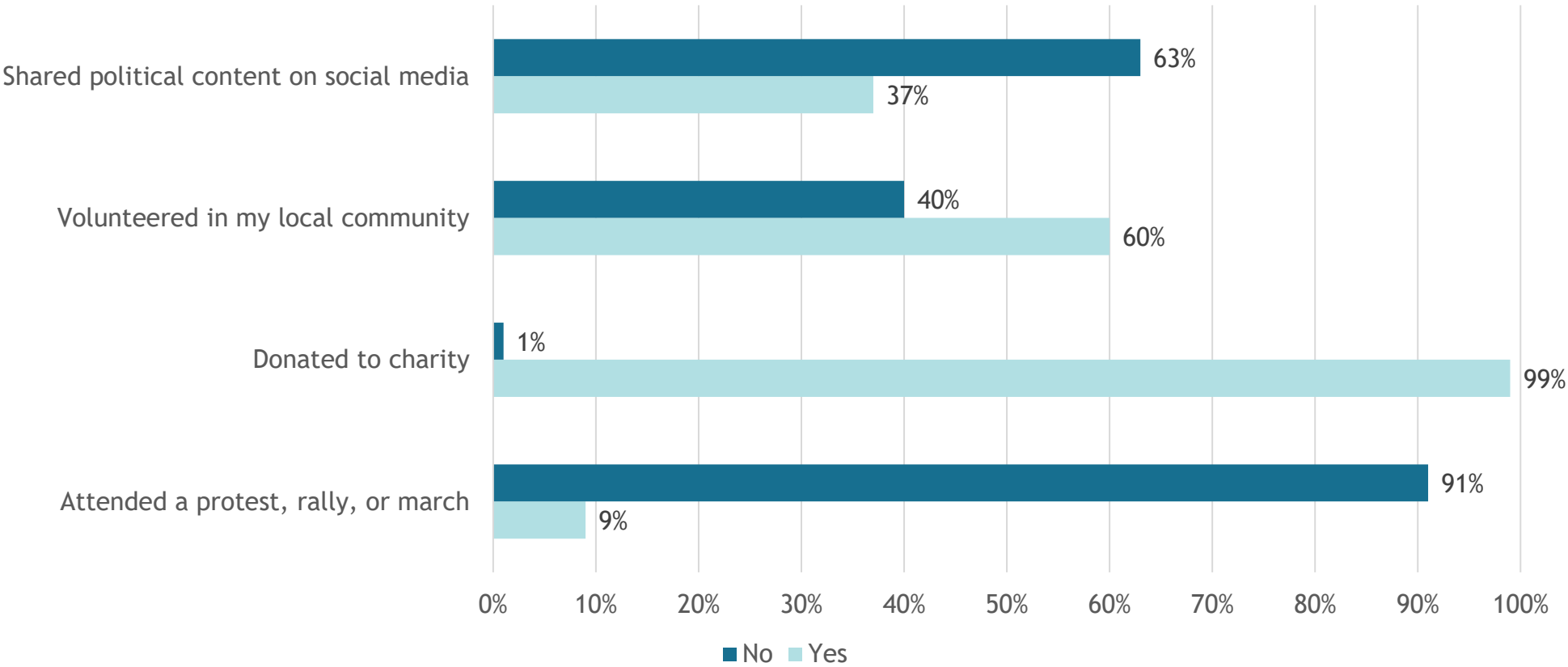
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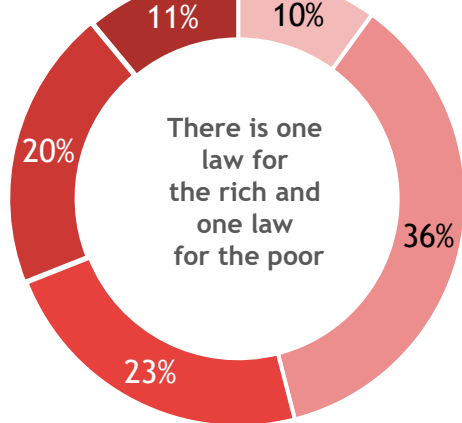
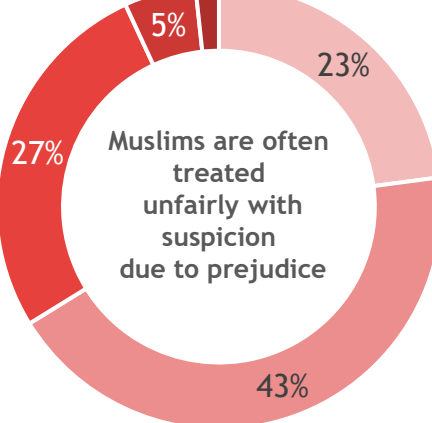
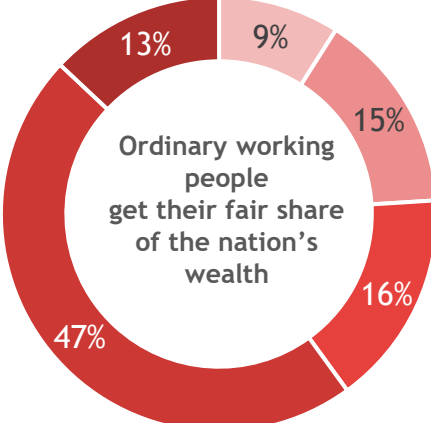
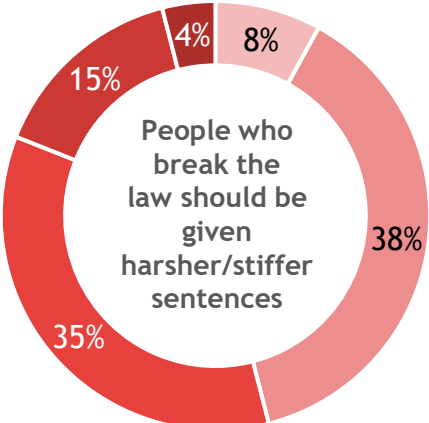
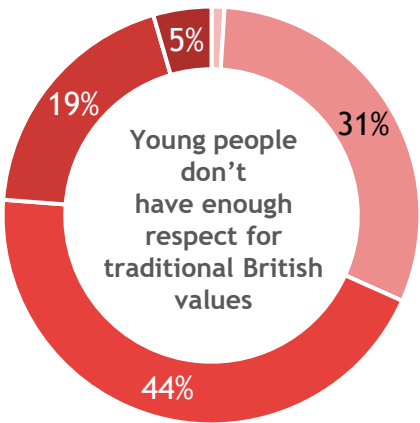


ESTABLISHED LIBERALS

12% OF STUDENTS

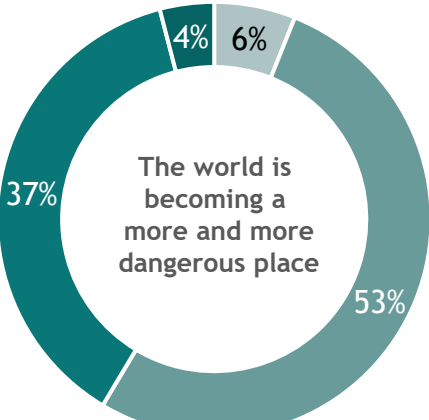
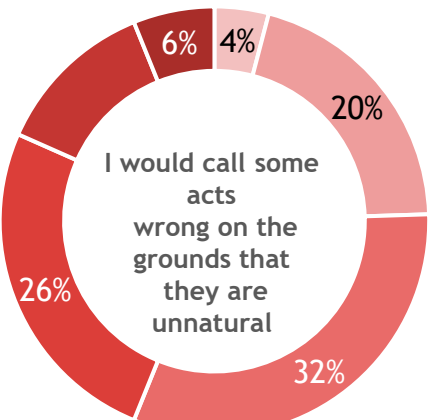
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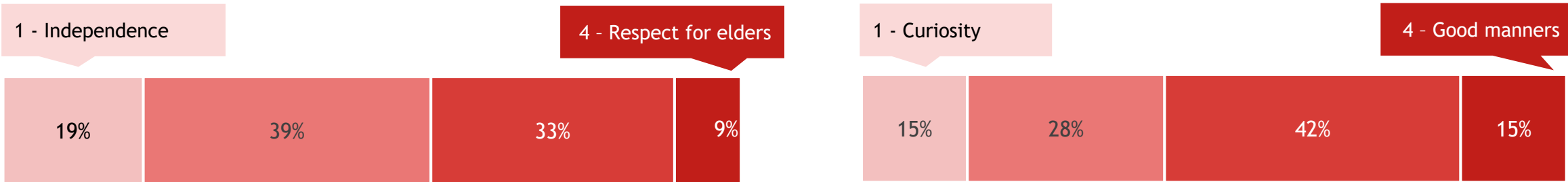


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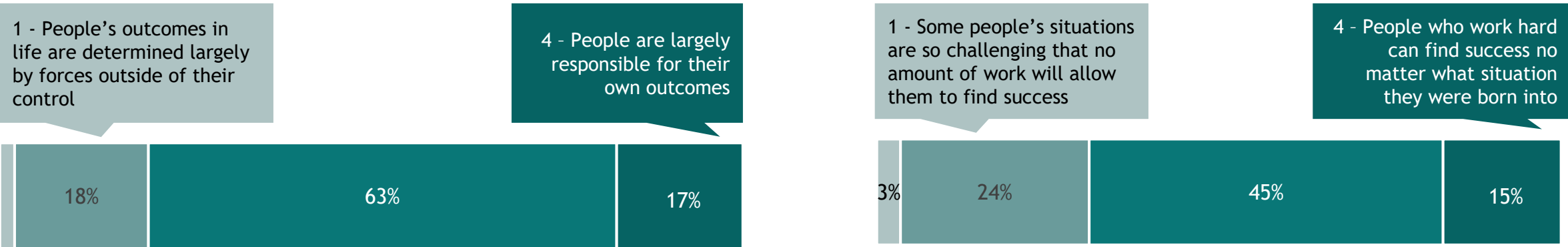
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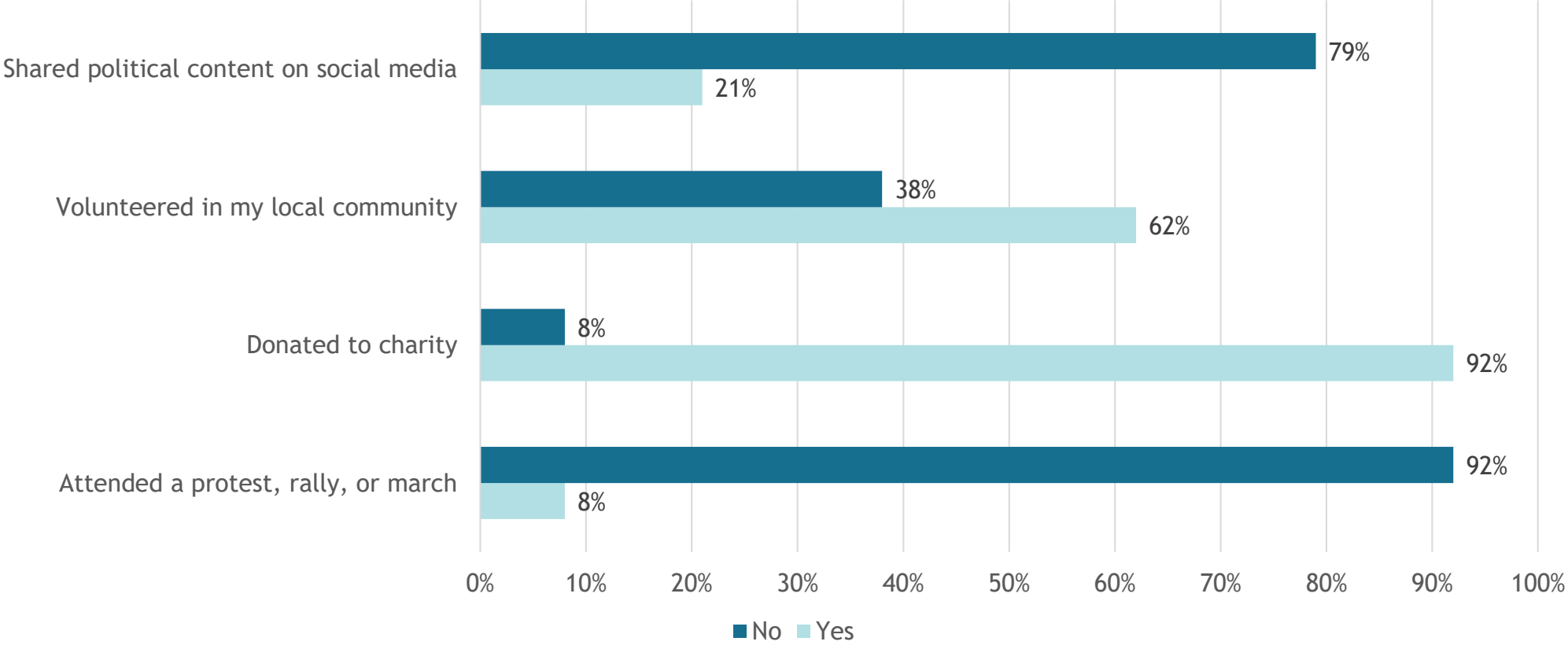
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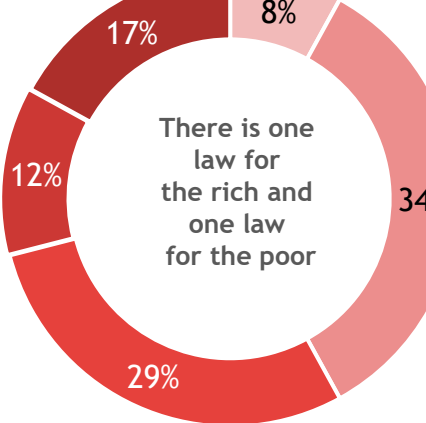
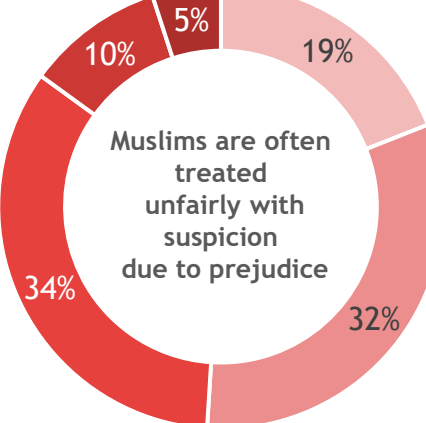
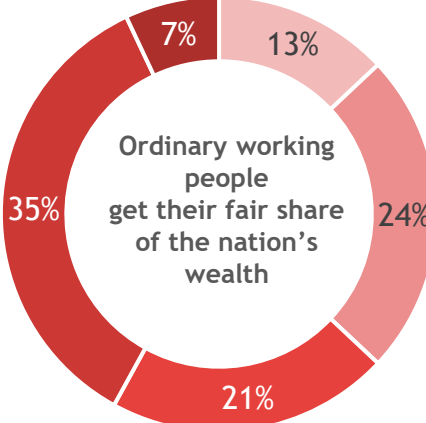
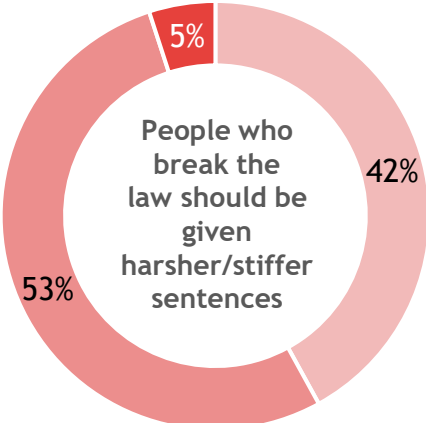
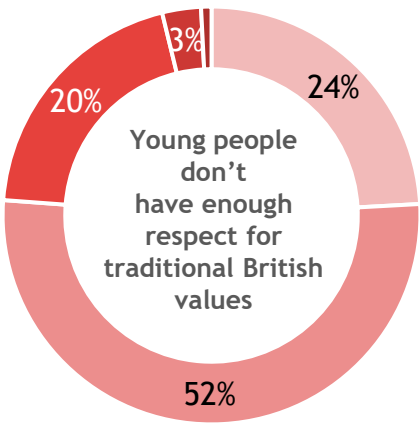


BACKBONE CONSERVATIVES

10% OF STUDENTS

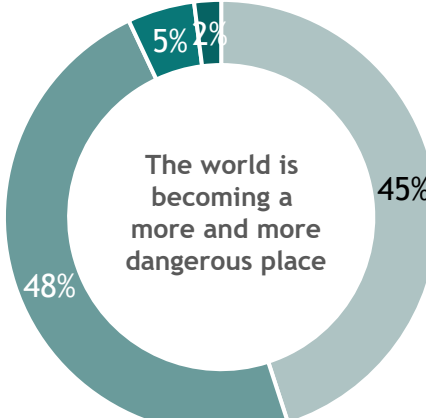
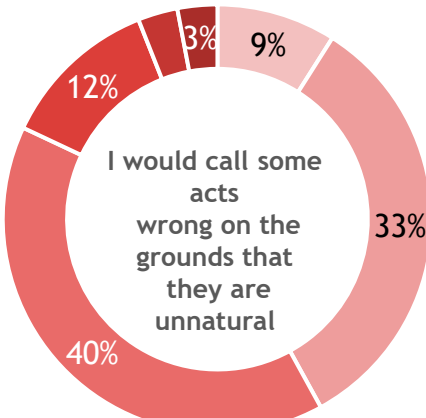
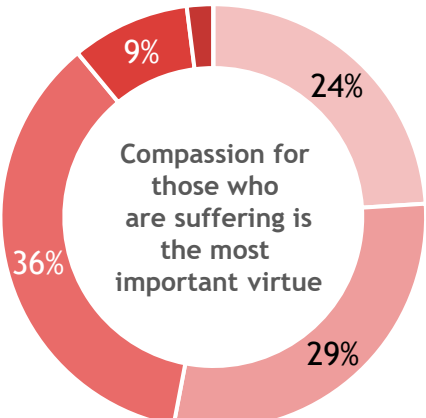
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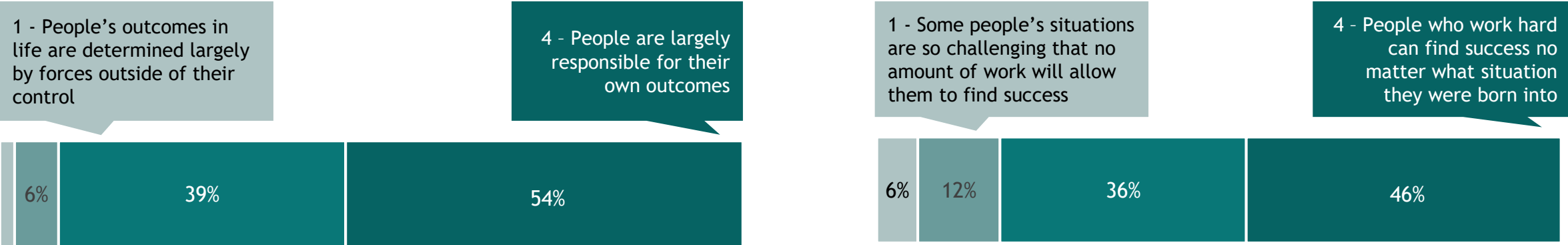
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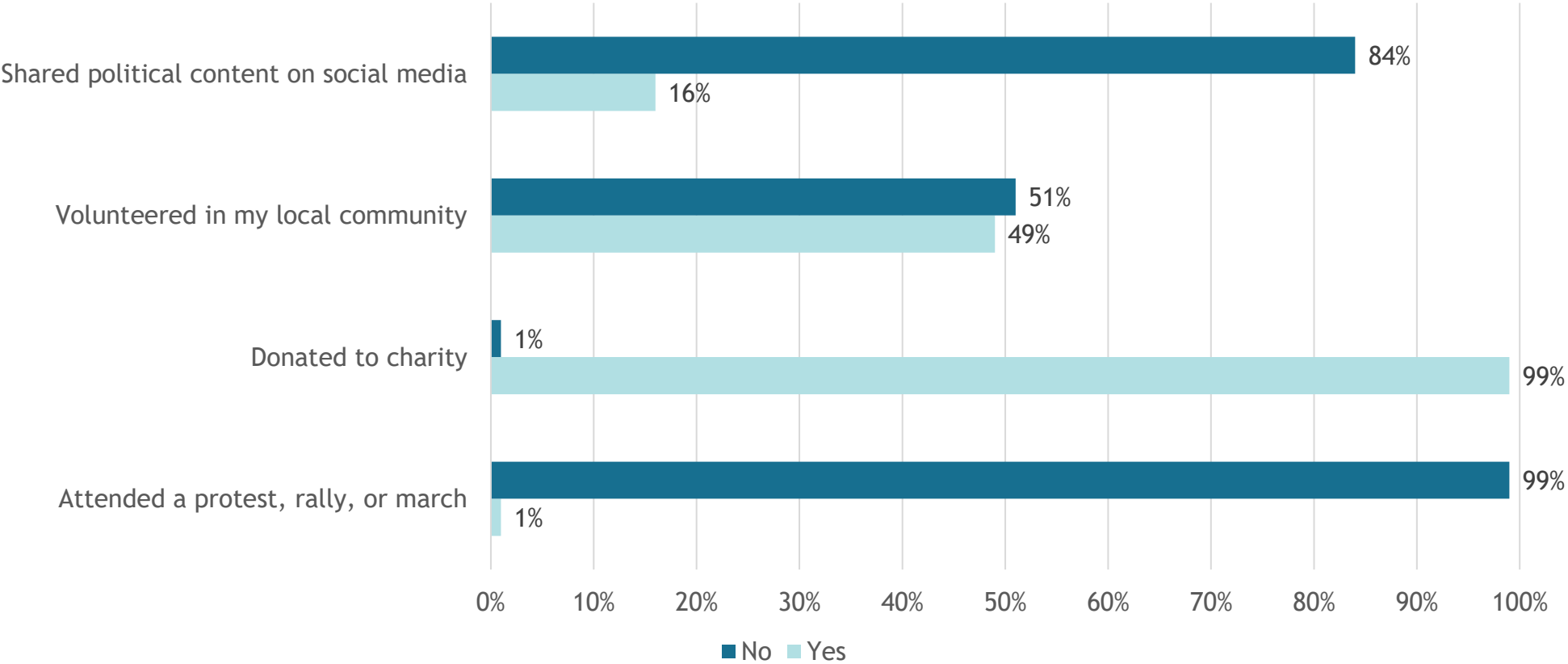
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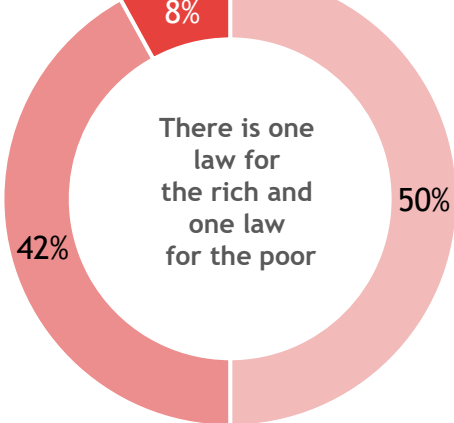
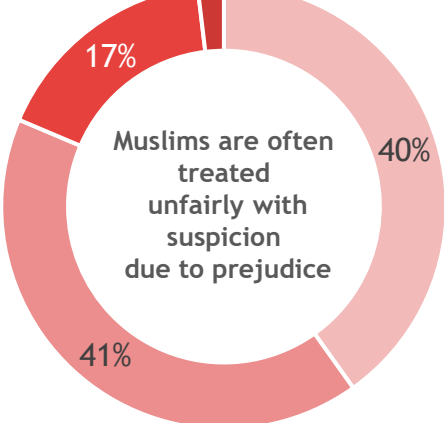
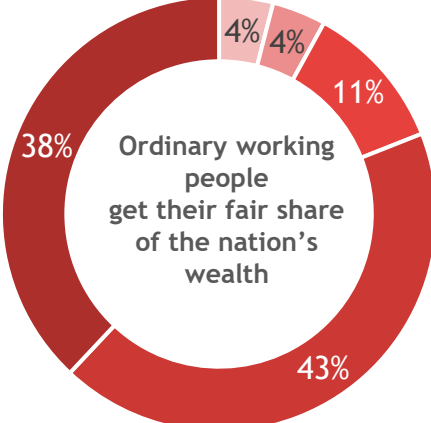
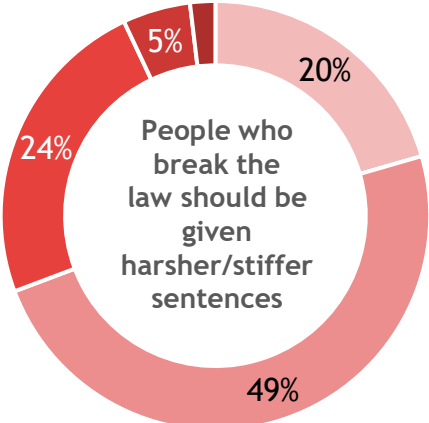
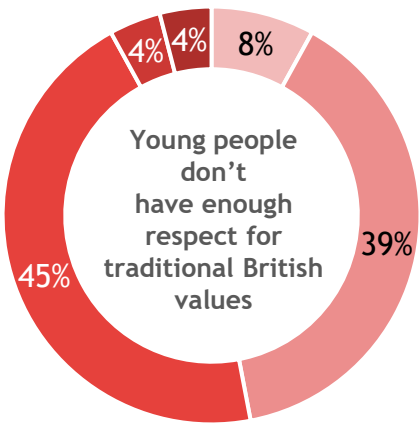


DISENGAGED BATTLERS

5% OF STUDENTS

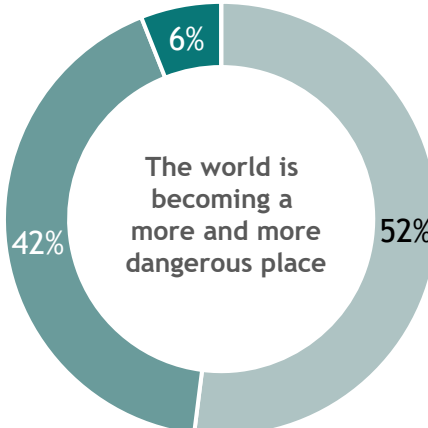
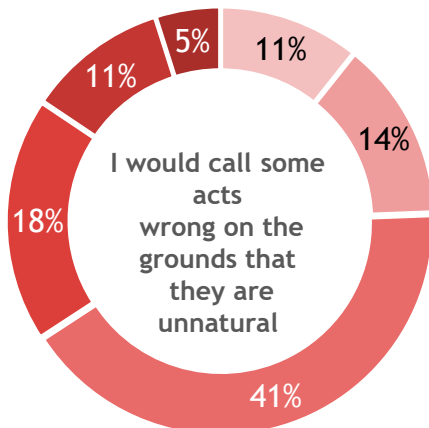
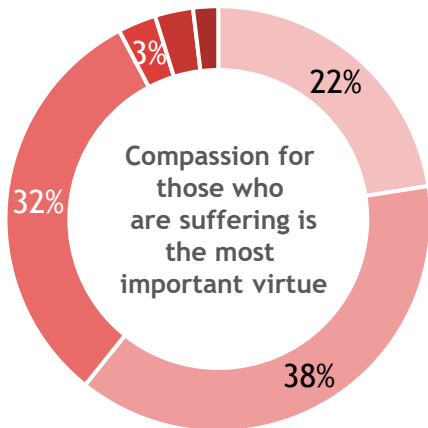
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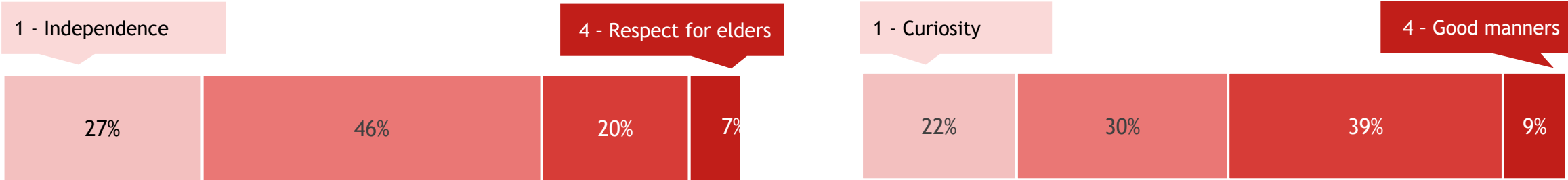
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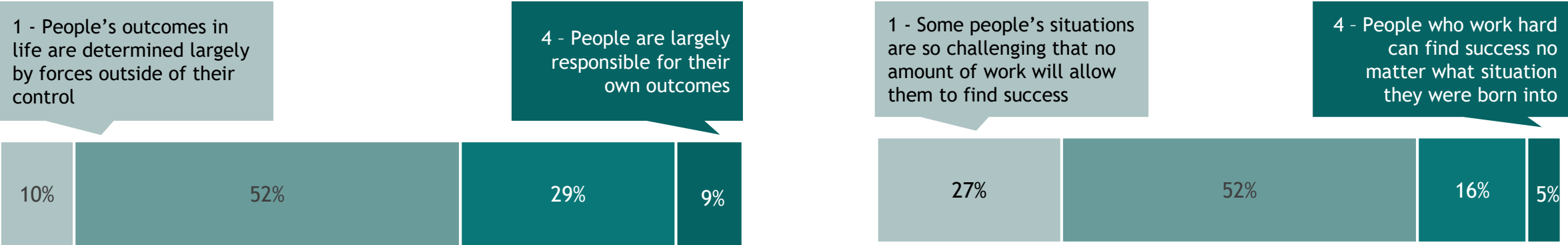
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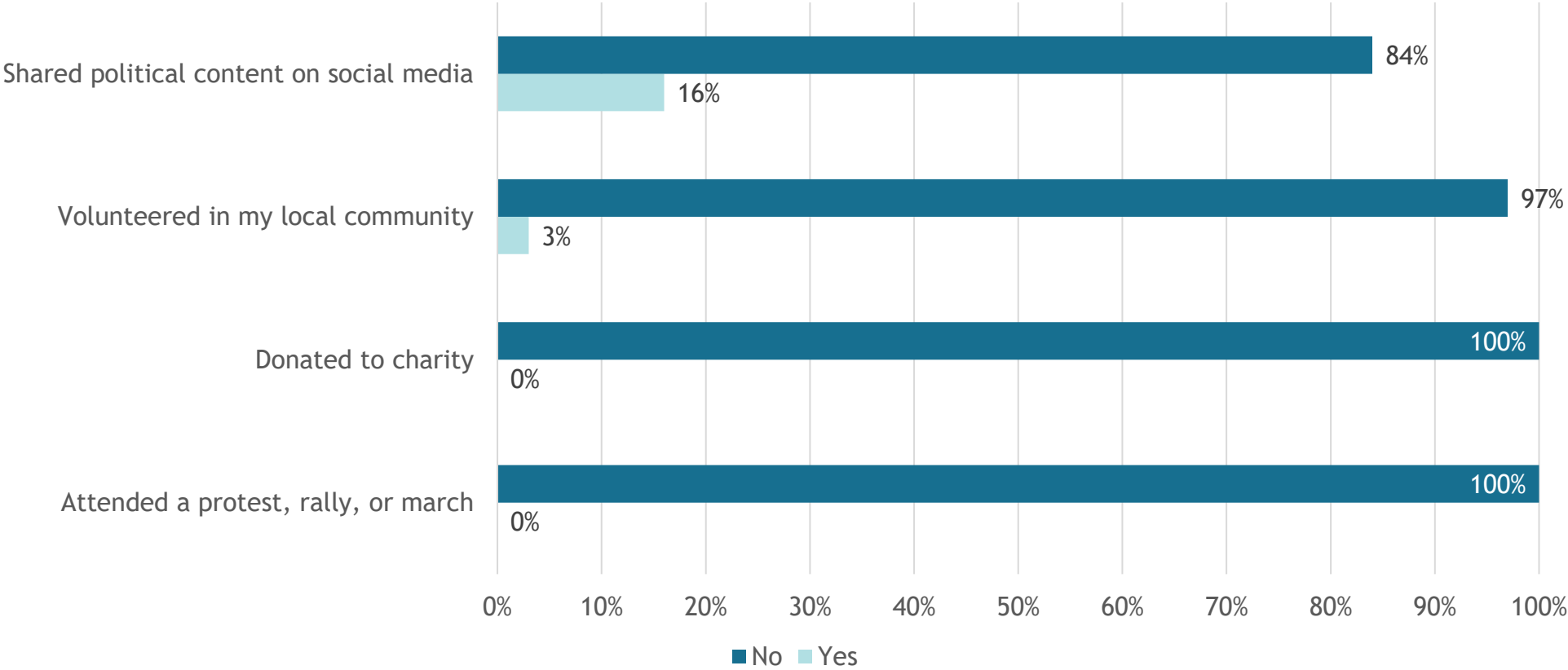
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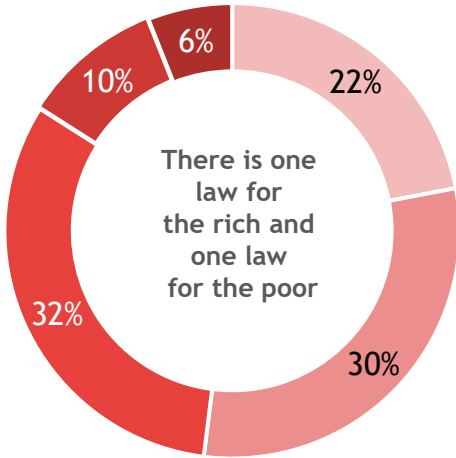
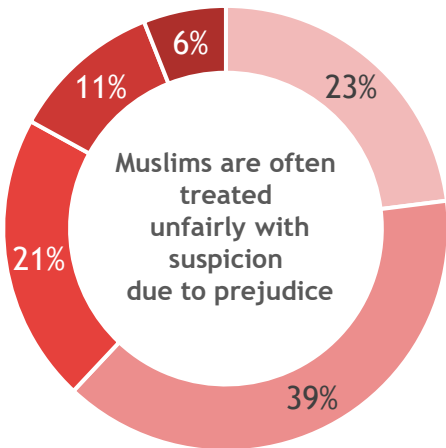
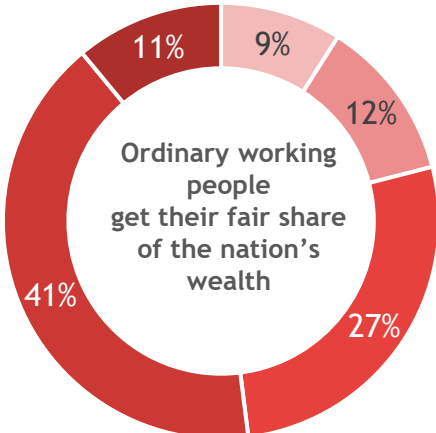
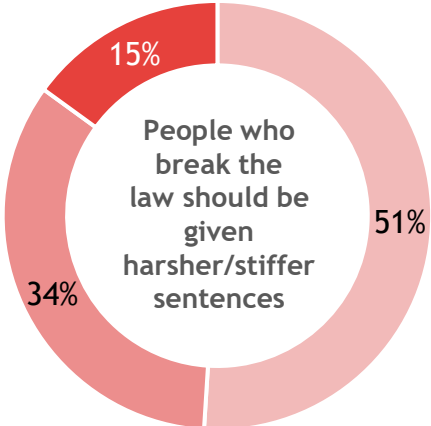
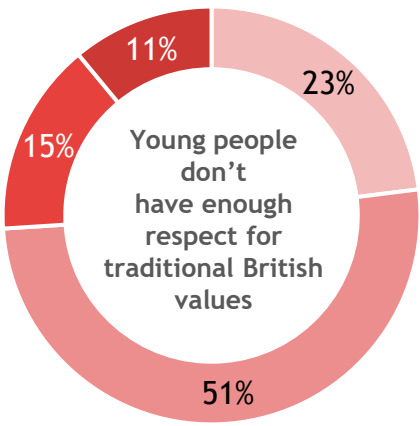


DISENGAGED TRADITIONALISTS

2% OF STUDENTS

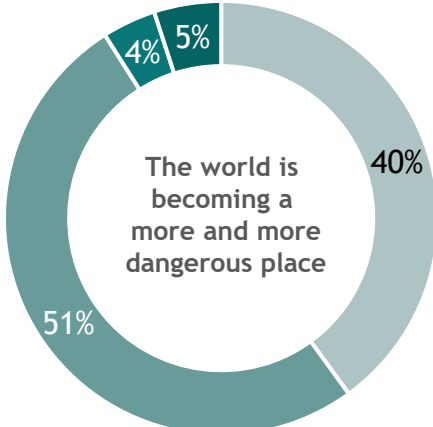
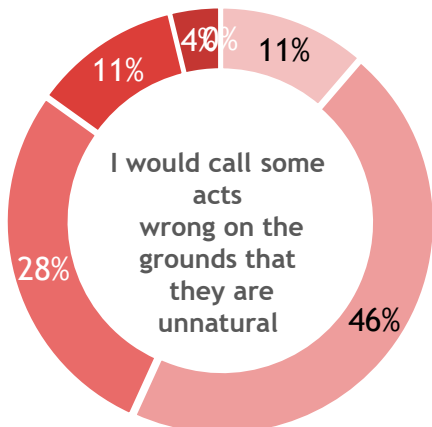
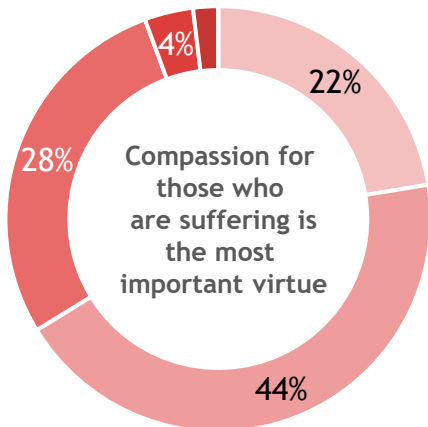
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- 5 - Moderately disagree
- 6 - Strongly disagree



- 1 - Strongly agree
- 2 - Somewhat agree
- 3 - Somewhat disagree
- 4 - Strongly disagree



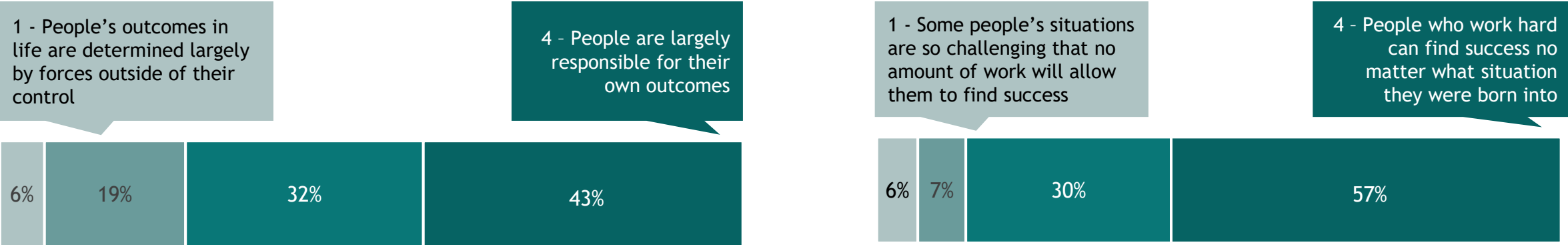
Importance of traits in children

For the following pair of traits, which one do you think is more important for a child to have using the scale below, where 1 means it is much more important for them to have the first trait, and 4 means it is much more important for them to have the second trait.



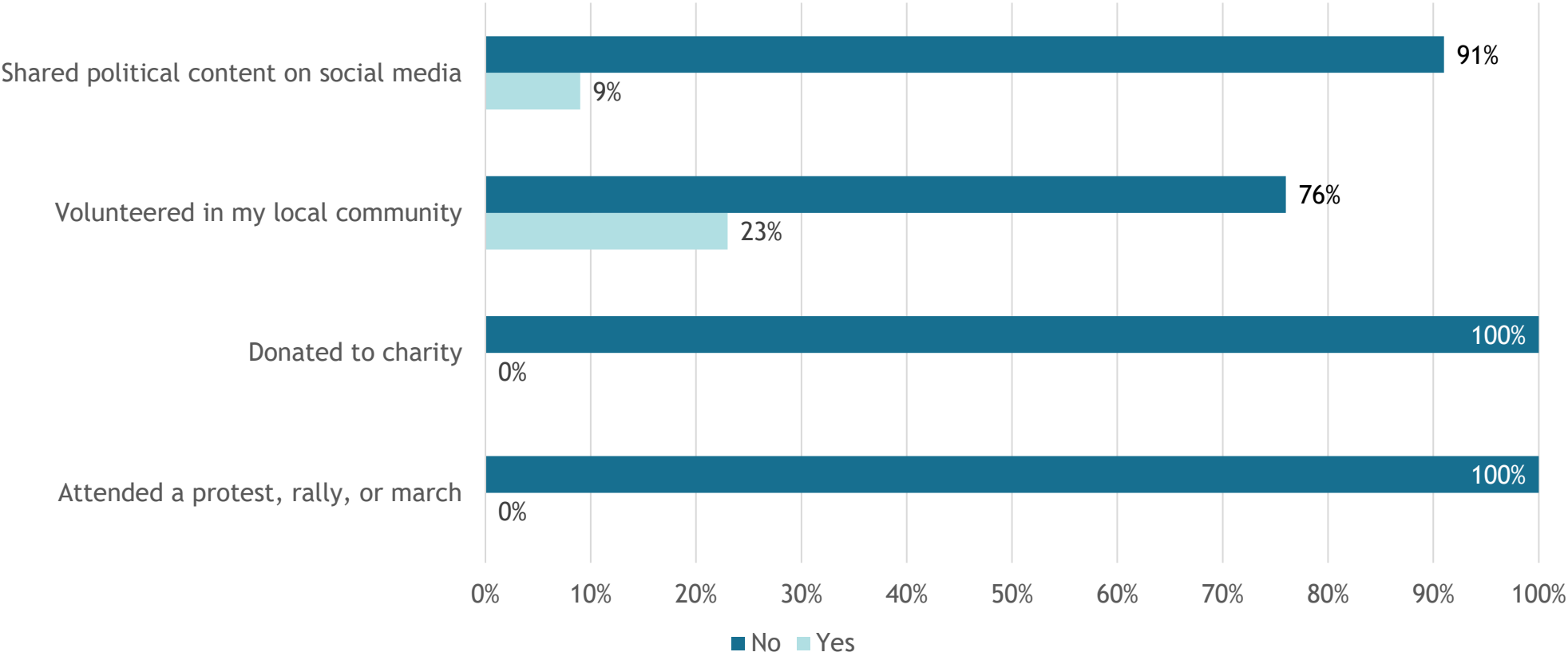
Views on control over how life turns out

Please say how well the following statements reflect your views using the scale below, where 1 means you agree completely with the first statement, and 4 means you agree completely with the second statement:



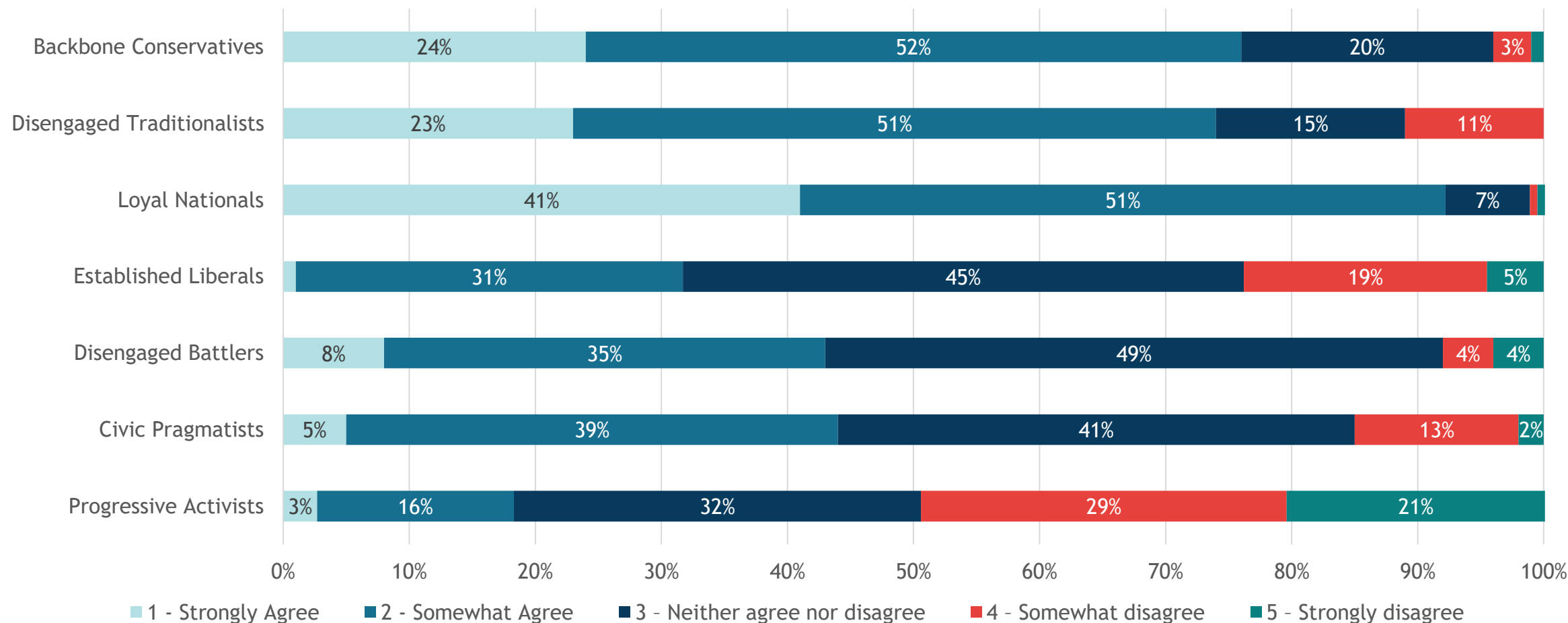
Political and civic participation

Here is a list of activities that some people get a chance to participate in and others don't. Which of the following have you taken part in in the past year?

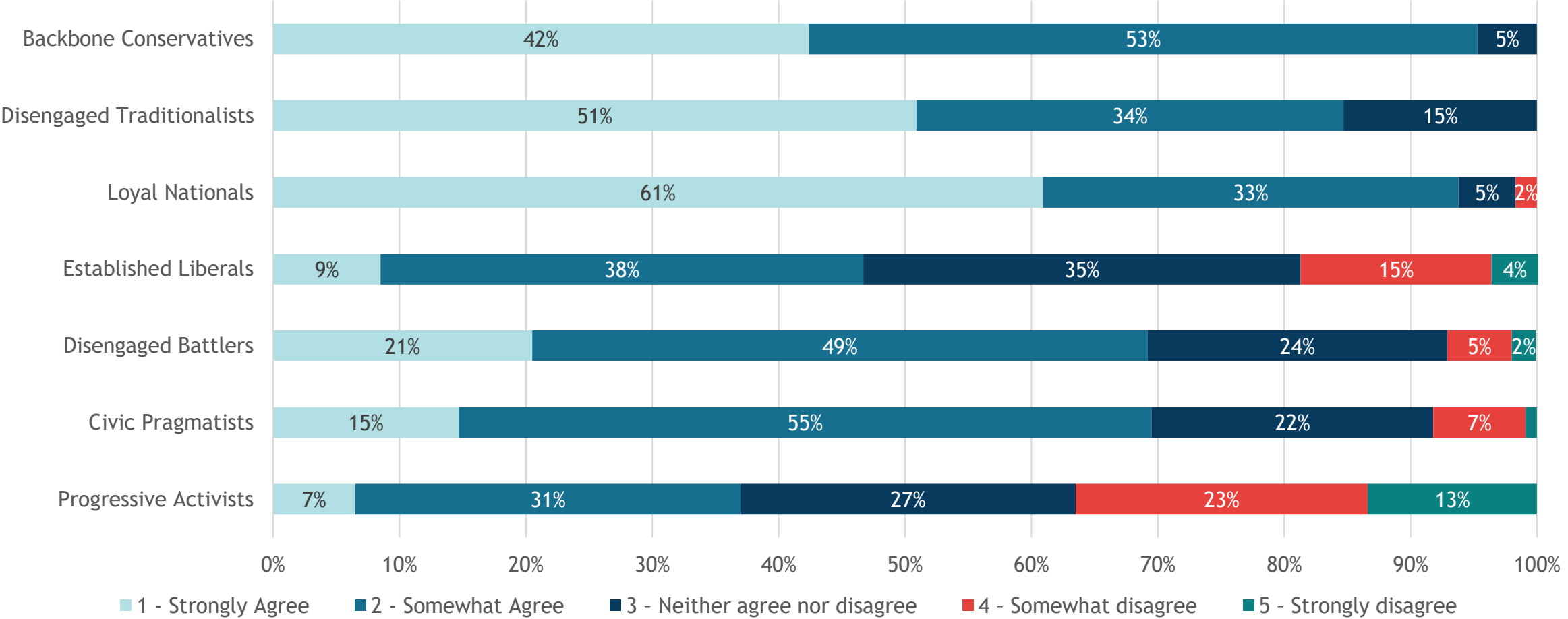


APPENDIX

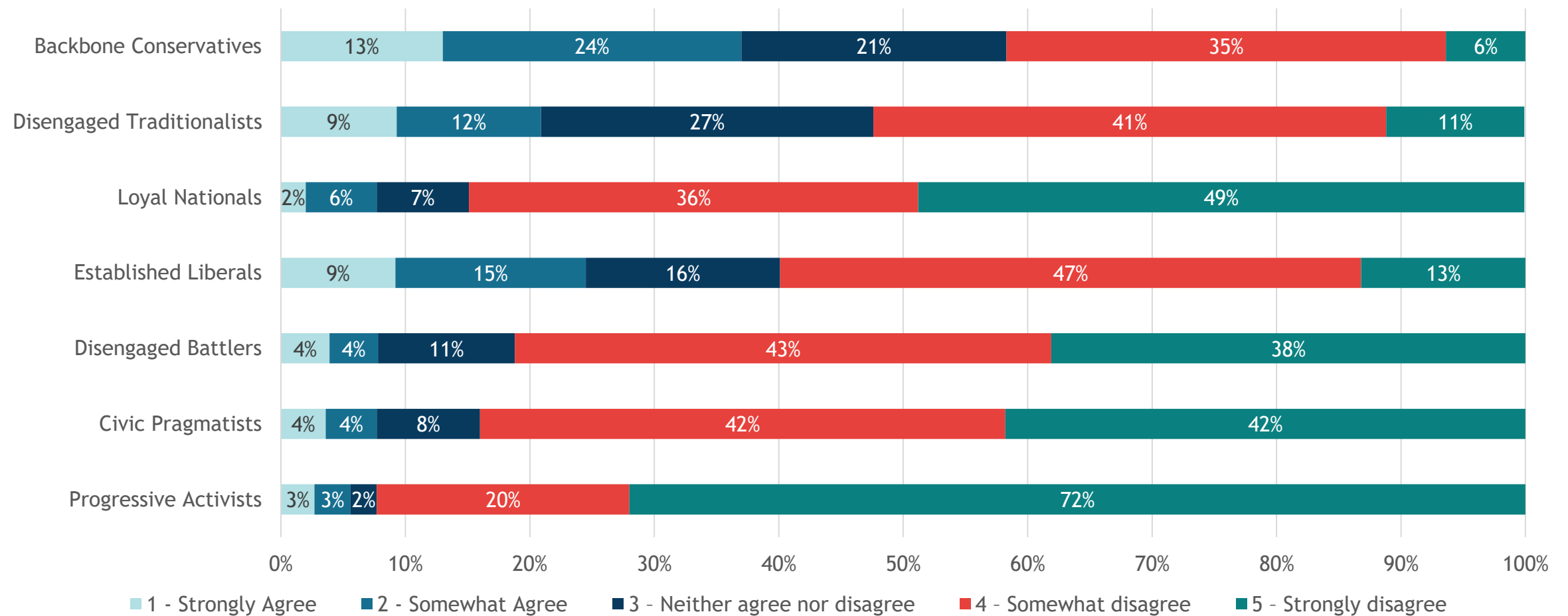
Young people don't have enough respect for traditional British values



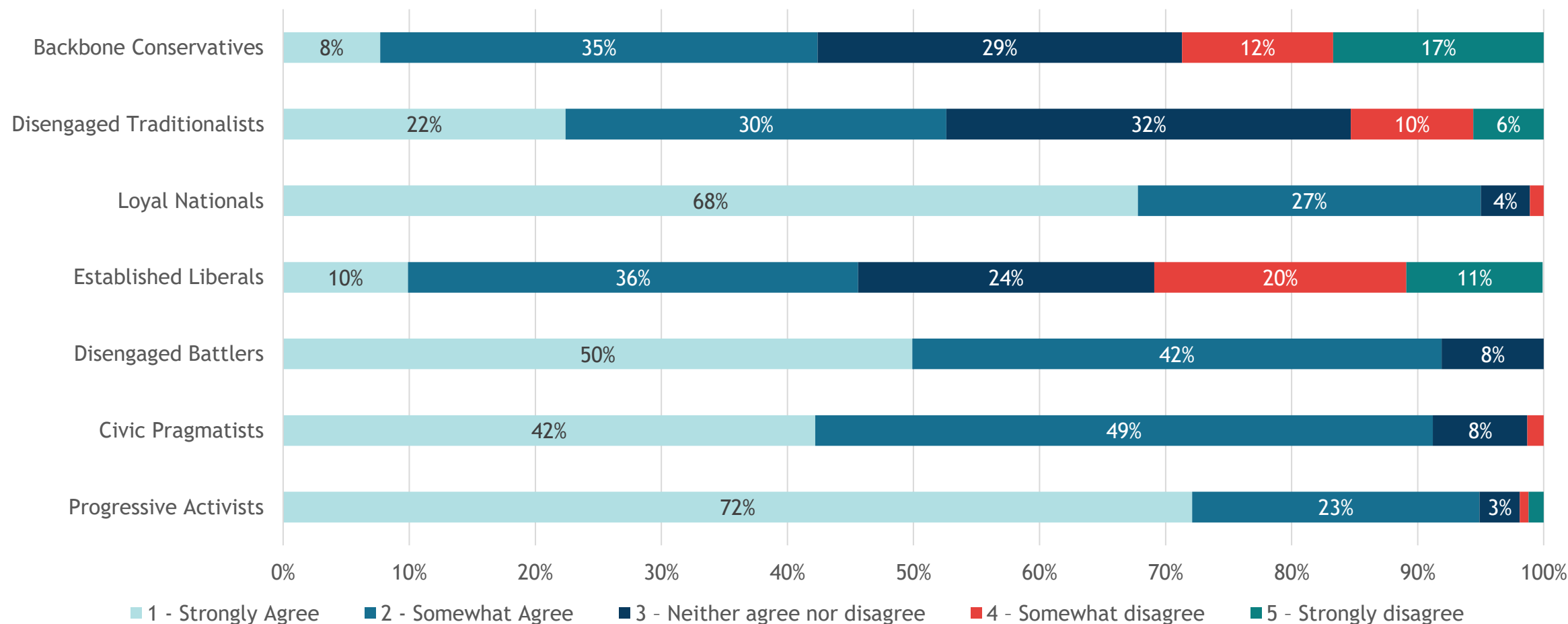
People who break the law should be given harsher/stiffer sentences



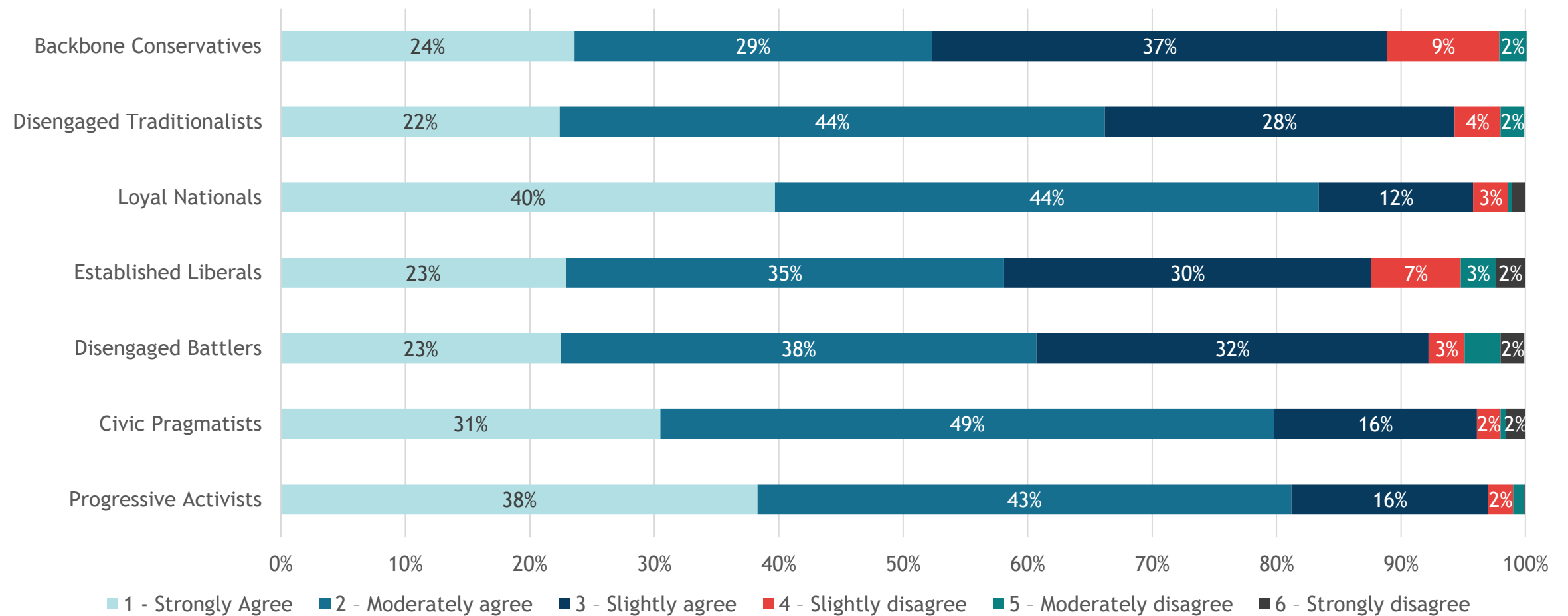
Ordinary working people get their fair share of the nation's wealth



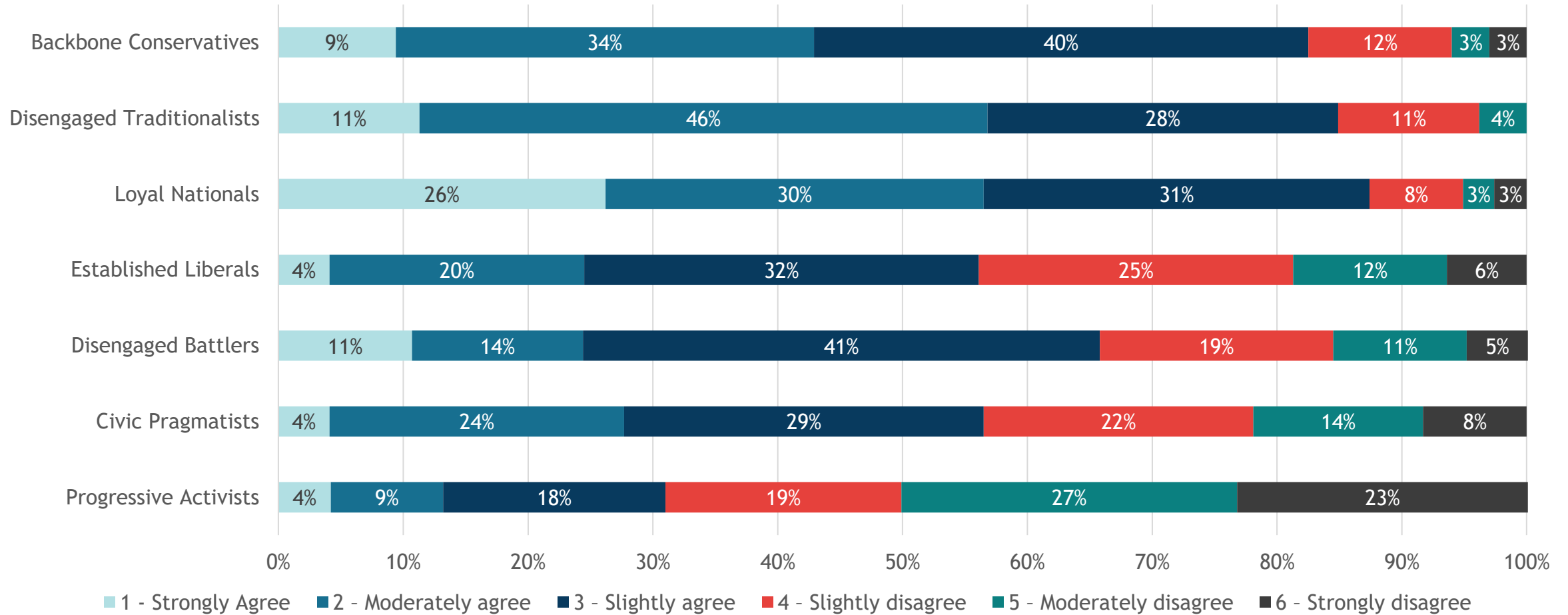
There is one law for the rich and one for the poor



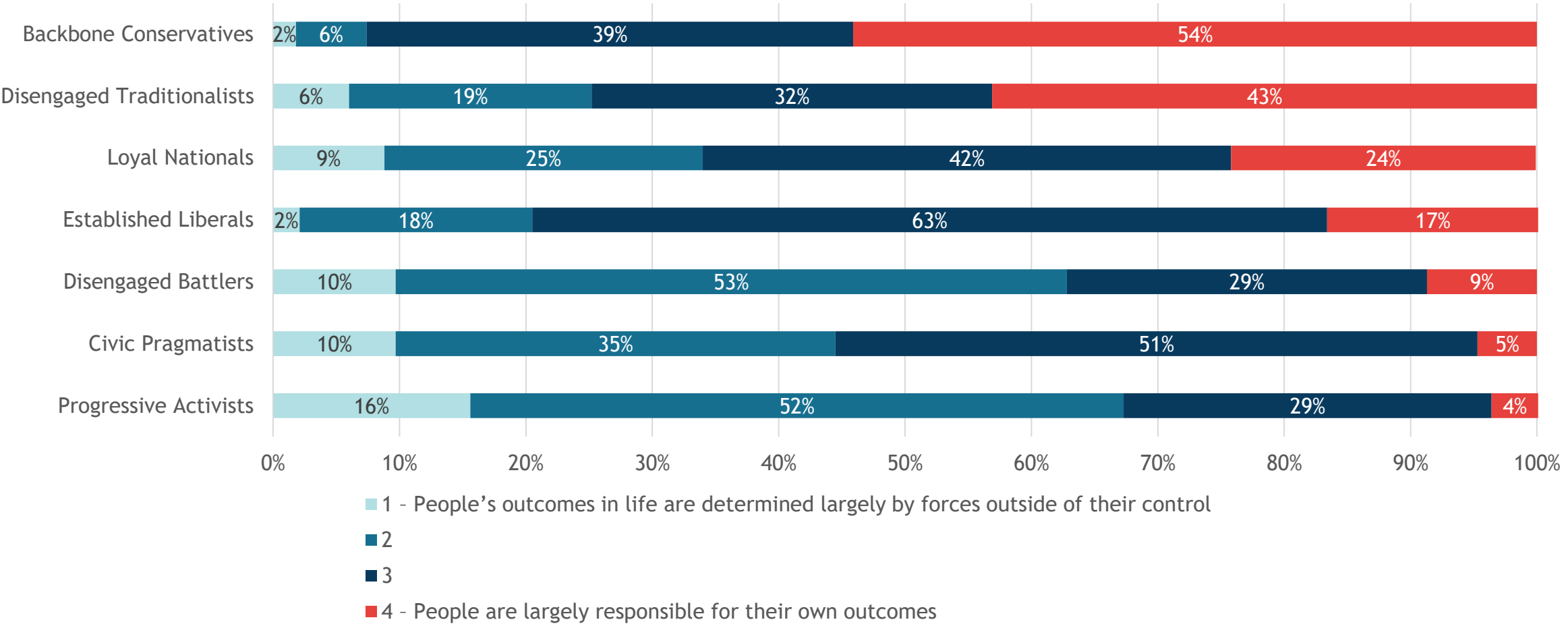
Compassion for those who are suffering is the most important virtue in a person



I would call some acts wrong on the grounds that they are unnatural



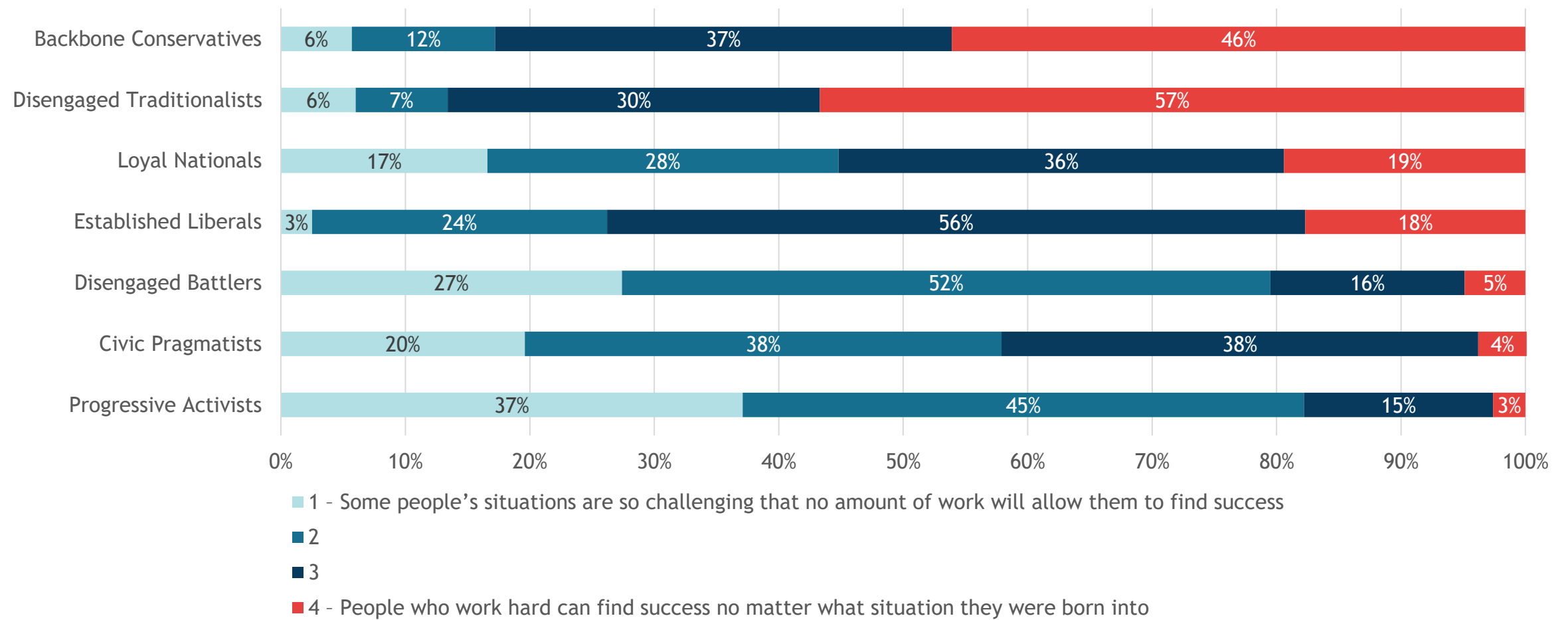
How well do the following statements reflect your views?



Question: Please say how well the following statements reflect your views using the scale below, where 1 means you agree completely with the first statement, and 4 means you agree completely with the second statement.

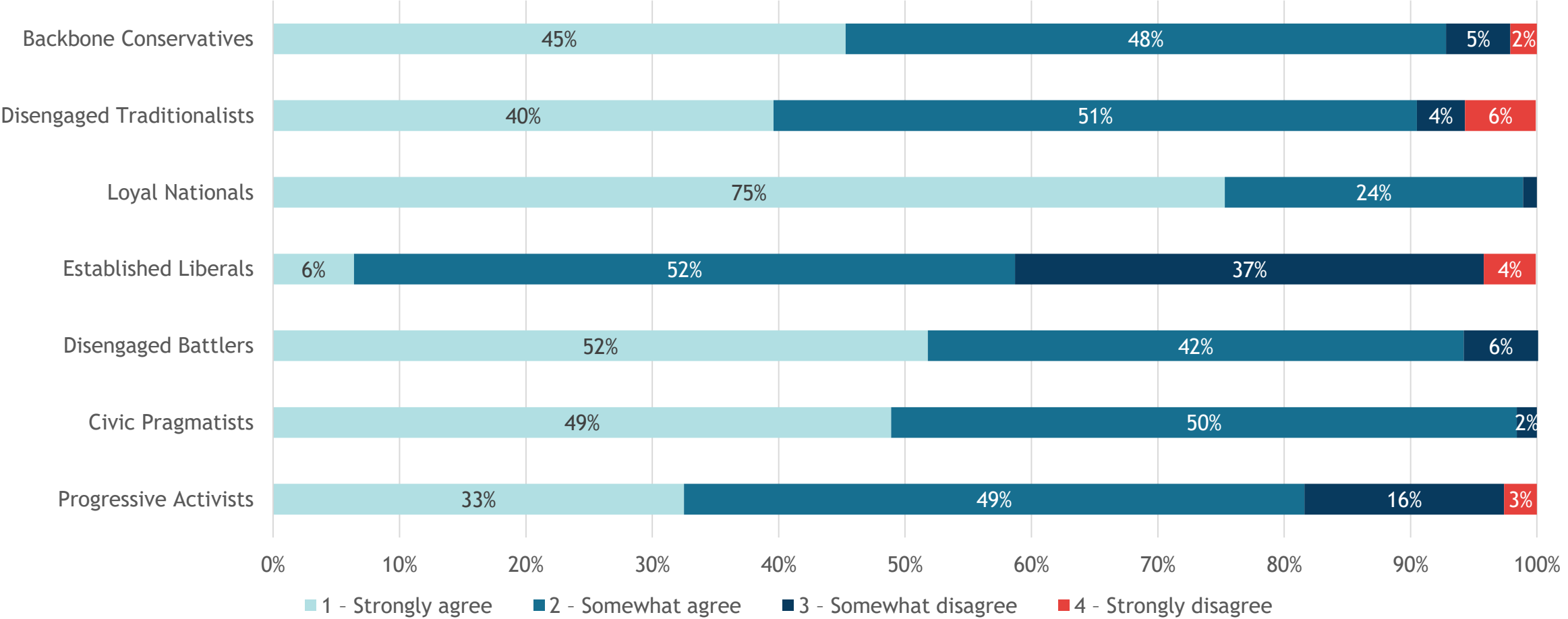


How much control do you feel most people have over the way their life turns out?

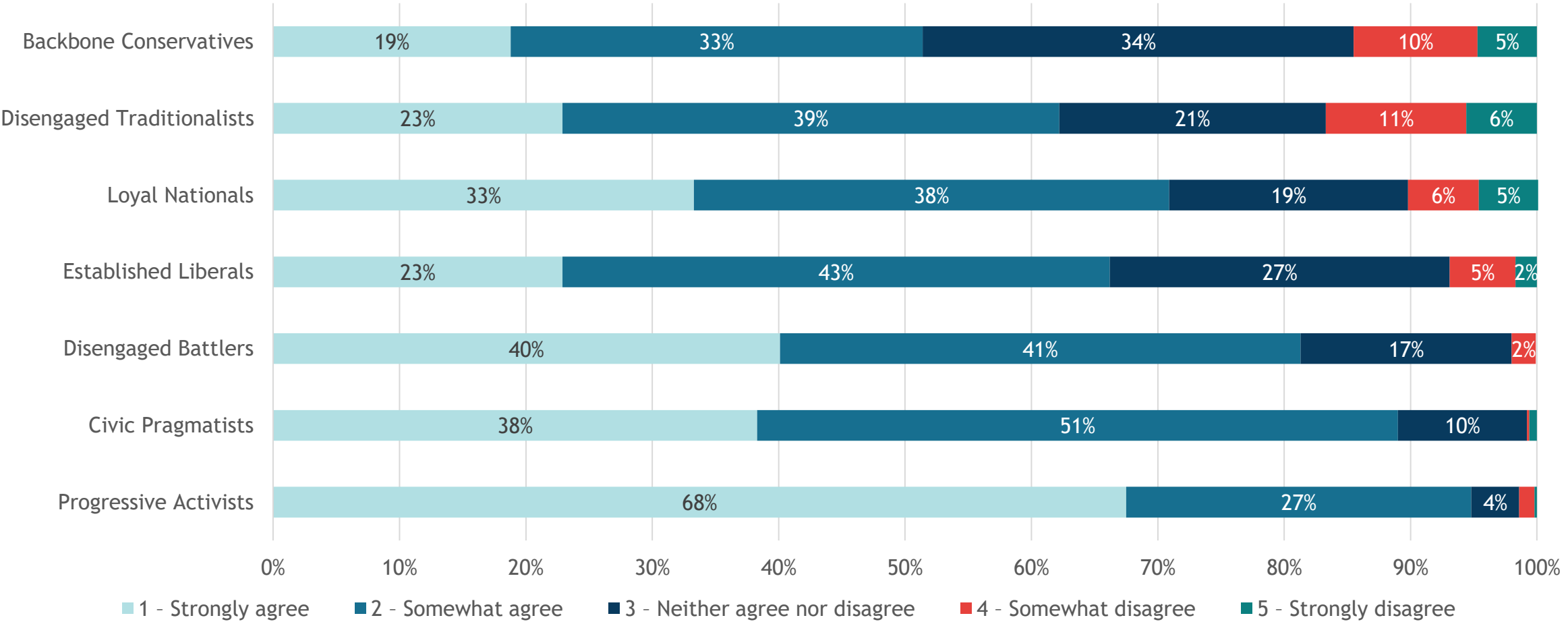


Question: Please say how well the following statements reflect your views using the scale below, where 1 means you agree completely with the first statement, and 4 means you agree completely with the second statement.

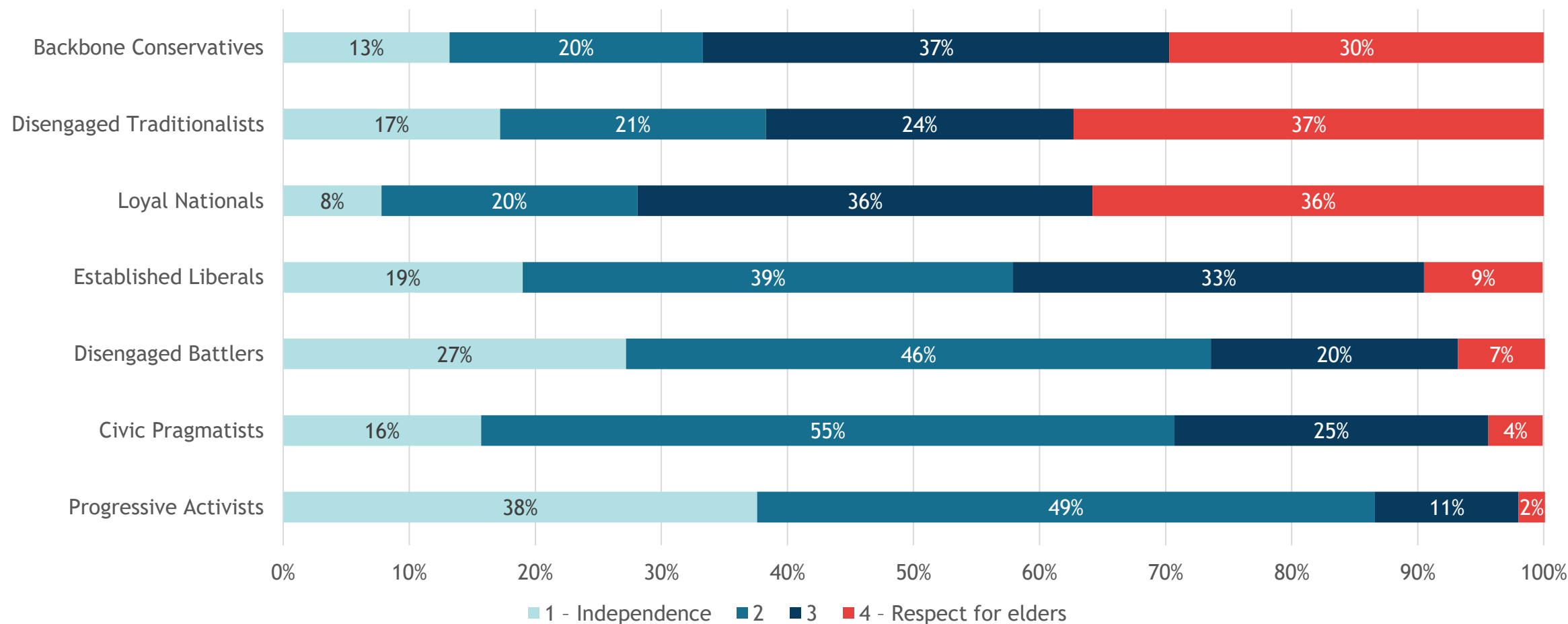
The world is becoming a more and more dangerous place



Muslims are often unfairly treated with suspicion due to prejudice

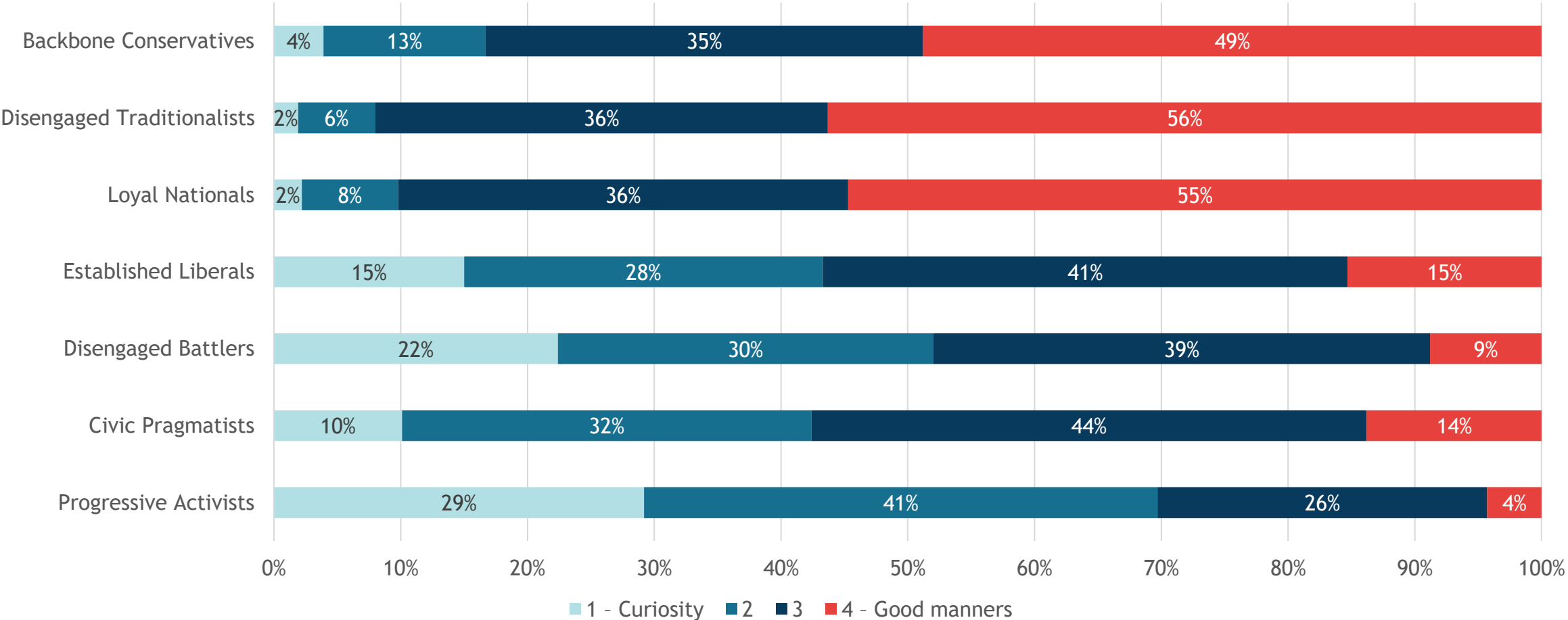


Which trait do you think it is more important for a child to have?



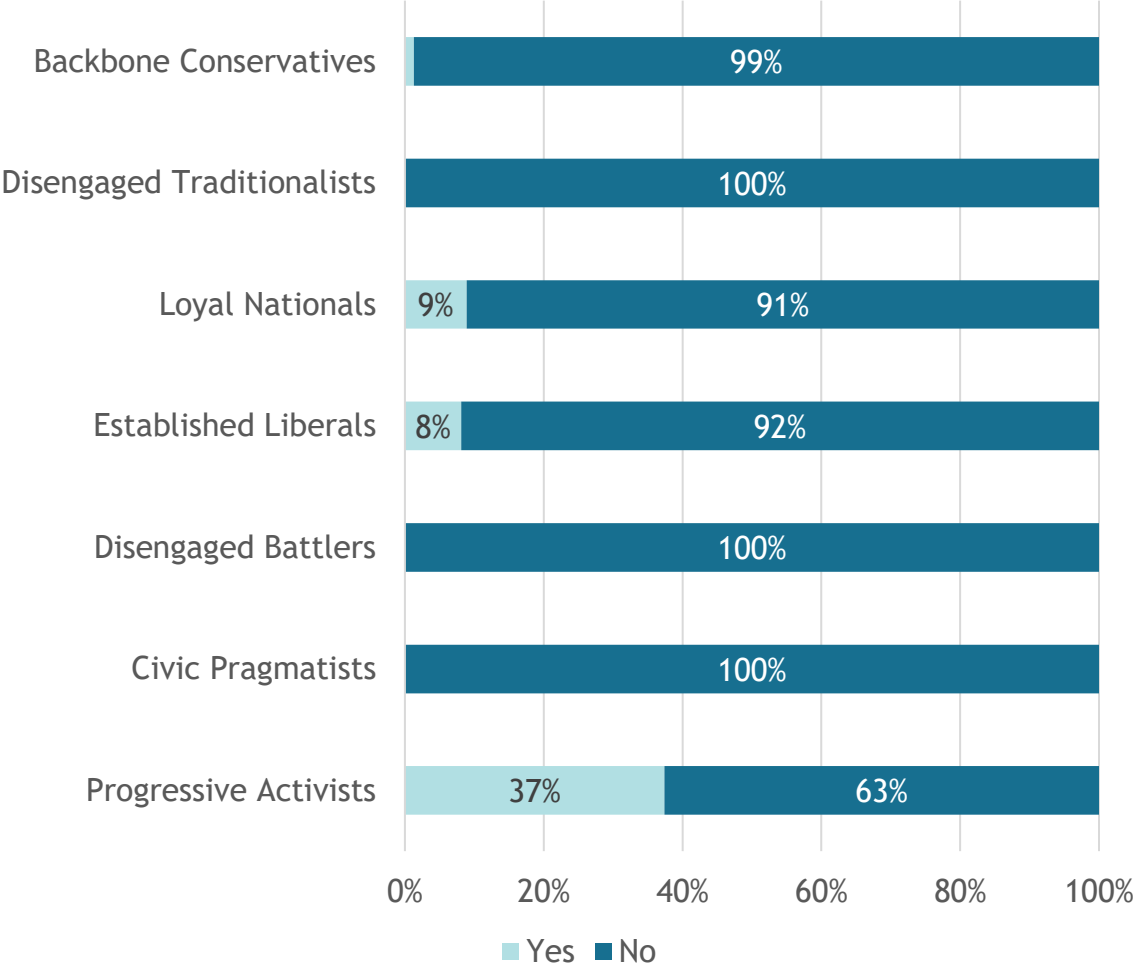
Question: For the following pair of traits, which one do you think is more important for a child to have using the scale below, where 1 means it is much more important for them to have the first trait, and 4 means it is much more important for them to have the second trait.

Which trait do you think it is more important for a child to have?

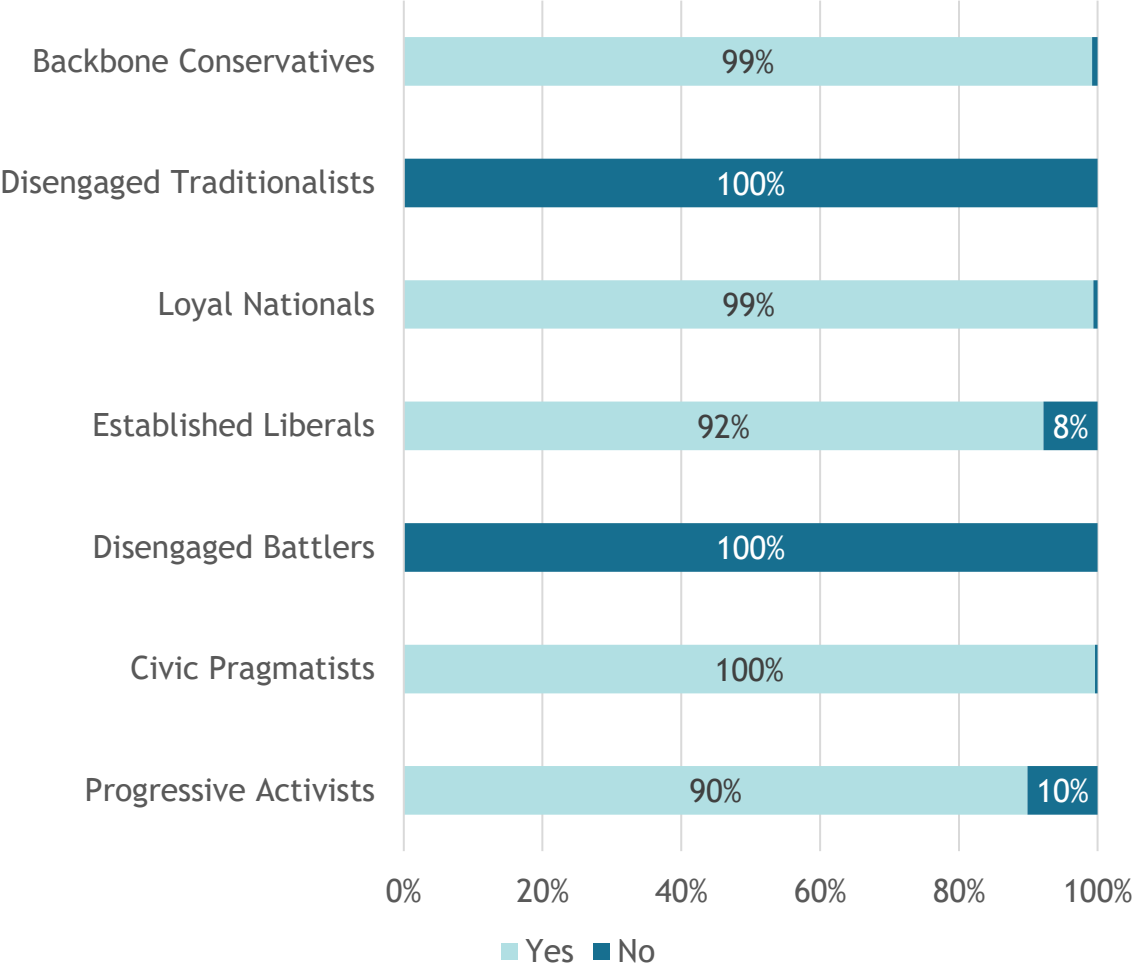


Question: For the following pair of traits, which one do you think is more important for a child to have using the scale below, where 1 means it is much more important for them to have the first trait, and 4 means it is much more important for them to have the second trait.

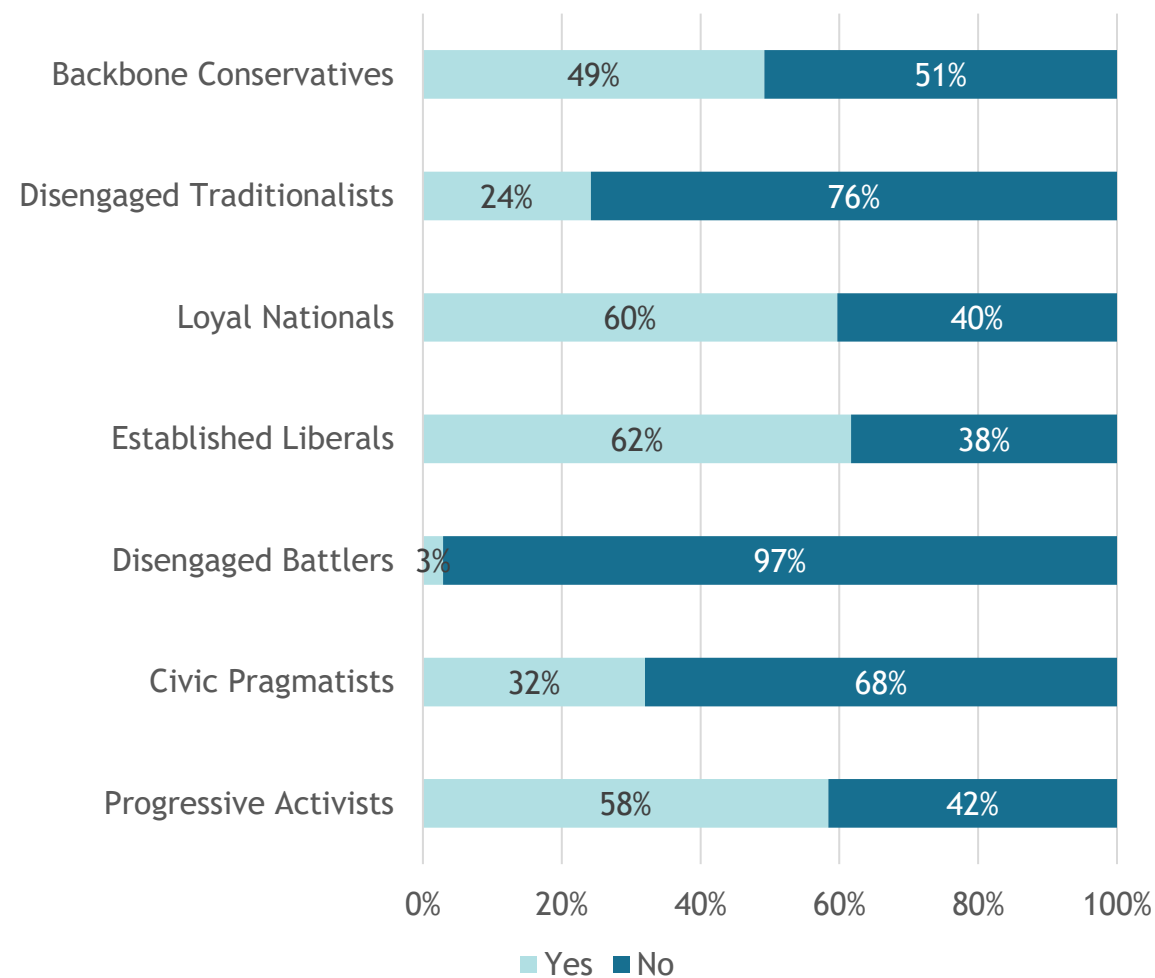
Attended a protest, rally or march



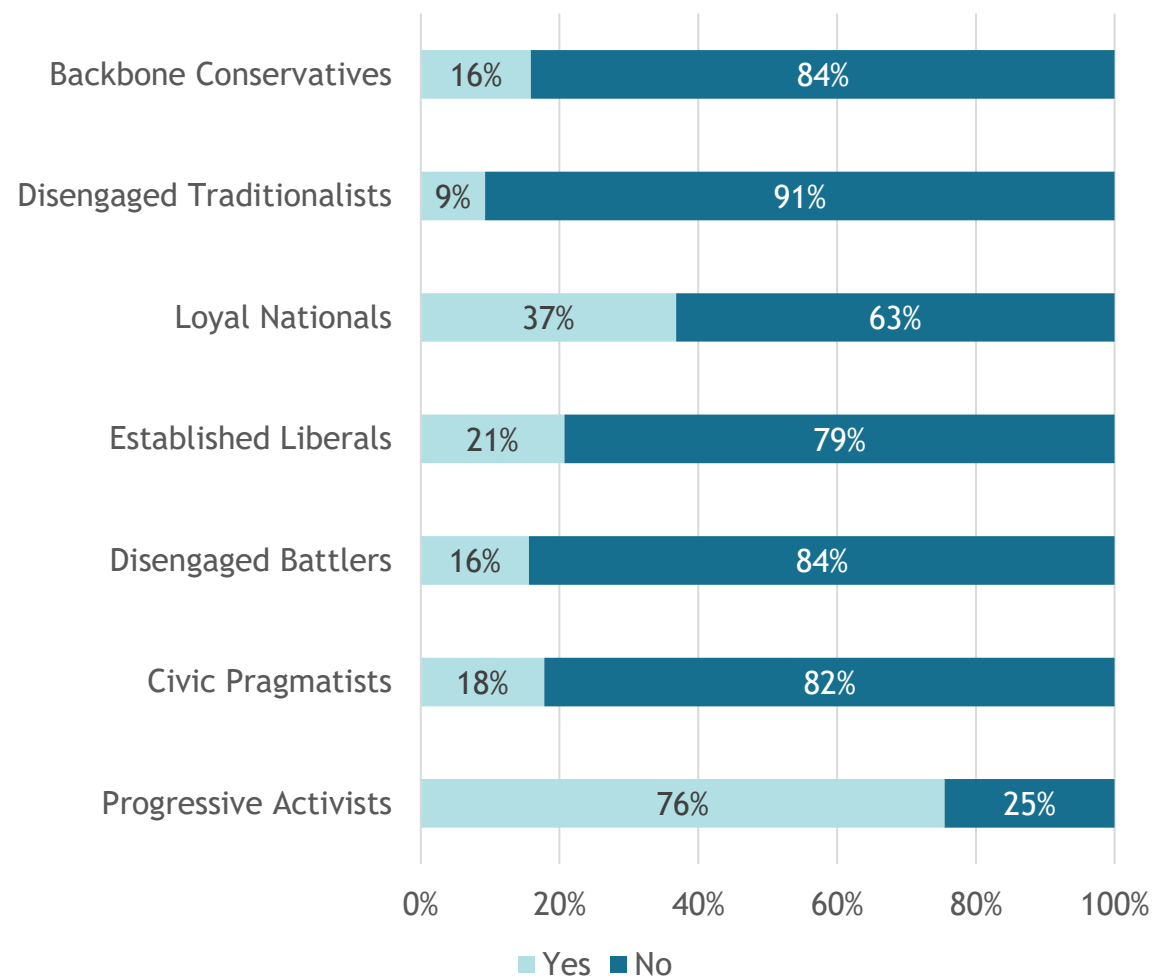
Donated to charity



Volunteered in my local community

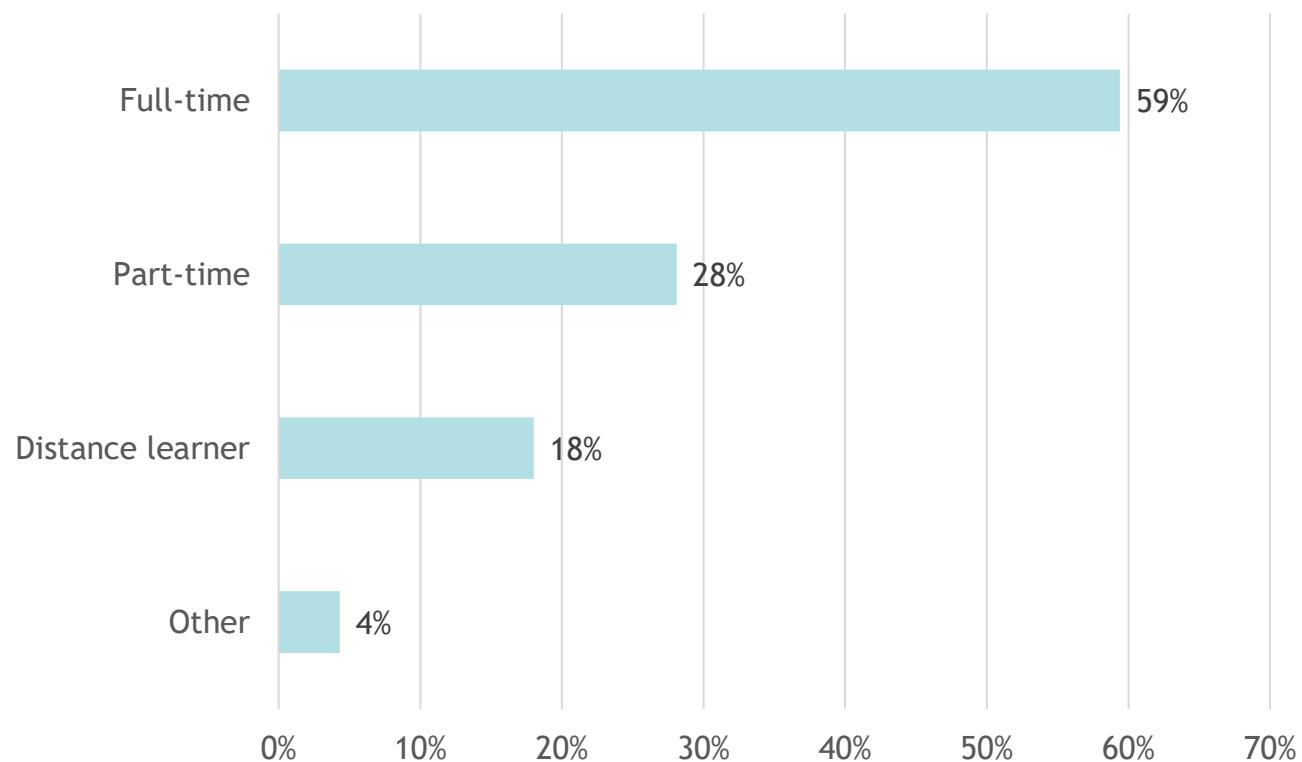


Shared political content on social media

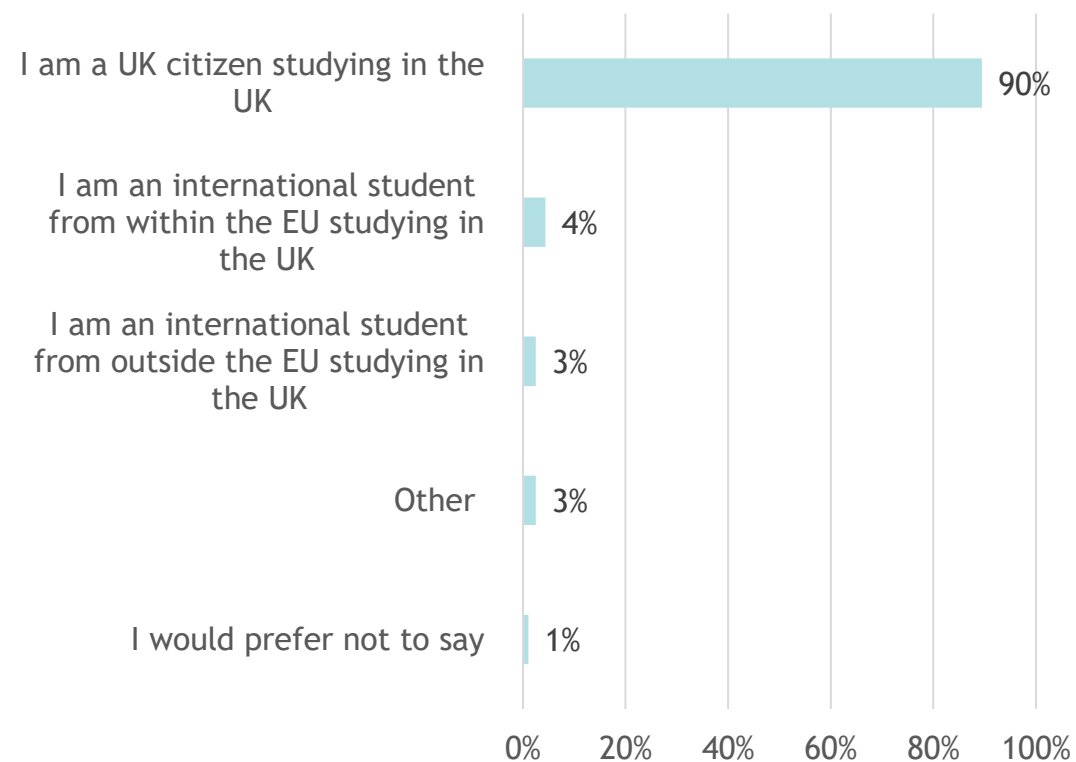


DEMOGRAPHICS

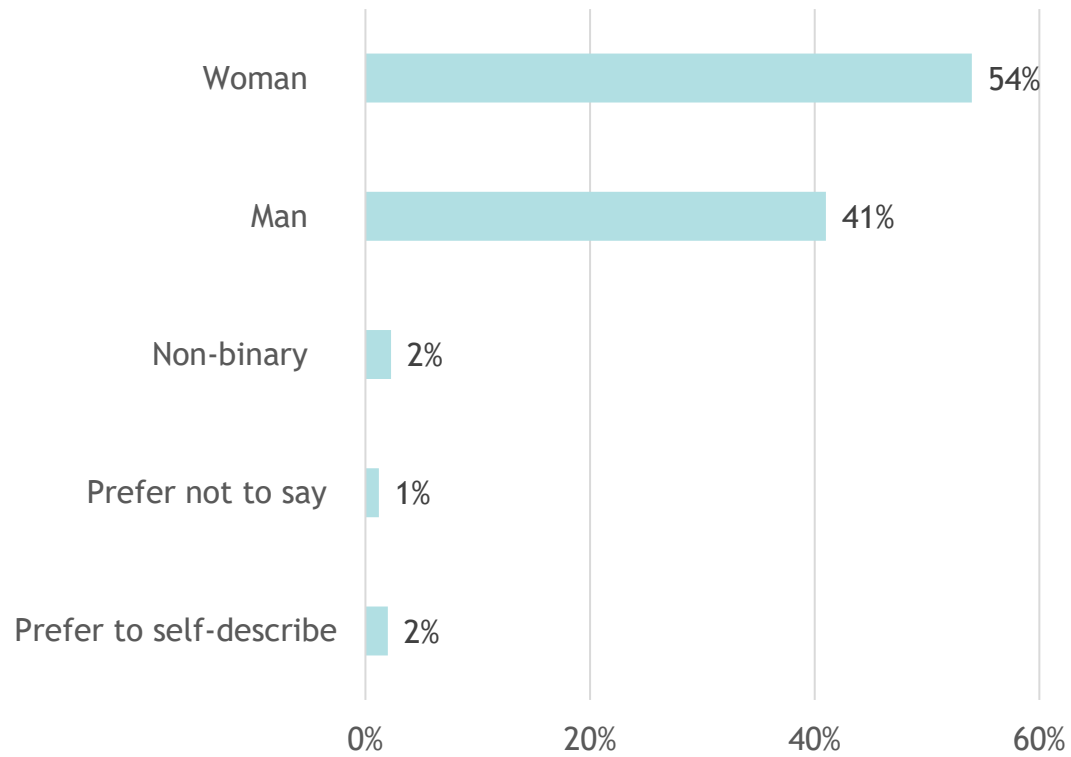
STUDY TYPE



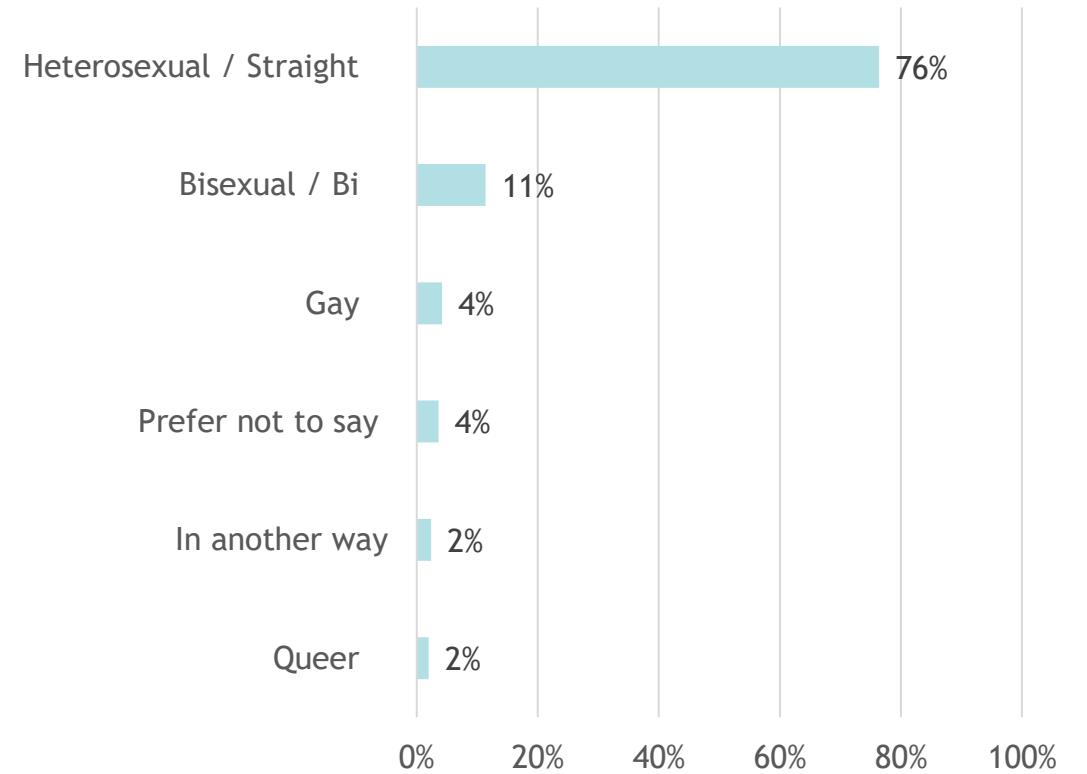
NATIONALITY



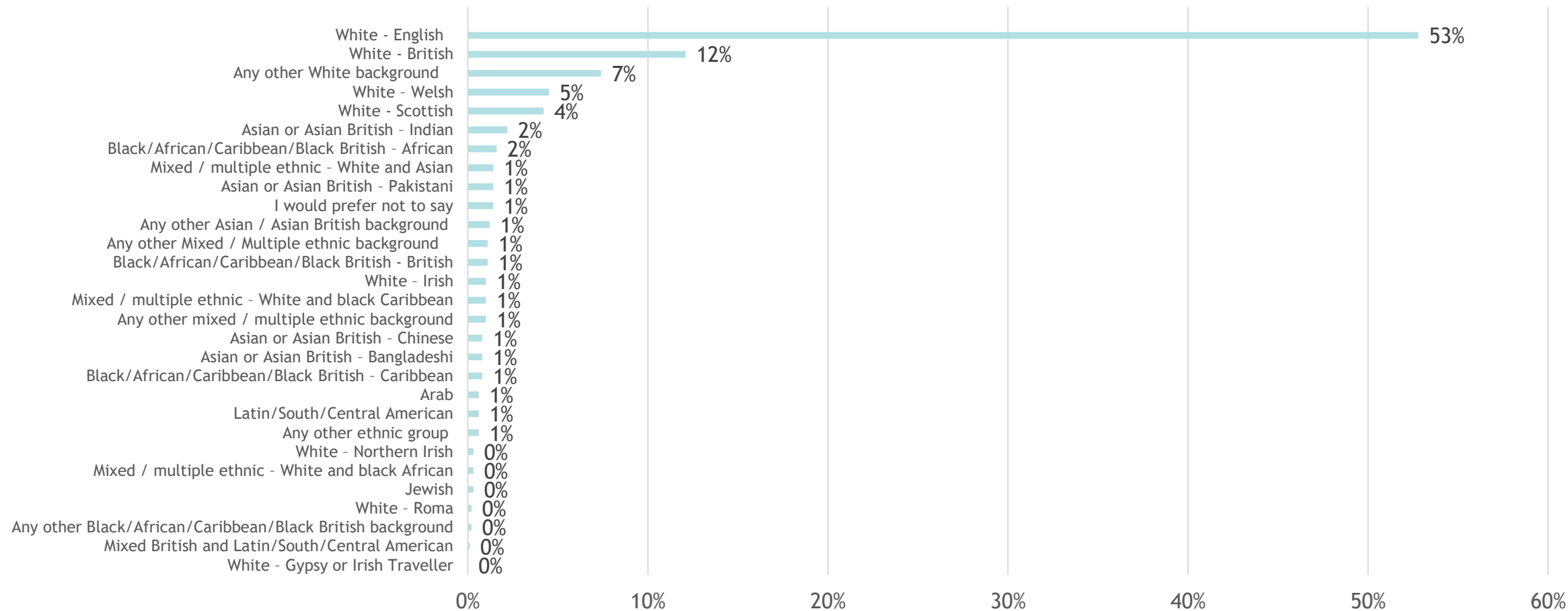
GENDER IDENTITY



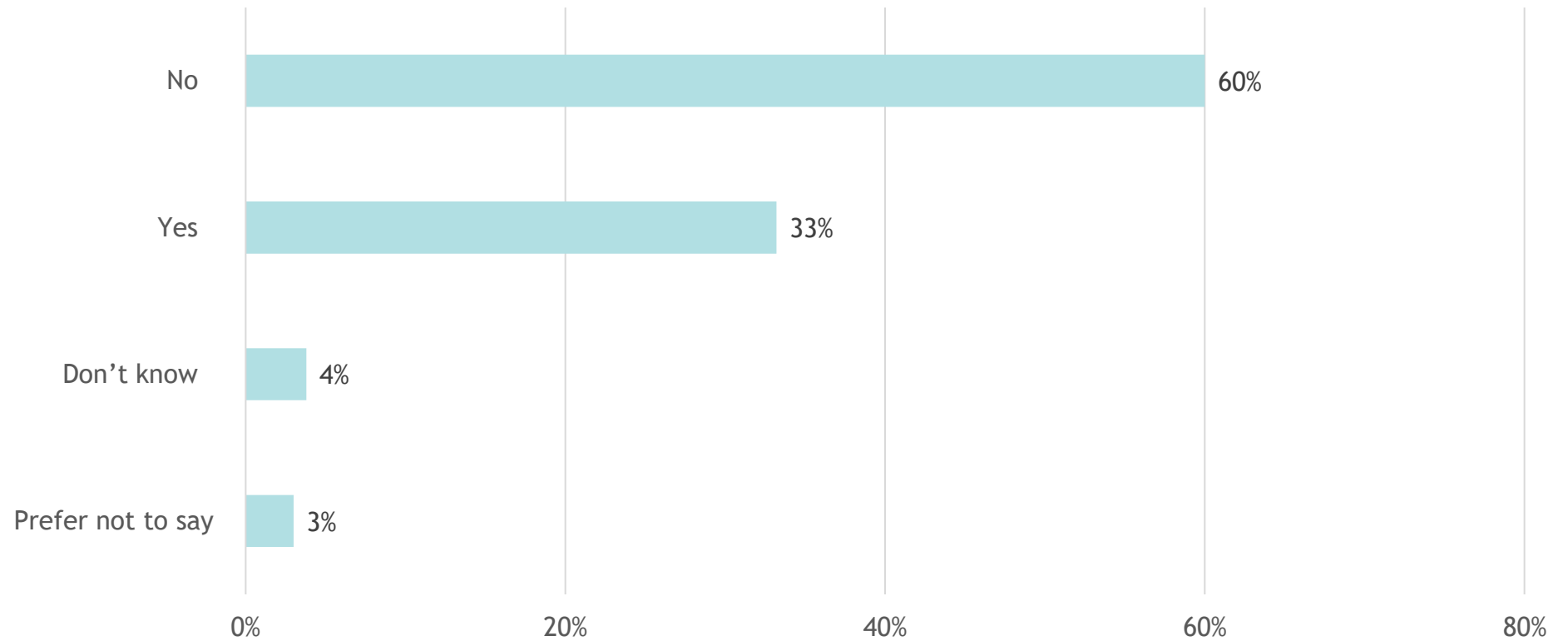
SEXUALITY



RACE / ETHNICITY



DISABILITY



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