HOPE NOT HATE
CHARITABLE TRUST

FEAR AND HOPE 2022

A REALIGNMENT OF IDENTITY POLITICS

HOPE not hate

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EDITORIAL

HOPE not hate first commissioned our Fear and Hope research in 2011, when the organisation found itself on the front-line of a new politics of identity. We developed a system of 'identity tribes' to better understand the lines that divide us and what brings us together, which has guided our work over the last decade.

In the recovery from a global pandemic but heading into economic recession, amidst a political context of culture wars, Brexit fallouts and fracturing across the political spectrum, we revisited our Fear and Hope research. We find a new alignment of identity politics and the emergence of a new reactionary right threat.

Written by Rosie Carter and Nick Lowles, with thanks to James Kanagasooriam, Nick Partington and Stack Data, Focaldata, Anthony Painter, Eve Kasperaviciute and Andy Vine for their contribution.

FOREWORD

Anthony Painter

In the recent BBC drama, Sherwood, we are led into the lives of a former mining community in Nottinghamshire. Since the miners' strike in the 1980s, the community has been experiencing a kind of collective post-traumatic stress disorder. A working class community deliberately divided and crushed by the might of the Thatcherite state suddenly experiences a spate of murders. We are led to believe that some sort of political retribution for the 1980s is the motive of the killer.

For those who don't like spoilers, stop reading now. When the truth emerges it is far more shocking. The killer was facing prison for an innocent mistake leading to a benefit fraud charge. The little future he has is stolen. He takes his revenge out on those in the community who enjoy status and standing where he has little. This Robin Hood levels up his status by becoming a brutal killer, righting the wrongs of his secluded, ostracised life in the process, in his eyes at least. Politics and ideology, history, culture and community all lie in the background. Yet, his motives are ultimately nihilistic and seemingly random.

And sat alongside me as I watch Sherwood is the latest *Fear and HOPE* report, a little over a decade from the original. The two relate for reasons I will return to. Back in 2011, I remember vividly Nick Lowles and I looking at the data that emerged from the original *Fear and HOPE* report. Three things were immediately striking.

The rise of the BNP as a violent movement repurposed for the New Labour era albeit with an undercurrent of threat and hatred was visible in one of the 'identity tribes', the 'active enmity'. The good news was that its growth was likely to be contained. So it turned out – with a lot of amazing campaigning work by Hope not Hate and many others in Dagenham and many other places besides. Lowles remarked at the time that UKIP looked likely to prosper, looking at a large group, nationalistic, authoritarian, hostile to immigration and Muslims, yet antipathetic towards violence. So it was to be. Yet there was another group, the 'identity ambivalents', whose economic insecurity could open up opportunities for the right (and for the far left as it happens though we didn't imagine that). The story of the 2010s is of 'identity ambivalents' being softened up for Brexit by austerity. Then an authoritarian, nationalistic and immigrant hostile UKIP-led campaign. Leave.eu, the bad boys of Brexit, super-charging the 'latent hostiles' into the referendum.

The data was all in the original *Fear and HOPE* report. A combination of David Cameron who called the referendum, George Osborne who delivered the austerity, and Nigel Farage who injected the emotional charge delivered Brexit. The good, through perhaps temporary news, is that Brexit has seemingly taken the sting out of the immigration debate. Brexit was delivered, we have temporarily taken back control, the right wing media have moved onto other issues such as climate change, remote working, wokeism, lockdowns, transgender rights, and so immigration is no longer quite the fault-line it once was. We are still stuck with low productivity growth, deep income inequality, a trade deal that means we no longer even have a domestic single market and regional disparity, but we have taken back control.

Many progressives have celebrated this de-toxification of the immigration debate – though note the deportation of asylum seekers to Rwanda and anger at English Channel crossings. They will find much to cheer in the latest version of the *Fear and HOPE* report and further encouragement from a widening social liberal consensus (up to a point). But just as the first *Fear and HOPE* report both helped us comprehend the politics of the present and pointed to the politics of the next decade, so the latest reports flashes warning signals at us brightly and persistently. We better have the Chernobyl control-room manual to hand.

Hope not Hate exists to combat hostility and enmity. The former makes life relentlessly hard for those from certain backgrounds and with particular characteristics. Enmity reaches into violent means periodically. Over the past decade, so many policy seminars, pamphlets, books and conferences have been devoted to reconnecting politics with traditional working class communities and values in an attempt to rebuild fractured coalitions between progressives and social conservatives. Out of this process, two distinct movements, Blue Labour and red Toryism appeared. The former had more staying power. And yet, like the detectives in Sherwood, this endeavour has completely missed the changing nature of modern politics; locked in a history two generations away.

This is where the new *Fear and HOPE* report comes in with its new method for helping us understand our present and future: the Fear Index. Rosie Carter and team have done an incredible job of gathering, analysing and interpreting the data. They have produced another seminal work. What they have discovered is that the future of hostility – and enmity – is far more contingent, emotive, conditional and shape-shifting than it was in the past. It is becoming unmoored from particular communities and demographics. Far from a coherent sociological or ideological edifice, it is defined by emotionally charged issues, networks, some odd alliances, saviour leaders, truth tellers fighting to rid society of its comfortable, smug elites lying to retain their economic, political and cultural standing.

In the next decade, we will see a whole host of entrepreneurial mobilisers of fear of lost status, charging and being charged by emotive issues of perceived cultural or social threat. Some will exist on fringe online platforms. They will be in and out of prison, dancing on the edge and into violence, committing fraud, petty crime and marking the fringe of the law as they go. Others will be within mainstream politics, helping a confused world make sense of complexity, telling truths to cut through the woke miasma and tapping into discontent wherever it can enhance their brand. Boris Johnson was simply the prototype. The model will be refined.

For progressives this form of politics will be bewildering, disorientating and perplexing. Used to established institutions, rational policy, ethical grounding, and long-term continuity, they will be distracted by issues they don't understand, don't see as relevant, or see as honest. Or they will ignore them making them seem irrelevant. Yet fact-checking, impulsive response, angry exchanges on Twitter and in chat show studios will seem to highlight their difficulty in responding to an emotionally charged politics. For those at the higher levels on the fear index, the progressive or liberal mode of politics will miss the point every time. For those in the middle, it will appear that way some of the time at least.

Despite the forces of fear storming the Capitol in January 2021, surely a moment to see a political cordon sanitaire erected if there ever was one, the mobilisers of fear and perceived lost status and victimhood are once again politically (and economically) prospering in the US. President Biden's early FDR-style progressive advance stalled and President Trump is back in town. A quasi legal investigation is underway. The risk is that it may build rather than diminish the Trump brand. Fortunately, the UK isn't there- yet at least.

We can easily imagine our killer in Sherwood being one of the storming protesters in DC, January 6th 2021. His youth is also a warning: hostility is no longer a predominantly older man's game. Hope not Hate will help us navigate this environment. They will identify when nationalism or the thirst for authority becomes hostility and enmity. They will highlight moments of national togetherness and what communities have in common. They will help us identify how reformed community support, policing and security as well as economic approaches have to change to drain the hostility swamp. Hope not Hate will highlight media and political narratives that have the potential to make the lives of some a misery and risk morphing into violence. This report points to a difficult future; it also emphasises why Hope not Hate and its work is so essential.

Anthony Painter is Director of Policy and External Affairs at the Chartered Management Institute, and previously led the RSA's Research and Impact team. He co-authored the first Fear and HOPE *report in 2011.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

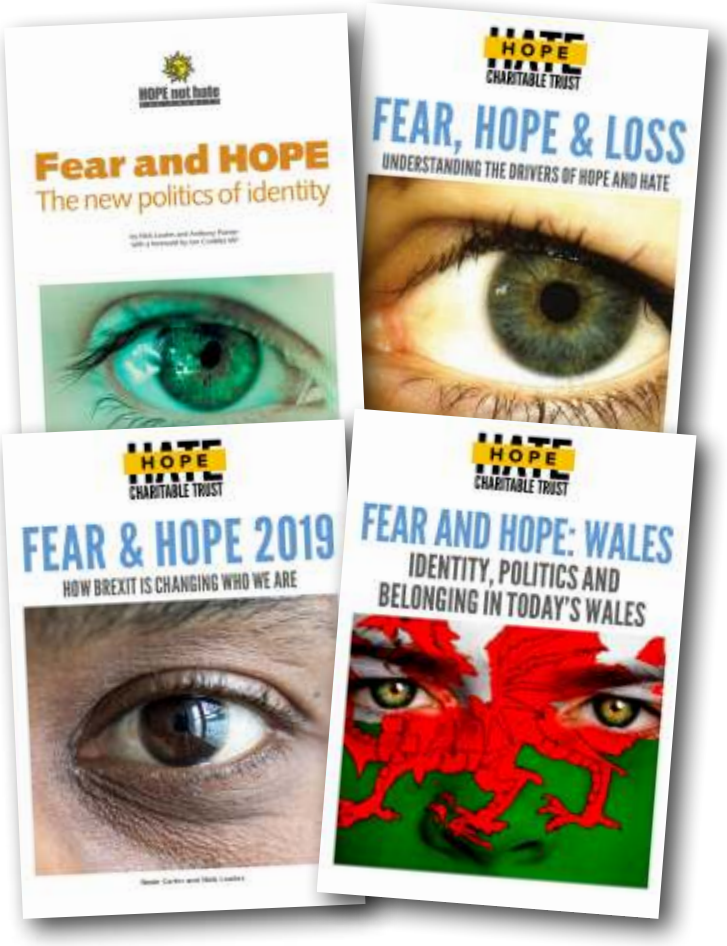
HOPE not hate first commissioned our *Fear and HOPE* research in 2011, when the organisation found itself on the front-line of a new politics of identity. At a time when the British National Party were in decline but the EDL were on the rise and UKIP were positioning themselves as a more respectable face to the radical right, we were dealing with a shift away from the politics of race and immigration of the past, towards a politics of culture, identity and nation.

We developed six 'identity tribes' to better understand the lines that divide us, what brings us together, and to understand what fears were driving hate in our communities, and where we could foster hope.

A decade later, we recommissioned our *Fear and HOPE* research to better understand how social attitudes have changed over the last decade. In the recovery from a global pandemic but heading into economic recession, amidst a political context of culture wars, Brexit fallouts and fracturing across the political spectrum, our research finds a new alignment of identity politics, and the emergence of a new reactionary right threat.

- Over the last decade, there has been a huge shift in public attitudes as overall, society has become more socially liberal. We are, on the whole, a far more open and tolerant society, and while many challenges remain, we are more confident to speak out about social injustices, especially around race and sexuality, than we were ten years ago.
- In 2011, just under half the population felt immigration had been good for the country (40%) while now a majority agree (56%). And while just 29% said that the different ethnic groups that make up this country get along well in 2011, a decade later this stands at 41%.
- But as a society, we are more likely to feel disappointed with our own lives (32%) than we were in 2011 (25%) and less in control of our own successes (35% compared to 25% in 2011). The precarity many feel as we enter a difficult economic period is likely to spread. And for some, this is articulated through an assertion of status based on identity.
- Anti-Muslim prejudice and anti-asylum narratives are deeply engrained, while the 'culture wars' have reframed questions of racial equality, gender and sexuality, to fuel a reactionary identity politics that kicks back against progressive norms. Attitudes on key social issues are now less structured by ideology than they were ten years ago, with a greater focus on single issues.
- Identity politics have increasingly been framed around a reaction to progressive values, cutting across multiple issues, from modern masculinity to structural racism and trans rights. Meanwhile a crystallisation among those with the most socially liberal views has meant a progressive worldview has increasingly been weaponised by the reactionary right to tap into new audiences.
- While our research reaffirms that the culture wars are not reflected in deep societal polarisation, as public attitudes remain balanced and often largely ambivalent on key 'culture war' issues, we do find that this strategy has had an impact in reframing political debates, and in turn, is shaping a more reactive identity politics. Not all issues have become 'polarised' in the same way. Indeed, as the politics of identity have played out over the last decade, certain attitudes, values, or framings on key issues have become more dominant.
- The new politics of identity is structured around four elements; attitudes around identity, political and institutional trust, attitudes towards different cultures and religions and openness to conspiracy theory.
- The far right have, for a long time, targeted a stable demographic of older, non-graduate, white British voters, more often male than female, and generally living in areas outside of core cities. But our research highlights that with a shift away from ideologically structured views, demographic characteristics are less of an attitudinal predictor.

- Rather than a unified bloc of 'far-right' voters, the new politics of identity opens up opportunities for those peddling hate to bring together a diverse collective of voters who hold reactionary views on certain issues. Our research highlights the importance of understanding how to engage with these new audiences.
- There is a worrying growth of reactionary identity issues amongst young people – and in particular young men. We find that it is younger people who are far more likely to voice support for a reactionary right party that stands against 'woke culture', while the strongest opposition comes from older respondents. This would seem to contradict trends, whereby younger people are more socially liberal overall, and more likely to vote for parties on the political left. But the changing nature of the political right, the rise of reactionary identity politics, and the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns on young people has opened space for a new party on the right to gain ground with young voters.
- People's relationships with authority, trust and institutions will be a key battleground for the coming years. For most, politics is a 'one-way-street'. Overall, 65% of our poll agreed that voting is the best way to have your voice heard by those in power, with only 13% in disagreement. Just 26% said that they felt confident that local councillors act in their best interests, while a majority (54%) felt that none of the main political parties speak for them. 57% agreed with the statement 'the political system is broken'.
- Economic inequality continues to shape attitudes and create openings for division. It is the growing economic difficulties that many people will face over the next year that offer the far right, as well as a populist or reactionary right, their best hope to expand. The impacts of the cost of living crisis, and the wider economic impact as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the implications of Brexit will all hit the poorest in society hardest.
- The new politics of identity has not evolved, and will not play out, spontaneously. Shifts in public opinion are strongly influenced by events and their political framings. In an increasingly issue based setting, being able to create and capitalise on events, moments and opportunities is essential. Just as the 'culture wars' have shifted the debate to a more reactionary place, the creation of moments and opportunities can turn the dial to a more progressive place.
- In response to the rise of reactionary youth as a new and key change in society, HOPE not hate is developing a new work stream to address this. We plan to make youth radicalisation a priority area for the organisation over the next few years, utilising skills and expertise from our research, education, policy and campaign teams.



INTRODUCTION

HOPE not hate first commissioned our *Fear and HOPE* research in 2011, when the organisation found itself on the front-line of a new politics of identity. The threat of the British far-right was broadening its reach into the mainstream, and shaping the broader political spectrum as it did. While the British National Party were fading, we were seeing new forms of extremism take hold of communities across the country.

The English Defence League were on the rise, peddling anti-Muslim hatred through mass demonstrations, while at a local level mosque planning applications had become acute points of community tension. And radical right party UKIP had begun to capture an anti-immigration and anti-EU sentiment that had a more respectable face than the BNP, appealing to an even bigger audience.

We were dealing with a shift away from the politics of race and immigration of the past, towards a politics of culture, identity and nation.

This move continued through the 2010s. When we repeated our *Fear and HOPE* study in 2016 we found that recovery from the 2008 recession saw growing optimism, as England had become more tolerant and confident multicultural society than five years ago. Nonetheless, deep cultural gulfs remained and concerns about immigration, Islam and multiculturalism were widespread. In the 2016 EU referendum campaign we saw two very different visions of England clash, structured, in part, by the competing identity and values of voters at opposite poles of the identity politics spectrum.

Since the referendum, the long and drawn out process of leaving the EU saw the centrality of Brexit identities wane for many, but the identity issues which sat around the vote have remained. Meanwhile the global rise of populism furthered a political landscape based on culture and status. More and more, the national discourse has become fraught with 'culture war' debates – about everything from veganism to Winston Churchill's legacy.

Against this landscape, progressive social movements have taken hold internationally, with the Black Lives Matter, #MeToo and Extinction Rebellion movements taking to the streets and social media, but also mainstreaming social justice activism on a mass scale.

National media continues to pit progressives and reactionaries head-to-head, but many of these issues have played out in England at a local level, evidenced in growing geographic divides. Older, non-graduate majority white British populations in smaller towns have tended to take a differing view to younger, more educated populations in cities. The political consequences of this have been manifest in the fall of the 'Red Wall', as Labour lost many of its seats in the post-industrial heartlands to the Conservatives, while they gained seats in middle-class student areas.

And the coronavirus pandemic has added a dimension of complexity to all of this. With the majority of older groups more at risk than younger generations from the disease, they have been more likely to favour strong lockdown regulations. Many young people, less at risk from the virus itself, rejected authoritarian lockdown measures, while susceptibility to conspiracy theories has grown.

Meanwhile, the effects of the pandemic have amplified and hardened existing inequalities. While the vaccine rollout has slowed the medical impact of the virus, the economic impact of lockdown measures is still becoming clear, with women, younger people, and BAME communities all more likely to have lost out financially as a result of the pandemic. With likely job losses and austerity measures coming down the line, inequalities are set to deepen. And the cost of living crisis is just starting to take hold, pushing millions into poverty and forcing a tight squeeze on millions more.

And the departure of Boris Johnson leaves the country casts a shadow of uncertainty, leaving a trail of political chaos. This is a leadership that directly attacked public institutions, weakened public trust through a series of law-breaking parties and scandals, pursued a divisive culture war politics and whipped up anti-migrant hatred.

It is within this context that HOPE not hate have recommissioned our *Fear and HOPE* research, revising our original questions, as well as many additional ones, and recreating the original six identity tribes, to better understand how social

attitudes have changed over the last decade. We wanted to understand where dividing lines now are, and where the fight for hope over hate will be played out in the coming years.

The right has become far more complex over the last decade, as they have navigated this changing politics of culture, identity and nation. The decline of the electoral far right and a move from street movements to online forums has created a post-organisational structure, whereby alternative media and online communities are growing in influence. Information overload has posed new questions on trust and truth, while 24-hour news cycles and social media dominance have contributed to a place where increasingly, the boundaries between the mainstream and extremes increasingly overlap and intersect.

Meanwhile, large parts of the contemporary far-right's platform – namely anti-Muslim politics, co-option of the free speech debate and an anti-elite populism – now has widespread public support. Growing polarisation alongside weakening trust in political structures in the aftermath of Brexit as well as the impacts of the pandemic have created space for this to flourish. Progressive values have increasingly been packaged up in populist language as a suppressive force of 'liberal elites'.

Our report finds that identity issues remain core dividers of English society, but that their manifestation is very different from ten years ago. There has been a move away from political identities based on 'Englishness' or 'British values', and the strong Brexit identities that divided us in the aftermath of the referendum have simmered to a point where many, on both sides of the spectrum, have even forgotten how they voted.

Instead, we are seeing the rise of a new identity politics that moves away from being ideologically structured, and the lines of division which framed our understanding in 2011 no longer hold.

Over time, society has become more socially liberal on a range of issues. From gay marriage to immigration, social norms have been dramatically moved to a more open and tolerant place. This has, in part, happened as an organic impact of society becoming both more diverse and more educated over time. But it has also been spurred by exposure to this growing change, through television, music, cinema, advertising and so on. The diverse Britain that we see on our TV screens is a key part of building our cultural ecology.

But as society has gotten more socially liberal, identity politics have increasingly been framed around a reaction to progressive values, cutting across multiple issues, from modern masculinity to structural racism and trans rights.

Cultural conflicts are nothing new, but in the last few years, symbolic issues and questions of

identity have not just become louder, but more antagonistic in the so-called 'culture wars'. It is not that there are specific 'culture war issues'. It is that any issue can be politicised in such a way. Moreover, the culture wars shift over time, so that once consensus has been met on one issue, another may emerge.

And while our research reaffirms that the culture wars are not reflected in deep polarisation reflected in public attitudes, we do find that this strategy has had an impact in reframing political debates, and in turn, the culture wars are a strategy that is cutting through in shaping a more reactive identity politics.

What we are finding is that not all issues have become 'polarised' in the same way. Indeed, as the politics of identity have played out over the last decade, certain attitudes, values, or framings on key issues have become more dominant.

Growing social liberalism across society has been met with roadblocks, whereby those pushing for further progress are shunned as 'out of touch', or 'going too far'. Consensus on immigration now meets on seeing both the economic and cultural benefits of immigration, but on issues of asylum, the majority share concerns directly linked to islamophobic tropes and fears of 'illegal immigrants' as a security threat. The majority of people voice concern about levels of racism in Britain and acknowledge the everyday discrimination faced by Black and Asian people, but there is broad resistance among the public to challenge structural racism, and a majority reject notions of privilege based on identity. There is a broad consensus on gender equality, but at the same time, a majority feel that feminists have gone too far and now jeopardise the rights of men.

Economic positioning remains a decisive factor. The rise of progressive identity politics has been matched by a reactionary identity politics that reasserts hierarchies of whiteness and masculinity that has cut through to many who feel a loss in their own sense of status and position in society. The cost of living crisis is only set to deepen this.

But demographic characteristics are less of an attitudinal predictor, and we have witnessed a growth in reactionary identity issues amongst young people – and in particular young men – alongside an older, more traditionally conservative audience.

A swelling broken relationship with the political system is increasingly the target for broader feelings of resentment, somewhere to point the finger where people feel that society is stacked against them. Populist framings of 'the elite' against 'the people' have further ebbed away at ties between voters and political parties, increasingly put liberal democracies under strain, and fuelled the appeal of 'strongman' politics.

By creating a pushback against progressive values across a range of issues, while accepting other liberal social norms, the far right poses a very different threat from ten years ago. Coalitions can broaden, and hateful agendas can't be easily undercut. It does not look like a far right we have seen before, but a reactionary right that will pull together both an authoritarian and libertarian appeal, will reach a more diverse and younger pool of voters, while speaking to a traditionalist base.

This report outlines a new model for understanding this new landscape of identity politics, and what it means for antifascists. We have created a new *Fear and HOPE* Index which indicates the extent to which each respondent displays views on issues which we can characterise as anti-liberal, conflictual or contrary to liberal democratic norms and institutions. This is how politics of identity is likely to play out over the coming years.

The traditional far right's politics of racial nationalism and opposition to immigration have tended to appeal to a shrinking base of older, white British, non-graduate, and predominantly male group of voters. But the new alignment of identity politics identified in our research

METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on England. When we did our first survey, in 2011, the crisis in society appeared to focused on the English. Devolution had transferred considerable power to the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly and many Scots were increasingly agitating for a vote on full independence. As a result we were most interested in discovering whether there was a crisis of Englishness and whether English nationalism could emerge as a potent political movement. While all this was quite valid, it did, however, create a benchmark which then was hard to change in future studies if we were going to compare results from previous polls. In 2021, we published a *Fear and HOPE* study of Wales, and hope to expand this work to Scotland and Northern Ireland in the future.

POLLING

On behalf of HOPE not hate, Stack Data Strategy conducted polling of a sample of 3,000 adults in England, between 8th-14th October 2021 weighted to be demographically representative of the nation in terms of education, region, and interlocked age and gender. *Stack Data Strategy* is a member of the *British Polling Council and the Market Research Society*.

Additional data was collected from a nationally representative sample of 1,010 18-24-year-olds living in Britain between 15 and 19 April 2022 via Focaldata. The data is weighted to be representative of 18-24-year-olds in Britain. *Focaldata is a member of the British Polling Council*.

SEGMENTATION

In the original 2011 report, Populus created a segmentation based on a subset of both hard and soft questions which covered the following key issues:

- Attitudes and exposure to race, multiculturalism, immigration, religious minorities and their impact on the British communities;
- Participants perceptions of their own racial, religious and cultural identities
- Perceptions of what makes somebody British

A Segmentation was created from these using a form of Latent Class Analysis called "Dfactor Modelling", an exploratory technique that involves the creation of Four factors (known as Dfactors) which summarise the responses across questions. The factors can be thought of as four different cuts of the data. each factor cuts the data into two groups: Those Low on a dimension AND Those High on the same dimension, Populus then interpreted the dimension by profiling each factor.

The four factors emerge in such a way that in combination they maximise our ability to explain

presents a more complex landscape. Rather than there being one group who share a similar set of views and values, attracted to an agenda rooted in racial prejudice, we find that a more diverse group, with a more mixed set of views and values are drawn to an agenda shaped by a reaction to progressive values.

But there are some key lessons for the politics of hope.

Society is more socially liberal, and progressives should have confidence in that as they navigate the new identity politics. A politics of pessimism is not one that will win, and they should not shy away from cultural issues, but embrace the more open society we are in everything they do. But they also cannot be complacent.

Politics is increasingly being shaped by a reaction to progressive values, and a crystallisation among those with the most socially liberal views has meant a progressive worldview has increasingly been weaponised by the reactionary right to tap into new audiences.

Those who champion equality and diversity must understand the shifting landscape has put them on the back foot. A more diverse cohort of young people is now the principal target for a new reactionary right. Progressives cannot continue to assume that certain demographic groups, namely younger people or Black and ethnic minority voters, will continue to support their causes and to vote for socially liberal parties.

And where individual issues are more important, events and political messaging have even greater influence in shaping trends. We need to create moments and opportunities for progress, but equally be more prepared to respond quickly and confidently at the moments created by the right.

different response patterns across the underlying questions On this basis Populus had four dimensions upon which to create a segmentation

Stack Data Strategy replicated this segmentation, repeating the same questions as in the 2011 model, using their own logistic regression replication method trained on the same data.

THE INDEX

A *Fear and HOPE* Index was created by Stack Data Strategy, which indicates the extent to which each respondent displays views on issues which we can characterise as anti-liberal, conflictual or contrary to liberal-democratic norms and institutions.

This score encompasses a set of four components, covering Identity, Politics, Multiculturalism, and Conspiratorial thinking.

These combine to give us each respondent's index score, which falls between 0 and 1, with 0 describing a respondent who is entirely liberal in identity, anti-conspiracy, pro-multicultural, and politically liberal, 1 being the opposite.

Stack data used a selection of questions from the survey to create four components on four divisive issue areas covered by our survey, which are weighed equally in calculating a respondents overall score in our index

- Identity Component (0-1) This component focuses on issues of identity, covering a range of issues, among which are LGBT rights and identities, perceptions of racial discrimination, beliefs about national identity and gender issues.
- Politics component (0-1) Respondents which score towards 1 in this segment tend to reject liberal political principles and institutions, believing the BBC to be biased, that violence is sometimes necessary in politics and rejecting liberal democracy in favour of a strong leader.
- Multicultural component (0-1) Questions here exclusively focus on attitudes towards different cultures and religions, and the extent to which people believe that diversity has had a negative impact upon British society. A respondent scoring 1 is very concerned about the impact of religious groups on the UK and the world
- Conspiracy component (0-1) This component covers a set of questions where respondents were presented with a set of extreme views, for example the idea that the Government lies about the number of immigrants, and asked the extent to which they believe them to be true. A respondent scoring 1 agrees with all of these statements.

On each of these components every respondent is scored from 0 to 1, with 0 meaning that the respondent has entirely liberal, anti-conspiracy views, and 1 meaning the opposite.

IDENTITY TRIBES

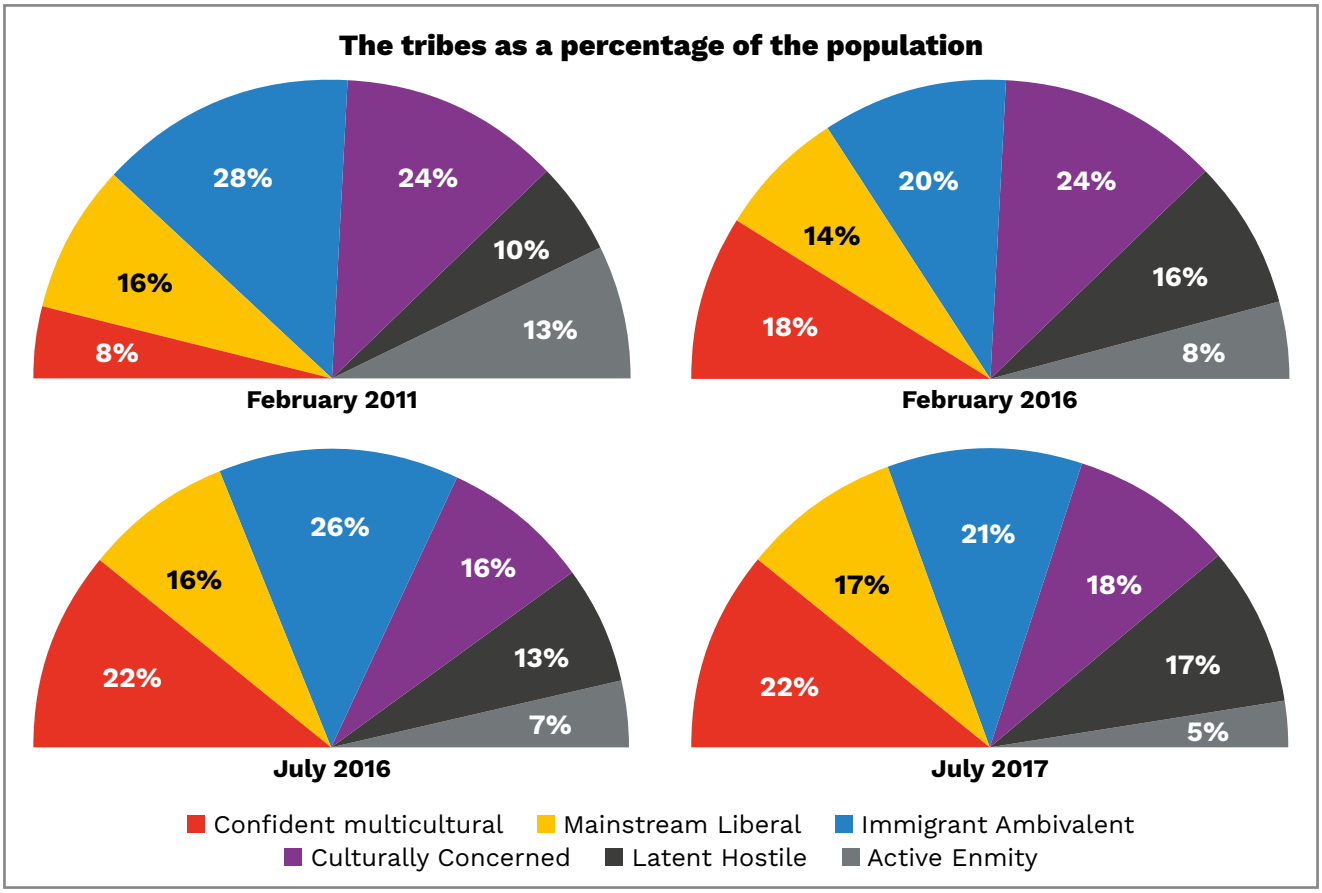
We first commissioned our *Fear and HOPE* survey in 2011, to try and better understand the deeper drivers of hate. A traditional class-based political axis failed to explain attitudes to culture and identity, which reflect personal experiences and life circumstances that frame a larger worldview.

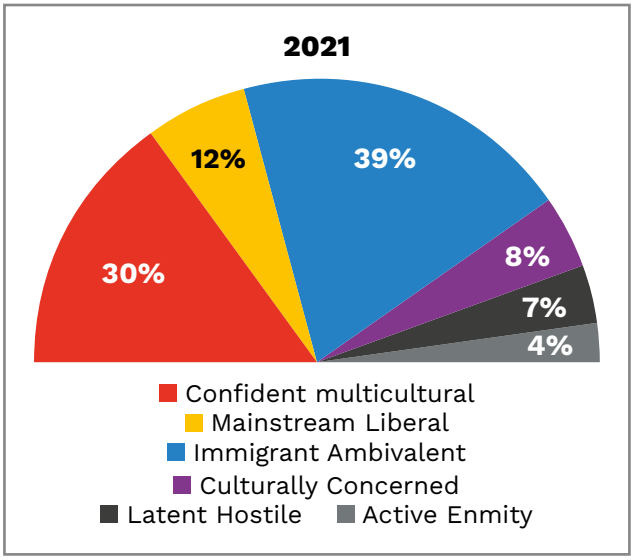
We developed six identity 'tribes', each representing a set of views on economic optimism and pessimism, community, values, immigration, race and religion. At one end sit liberals and multiculturalists, while at the other sit those who are hold latent and actively hostile views. In the middle sit a more ambivalent group sensitive to economic conditions which may drive them towards more hostile views, and an economically secure group with cultural anxieties.

While the debate often gets split into *identity issues* versus *standard of living*, our research, recommissioned four times over the last seven years, saw that the drivers of hate are often more complex. We also saw how identity issues are dialled up or down depending on how the economy is doing. Cultural concerns remain, but when economic conditions improve, and people feel more optimistic about their own quality of life, they are likely to be less anxious about questions of identity.

Over the last ten years, we have seen a liberal shift across society, with our confident multicultural and mainstream liberal groups growing. However, the proportion of people with the most hostile views had remained stable between 2011-2017, only shifting slightly between the active enmity and latent hostile tribes.

Revisiting the *Fear and HOPE* tribes ten years on from their inception, things have clearly shifted. In fact, they have shifted so much that





the categories no longer reflect a true picture of attitudes in British society.

Over the last ten years, there have been seismic shifts in the political, social and economic landscape. Broadly, throughout the 2010s, there was a shift towards a more socially liberal and open society, in a country that has become more diverse and educated. Social movements like BLM and #MeToo have made waves in bringing attention to deeply engrained injustices, while the outbreak of coronavirus and subsequent lockdowns had an immediate and dramatic impact on every aspect of daily life. Shifting political control, from the coalition government to Cameron, May and Johnson all had significant impacts, not just through policy and legislation, but also impacted the relationship people hold with the political system.

The EU referendum not only exposed, but also created new dimensions of social division in the UK. Leave appealed most to those sceptical about immigration, pessimistic about cultural change and more assertive about English nationalism. Remain appealed most to those with a cosmopolitan worldview, pro-migration attitudes and optimism about the future. Of course, those who voted Leave and Remain were in no way homogenous groups. But the 2016 referendum was unique in offering two clear cut camps where two very different visions of Britishness clashed, and a political identity to reflect that was stronger than any other political allegiance.

And while the far right have become increasingly fragmented, many of their ideas have seeped into the mainstream. Where the BNPs politics of hate failed, radical right party UKIP capitalised on growing feelings of status-loss and cultural concern, which was channelled towards anti-migrant sentiments and Euroscepticism. In a move to mainstream their politics of hate, the far-right's focus shifted from overt white supremacy towards anti-Muslim hatred and reactionary politics. Terror attacks in the UK over the last decade became mobilising points for mainstreaming anti-Muslim hatred.

Our *Fear and HOPE* studies over the last decade have tracked the responses to all of these, through changes in public opinion. Many have been encouraging. The proportion of the English population who say immigration has been a good thing for the country grew from just 40% in 2011, to 50% in 2016, rose to 60% in 2017 as the impact of leaving the EU eased concerns for some, and now stands at 54%. And the proportion of people who say that having a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures is part of British culture has grown from a minority in 2011 (49%) to 60% in 2021.

This has been reflected in our segmentation, as the most socially liberal tribe, 'confident multicultural' has grown to be one of the largest groups – expanding from the smallest of our six tribes in 2011 at just 8%, to now encompassing 30% of the population. The share of the population that now fall within the two most liberal tribes now make up almost half of the entire population (42%), up from around a quarter in 2011 (24%).

But what has happened to the more hostile tribes and the 'middle ground' groups – those who share more ambivalent views on political, social and cultural issues – is more complex.

Our 2021 poll would suggest that the proportion of the population who share hostile attitudes to immigration and multiculturalism, the latent hostile and active enmity groups, have declined substantially. The two tribes, who both believe immigration and multiculturalism and what they think it represents as having negative effects on all aspects of life, though to slightly varying degrees, had remained relatively constant between 2011-2017 at around 20-25% of the population. But our most recent tribe breakdown suggests that these two groups now make up just 11% of the population.

Meanwhile, the 'immigrant ambivalent' tribe, largely insecure working class voters who are not hugely politically engaged but worried about the impact of immigration on their communities and their economic circumstances, has become the largest tribe, at 39% of the population. At the same time, the culturally concerned group, financially comfortable Conservative voters troubled by the impact immigration was having on British national identity and worried about immigrant integration, has shrunk to just 8% of the population.

At face value, this would seem to reflect growing social liberalism in society – the hostile tribes

shrinking, and the centre ground ambivalent group growing. But that is not necessarily the case, as among a broad progressive shift in public attitudes, we have also seen a pockets of more reactionary identity politics emerge – even among those who share progressive views on the majority of cultural issues.

The repeat of our 2011 segmentation also presents us with some methodological challenges; the formation of two large groups (30% are 'Confident multiculturals' and 39% 'Immigrant ambivalents') which hide many nuances in public opinion. And our 2011 segmentation was based on a series of questions, one of which was about frequency of contact with different religious groups, where results have been skewed by the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and Government and self-imposed restrictions on contact.

Despite these issues, this shift in the makeup of our tribes does offer some insight into what has happened to public attitudes to race, faith and belonging over the last decade. The changes across each of these tribes represent a complication of the attitudinal spectrum; rather than leaning left or right, people's views on individual identity issues have become more distinct.

THE ORIGINAL *FEAR AND HOPE* TRIBES: TEN YEARS ON

CONFIDENT MULTICULTURAL

The most socially liberal of all the tribes, this group have seen immigration as hugely positive, both economically and culturally. They share values of compassion, champion anti-racism and care greatly about inequalities in society.

In 2021, this tribe remain fairly constant with their past versions, now representing 30% of the population. They are most likely to see immigration as a good thing for the country (85%), to think that Brexit has been bad for Britain (71%) and reject anti-lockdown protests but strongly support the Black Lives Matter movement. They are most opposed to Brexit of all the tribes. But given their size now, there is more diversity among the group and their views.

They are just as likely to get their news from the Guardian as the Daily Mail (16%). They generally support the BBC as an important national institution, but a proportion reject BBC news as biased and don't agree with the licence fee. Though they are least likely to see any specific religious groups as causing problems in society, they are split on their views about the role of religion in society.

And while the most part of this group hold socially liberal values, some within this group differ on identity politics, and wouldn't fit any 'woke' stereotype. A significant pocket believe you can't be proud of your national identity without being considered racist (39%), and another pocket (22%) feel feminism has gone too far and holds men back. Although 63% say they are worried about racism in Britain, and most see that Black and Asian people face discrimination in their everyday lives (74%), they are less convinced by accounts of structural racism and half agree that white people are unfairly made to feel guilty over historical racism.

A shift away from a homogeny of views in this group in many ways reflects its expansion, which has taken place as a result of growing social liberalism over the last decade, as well as the declining political salience of immigration. But it also highlights how polarisation and 'culture war' politics intersect, with reactive sentiments around race politics and progressive social movements emerging even among the most socially liberal cohort in society.

MAINSTREAM LIBERAL

This tribe had, in our previous studies, been one of the most ethnically diverse groups, and held similar values to the confident multicultural tribe, though was slightly less confident in their support for progressive causes. They overwhelmingly saw immigration and multiculturalism as a good thing for the country, though were more likely to hold some concerns about integration.

In our 2021 reproduction of this tribe reflects, that they generally hold positive opinions on immigration and multiculturalism, generally oppose Brexit and support anti-racism. Nonetheless they hold some concerns about integration, and are more likely to voice concerns around 'PC culture' supressing free speech; around half (46%) believe that political correctness is used by the liberal elite to limit what people can say.

The changes in this tribe mean this group now reflects a section of society who are less politically engaged and less confident in the political system, but generally share socially liberal attitudes. Nonetheless, within this groups, some share more reactive sentiments around questions of identity where they feel progressive change may serve to limit themselves.

IMMIGRANT AMBIVALENT

This group has traditionally been seen as a middle ground set of 'swing voters' who, though not hugely motivated by cultural issues, view immigration through the prism of its economic impact on their opportunities and the social impact on their communities.

Now representing the largest grouping, the growth of this tribe, and who it now represents, reflects broader political changes.

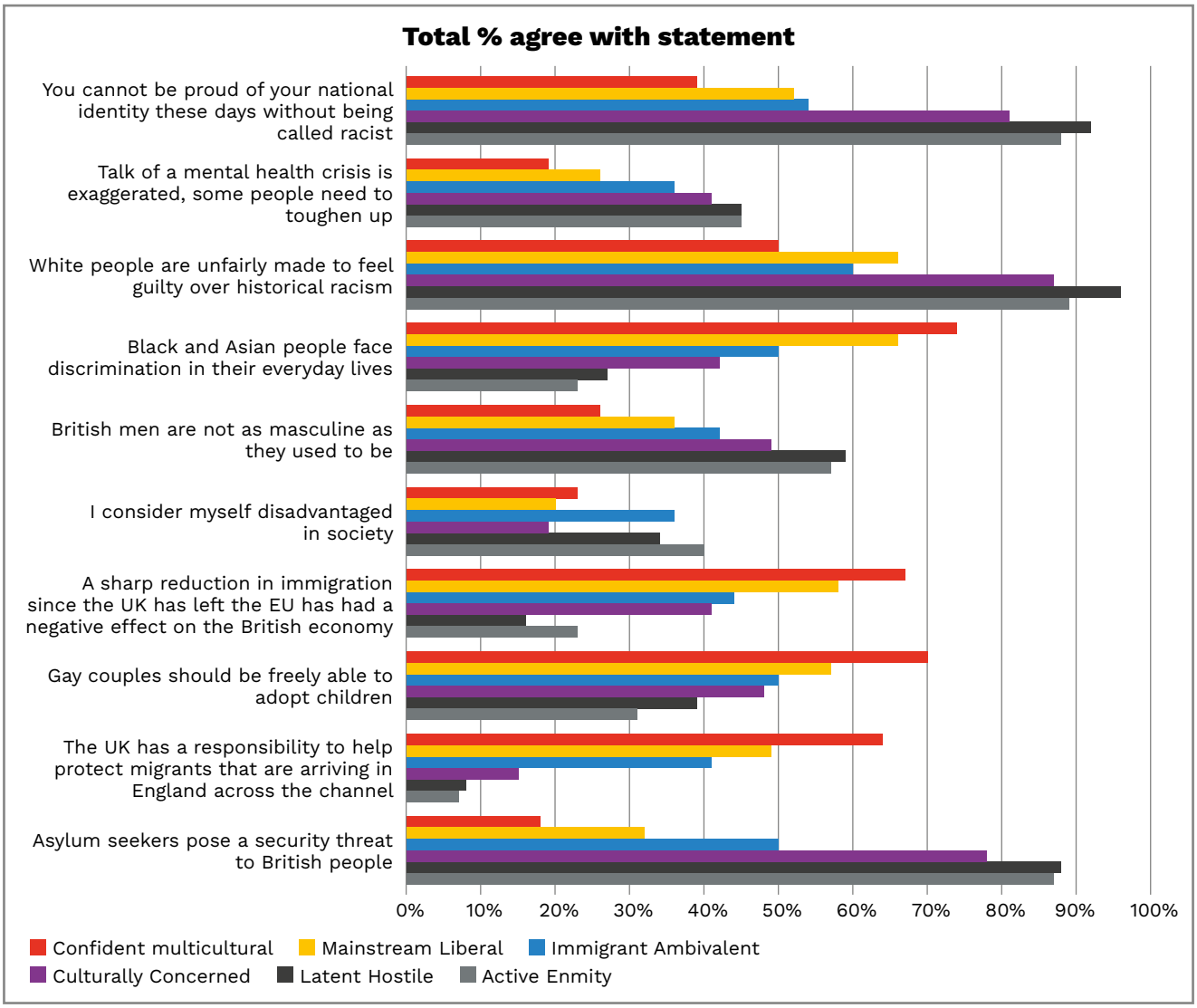
They are the most optimistic of all the tribes, though they do not see themselves as in control of how well they do in life. More of this tribe consider themselves disadvantaged in society (36%) than do not (22%). They are generally not enthused by politics, and although they are split on their views on Brexit, it is not a topic that motivates them.

They are generally socially progressive and are concerned about racism in society, though they are not vocal in their support for the Black Lives Matter movement. They are more likely to say that terror attacks in the UK have made me more suspicious of Muslims in Britain (48%) than the socially liberal tribes.

But this tribe are most likely to believe the threat of covid-19 has been exaggerated by the government (38%), that their freedoms have been abused by lockdown measures (38%) and they place strong emphasis, more so than any other group, on the idea that individual freedoms are more important than collective wellbeing (41%).

They have suffered financially more than many of the other tribes as a result of the pandemic and almost half (42%) fear that they or someone in their family will lose their job as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. Despite general ambivalence about immigration, many vocalise their own sense of decline or precarity as direct consequence of demographic change, with the proportion who see immigration as putting their own job at risk in line with that of the two hostile groups.

For some within this tribe, we also find this dissatisfaction with their own lives combined with a sense of losing out and individualism spills over into reactive identity politics. They are least likely of all the tribes to agree with the statement 'women are never to blame for being raped' (51%), and more likely to agree (36%) than disagree (24%) that feminism has gone too far and makes



it harder for men to succeed. 42% say that British men are not as masculine as they used to be while 36% say that talk of a mental health crisis is exaggerated, some people need to toughen up. Just 50% believe that gay couples should be freely able to adopt children.

This tribe presents less of a coherent 'middle ground group', but one where a distance from politics and power, and a sense of pragmatist 'just about getting by' is accompanied by underlying grievances that life isn't quite working for them. It is not that this group are simply ambivalent, while they are largely detached, certain issues which resonate with their outlook can become flashpoints.

CULTURALLY CONCERNED

This group have, in our past *Fear and HOPE* studies, been considered the Conservatives' core voter base. They are economically secure, slightly older, socially conservative and vocally concerned about the pace of change. They are more likely to view immigration as a cultural issue with concerns about the impact of immigration on national identity and about immigrants' willingness to integrate. They hold some anti-Muslim views, and their concerns around Islam in Britain were impacted by the series of terror attacks in 2017.

Between 2011-2017 we saw the views of this tribe pushed further to the right. Their views on Brexit as a mostly Leave-supporting bloc, a sense of decline linked to the importance they place on British Values, and their motivation around cultural issues saw many in this group align their political values with Nigel Farage.

The 2021 version of the culturally concerned tribe indicates a continuation of this trend, and though the group has shrunk dramatically to just 8% of the population, their outlook has merged more with that of the active enmity and latent hostile tribes. They tend to have pragmatic views about immigration as an economic gain, which differentiates them from these groups, but they are equally motivated on key 'culture war' issues.

87% say that white people are unfairly made to feel guilty over historical racism, 81% say that you cannot be proud of your national identity these days without being called racist, and 71% say that terror attacks in the UK have made me more suspicious of Muslims in Britain. 41% say Feminism has gone too far and makes it harder for men to succeed, and just 31% say that a transgender woman is a woman while 43% disagree. Despite having less anti-immigrant views more generally, 78% believe that asylum seekers pose a security threat to British people and just 15% believe that the UK has a responsibility to help protect migrants that are arriving in England across the channel – 65% disagree.

They remain, overall, a financially comfortable group, less impacted by the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic than any of the other tribes. They are generally optimistic and do not consider themselves disadvantaged in society. They are in many ways, community minded, though they tend to live in fairly demographically homogenous areas and some of this sentiment reflects their nativism. They are least likely to have any concern about divisions in their community.

In many ways, the Leave identity of this tribe, combined with their cultural conservativism has made them a key political target for the right, and they have been most susceptible to 'culture war' narratives, islamophobic tropes and hostility towards asylum seekers. This process has dragged the culturally concerned tribe further to the right, blending more with the latent hostile and active enmity groups.

LATENT HOSTILE

The latent hostile tribe have generally been characterised by their hostility towards immigration and multiculturalism, though to a lesser extent than the active enmity group. They hold socially authoritarian views and are more likely to be economically liberal than any of the other groups. They are typically 'Leave' voters and are most ideologically aligned to UKIP and Nigel Farage. For them, immigration has undermined British culture, public services and their own economic prospects.

Our 2021 iteration of the tribes finds a group who remain the most ardent supporters of Brexit, and though their views on immigration are generally softer than the active enmity tribe because they see the economic advantages it brings, they are extremely hostile towards asylum seekers. This tribe voice distinct anti-Muslim prejudice, and their vocal opposition to multiculturalism is articulated as a cause of social breakdown. 87% believe Enoch Powell was right to warn that warned that mass immigration would produce social breakdown and predicted "rivers of blood".

This is a group whose grievances become manifest through reinforcing the perceived superiority of their own identities. The decline of anti-immigration discourse and growth of 'culture war' issues has centred race politics for this tribe, and heightened their defensiveness around white identity.

ACTIVE ENMITY

Having been considered the most hostile of all the tribes, this group see immigrants and what they think immigration represents as having

negative effects on all aspects of life. Opposed to all ethnicities or religions other than their own, many also believe that violence is acceptable if it is a consequence of standing up for what is 'right'.

This tribe now represent just 4% of the population. Just 3% of the group say that immigration has added richness and variety to the culture of Britain and made the country more prosperous and while they hold strong anti-Muslim views, they express hostility towards all non-Christian religious groups. While their attitudes remain relatively unchanged since 2011, they have become more vocal on race and not just immigration.

Their relationship with the political system is fractious, and they are most likely to support political violence or favour 'strong man' authoritarian leaders in over liberal democracy. They oppose the adoption of children by gay couples, feel that British men are now less masculine, oppose trans rights, and feel that feminism is a disruptive force that holds men back.

Their hostile views combine with a sense of unfairness. A predominantly white, male older group, they are most likely to consider themselves disadvantaged in society (40% agree, while just 31% say they do not). Many within this group, similar to the latent hostile tribe, have found refuge in their white, heterosexual, and male identity, as identity politics have become more prominent in public discourse.

BREAKDOWN OF IDENTITY TRIBES

Our polling over the last decade has tracked public attitude trends that are constantly in flux. Certain events have triggered anxieties on specific issues, while others have fostered a sense of solidarity. On many issues, the dial has shifted in a more progressive direction; on immigration, multiculturalism, LGBT+ issues, and on gender equality, attitudes are far more open and inclusive than they were ten years ago, and there is a greater recognition of the racism that plagues society.

But other issues have triggered a backlash or fuelled more hostile views, while the shift towards socially liberal norms has in some ways created a target for a regressive pushback. Anti-Muslim prejudice has remained widespread, anti-Roma, gypsy and traveller discrimination are deeply engrained, while the 'culture wars' have reframed questions of racial equality, gender and sexuality, to fuel a reactionary identity politics.

These shifts have created a more complex picture of social attitudes, which are now harder to predict. Where before, a person's views on one social issue, such as immigration, could be a strong indicator of social attitudes on another issue, such as prison and rehabilitation, this is no longer the case.

A general socially liberal shift, combined with a rise of a more reactionary kind of identity politics means that people do not cluster so neatly onto a spectrum of socially conservative to socially liberal. Where the dial has moved one way on some issues, it has moved in the other direction on others. People may be very socially liberal on one thing, yet hold reactionary right views on another.

The declining political salience of immigration and growth of 'culture war' issues, alongside the progress of anti-racist movements, has seen a public conversation increasingly centred on race. And while anti-racist agendas have made their way into the mainstream, this in turn has inadvertently created space for some to amplify a defensiveness around white identity.

The changes we see now in the original *Fear and HOPE* tribes are a visualisation of this shift, but they also highlight where new dividing lines are emerging. As progressives have succeeded in driving a more socially liberal agenda on many issues, reactions against what was once the 'looney-left', or 'PC culture', has morphed into a defence against 'woke', or 'cancel culture'.

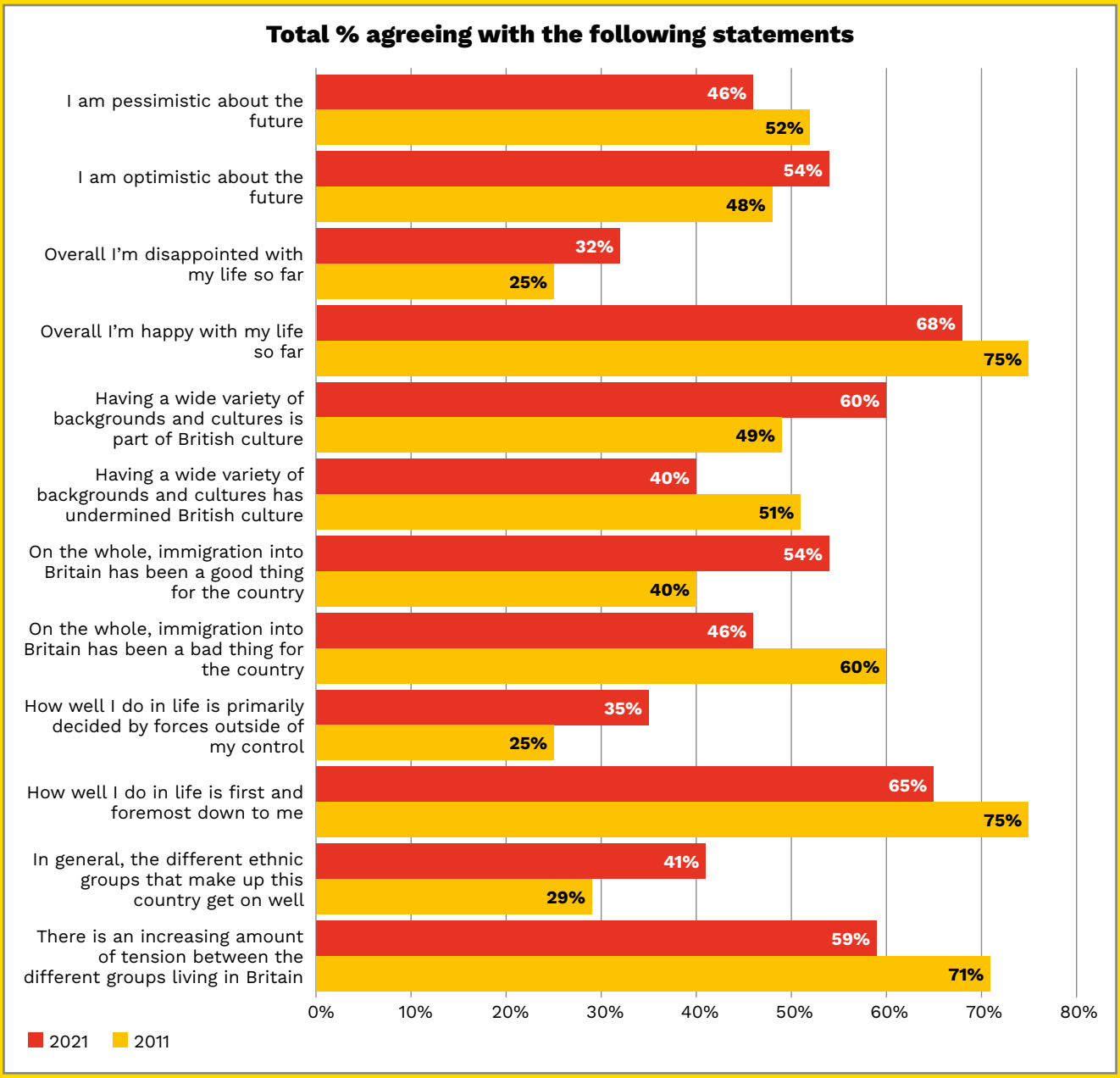
FEAR AND HOPE OVER THE LAST DECADE

Comparing the data from our original *Fear and HOPE* report with polling collected ten years later, there have been some clear shifts in public attitudes across England. We are more likely to see the benefits of immigration, more likely to see the benefits of multiculturalism and more confident about our communities.

But while in 2021, England is slightly more optimistic than we were in 2011, we feel less control over our own lives, and less content with our own situations reflecting a sense of precarity many feel heading into recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, but also our relationship with power following a tumultuous political decade.

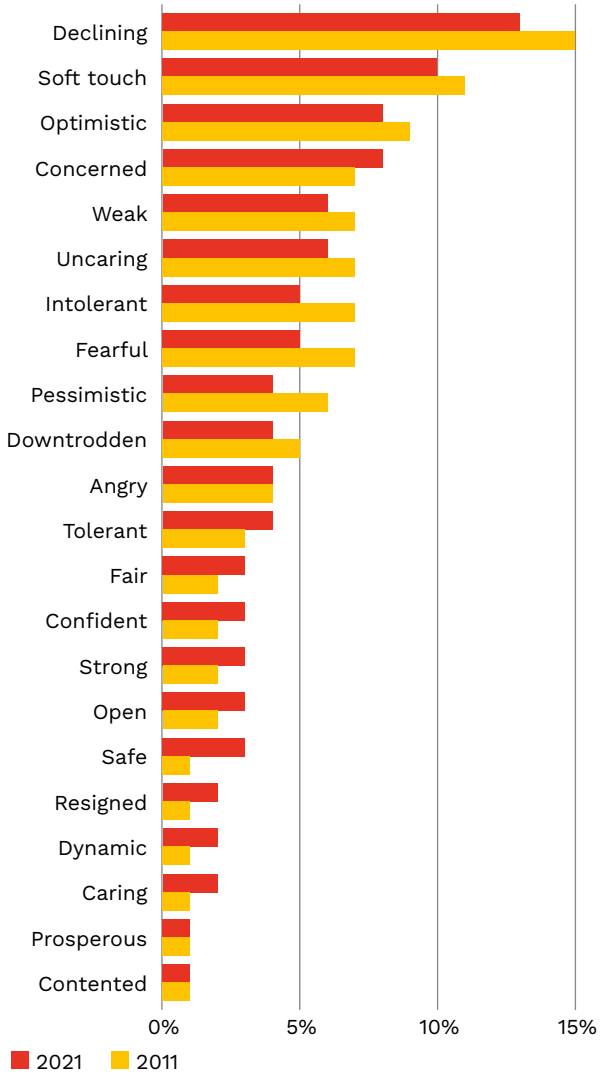
And while we are less likely to describe Britain today as pessimistic and more likely to say Britain is tolerant, open or safe, declining and soft touch have remained the most commonly used words or phrases to describe Britain for a whole decade.

Comparing attitudes to various religious groups, there have been notable shifts over the last decade. While Christians are no longer seen in a more positive light than other religious groups, and views of Hindus and Sikhs in Britain have improved, anti-Muslim prejudice has softened, but views towards Muslims remain distinct from other religious groups in the UK.

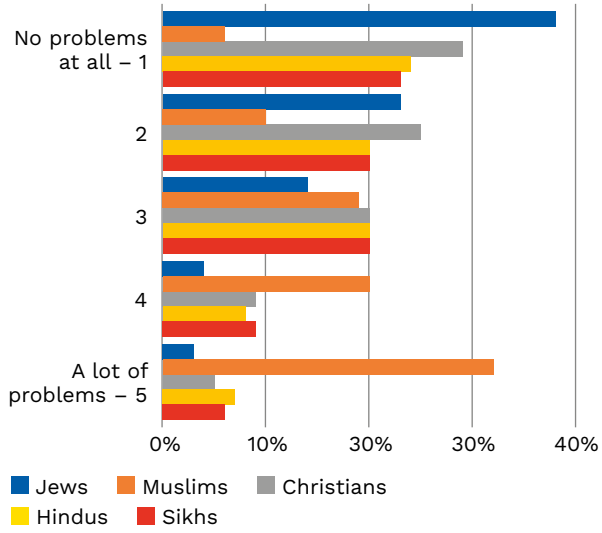


We see this elsewhere in our poll, reflected in high levels who voice concern that Islam poses a threat to the British way of life (30% believe this is true, while 35% say that Islam is compatible with the British way of life). And more respondents believe a conspiracy about parts of many European cities being under the control of Sharia Law and are 'no-go' zones for non-Muslims are true (34%) than not true (27%). Despite many positive changes over the last ten years, there is a long way to go to challenge engrained and widespread anti-Muslim prejudice.

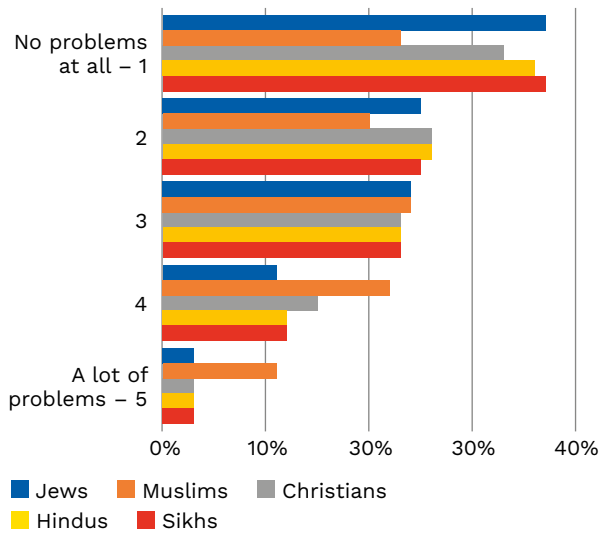
Which of these words and phrases do you think best describes Britain today?



2011: In your view, to what extent do the following groups create problems in the UK?



2021: In your view, to what extent do the following groups create problems in the UK?



FEAR AND HOPE: DIVIDING LINES

The changes in our original 'identity tribes' reflect how the attitudinal landscape has shifted over the last ten years. Since our first *Fear and HOPE* report in 2011 where we saw shift towards a politics of culture, identity and nation, a number of divisive issues have dominated public discourse.

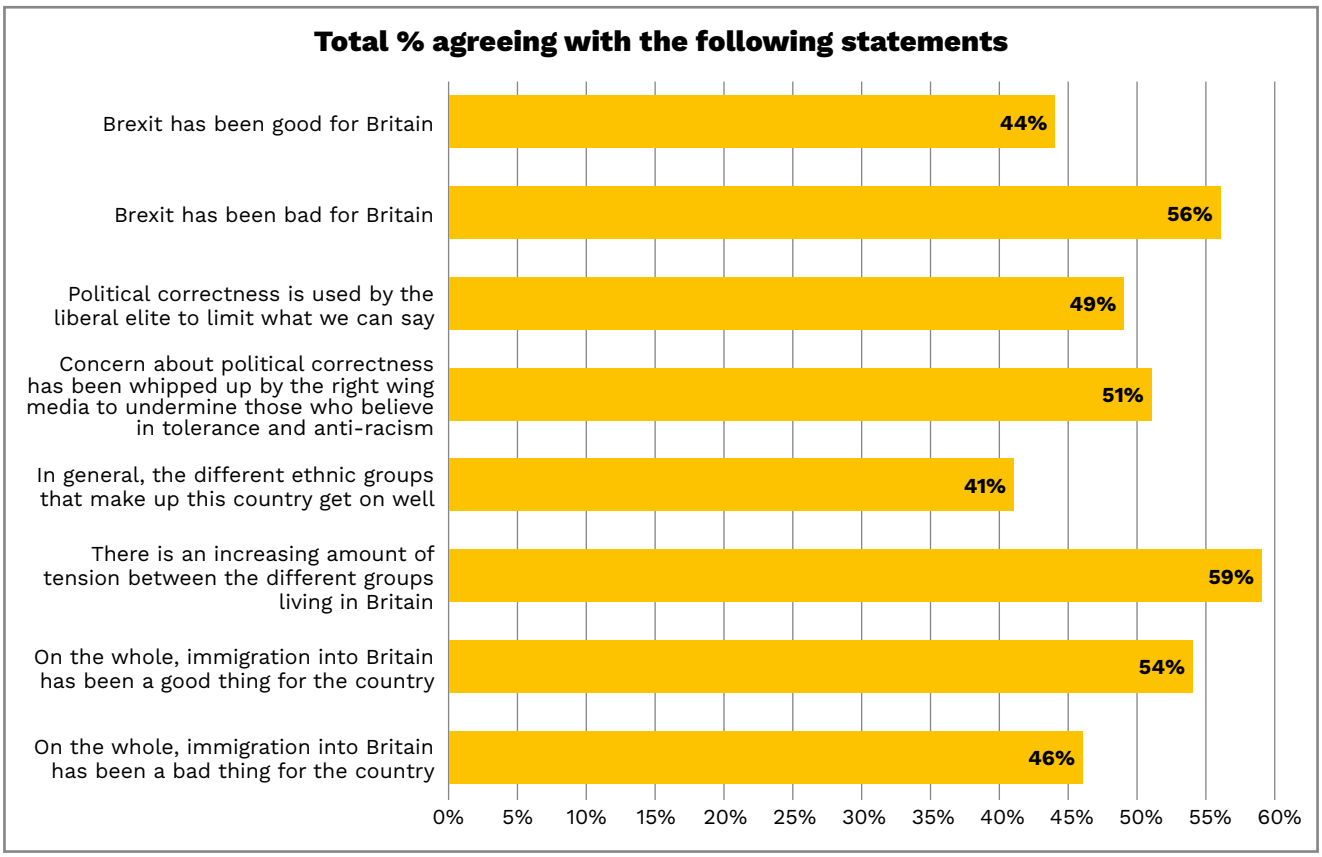
While of course, people attach different weight to these views, and many remain ambivalent on a number of issues, the strength of identity-based politics continues to divide Britons. Immigration, political correctness, integration and Islam have remained core dividing lines, while support or opposition for Brexit, although faded in salience, continues to divide.

In our 2021 poll, the proportion of those who feel Brexit has been bad for Britain (56%) are now larger than the proportion who feel it has been a positive thing (44%). Just as many people agree (31%) as disagree (33%) that immigration has changed their local area for the worse, and that immigration has undercut wages (30% agree, 33% disagree). On political correctness, half (49%) say it is 'a tool used by the liberal elite to limit what we can say' while half (51%) feel that concern about political correctness has been whipped up by the right wing media to undermine progressive values. Around a third (30%) of respondents believe Islam poses a threat to the British way of life, but 35% say the two are compatible.

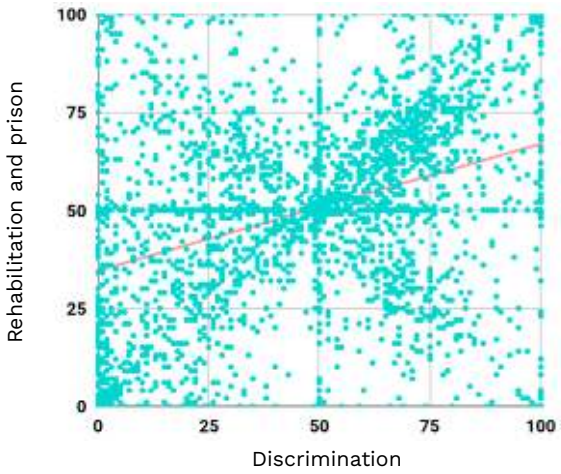
Nonetheless, where people sit on these issues is more difficult to predict than when we first commissioned our *Fear and HOPE* study. Just as our analysis of the identity tribes showed muddying in the values and attitudes of each group, looking at our poll in full, many respondents hold multiple and varying views that do not align with their attitudes on other social questions in a way we might anticipate. What we are seeing is a move away from attitudes structured on an ideological basis, towards a more complex picture, where it is harder to predict attitudes across issues.

If beliefs were overwhelmingly structured ideologically, we would expect attitudes on one issue to be strongly predictive of the other. For example, someone's views on crime and punishment should allow us to make a good prediction about their views on taxation.

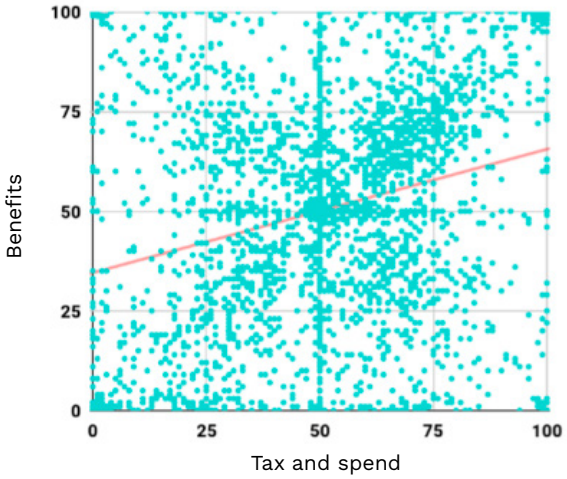
Instead, this is not what we find. In the scatter chart below, we have plotted each respondent on a chart based on their answers (from 0-100) on attitude questions regarding discrimination and punishment. This outlines whether people feel that discrimination is as big a problem for people of colour as white people, and whether they prefer a punitive or rehabilitative approach to crime. If one were strongly predictive of the other, as we would expect broadly attitudes on one of these questions to predict attitudes on the other, we would see a clear line. What we actually see is a chart with a significant minority in each of the four quadrants, implying that respondents hold the full range of combinations of beliefs.



Relationship between attitudes on discrimination and punishment



Relationship between attitudes on provision of state benefits and tax and spend



The measure of correlation, where 1 = perfectly correlated and 0 = not at all correlated, we see an R2 of just 0.133.

Another example is the lack of relationship between attitudes on the issues of state size (i.e. tax and spend) and the provision of state benefits. We see a similar picture, where correlation is weak, this time giving us an R2 of only 0.071. While we would usually anticipate that a person who favours big state politics would also be more socially liberal about state benefits, this is not the case.

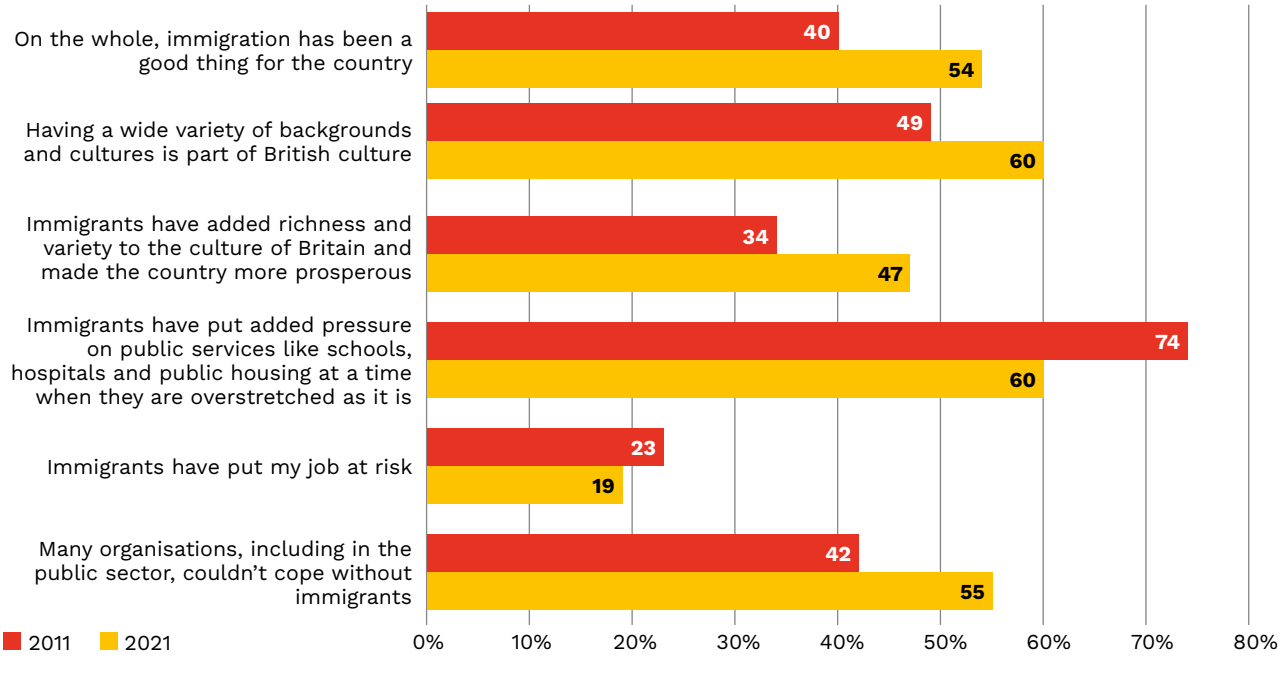
So why is it that a person may be socially conservative on one issue, but hold strong socially liberal views on another?

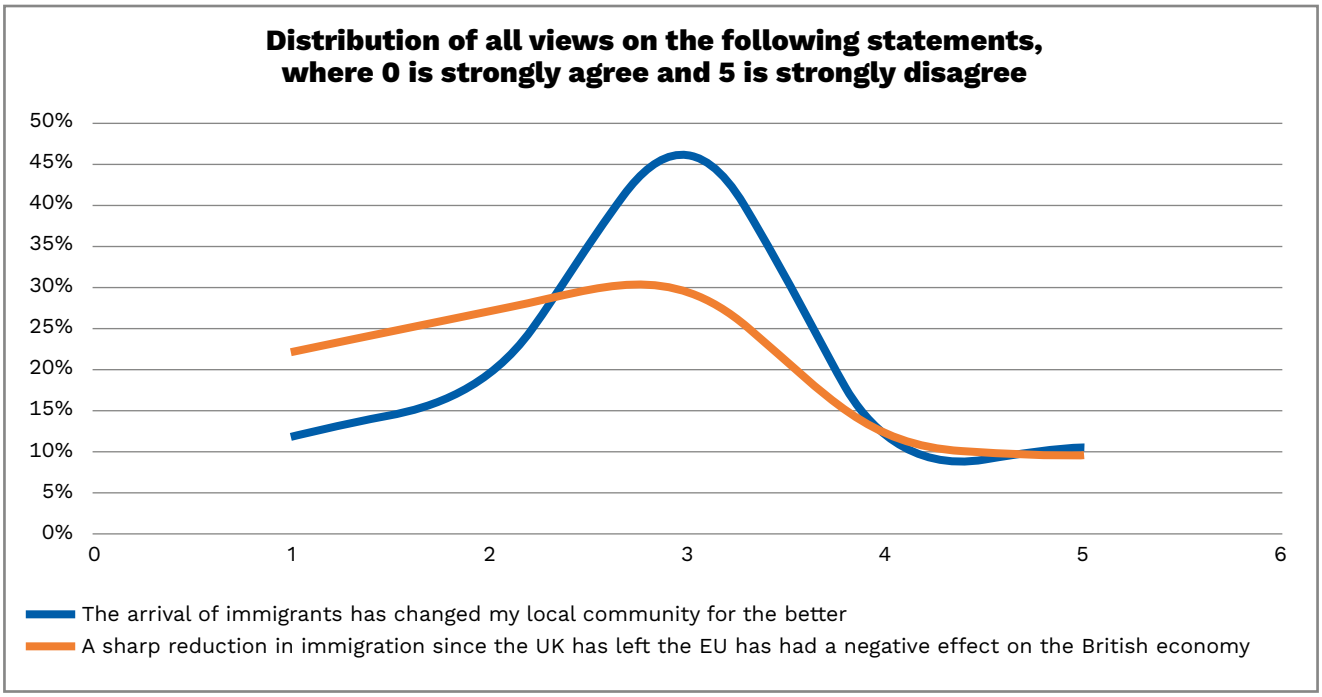
One indicator from our research is that not all issues have become 'polarised' in the same way. Indeed, as the politics of identity have played out over the last decade, certain attitudes, values, or framings on key issues have become more dominant.

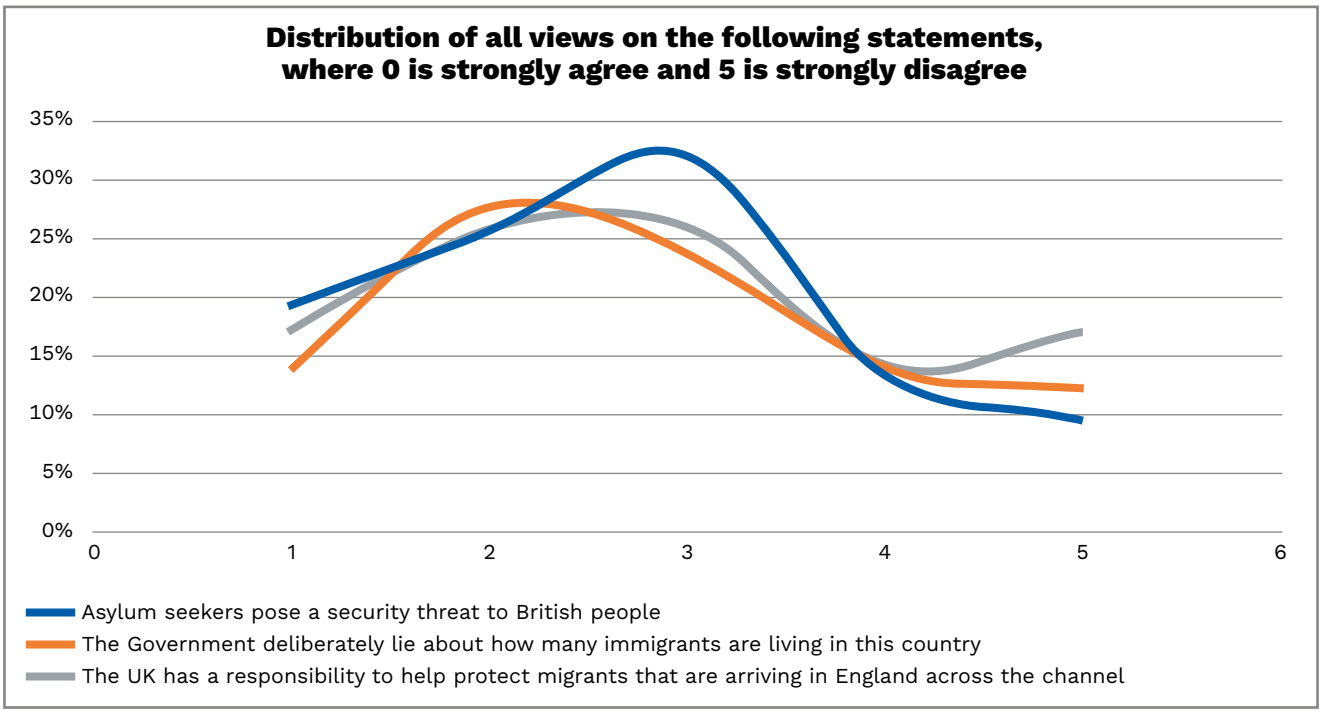
In many cases, public opinion has been shifted in a more progressive direction, for example, looking at attitudes to immigration. Although society remains divided on immigration, there has been a distinct shift that now sees majority support.

Comparing our *Fear and HOPE* research from 2011 with our most recent poll, it is evident that

Total % agreeing with the following statements







the English population on the whole now share a more positive view of immigration, and are more likely to see both cultural and economic benefits.

54% see immigration as a good thing for the country, while 46% think the effects have on the whole been negative, but this is a notable shift from 2011, when a minority (40%) saw immigration as a positive and 60% felt it was bad for the country. People are significantly more likely to see the impact of the migrant workforce in supporting the economy, and are less likely to see immigration as a burden on public services or to pose a threat to their jobs.

It is likely that Brexit has had an impact in framing this shift. Pledges to curb EU immigration, and limit immigration based on economic contribution and skills were central to the Leave campaign, and some sceptics were reassured that Brexit will partly solve the 'problem'. But also the impact of Brexit in revealing Britain's reliance on migrant workers through shortages in lorry drivers, fruit pickers and other jobs have also played a role.

The chart above displays the spread of attitudes in our poll across two statements on immigration. The blue line, the statement 'immigrants have

changed my community for the better' shows a classic bell curve – an even spread of public opinion, with most ambivalent, or voicing soft support or opposition to the statement.

The orange line shows the spread of opinion in relation to 'a sharp reduction in immigration since the UK left the EU has had a negative effect on the British economy'. Here, the bell curve is heavily skewed. While there is some ambivalence, there is little opposition, and clear support. The economic case for immigration is obvious at the national level, while there remains support to build for how people see this effect in their own communities.

But the next chart shows two statements on migration where anti-immigrant framings have become dominant, one more conspiratorial statement about the Government covering up the truth on immigration, and another linking asylum flows to security threats.

Here, on the two statements, 'asylum seekers pose a security threat to British people' in blue, and 'the Government deliberately lie about how many immigrants are living in this country', the curve is skewed towards support for these views. Despite this, as indicated on the grey line, there is generally support for Britain to offer protection to migrants arriving across the British channel, despite a considerable amount of strong opposition.

Framing of asylum seekers as 'illegal' immigrants, and widespread coverage of migration flows through irregular routes as having made 'criminal journeys' linked to organised criminal smuggler gangs has become a dominant framing in the public imagination. Similarly, press coverage of immigration centred on numbers, despite difficulties in collecting immigration data, and weak trust in the Government's ability to control immigration, feeds a perception that the Government lies about how many immigrants are living in the UK. People are also more likely to overestimate the immigrant population where they perceive threat.

This is indicative of similar attitudes on other issues, where progressive norms are destabilised by dominant framings that are more reactive. There is a general acceptance of liberal norms – Britain should offer refuge to people in need of protection – but this support falls short once a framing around security threats, and a more extreme narrative that the Government is lying about how many immigrants are living in this country are introduced.

In this distribution of opinion, it is possible to see how opinion is moving away from a purely issue-based approach. While there is now majority support for immigration at a national level, this support is being undercut by narratives from the reactionary right.

This goes some way to explain some of the contradictions in people's views on immigration. For example, 60% of respondents agreed that immigrants have put added pressure on public services like schools, hospitals and public housing at a time when they are overstretched as it is, but 55% said that many organisations, including in the public sector, couldn't cope without immigrants.

And it is why even when public attitudes to immigration have become so much more positive over time, migration continues to be weaponised as a political tool to divide.

THE CULTURE WARS

Cultural conflicts are nothing new, but in the last few years, symbolic issues and questions of identity have not just become louder, but more antagonistic.

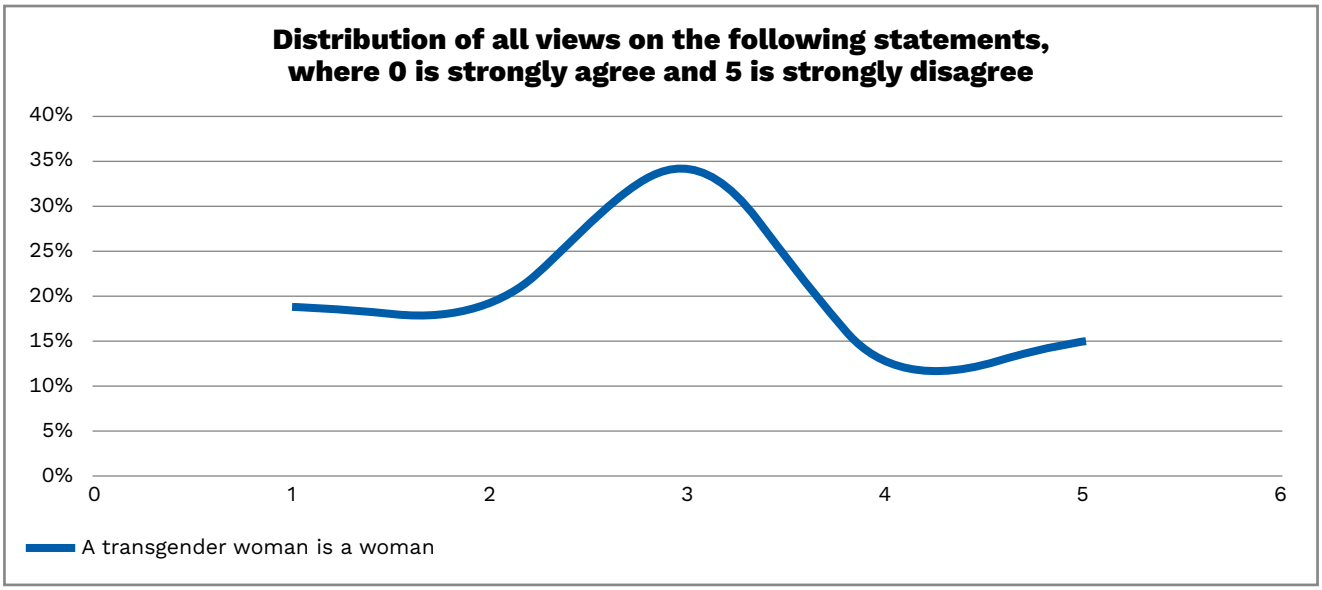
The 'culture wars' which originated in the U.S. broadly refers to a cultural conflict over values, beliefs, and practices that shape society. While the UK context is of course very different from the U.S., culture wars have risen on the political agenda, making headlines about 'cancel culture', 'identity politics' and 'wokeism'. A study from the Policy Institute found that articles in UK newspapers on the existence or nature of culture wars in the country increased by more than 25 times between 2015 and 2020[1].

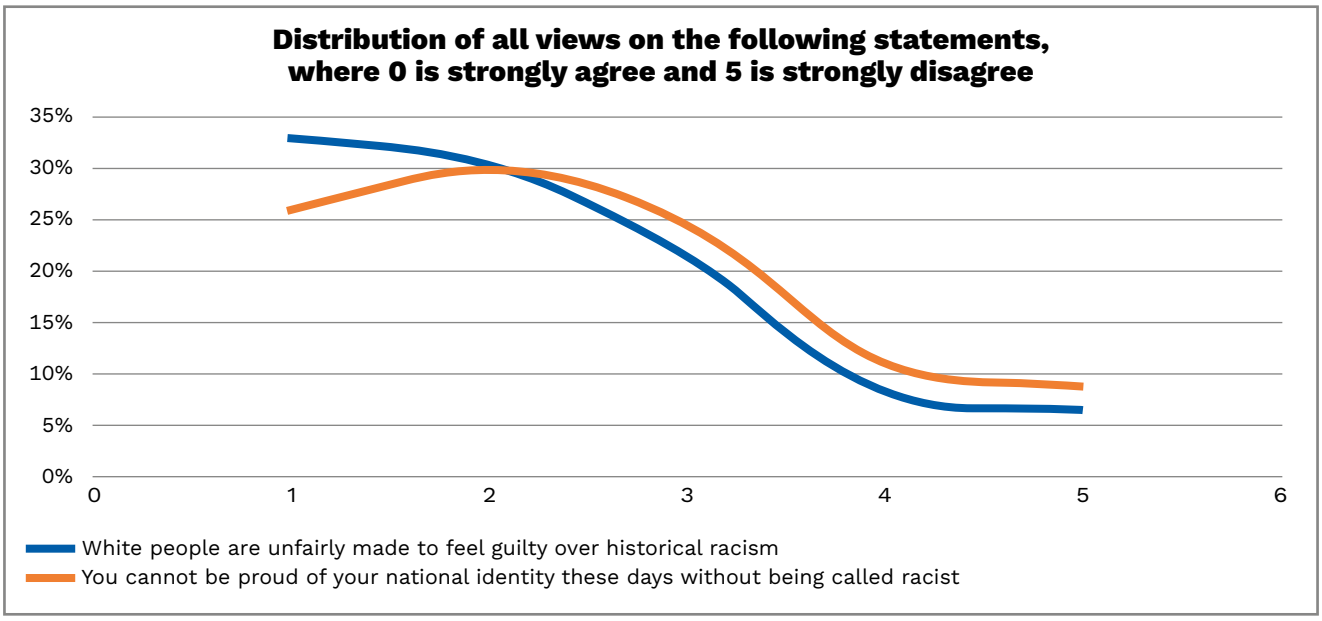
It is not that there are specific 'culture war issues'. It is that any issue can be politicised in such a way, to create divisions that present two clear sides of opposing values. Moreover, the culture wars shift over time, so that once consensus has been met on one issue, another may emerge.

Kirsty McNeill and Roger Harding have described the culture wars in the UK as primarily a strategy, not a set of issues or values divides. They have set out that the culture wars in the UK differ from that in the US, primarily because the culture wars were a means of creating division and distraction on a set of issues rather than deep and enduring differences on values questions among the public[2].

And while our research reaffirms that the culture wars are not reflected in deep societal polarisation, as public attitudes remain balanced and often largely ambivalent on key 'culture war' issues, we do find that this strategy has had an impact in reframing political debates, and in turn, is shaping a more reactive identity politics. By looking at the culture wars as a battle that is either lost or won, we risk overlooking the impact this style of politics can have.

On some issues considered to be key players in the culture war, there has been little sway on public opinion. For example, the national


Distribution of all views on the following statements, where 0 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
A transgender woman is a woman


Distribution of all views on the following statements, where 0 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
0
1
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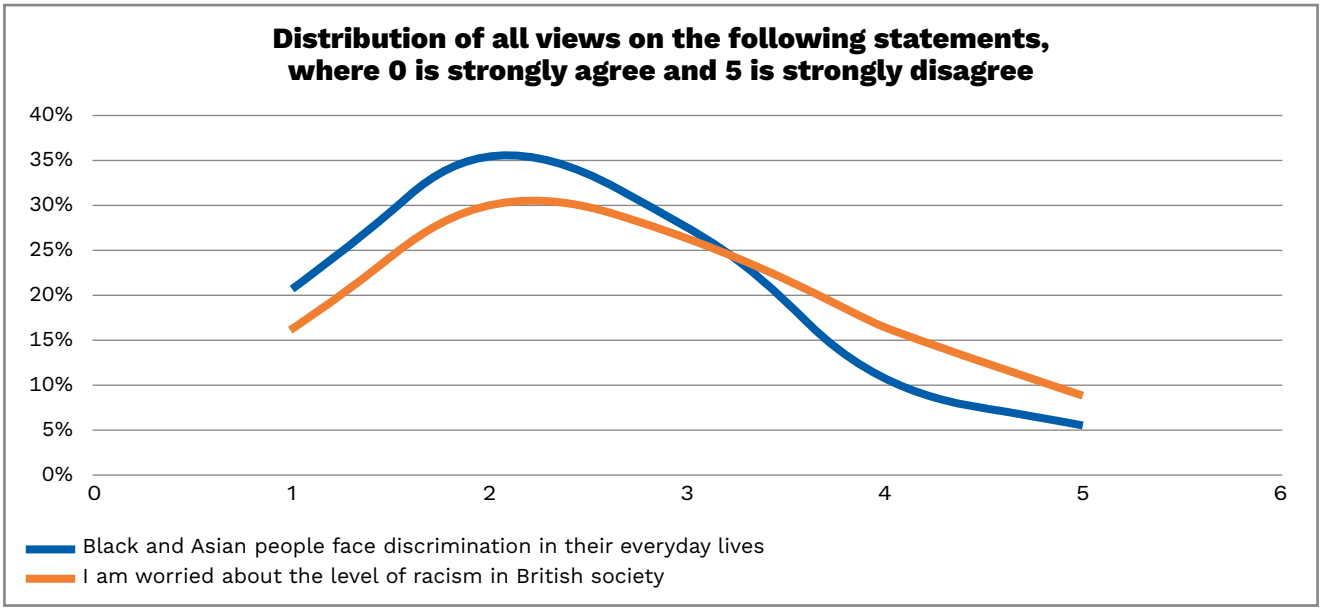
White people are unfairly made to feel guilty over historical racism
You cannot be proud of your national identity these days without being called racist


Distribution of all views on the following statements, where 0 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree
40%
35%
30%
25%
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Black and Asian people face discrimination in their everyday lives
I am worried about the level of racism in British society

conversation around transgender rights and recognition has been considered a corner stone of the culture war debate. The so-called 'debate' does not conform to traditional left/right divisions, but is an issue that has become a rallying point for divisive narratives of free speech suppression, 'cancel culture', or left wingers 'gone too far'. But the issue itself has little public salience.

When asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement, 'a transgender woman is a woman', our poll finds that respondents remain largely ambivalent or disinterested in the issue. Public opinion on this question is distributed in a classic bell curve, with some strong agreement, some strong disagreement, but most not holding a strong opinion either way.

But on other issues, the culture wars have swayed the debate, with reactive framings around identity issues shaping public opinion.

Although the vast majority of people see that there is a problem with racism in British society, and that Black and Asian people face discrimination in their everyday lives, when the framing around questions of race is framed around 'white guilt', the curve is clearly skewed. A majority of people say that white people are unfairly made to feel guilty about historic racism. Similarly, when asked whether people can have pride in their national identity without being considered racist, there is extremely low opposition to the statement, and higher levels of strong support.

Framings around 'unfair white guilt' and not being able to voice your national identity without being accused of racism are particularly good at cutting through to the mainstream as they tap into individual concerns about status, power and entitlement linked to race. But they also speak to a broader pushback against progressive values.

As society has gotten more liberal overall, with social norms shifting and Britons becoming more open-minded in their attitudes about race and more concerned about inequalities, we have also seen a reactionary backlash gain traction. While most people accept an anti-racist viewpoint to a certain degree – that racism is a problem in society that needs addressing – narratives that set limits to this progress cut through – such as a belief that white people are discriminated against just as much – even where a person may hold a more progressive stance on a range of other issues.

A CHALLENGE TO THE 'MODERATE MIDDLE'?

Our *Fear and HOPE* model initially set out a spectrum of identity politics that spread from overt enmity to an enthusiastic embrace of immigration and multiculturalism. We understood that in the centre there were groups that had different motivations, but were generally moderate. One was culturally ambivalent, another more conservative, and another more open.

We understood that this 'middle ground' was the political target for our fight against the far right. We knew that these people generally held some cultural anxieties that could be stirred up, and were particularly vulnerable in times of uncertainty and economic hardship. We knew that the far right would target this group, but that we could work with them to build solidarity and promote a politics of hope.

But the breakdown of these identity tribes, and the direction in which different issues have been swayed by dominant framings presents a challenge in what is more of an issue based landscape. These issues pull support from across the spectrum of identity politics, but often they are positions that wouldn't really be considered 'moderate', and do not fall across a spectrum in such a way that creates an obvious middle ground.

There are a clear number of issues on which progressives have pulled consensus in their direction, while for other issues, reactionary framings have become dominant. For example, suspicions of Muslims in Britain and an association of Islam as a force of intolerance against Western norms are widespread, while 'failure of integration' and 'great replacement' narratives are now broadly mainstream.

But it is also clear that an identity politics that attempts to weaponise single issues will not succeed. The majority of people do not attach enough weight to their views on one or two issues to compromise on their views of others. But because it is harder to predict views on an ideological basis, we need to understand how identity issues intersect, and where new coalitions can potentially form.

THE *FEAR AND HOPE* INDEX

Our original *Fear and HOPE* tribes were developed to create segments based on an intersection of economic positioning and cultural anxieties. We found that there was a refraction of individual issues through the prism of identity politics, which clustered around the following themes:

- Optimism vs pessimism; security vs insecurity.
- Economic change and identity.
- Englishness, Britishness and identity.
- Social capital vs social dislocation.
- Attitudes towards immigration and multiculturalism
- Negative attitudes towards Islam and Muslims.

But while many of these factors remain key issues to understand division in society, our analysis suggests that the old tribe system, built around these, has broken down. As an attitudinal framework based on ideology has fallen away with a greater focus on single issues, the new politics of identity is determined by a different set of forces, and increasingly framed around a reaction to progressive norms.

To understand where the new politics of identity is playing out, we have created a *Fear and HOPE* Index which indicates the extent to which each respondent displays views on issues which we can characterise as anti-liberal, conflictual or contrary to liberal democratic norms and institutions. This is based on the following four factors:

IDENTITY POLITICS
This describes people's views on identity, covering a range of issues, among which are LGBT rights and identities, perceptions of racial discrimination, beliefs about national identity and gender issues. Rather than capturing distinct support or opposition on each issue, this is largely about how people position themselves where issues are framed as a pushback against a 'woke' positioning. For example, while those who score highly on this factor believe that white people are discriminated against as much as people of colour, most also accept that Black and Asian Britons experience everyday racism.

POLITICS AND POWER
Those who score highly on this factor have weak political trust, and an antagonistic relationship with democracy. They reject liberal political principles and institutions, believing the BBC to be biased, that violence is sometimes necessary in politics and reject liberal democracy in favour of 'strong man' politics.

MULTICULTURALISM AND RELIGION
This factor is based on attitudes towards different cultures and religions, and the extent to which people believe that diversity has had a negative impact upon British society. A respondent scoring highly on this factor is very concerned about the impact of religious groups on the UK and the world, in particular Muslims, and is most likely to describe multiculturalism as a failure.

CONSPIRACY AND MISTRUST
This factor is based on respondent answers to whether respondents believe a set of extreme and conspiratorial views to be true or false. For example, whether they think it is true that the Government lies about the number of immigrants living in the country, or believe that there is a single group of people who secretly control events and rule the world together. A respondent scoring 1 on this factor believes a number of conspiracy theories to be true.

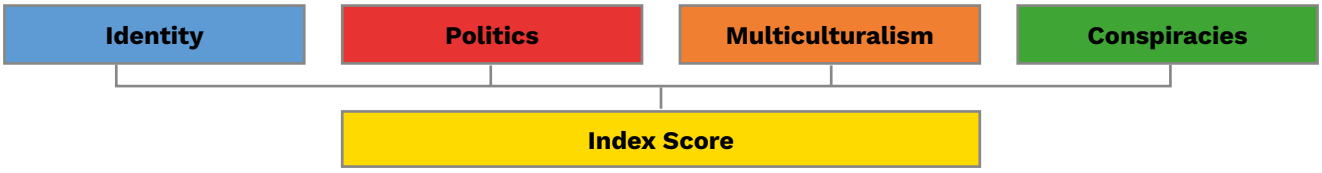
Importantly, there is not strong correlation between all of these factors. For example, while there is moderate correlation between a rejection of political institutions and openness to conspiracy theories, the correlation between a rejection of political institutions and a belief that diversity has had a negative impact upon British society is negligible. The components broadly describe different things rather than representing an underlying factor which explains each.

Our understanding is that despite public attitudes being more 'issue based' than ideologically framed, single issues alone are insufficient in understanding where lines of division emerge. In many places, these factors do intersect, and where they do, we can identify the issues, and framings of issues, which divide.

This is important in understanding the new landscape, as it helps us to understand where new coalitions for a politics of hate can be built, based on views on issues which we can

Correlation between each component, 1 representing perfect correlation, 0 no correlation at all.

	Identity	Politics	Multiculturalism	Conspiracies
Identity	1.00	0.35	0.40	0.44
Politics	0.35	1.00	0.22	0.50
Multiculturalism	0.40	0.22	1.00	0.38
Conspiracies	0.44	0.50	0.38	1.00

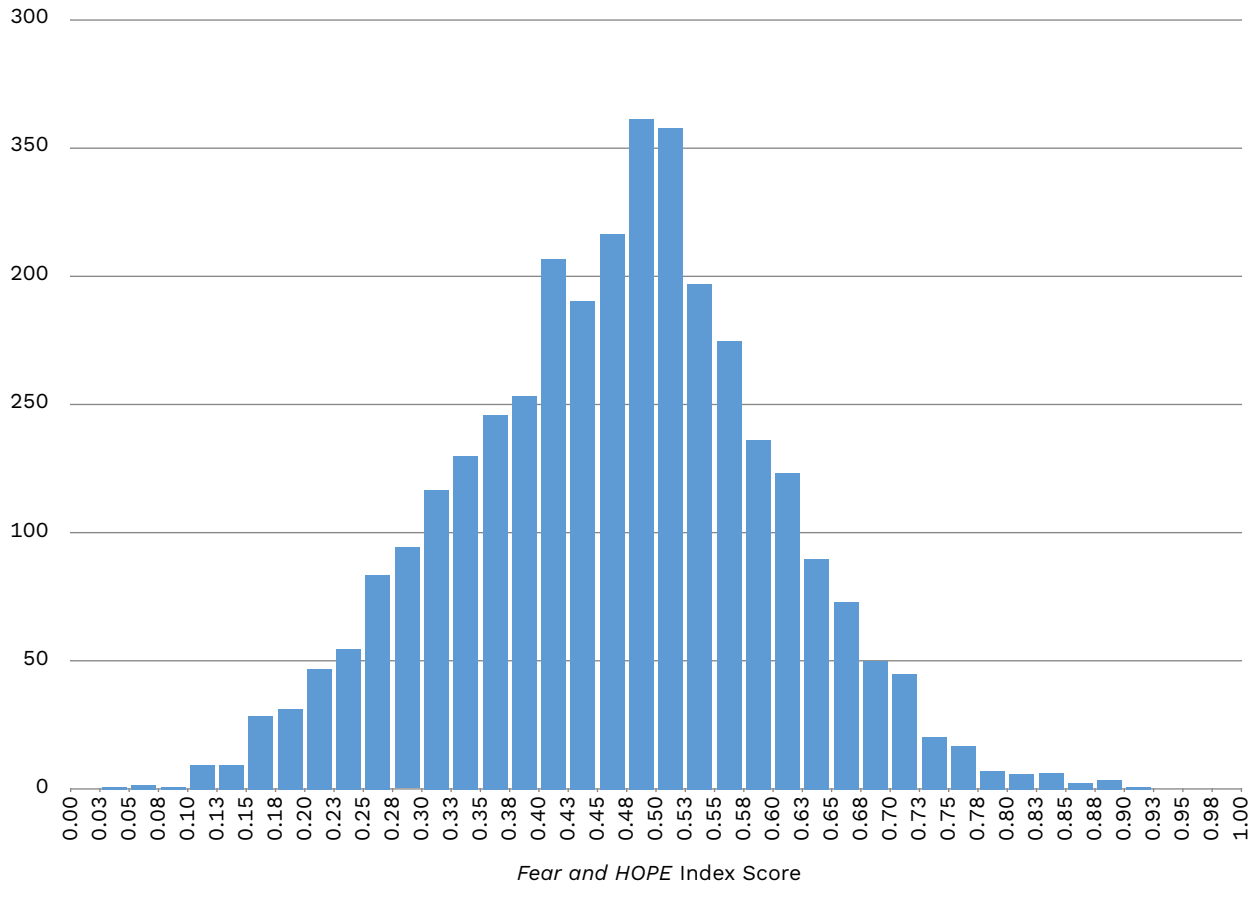


characterise as anti-liberal, conflictual or contrary to liberal democratic norms and institutions.

For each respondent, then, we score them across each aspect and then take the average score across all four of these components, which gives us an overall *Fear and HOPE* Index score of between 0 and 1. 0 describes a respondent who is entirely liberal in identity, anti-conspiracy, pro-multicultural, and politically liberal, 1 being the opposite.

Applying index scores across the population as a whole, we find an even distribution across the index, weighted slightly further towards liberal views and values.

Frequency distribution of *Fear and HOPE* Index Score



This is because society as a whole leans towards more socially progressive norms on each of the four elements our index explores.

We have then broken this spectrum of results into ten deciles(i.e. ten equally sized groups based on their index score). The first decile score nearest to zero on the index, is therefore most liberal in identity, anti-conspiracy, pro-multicultural, and politically liberal. The tenth decile scores closest to 1 are therefore most likely to believe in a number of conspiracy theories, reject political institutions, and to reject 'woke' culture. This creates a new spectrum for understanding public attitudes.

This new spectrum then helps us to better understand where the politics of identity is likely to play out over the coming years.

UNDERSTANDING THE INDEX

This section looks at our poll in full, across the new *Fear and HOPE* index.

IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Questions of national identity were central to understanding identity politics in our first *Fear and HOPE* study. Englishness had risen on the political agenda, as the rise of the English Defence League had furthered a connection for some between symbols of English identity and exclusionary national identity. Our 2011 study found that 60% regarded themselves as British and 39% saw themselves as English, with those selecting English most likely to be in the culturally concerned tribe.

Overall, little seems to have shifted over the last 10 years, as 35% consider themselves English and 52% British, with a slightly higher proportion saying European (6%) or Hyphenated (i.e. Asian- or Black-) British (4%) or English (1%), reflecting an increasingly diverse society.

And across the spectrum of the *Fear and HOPE* index, the differences across the deciles are not enormous. Those in the most liberal groups were less likely to see themselves as English, though over a quarter did, and most likely to see themselves as European, reflecting not just the diversity within these groups but also their rejection of Brexit.

Index by decile

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
British	57%	61%	57%	54%	52%	49%	50%	47%	46%	49%
English	26%	27%	32%	36%	37%	37%	39%	38%	42%	42%
European	10%	8%	5%	5%	5%	5%	3%	6%	5%	4%

But the meanings people attach to their national identity is where we see more divergence across the spectrum. Overall, a small majority of our survey agreed with the statement 'you cannot be proud of your national identity these days without being called racist', while 20% disagreed and 25% neither agreed nor disagreed. But looking across the index, it is clear that rejection of this statement emerges most strongly among the most liberal deciles.

Index by decile

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Agree: You cannot be proud of your national identity these days without being called racist	22%	42%	49%	52%	54%	56%	57%	71%	74%	83%
Disagree: You cannot be proud of your national identity these days without being called racist	55%	35%	23%	17%	16%	12%	9%	9%	10%	7%

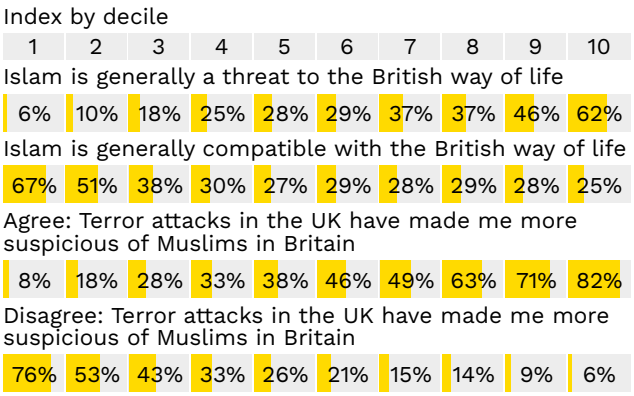
Views about national identity have become more inclusive in the UK[3] over time. Racial nationalism has become more and more of a minority view as the country has gotten increasingly diverse, and social attitudes to race have changed. Nonetheless, the strength of association between pride in your own national identity and an association with racism suggests that a vision of progressive patriotism is not one shared by all.

And looking at attitudes to multiculturalism, it is unsurprising that the lower deciles of the index are all more likely to see diversity as an integral part of British culture than those with higher scores on the index who are more likely to see that diversity undermines British culture.

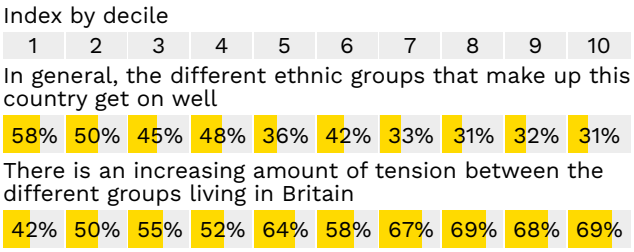
Index by decile

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Having a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures is part of British culture	93%	86%	76%	67%	58%	51%	48%	41%	38%	38%
Having a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures has undermined British culture	7%	14%	24%	33%	42%	49%	52%	59%	62%	62%

Those who score higher on the index are also far more likely to see Islam as a threat to the British way of life than those with lower scores, who overwhelmingly see Islam compatible with the British way of life. Those with higher scores are also more likely to say they have become more suspicious of Muslims in Britain as a result of terror attacks in the UK.



And perhaps unsurprising again given a greater prevalence of pessimistic views on multiculturalism, those who score higher on the index are more likely to see that there is an increasing amount of tension between the different groups living in Britain than those with lower scores, who are more likely to say that in general, the different ethnic groups that make up this country get on well.



But even among the higher scoring deciles of the index, there is a considerable pocket of support for multiculturalism, and the view that Islam is incompatible with the British way of life or that there is growing conflict between different ethnic groups living in England is not homogenous. Of course, the multiculturalism component is just one of the factors feeding into the *Fear and HOPE* index.

But this also reflects how the dividing lines in society have moved on from 2011. Rather than being centred on an exclusionary nationalism, 'Englishness' or 'British values', the politics of identity is increasingly being shaped by a reaction to progressive values, cutting across multiple issues, from modern masculinity to structural racism and trans rights.

STATUS AND POWER

In our 2011 report, as the country was still feeling the effects of the 2011 recession, questions of optimism and pessimism were a key dividing line. We found a clear correlation between liberalism and optimism, with the more socially liberal tribes all more likely to say they felt optimistic for the future than the hostile groups. The active enmity and latent hostile tribes were overwhelmingly pessimistic about the future, which reflected their broader outlook on life, and became a channel for their resentments towards minority groups.

We saw that people who were more optimistic tended to feel more in control of their own lives, and were less likely to hold negative views toward immigration, multiculturalism, and are less likely to be prejudiced against Muslims.

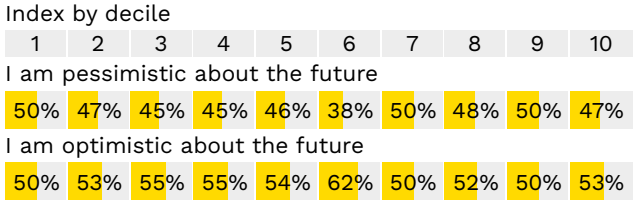
But we saw these patterns shift with the mixed response to the referendum result. In 2017, using MRP modelling, we saw that constituencies that had a very high Brexit vote, which had been most pessimistic before the referendum, became most likely to be optimistic[4]. The referendum result was seen to offer a window for opportunity for many of these groups. The messaging of the Leave campaign (around control) was likely to have resonated with these groups, and it may have seemed that it was finally possible to take control and challenge some of the root factors for the long-standing pessimism of the two hostile groups.

The patterns of optimism for the most socially liberal groups, confident multicultural and mainstream liberals, reflected almost the opposite. These groups were the most optimistic in 2011, becoming more so between 2011 and 2016. Many in these groups experienced an initial shock as the result of the referendum became clear.

Our 2021 *Fear and HOPE* poll reflects that overall, levels of optimism and pessimism across the country are similar to where they were in 2011. 46% say they are pessimistic for the future, down from 52% in 2011, while 54% say they are optimistic, up from 48% in 2011.

But the impact of Brexit appears to have dissipated. 48% of Remainers say they are optimistic, as do 57% of Leave voters.

And looking across the *Fear and HOPE* Index, there appears to be little relation between people's outlook on identity, politics, multiculturalism and conspiracy and how optimistic or pessimistic they feel.



Nonetheless, there are clearer correlations when people are asked about how optimistic they feel about their own personal status. Those scoring higher on the identity index were far more likely to feel discontented with their lives so far.

Index by decile

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overall I'm disappointed with my life so far									
24%	27%	29%	26%	31%	30%	33%	42%	45%	38%
Overall I'm happy with my life so far									
76%	73%	71%	74%	69%	70%	67%	58%	55%	62%

They are also more likely to feel disadvantaged in society. While to some extent this is reflected in the higher degree of BAME groups in the higher deciles of the index, who may feel disadvantaged as a result of racist prejudice (38% of BAME respondents say they feel disadvantaged compare to 26% of white respondents).

Overall, more men say they feel disadvantaged in society (31%) than women (27%), while there is also a small difference between graduates (34%) and non-graduates (40%).

Index by decile

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Agree: I consider myself disadvantaged in society									
17%	21%	22%	18%	23%	18%	26%	32%	46%	66%
Disagree: I consider myself disadvantaged in society									
66%	55%	53%	43%	40%	37%	31%	26%	21%	12%

For some, a feeling of being disadvantaged in society, and of being disappointed with their lives, speak to a more general sense of displacement, where they feel left behind by progressive norms. Those who feel strongly that they are disadvantaged in society are more likely to see their successes in life determined by external forces (49% compared to 35% total).

While most of those who feel disadvantaged in society are likely to say so because of genuine grievances, some who feel that society is stacked against people like them are likely to push back against progressive politics which they feel undermines them. Particularly for those without protected characteristics, progressive norms can seem to present a threat to their own position in society rather than incentives to find equality for all.

SOCIAL ATTITUDES: WOKE AND ANTI-WOKE?

Despite YouGov research form May 2021 showing that most Britons (59%) didn't know what "woke" meant, half of whom (30%) had never heard the term being used in the first place[5], a pushback against 'wokeness' and the rise of "cancel culture" has become louder and louder among social commentators.

Originating in radical Black politics in the U.S., broadly referring to an awareness of racial injustices, the term 'woke' has become increasingly distorted in the UK context, with right wing commentators increasingly weaponising the term to undermine progressive politics.

The so called 'war on woke' builds on a long history of the right's attempts to whip up a moral panic about left-wing "identity politics" by presenting it as a threat to the British way of life rather than the promotion of equal rights, the "looney left" or "political correctness gone too far".

Nonetheless, our polling and *Fear and HOPE* index suggest that this is less divisive than social commentators make out.

Index by decile

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Political correctness is used by the liberal elite to limit what we can say									
24%	38%	47%	53%	53%	52%	55%	58%	55%	55%
Concern about political correctness has been whipped up by the right wing media to undermine those who believe in tolerance and anti-racism									
76%	62%	53%	47%	47%	48%	45%	42%	45%	45%

Overall, the country is split in half, with 49% in agreement that political correctness is used by the liberal elite to limit what we can say and 51% believing that concern about political correctness has been whipped up by the right wing media to undermine those who believe in tolerance and anti-racism.

But across the *Fear and HOPE* index, each decile is also divided on the question, despite them holding very different social attitudes. This includes those in the highest scoring 20% of the index who are split, with 45% believing that concern about political correctness is a tool of the right wing media to undermine tolerance and anti-racism and 55% in agreement that political correctness is a tool of the liberal elite to shut down free speech. The only exception is among those scoring lowest on the index, who are far more likely to agree that concern about political correctness is a tool of the right wing media.

However, looking at attitudes across a range of issues, clearer divides emerge.

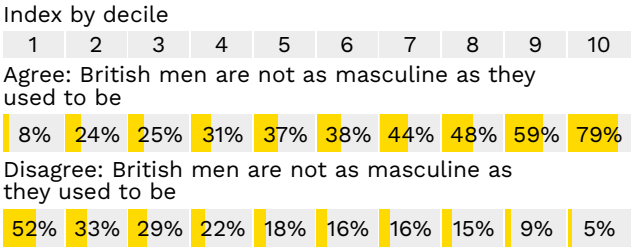
For example, when asked about Feminism, overall a third agree that feminism has gone too far and makes it harder for men to succeed (33%) while just over a third disagree (35%). But across the *Fear and HOPE* index, those with higher scores are far more likely to reject feminism as demonising men, while those who score lower reject this.

Index by decile

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Agree: Feminism has gone too far and makes it harder for men to succeed									
12%	18%	22%	28%	28%	29%	38%	41%	50%	68%
Disagree: Feminism has gone too far and makes it harder for men to succeed									
75%	53%	46%	40%	28%	28%	20%	20%	25%	16%

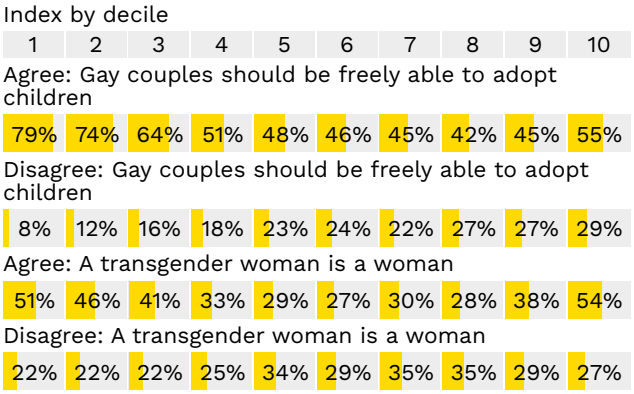
On sexuality and gender, too, we find considerable differences across the index. When asked if they

agree or disagree that British men have become less masculine, there is a clear gradient of support as index scores increase.

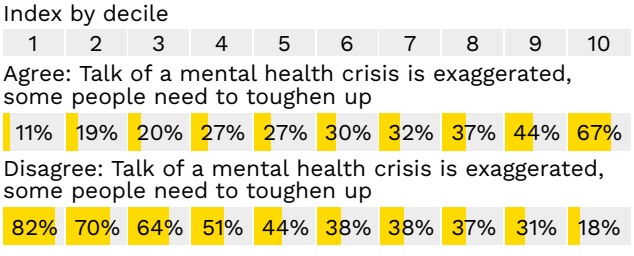


And while overall, the majority agree that gay people should be freely able to adopt children, there is increasing opposition among those who have higher scores on the index.

Yet despite transgender rights playing a key role in the 'culture wars', with support often presented by right-wing commentators as totemic of progressive values and 'wokeness' gone too far, we do not see a correlating pattern across the index deciles.

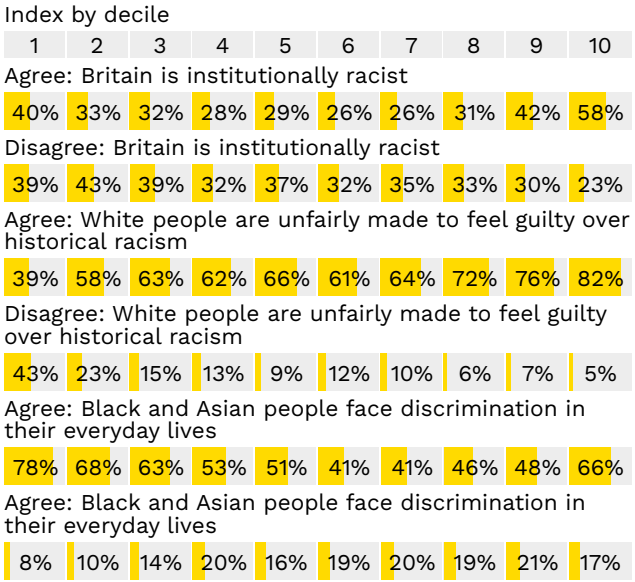


Attitudes towards mental health also highlight the reactionary views of those who score highly on the index. Despite mental health issues being increasingly destigmatised, across our poll 31% agreed with the statement 'Talk of a mental health crisis is exaggerated, some people need to toughen up' while 48% disagreed, with those scoring highest on the index most likely to agree.



Attitudes to race and racism in Britain are however, slightly more complex, not least because of the relative ethnic diversity among cohorts scoring higher on the *Fear and HOPE* index.

When asked whether they feel Black and Asian people face discrimination in their everyday lives, there is agreement across the spectrum of the index, with pockets of disagreement emerging within each decile. When asked whether Britain is institutionally racist, there is a greater degree of disagreement – overall 35% agree and 34% disagree – but those scoring higher on the index are slightly more likely to agree with this.



But when asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement 'White people are unfairly made to feel guilty over historical racism', those who score higher on the index are more likely to agree.

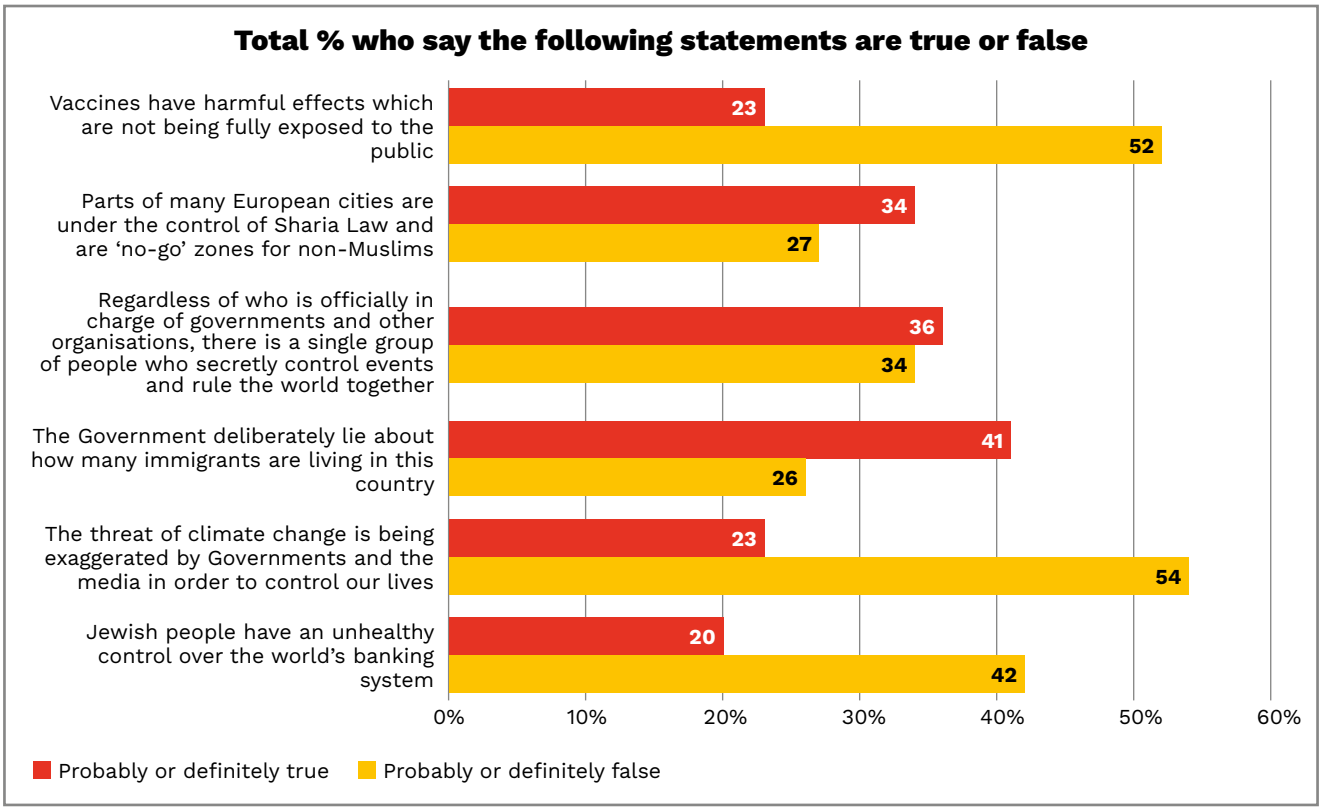
New lines of division are drawn here, not necessarily built on social attitudes on particular issues, but around the framings of these issues, that show the support for and pushback against progressive values.

CONSPIRACY

It is no surprise that we have seen a rise in the spread of conspiracy theory throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Conspiracy theories tend to rise in volatile and uncertain times, as people look for answers in complex situations. Although conspiracy theories are often an outlet for people to question the status quo, some conspiracy theories are particularly divisive and corrosive to democracy, and can fuel racism, the far right and violence.

Our poll finds that although overall, the majority of people reject conspiracy theories as being true, a significant minority remain open to believing myths about everything from climate change being exaggerated to 'great replacement' and 'new world order' conspiracies as well as those explicitly rooted in prejudice towards Jews and Muslims.

Of course, these figures indicate an openness to each conspiracy rather than a wholehearted belief. Nonetheless, they should come as some concern.



Index by decile

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
It is true that parts of many European cities are under the control of Sharia Law and are 'no-go' zones for non-Muslims	3%	12%	17%	26%	29%	31%	42%	46%	61%	75%
It is false that parts of many European cities are under the control of Sharia Law and are 'no-go' zones for non-Muslims	75%	52%	34%	23%	21%	21%	13%	13%	9%	4%
It is true that Jewish people have an unhealthy control over the world's banking system	1%	5%	6%	11%	9%	21%	20%	28%	39%	65%
It is false that Jewish people have an unhealthy control over the world's banking system	91%	70%	58%	46%	42%	28%	26%	24%	18%	10%
It is true that regardless of who is officially in charge of governments and other organisations, there is a single group of people who secretly control events and rule the world together	5%	16%	22%	28%	30%	32%	38%	46%	61%	80%
It is false that regardless of who is officially in charge of governments and other organisations, there is a single group of people who secretly control events and rule the world together	87%	63%	42%	38%	26%	21%	20%	16%	14%	4%

That is why openness or belief in conspiracy is one of the four components of the *Fear and HOPE* index. While not all of those who score highest on the index wholeheartedly believe in all the conspiracies we asked about in our poll, there is a clear gradient of openness, with those scoring higher more likely to believe conspiracies on Covid-19, immigration and government control as well as more extreme overt islamophobia and antisemitic conspiracies.

POLITICS AND TRUST

Politically, there is a spread of support for the main political parties across the spectrum when respondents are asked their voting intention.

Index by decile

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Conservatives	8%	9%	11%	13%	9%	11%	9%	11%	9%	10%
Labour	13%	12%	10%	9%	9%	8%	9%	8%	10%	11%
Liberal Democrats	16%	12%	9%	10%	10%	5%	12%	10%	8%	8%
Green Party	15%	10%	7%	5%	7%	10%	10%	10%	9%	16%
Reform Party	1%	1%	0%	6%	8%	10%	16%	25%	17%	15%
Other	4%	4%	0%	0%	14%	6%	16%	11%	24%	20%
Don't know	9%	13%	12%	11%	14%	13%	9%	8%	8%	5%
Would not vote	5%	5%	11%	9%	12%	16%	12%	9%	12%	9%

And Brexit does not seem to be a significant divider across the index deciles, with those scoring lowest most likely to reject Brexit as a

bad thing for the country, but others across the spectrum split on the Brexit question.

Index by decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Brexit has been good for Britain	25%	34%	40%	44%	44%	48%	50%	49%	54%	57%
Brexit has been bad for Britain	75%	66%	60%	56%	56%	52%	50%	51%	46%	43%

But trust in the political system and key institutions has been severely challenged by the Brexit referendum and its fallout, and now the coronavirus pandemic. While low trust in politicians is nothing new, over the last decade, populists have increasingly hammered away at political trust by pitting 'the will of the people' against 'the corrupt elite'.

In a poll we carried out in May 2019, three-quarters of people (73%) said that none of the main political parties speak for them, and half of voters said they thought that the media and politicians were conspiring together to lie to the public.

And when it comes to questions of trust in the political system, although a majority across the deciles agree that voting is the best way to have your voice heard by those in power, most also agree that the political system is broken, with those scoring higher on the index more likely to share this sentiment.

Index by decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Agree: The political system is broken	54%	53%	51%	45%	51%	47%	56%	59%	73%	84%
Disagree: The political system is broken	26%	25%	19%	20%	15%	13%	9%	12%	8%	2%
Agree: Voting is the best way to have your voice heard by those in power	81%	74%	71%	66%	59%	50%	53%	58%	62%	75%
Disagree: Voting is the best way to have your voice heard by those in power	11%	12%	13%	11%	13%	16%	18%	13%	13%	13%

On the whole, the majority of respondents said they got their news from the BBC (37%), although those with higher scores on the index were more likely to look at alternatives, in particular Sky News or ITN news. But many feel that the BBC do not report the news truthfully and accurately (53%) and more than a third (39%) believe that the BBC is politically biased against the Government. This sentiment came through strongest among those with higher score on the index.

Anti-BBC attitudes may reflect a myriad of things coming from a resentment of programming to growing competition from for example, Facebook, YouTube, or Netflix, and accusations of bias have long come from both the political left and right. Nonetheless, accusations of the BBC as politically biased have become a focus of the hard-right, leaning into populist myths about mainstream media acting as a voice of suppression from a left-wing agenda.

Index by decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The BBC report the news truthfully and accurately	72%	59%	54%	42%	35%	44%	44%	37%	36%	41%
The BBC does not report the news truthfully and accurately	28%	41%	46%	58%	65%	56%	56%	63%	64%	59%
Agree: The BBC is politically biased against the Government	11%	21%	23%	31%	34%	32%	41%	51%	66%	82%
Disagree: The BBC is politically biased against the Government	65%	40%	32%	20%	21%	16%	16%	13%	7%	4%

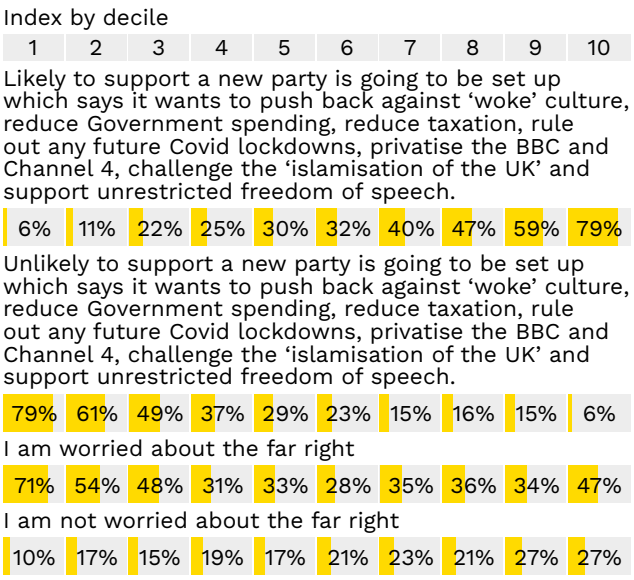
And while there is dissatisfaction with the political system for many – overall 57% agree that the political system is broken, with just 15% saying that it is not – this is more pronounced among those with higher scores on the index.

Index by decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Agree: In extreme circumstances, violence can be necessary to defend something you strongly believe	12%	19%	22%	26%	28%	30%	37%	44%	59%	79%
Disagree: In extreme circumstances, violence can be necessary to defend something you strongly believe	73%	60%	54%	44%	39%	34%	29%	25%	18%	9%
Agree: The political system is broken	54%	53%	51%	45%	51%	47%	56%	59%	73%	84%
Disagree: The political system is broken	26%	25%	19%	20%	15%	13%	9%	12%	8%	2%
Having liberal democracy with regular elections and a multiparty system	93%	77%	67%	60%	50%	41%	46%	34%	37%	26%
Having a strong and decisive leader who does not have to bother with parliament or elections	2%	8%	11%	14%	22%	26%	28%	40%	49%	64%

But those with higher scores on the index are far more receptive to solutions rooted in authoritarianism or political violence than those with lower scores on the index. Overall, just 35% of respondents said that they felt in extreme circumstances violence can be necessary to defend something you strongly believe. This rose to 79% among the decile with the highest scores on the index.

And when asked to make a choice between two different political systems; a liberal democracy with regular elections and a multiparty system or a strong and decisive leader who does not have to bother with parliament or elections, overall

54% opted for liberal democracy and 26% opted for a strong leader who eschews elections. But there was far stronger support for a strong leader among the upper deciles of the index.



Of course, these views do not necessarily translate directly into voting patterns or political action – as we have already described our polling shows a spread of voters for all the main political parties across the index spectrum.

Nonetheless, they highlight the potential for a far-right group to exploit this combination of reactionary identity politics, authoritarian political leanings, low trust and insecurity. While this may seem to be an unnatural alignment of views, our index model shows how although the higher deciles may not be ideologically aligned, their positions on individual issues in the identity politics matrix has the potential to break down barriers and form new alliances. This is where a new reactionary right threat could take hold.

When asked whether they are concerned about the far right, most respondents, wherever they sit on the index, said they were concerned, with pockets of opposition in the upper deciles. But when asked if they were likely to support or oppose a new reactionary right wing party which says it wants to push back against 'woke' culture, reduce Government spending, reduce taxation, rule out any future Covid lockdowns, privatise the BBC and Channel 4, challenge the 'islamisation of the UK' and support unrestricted freedom of speech, 16% said they were very likely and 19% quite likely to support it across our poll. Potential support for such a party is unsurprisingly concentrated among those scoring highest on our *Fear and HOPE* index.

The rewriting of identity politics has shifted the potential threat of a reactionary right politics of hate into new territories, and with it, is encouraging new audiences.

FEAR AND HOPE BY DEMOGRAPHICS

In our original *Fear and HOPE* tribes, we found that the two more hostile groups tended to be older, white Britons, while the liberal tribes were more likely to be younger, with the mainstream liberal and immigrant ambivalent groups most likely to be from BAME backgrounds. But with the changing nature of the identity politics matrix, our *Fear and HOPE* index would suggest that demographic characteristics are becoming less of an attitudinal predictor.

THE GROWTH OF YOUNG REACTIONARIES

Looking across the *Fear and HOPE* index by age group, we find that the upper deciles of the index – those most likely to believe in a number of conspiracy theories, reject political institutions, and to reject 'woke' culture – are more likely to be occupied by younger respondents.

This would seem to contradict the vast majority of public attitude studies where younger respondents generally hold more socially liberal views than older cohorts. To some extent this is explained by lower levels of political trust among younger groups, and increased openness to conspiracy theories amongst these groups, which make up two of the four elements in the index.

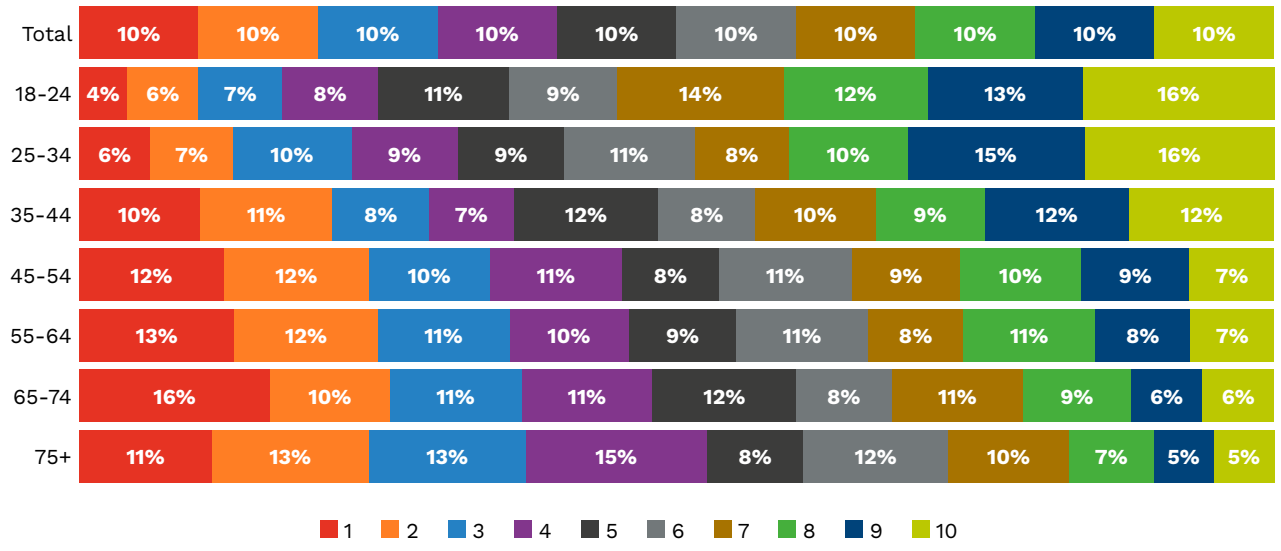
Breaking the index down into the four separate components, it is clear that younger people are more likely to have a higher score, indicating greater alignment, with the politics and conspiracy components, though score around the same on the identity component and lower on the multiculturalism element than older age sets.

Nonetheless, it also highlights that attitudes to identity issues and multiculturalism – the other two factors that feed into the index – are in no way homogenous amongst younger people.

Our poll reaffirms that younger people are more likely to share more positive views of immigration, to embrace multiculturalism and to support anti-racist initiatives than older age groups. In fact, we find that social attitudes among 18-24s are more likely to be progressive than they were ten years ago. In 2011, just 41% said immigration had been a good thing for Britain compared to 61% today. Just over half saw multiculturalism as a core component of British culture in 2011 compared with 65% today. Nonetheless, there is still a sizeable proportion of 18-24s who reject these notions, and on some issues, younger respondents were more likely to share hostile views than older groups.

For example, 18-24s are more likely than older generations to say that Britain is institutionally racist, that Brexit has been a bad thing for the country, that immigration has been a good thing

Index deciles by age



Index scores by age

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Identity component (0 = most liberal, 1 = least liberal) AVERAGE	0.52	0.51	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.51	0.54
Politics component (0 = most liberal, 1 = least liberal) AVERAGE	0.62	0.58	0.54	0.50	0.47	0.43	0.42
Multiculturalism component (0 = most pro-multicultural, 1 = most anti-multicultural) AVERAGE	0.37	0.38	0.36	0.37	0.40	0.41	0.40
Conspiracy component (0 = least conspiratorial thinking, 1 = most conspiratorial thinking) AVERAGE	0.54	0.53	0.47	0.42	0.39	0.37	0.36

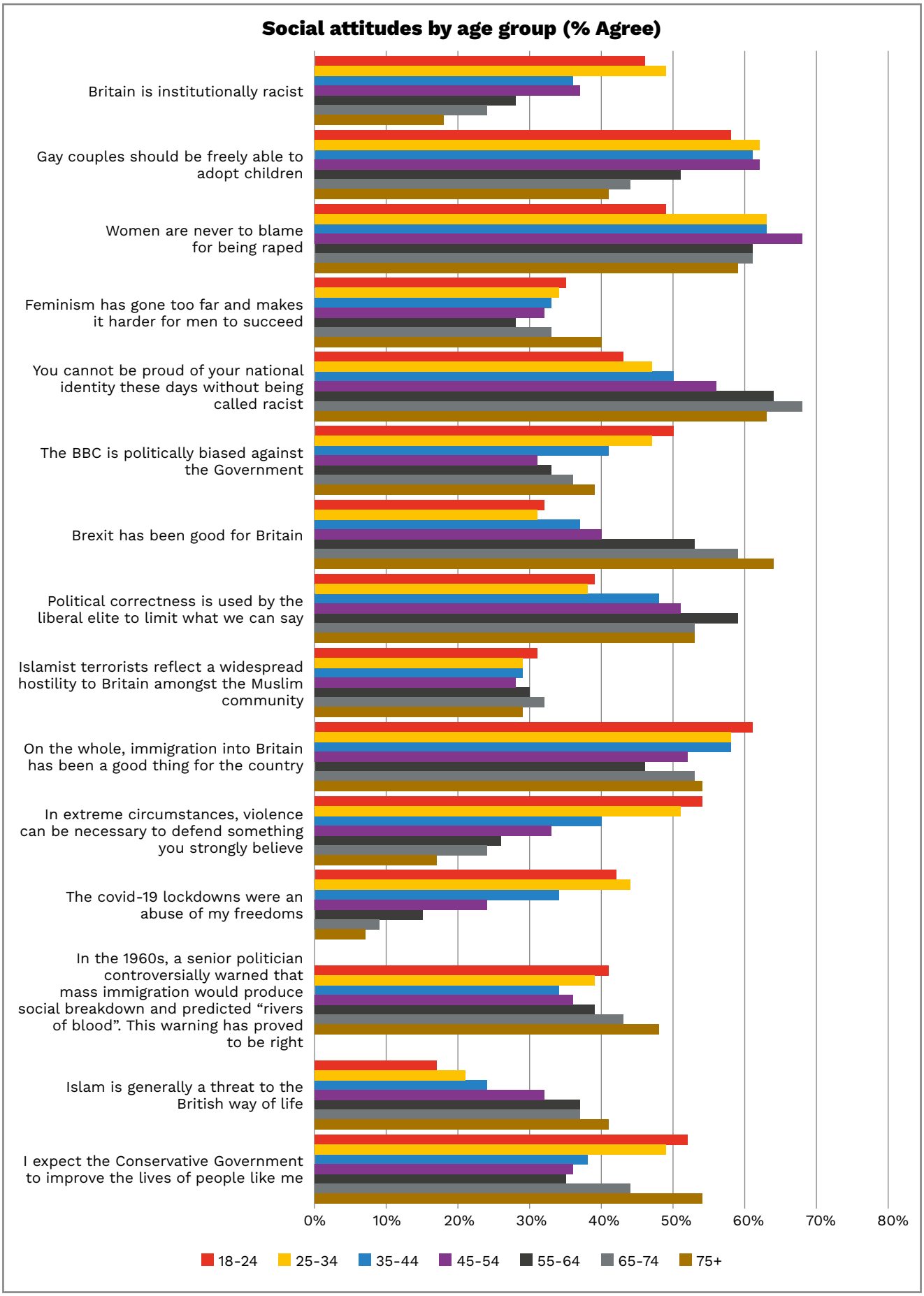
for the country, or that Islam is compatible with the British way of life. But they are equally likely to say that Islamist terrorists reflect a widespread hostility to Britain amongst the Muslim community, or think that Enoch Powell was right in predicting social breakdown as a consequence of mass immigration. (When asked, 'In the 1960s, a senior politician controversially warned that mass immigration would produce social breakdown and predicted "rivers of blood". Do you think this warning has proved to be right or wrong?', 41% of 18-24s agreed compared with 39% of all respondents).

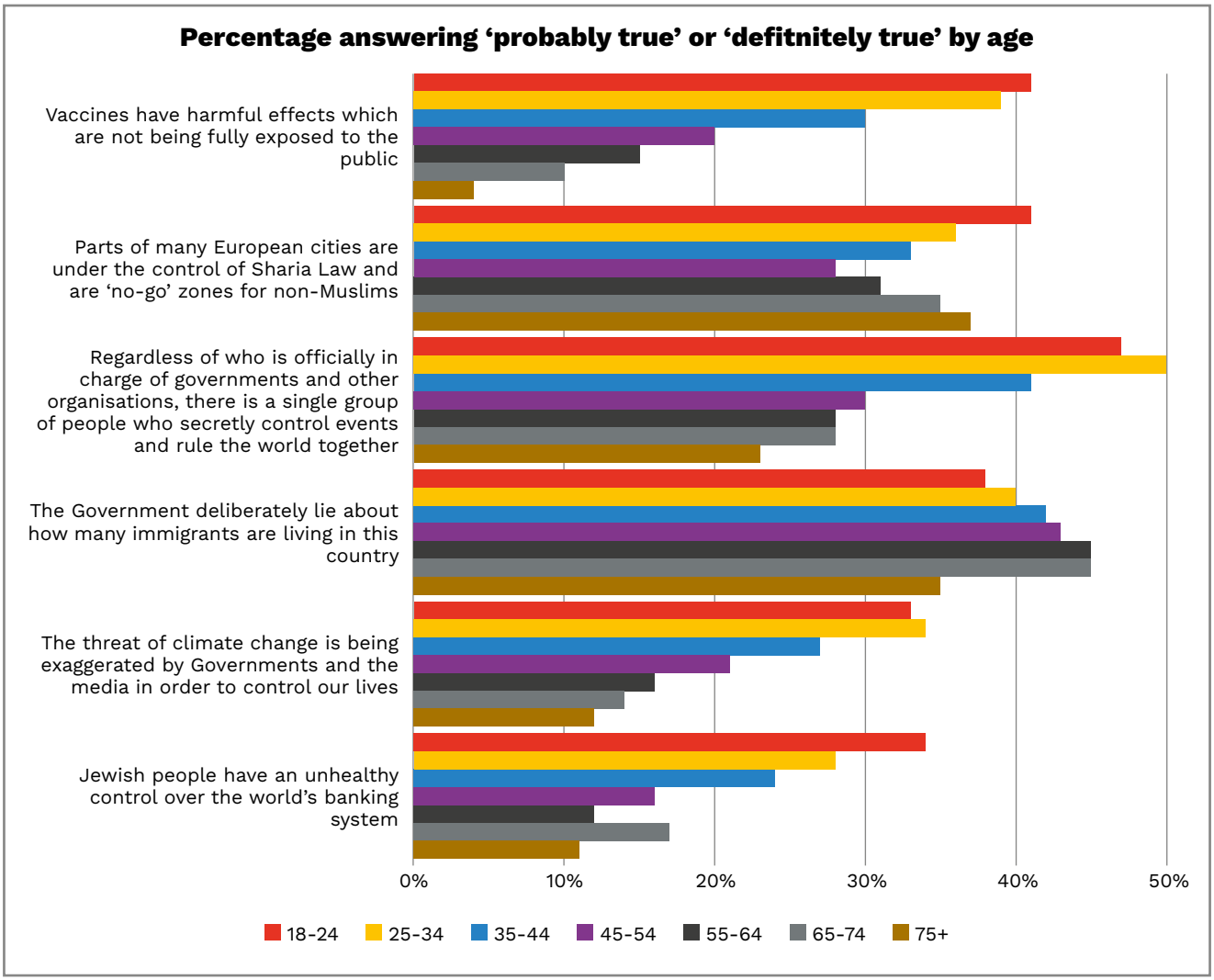
And even where 18-24s are notably more socially liberal than older age groups, there remains a notable proportion who hold more hostile views, for example the 39% who say immigration has been a bad thing for Britain.

And on certain issues, young people are more likely to hold some more regressive views (see chart on opposite page). They are more likely to think that political violence can be acceptable for something you strongly believe in, that feminism holds men back, and are most likely of all the age groups to believe that women can be to blame for sexual violence against themselves (25%). While they generally reject the notion that political correctness is used to limit what you can say, they are more likely to feel that the BBC is politically biased against the Government, and hold stronger anti-BBC views in general.

Despite younger people generally being less likely to vote Conservative, and generally voice less trust in the political system and are unlikely to feel represented by any of the main political parties, 18-24s are more likely than all other age groups, with the exclusion of those over 75, to feel that the current Government will improve their lives.

But many young people voice a desire for a different, more extreme form of politics. While overall, And while overall, more than twice as many people voice a preference for democracy (54%) as authoritarian leadership (26%), just as many 18-24s would prefer a political system based on liberal democracy with regular elections


Social attitudes by age group (% Agree)
Britain is institutionally racist
Gay couples should be freely able to adopt children
Women are never to blame for being raped
Feminism has gone too far and makes it harder for men to succeed
You cannot be proud of your national identity these days without being called racist
The BBC is politically biased against the Government
Brexit has been good for Britain
Political correctness is used by the liberal elite to limit what we can say
Islamist terrorists reflect a widespread hostility to Britain amongst the Muslim community
On the whole, immigration into Britain has been a good thing for the country
In extreme circumstances, violence can be necessary to defend something you strongly believe
The covid-19 lockdowns were an abuse of my freedoms
In the 1960s, a senior politician controversially warned that mass immigration would produce social breakdown and predicted "rivers of blood". This warning has proved to be right
Islam is generally a threat to the British way of life
I expect the Conservative Government to improve the lives of people like me
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65-74
75+



and a multiparty system (42%) as would prefer having a strong and decisive leader who does not have to bother with parliament or elections (41%).

It is not surprising that younger people are also more likely to feel that lockdown restrictions were an abuse of their freedoms (42% of 18-24s agreed), given the disproportionate impact that the pandemic has had on young people. Nonetheless, younger people were also more likely to voice more extreme opinions, with half (47%) of 18-24s saying that the threat of Covid has been exaggerated by the Government and 42% saying it was true that vaccines have harmful effects which are not being fully exposed to the public.

Our research has consistently shown that younger people are more likely to voice openness to conspiracy theories[6]. They are often less trusting of traditional news sources such as broadcast news than older generations, and more likely to spend more time on social media where narratives of conspiracy theories and misinformation spread quickly. And while openness to conspiracy theory does not indicate that people are necessarily bought into the idea, high degrees of openness among 18-24s in our poll should come as some concern.

Support for conspiracy theories and the far right tends to rise in volatile and uncertain times, and is not in itself always a point for concern. They can act as a form of challenging prevailing wisdom and functioning as a form of political dissent, or can personify concerns about hardship and danger in people's day-to-day experience into an identifiable enemy.

But the combination of conspiracy theories and populism are particularly potent as both employ a binary worldview, dividing societies between "good versus evil, right versus wrong, victims versus conspirators" (Hauwaert, 2012)[7]. And seemingly innocuous conspiracy theories can be a gateway into conspiratorial racism, islamophobia and antisemitism.

Despite having generally more liberal views on immigration and Islam, 41% of 18-24s say it is true that there are 'no go zones' for non-Muslims in parts of Europe and 38% believe that the

Government deliberately lies about how many immigrants are living in the country. And while to some extent, young people's low trust in political institutions explains their openness to conspiracies about a 'new world order' where a group of elites control events (50% of 25-34 and 47% of 18-24s), this opens a clear route to more extreme beliefs. Shockingly, more than a third of 18-24s agree that Jewish people have an unhealthy control over the world's banking system (34%).

Again, it is important to reiterate that it is extremely unlikely that so many people in our poll hold these believes in any degree of high esteem. Nonetheless, there are significant age gaps in beliefs indicating a higher degree of openness to conspiracies in those under 35.

Looking at the *Fear and HOPE* index, it is clear that while socially liberal beliefs are more common amongst the majority, there is a large cohort of young people who hold more reactionary views, and a smaller minority who hold even more extreme beliefs.

SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHIC PREDICTORS

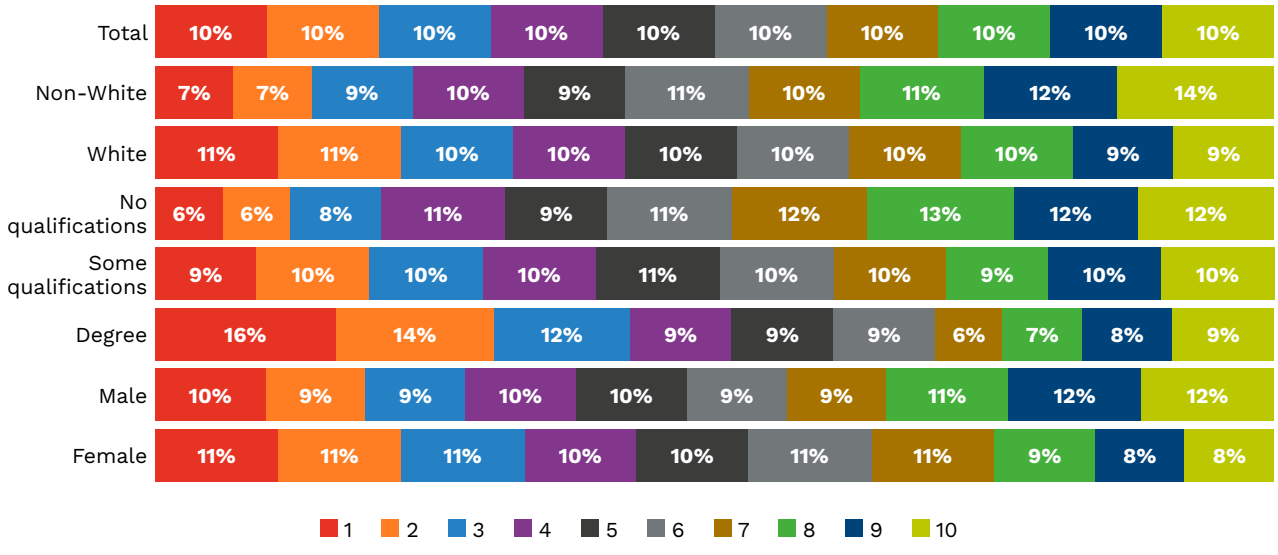
Just as age has traditionally been a good predictor, though not determinant, of social attitudes and voting patterns[8], graduates have consistently been seen as more likely to be more socially liberal, and less authoritarian than non-graduates. And although the reasons for this are complex and debated, it is in part, due to the overlap with age – younger people are more likely to be graduates than older generations.

Nonetheless, our poll finds a repeat of this dynamic. Comparing graduates with those with some qualifications and no qualifications, there is a clear shift in how they split across the *Fear and HOPE* deciles. Those with degrees are far more likely to be concentrated in the first few deciles, while those with no qualifications are more likely to be in the upper deciles. Nonetheless, the differences are more likely to reflect difference in opinions on both the multiculturalism and conspiracy elements of the index, where we find the views of those with less formal qualifications more likely to hold more socially conservative views and be more open to conspiracy theories.

Index scores by educational qualification

	No qualifi-cations	Some qualifi-cations	Degree
Identity component (0 = most liberal, 1 = least liberal) AVERAGE	0.53	0.51	0.50
Politics component (0 = most liberal, 1 = least liberal) AVERAGE	0.52	0.51	0.49
Multiculturalism component (0 = most pro-multicultural, 1 = most anti-multicultural) AVERAGE	0.44	0.38	0.34
Conspiracy component (0 = least conspiratorial thinking, 1 = most conspiratorial thinking) AVERAGE	0.48	0.45	0.41

Index deciles by demographics/education



While our previous research has shown greater receptiveness to authoritarianism amongst male respondents and more openness to conspiracies among female respondents, our *Fear and HOPE* index shows that there is not a significant difference in these views, as on each component of the index, male and female responses reach a similar average.

Index scores by sex

	Male	Female
Identity component (0 = most liberal, 1 = least liberal) AVERAGE	0.53	0.49
Politics component (0 = most liberal, 1 = least liberal) AVERAGE	0.51	0.51
Multiculturalism component (0 = most pro-multicultural, 1 = most anti-multicultural) AVERAGE	0.40	0.37
Conspiracy component (0 = least conspiratorial thinking, 1 = most conspiratorial thinking) AVERAGE	0.45	0.43

Yet when these factors combine, there is a more significant difference between gender groups, with male respondents far more likely to be concentrated in the upper deciles than female respondents. This suggests that male respondents may be more susceptible to a reactionary politics of identity than female respondents.

Ethnicity is a more complex predictor of social attitudes and political identities, not least because there is less available data on social attitudes among black and minority ethnic groups, as breakdowns by ethnic groups are often inconsistent or not representative in categorisations, or sample sizes for more representative categories are often too small to be representative.

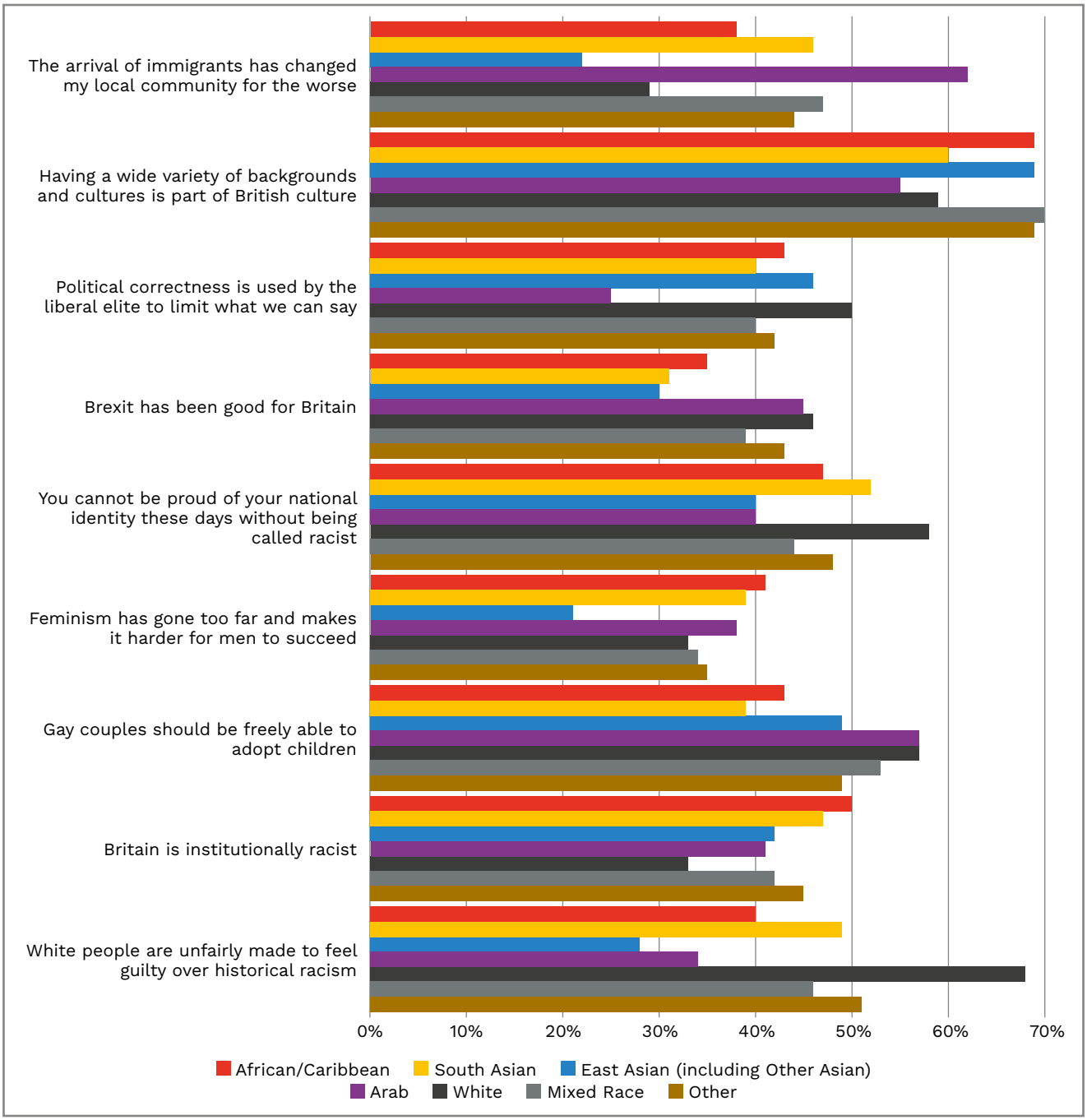
We can see some differences in our data. For example, while there is a notable difference between white respondents and those of other ethnicities when asked whether they believe Britain is institutionally racist, or whether 'you can be proud of your national identity without being called racist', concern about immigration at the local level is more pronounced among mixed race, Arab and South Asian respondents.

Comparing white and non-white respondents, although crude categorisations, across the *Fear and HOPE* index offers a headline insight into attitudinal differences. We see larger numbers of white respondents concentrated in the lower deciles while non-white respondents are more likely to be in the higher deciles.

Breaking this down into self-selected categorisations, the differences between ethnic groups across the index seem slight, but on each of the components there are greater differences. For example, South Asian respondents are more likely to share socially liberal views on multiculturalism, but score higher on politics, and on conspiracy theory, suggesting greater openness to conspiracies.

Index scores by ethnicity

	African/	South Asian	East Asian (in-cluding Other Asian)	Arab	White	Mixed Race	Other
Identity component (0 = most liberal, 1 = least liberal) AVERAGE	0.52	0.54	0.50	0.48	0.51	0.52	0.54
Politics component (0 = most liberal, 1 = least liberal) AVERAGE	0.58	0.60	0.49	0.56	0.50	0.58	0.61
Multiculturalism component (0 = most pro-multicultural, 1 = most anti-multicultural) AVERAGE	0.38	0.37	0.35	0.46	0.38	0.39	0.42
Conspiracy component (0 = least conspiratorial thinking, 1 = most conspiratorial thinking) AVERAGE	0.54	0.57	0.43	0.55	0.42	0.52	0.56
Index AVERAGE	0.51	0.52	0.44	0.51	0.45	0.50	0.53



Index scores by ethnicity

	White British	Bangladesh	Pakistani	Caribbean
Identity component (0 = most liberal, 1 = least liberal) AVERAGE	0.51	0.54	0.53	0.50
Politics component (0 = most liberal, 1 = least liberal) AVERAGE	0.50	0.57	0.63	0.53
Multiculturalism component (0 = most pro-multicultural, 1 = most anti-multicultural) AVERAGE	0.39	0.37	0.35	0.34
Conspiracy component (0 = least conspiratorial thinking, 1 = most conspiratorial thinking) AVERAGE	0.42	0.52	0.60	0.51

Breaking this down further into smaller self-selected categorisations, some differences become more apparent, though the sample sizes become smaller and therefore it is more difficult to draw conclusions from the data. For example, comparing respondents' index scores for white British, Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Caribbean backgrounds, there are some subtle differences.

White British respondents are more likely to have higher scores for the multiculturalism component of the index, indicating that they are more likely to see multiculturalism as having a negative impact on society, while they score lower on the conspiracy element, and on the politics component, indicating a higher degree of political trust. By contrast both Bangladeshi and Pakistani respondents are more likely to voice openness to conspiracy and reject the political establishment, while Pakistani and Caribbean respondents are more likely to be pro-multicultural.

While an imperfect picture, looking at attitudes in this way helps to explain why white respondents were more likely to fall in the more liberal deciles of the *Fear and HOPE* index, as despite their more negative views on multiculturalism, overall, they score lower on other factors.

Breaking down the index by demographics, our research suggests that demographic and educational characteristics have become weaker predictors of social attitudes and voting intentions. While many of these differences are not new, given the move away from overt white supremacy and racial nationalism on the far-right, and the complicating of the populist and radical right across multiple identity issues, our data suggests a more diverse audience for these politics.

A NEW REACTIONARY-RIGHT THREAT?

Our *Fear and HOPE* index draws out some clear lines of division, on questions of identity politics, politics and power. But in isolation, these factors are not necessarily new, and do not in themselves pose a threat to community relations, nor an opening for the far-right. For example, just because a person has low trust in the political system, voices some openness to conspiracy theories about Covid-19, feels a sense of insecurity and precarity, or has some anxieties about the arrival of asylum seekers, they are unlikely to be someone whose political persuasion could be considered far right.

But the widening of these lines of division in recent years has created space for a new reactionary right manifestation that knits together multiple issues, presented as a pushback to 'wokeism'. Indeed, the greatest challenge of this new alignment in identity politics is that it leaves an opportunity for a reactionary right group to draw a coalition of supporters from very different cohorts.

The traditional far right's politics of racial nationalism and opposition to immigration have tended to appeal to a shrinking base of older, white British, non-graduate, and predominantly male group of voters. And while the contemporary far right have expanded their support base in shifting their focus towards anti-Muslim politics, co-option of the free speech debate and an anti-elite populism[9] – their appeal has remained a relatively stable base of older, white, non-graduate group with more socially conservative views and authoritarian tendencies. For example, 75% of UKIP voters in 2015 were in favour of restoring the death penalty, compared to just 48 per cent of the general population, while support for the party was more than twice as high among those aged 55 and over (12 per cent) as it was among under 35s (five per cent)[10].

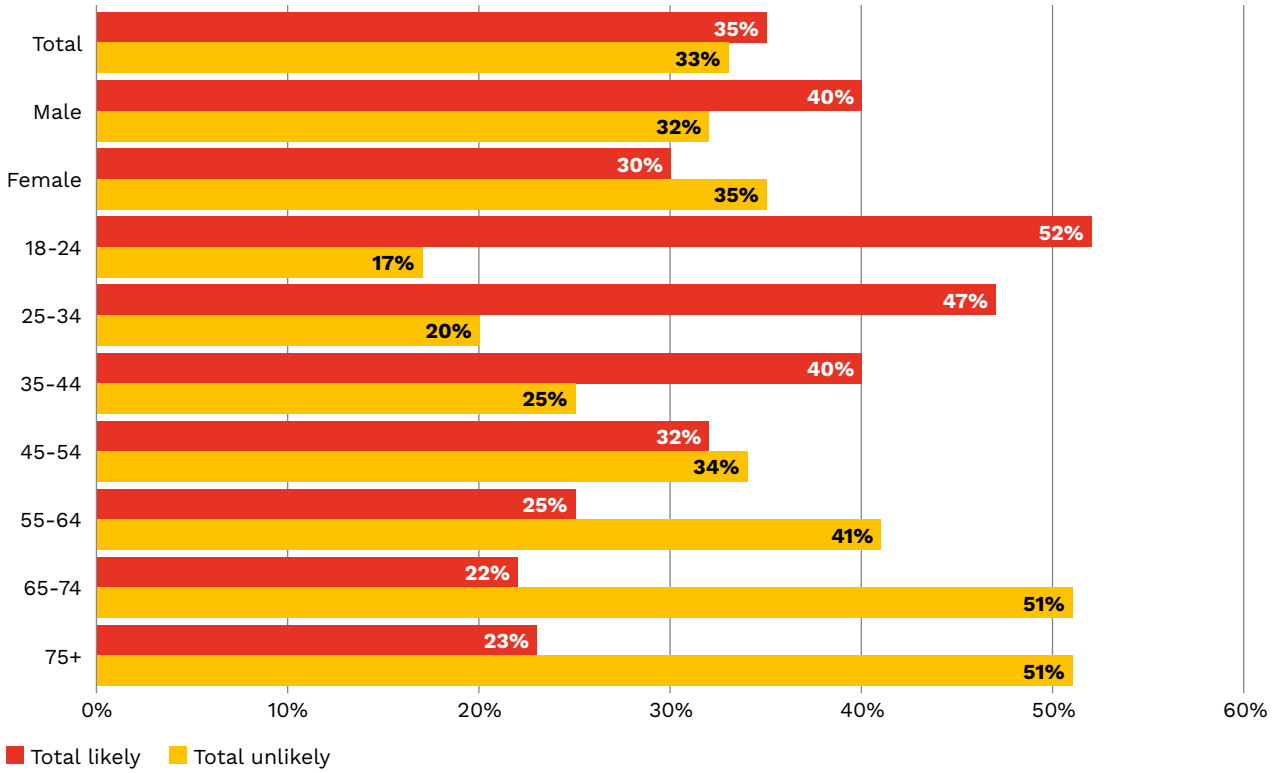
But the new alignment of identity politics identified in our research presents a more complex landscape. Rather than there being one group who share a similar set of views and values, attracted to an agenda rooted in racial prejudice, we find that a more diverse group, with a more mixed set of views and values are drawn to an agenda shaped by a reaction to progressive values. This is a more complex position, that cuts across multiple issues, from modern masculinity to structural racism to anti-globalism conspiracies, and because of this, can appeal to a diverse base.

If a political right group is able to create a compelling narrative that can string multiple issues together, that capitalises on any trigger events, and employ a charismatic and captivating leader, it has the potential to bring together supporters from a broad base – bringing together the older, whiter, 'culturally concerned' authoritarian base with more reactionary, libertarian cohort that are younger and more diverse.

While it may seem like a stretch that one group could create a coherent narrative for such a disparate pool of voters, our polling highlights that this potential threat already exists. In our poll, we asked about a potential reactionary right party who "which says it wants to push back against 'woke' culture, reduce Government spending, reduce taxation, rule out any future Covid lockdowns, privatise the BBC and Channel 4, challenge the 'islamisation of the UK' and support unrestricted freedom of speech".

Overall, we found that more than a third said they would be likely to support such a party (16% very likely and 19% quite likely), with a third overall

A new party is going to be set up which says it wants to push back against 'woke' culture, reduce Government spending, reduce taxation, rule out any future Covid lockdowns, privatise the BBC and Channel 4, challenge the 'islamisation of the UK' and support unrestricted freedom of speech



(33%) saying they were unlikely to (9% quite unlikely, 24% very unlikely) and 23% neither likely or unlikely to show support.

And while these figures may seem alarming, it is important to remember that this does not represent a unified bloc of 'far-right' voters, but rather a diverse collective of voters who hold reactionary views on certain issues. Nonetheless, the reach of support also points to a need to change the tactics in fighting this threat. Reactionary framings, such as anti-trans rights or anti-feminism, that while prejudiced could not be considered 'far-right' on their own merit, now hold the potential for mobilisation by a reactionary right party if certain conditions are met

A NEW PARTY FOR NEW AUDIENCES

Across the index, support is unsurprisingly concentrated among those who score highest, as this potential new party combines views on identity, politics and power. Across the deciles, just 6% of the group with the lowest scores on the index would be likely to support such a party, while 79% of the group with the highest index scores say they would.

Index by decile

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Likely to support a new party is going to be set up which says it wants to push back against 'woke' culture, reduce Government spending, reduce taxation, rule out any future Covid lockdowns, privatise the BBC and Channel 4, challenge the 'islamisation of the UK' and support unrestricted freedom of speech.									
6%	11%	22%	25%	30%	32%	40%	47%	59%	79%
Unlikely to support a new party is going to be set up which says it wants to push back against 'woke' culture, reduce Government spending, reduce taxation, rule out any future Covid lockdowns, privatise the BBC and Channel 4, challenge the 'islamisation of the UK' and support unrestricted freedom of speech.									
79%	61%	49%	37%	29%	23%	15%	16%	15%	6%

And breaking down support by demographic characteristics, the realignment of identity politics we have already highlighted becomes clear.

It is no great surprise that there is more support for such a party among male respondents (40%) than female respondents (30%), given higher index scores among male respondents overall but in a shift from established voting patterns, we find older people less likely to voice support than younger people for such a party.

In fact, support for this new party is highest among 18-24 year olds, among whom 23% say

they would be very likely to support such a party, while 29% are quite likely to. This seems to contradict accepted truths that young people are more socially liberal than older age groups, which is reinforced in our polling. And it is likely to be that many young people would be drawn to such a party because of their anti-lockdown stance than their aims to "challenge the 'islamisation of the UK'". Yet not all young people share socially liberal views, and that those who are drawn to the party for its anti-lockdown politics would be willing to forgive some views they don't share is exactly where the threat lies.

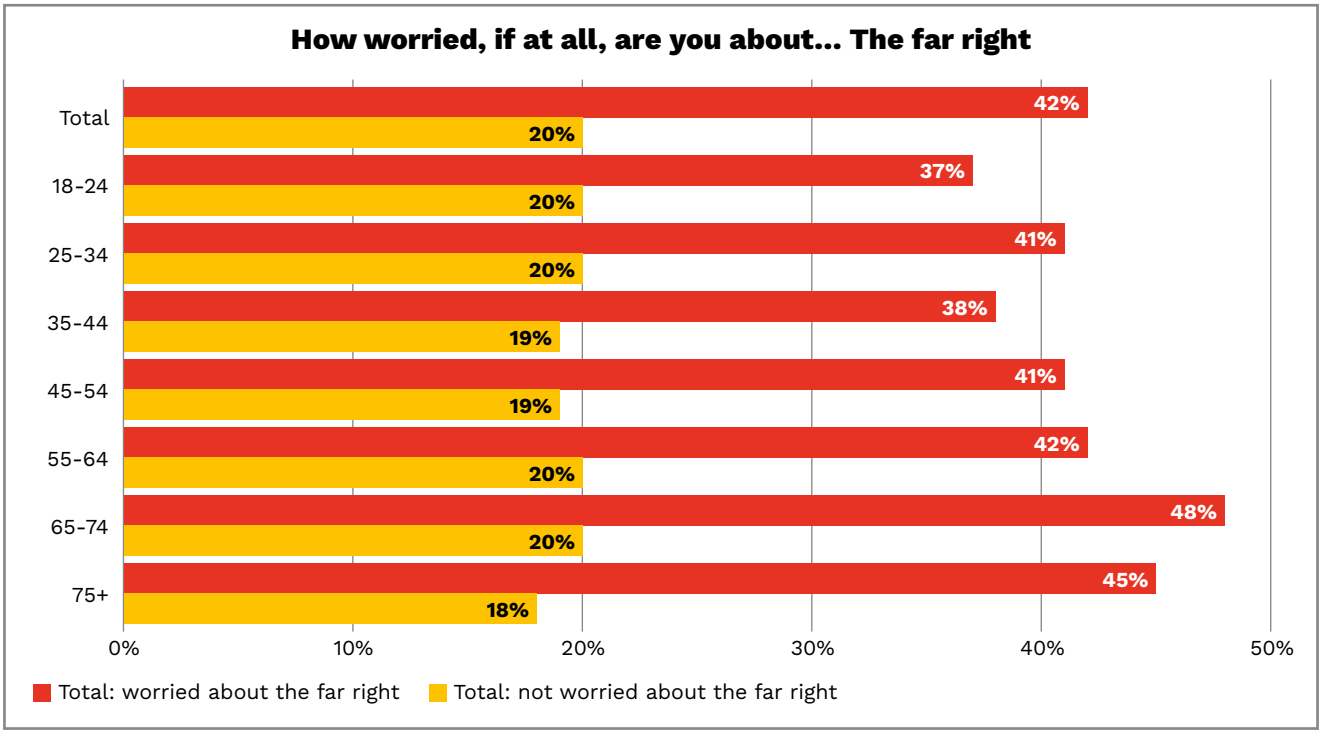
Our polling has also shown that young people are least concerned about the far right among age cohorts, perhaps as their adult lives have coincided with a period where the far right have posed no significant electoral threat, and far right street movements have been increasingly fractured and marginal. But that the far right are not considered such a threat for younger people is an indication that they are less likely to oppose such a party when framed as extreme.

Breaking down the views of those who would support such a party offers a clearer picture of what might drive their support.

Comparing the weighted sample of our poll who say they are 'very likely' to vote for such a party (n=465) with the overall total, the reactionary nature of their views are clear in their vocalisation of a pushback against feminism, their anti-Muslim views, or statements around white fragility. They are far more likely to see the political system as broken, to believe that multiculturalism will lead to societal breakdown, and many have bought into a range of conspiracy theories. But at the same time, most recognise racism is a problem in the UK, and their views cannot be considered homogenous.

They are far more likely to say that asylum seekers pose a security threat to British people (70% compared to 45% of the total), that terror attacks in the UK have made them more suspicious of Muslims in Britain (67% compared with 43% of the total), that the BBC is politically biased against the Government (64% compared with 39% of the total), and that you cannot be proud of your national identity these days without being called racist (73% compared to 56% of the total). But on explicit questions about racism in Britain, there is no profound difference between those who would support such a party and the overall population, with those likely to support such a party in fact more likely to say that Britain is institutionally racist (40%) than the overall population (35%).

Their reactionary views are more explicit on other social issues. Almost twice as many feel that feminism has gone too far and makes it harder for men to succeed (56%) as among the total population (33%), and more than half say that talk of a mental health crisis is exaggerated, some people need to toughen up (54%) compared with 31% overall. And many of these positions speak to their own sense of social dislocation – as they are much more likely to say they consider themselves disadvantaged in society (45%) than in the population overall (29%). And many are struggling, facing financial precarity compounded by the impact of covid-19 lockdowns; twice as likely to



say they had used a foodbank over the last 18 months than the total population (31% compared with 15% overall) or to have lost their job (28% compared with 14% overall).

They are more likely to favour strong man politics and be open to political violence, and are slightly more likely than the overall population to feel that the political system is broken (68% compared with 57% overall). But politically their views are mixed – they are both more likely to agree with authoritarian statements – such as giving the police more power – but also more likely to feel that individual freedoms are more important than collective wellbeing (58% compared with 31% overall).

While we can see the views they are more likely to hold, it is important those who would likely support a new reactionary right party do not share consistent views and values.

Of course, this hypothetical party does not yet exist, and it is a tall order for such a party to bring together such a broad coalition of voters with a diverse set of values. If such a group were to emerge, it is likely it would be unfamiliar to any 'far right' group we have seen in the UK before.

Moreover, their success would be contingent on a number of external conditions. Critically, they would have to position themselves in a way that captures support from people who feel politically alienated but for different reasons, that taps into a rejection of the establishment, as well as reassures a sense of precarity and insecurity that could be triggered by economic events. They would also have to create a narrative on identity and status that has diverse appeal. And their success would be dependent on the actions of progressives, as their politics is one of opposition. They would have to capitalise on events, and engineer opportunities to exploit.

TRUST, POWER AND AUTHORITY

People have identified less and less with political parties since the 1970s[11], but a sense of distance from politics and power has swelled through recent political turmoil, and with the added impact of the pandemic, has increasingly become the norm.

For most, politics is a 'one-way-street'. Overall, 65% of our poll agreed that voting is the best way to have your voice heard by those in power, with only 13% in disagreement, just 26% said that they felt confident that local councillors act in their best interests, while a majority (54%) felt that none of the main political parties speak for them. 57% agreed with the statement 'the political system is broken'.

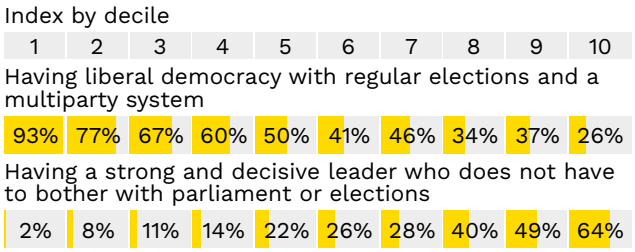
While questioning the actions of political representatives is not always a bad thing, feelings of misrepresentation and voicelessness have increasingly found resonance in populist right narratives. A broken relationship with the political system can often be the target for broader feelings of resentment, somewhere to point the finger where people feel that society is stacked against them.

Populist framings of 'the elite' against 'the people' have further ebbed away at ties between voters and political parties, increasingly put liberal democracies under strain, and fuelled the appeal of 'strongman' politics.

The desire for 'strong man' politics and authoritarian rule may well seem contradictory to a sense of voicelessness and misrepresentation. But strongman politicians play on a feeling of being shut out to make themselves the voice of 'the people', pointing the finger and laying blame on 'elites', using charisma and appeal to build their support as 'true' representatives who will really 'say it how it is'.

In times of fragility and uncertainty, people look to strong figures who can offer straight-talking answers. These strongman figures also offer an alternative to broader dissatisfaction with the political system.

While our data analysis finds a fractious relationship between people and politics across the *Fear and HOPE* index, this 'strongman' appeal is most profound among those with the highest index score, who are more open to political violence as a strategy and to prefer straight-talking, 'strong man' style politics. This is consistent across different elements of the index, indicating that this is a key factor in uniting both authoritarian and libertarian leaning cohorts. This is indicative of the importance of a charismatic leader in bringing these groups together.



Among the decile with the highest scores on the index, just 26% would opt for a political system of liberal democracy with regular elections and a multiparty system, while the majority (64%) would instead opt for having a strong and decisive leader who does not have to bother with parliament or elections.

Moreover, the fragile nature of people's relationships with power across the spectrum of identity politics means that this is one of the factors that could become a tipping point, fuelling

A NEW THREAT?

We asked respondents about a new potential populist right political party in our original 2011 *Fear and HOPE* report, in line with concerning trends we were seeing in public opinion and political shifts at the time. Such a party that pledged to 'defend the English, create an English Parliament, control immigration, challenge Islamic extremism, restrict the building of mosques and make it compulsory for all public buildings to fly the St George's flag or Union Jack' did not exist at the time, when the English Defence League were at their height. But such a party then came to resemble the UK Independence Party.

While UKIP was formed back in 1993, as a single-issue Eurosceptic party, it rose to success in the mid-2010s as under Nigel Farage's leadership the party started to expand its focus, capitalising on anti-immigrant sentiment and growing public concerns about the 'islamisation of Britain', and looking to appeal to the 'white working class'.

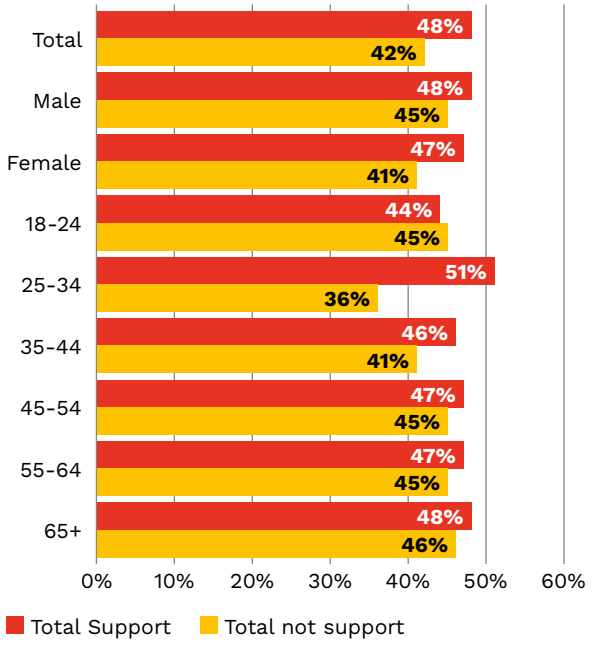
While the party we polled focused more on English identity than UKIP's British nationalist agenda, there is a remarkable similarity in what we saw in the rise of UKIP and the agenda of our fictional party.

In our poll, we found high degrees of support among the general population. Notably, there was not a great degree of difference in potential support across age groups, or between men and women in our poll, as UKIP's success later was founded on a base of older, white, male voters.

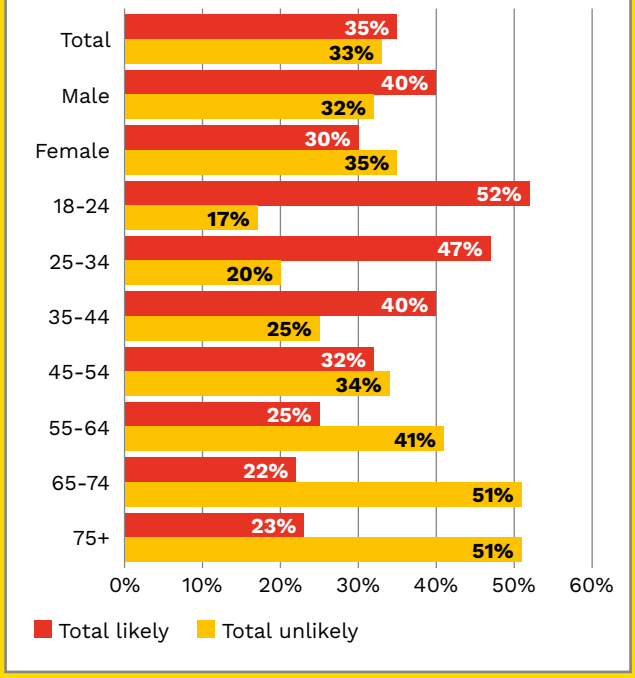
Ten years on we polled another fictional party, based on the rise in reactionary trends we have seen in public opinion and a shifting political context. Such a party would 'push back against 'woke' culture, reduce Government spending, reduce taxation, rule out any future Covid lockdowns, privatise the BBC and Channel 4, challenge the 'islamisation of the UK' and support unrestricted freedom of speech'.

Worryingly, again, we see high levels of support – though lower levels of support than we saw a decade ago, reflecting the more positive shift

A new party is going to be set up which says it wants to defend the English, create an English Parliament, control immigration, challenge Islamic extremism, restrict the building of mosques and make it compulsory for all public buildings to fly the St George's flag or Union Jack. To what extent would you support this party?"

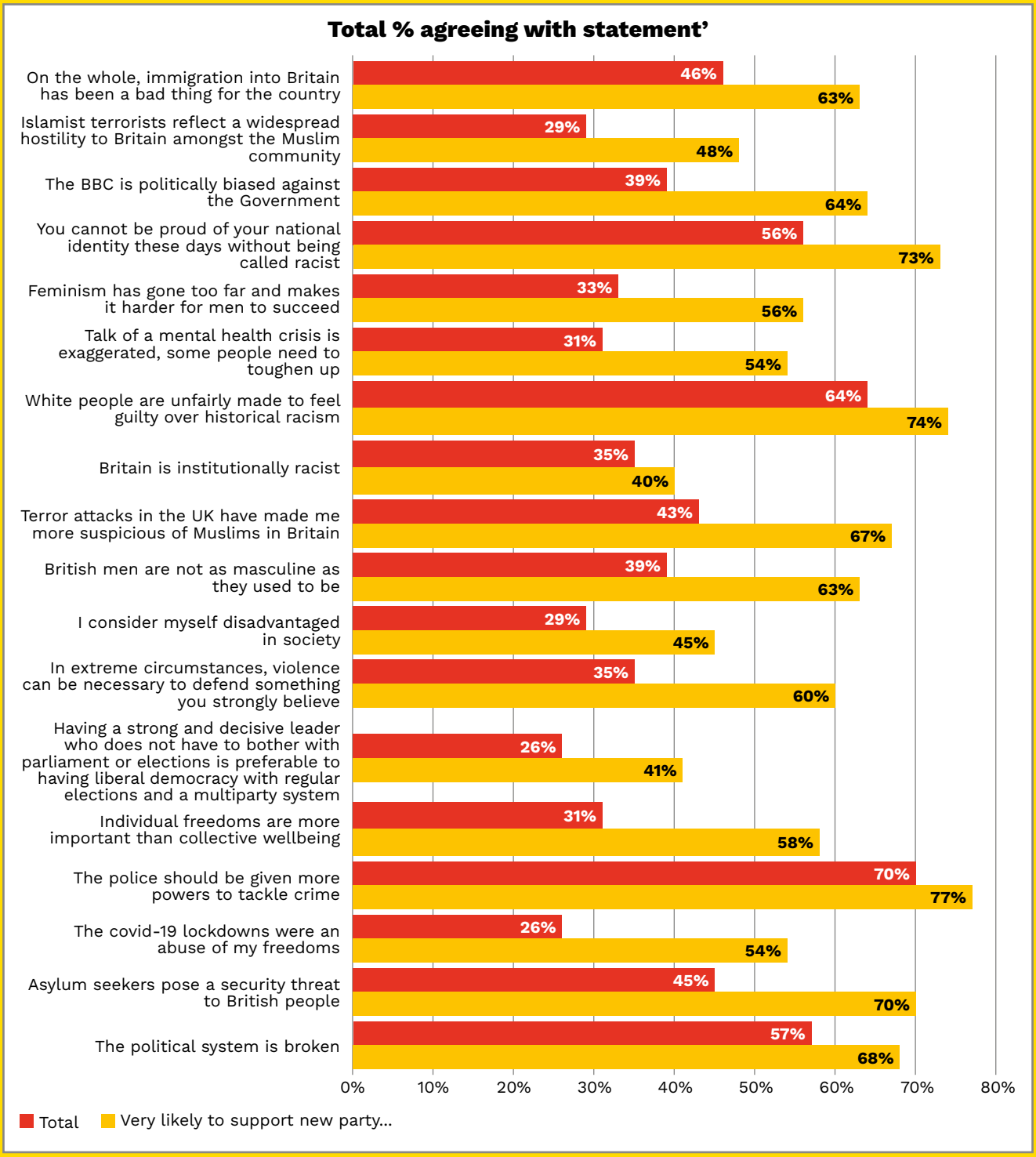


A new party is going to be set up which says it wants to push back against 'woke' culture, reduce Government spending, reduce taxation, rule out any future Covid lockdowns, privatise the BBC and Channel 4, challenge the 'islamisation of the UK' and support unrestricted freedom of speech. To what extent would you say that you are likely to support this party?



towards social liberalism among the general population. But what is distinctly different from our 2011 poll is that support for, and opposition to, such a party is clearly stratified by age group, and more so by gender.

We find that it is younger people who are far more likely to voice support for this fictional reactionary right party, while the strongest opposition comes from older respondents. This would seem to contradict voting trends, whereby younger people are more socially liberal overall, and more likely to vote for parties on the political left. But the changing nature of the political right, the rise of reactionary identity politics, and the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns on young people has opened space for a new party on the right to gain ground with young voters.



support from those who score lower on other elements of the *Fear and HOPE* index. Political trust is the index factor that scores highest among younger people, as well as scoring much higher among those who described their ethnicity as Asian or Black, and was higher among those who vote Labour than who vote Conservative.

Repairing some of the broken relationship many have with the political system will be increasingly important in the new landscape of identity politics. Creating opportunities for meaningful engagement and widening access to civic space will be an essential tactic to build resilience against a reactionary populist politics of the right.

IDENTITY AND STATUS

How people see their own position in society draws one of the starkest lines of division across the *Fear and HOPE* index.

Index by decile

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Agree: I consider myself disadvantaged in society									
17%	21%	22%	18%	23%	18%	26%	32%	46%	66%
Disagree: I consider myself disadvantaged in society									
66%	55%	53%	43%	40%	37%	31%	26%	21%	12%

When asked if they consider themselves disadvantaged against in society, 66% of the highest scoring decile say that they do compared with just 17% of the lowest scoring decile.

This is a complex question to unpick. For many a feeling of being discriminated against in society comes from genuine experiences of systemic prejudice. For example, the difference in response across the deciles on this question can to some extent be accounted for by the slightly larger proportion of BAME respondents in the higher deciles of the index (38% of BAME respondents say they feel disadvantaged compare to 26% of white respondents). We also know that younger respondents are more concentrated in the upper deciles, who are more likely overall to feel more disadvantaged (43% say they feel disadvantaged against in society), and have disproportionately lost out as a result of coronavirus restrictions.

But the demographic makeup of the index is not significant enough to be the sole factor driving this difference. Other characteristics that may cause a person to feel disadvantaged against in society, such as class and gender are not reflected in the same way. More men say they feel disadvantaged in society (31%) than women (27%), while there is also a small difference between graduates (34%) and non-graduates (40%).

Instead, this difference across the index is more likely to be accounted for by a feeling of disadvantage based on a combination of economic positioning, trust in the political system as well as in local services and key institutions, and based on status.

Index by decile

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Immigrants have put my job at risk									
1%	3%	6%	8%	8%	14%	18%	24%	42%	64%
Immigrants have not put my job at risk									
89%	79%	69%	64%	53%	44%	33%	35%	24%	13%

This is evidenced in attitudes to immigration, where those with the highest index scores are set apart from the majority population in thinking that immigrants have made it harder to get a fair wage for the work they do, or have put their job at risk.

Index by decile

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Immigrants have made it harder to get a fair wage for the work I do									
6%	15%	13%	22%	24%	27%	32%	41%	54%	71%
Immigrants have not made it any harder to get a fair wage for the work I do									
76%	55%	45%	34%	28%	27%	19%	17%	14%	10%

Much of this speaks to by real resentments about a lack of opportunity, the availability and quality of work, issues that affect every day, like education and housing. Of those who strongly agree that they are disadvantaged against in society, more than half (57%) are worried that they or someone in their family will lose their job as a result of the coronavirus outbreak compared with 39% overall. More than three quarters (76%) are worried about poverty in Britain compared to 59% overall.

But for some, a feeling of disadvantage is linked to a sense of entitlement, attached to status and identity. A sense of society being loaded or stacked against you and people like you can be reflective of a feeling of displacement from a social hierarchy of dominance, and offer a scapegoat in the form of those attempting to disrupt this order.

This sense of disadvantage is then expressed through social attitudes that push back against a perceived 'status loss', or a perception of others' 'status gain'. Those who feel strongly that they are disadvantaged in society are more likely to see their successes in life determined by external forces (49% compared to 35% total). But they also more likely to hold reactionary views on identity; for example, they are more likely to agree that feminism has gone too far and makes it harder for men to succeed (48% compared to 33% total), and that British men are not as masculine as they used to be (65% compared to 39% total).

They are also more likely to think that asylum seekers pose a security threat to British people

YOUTH SUPPORT FOR A REACTIONARY RIGHT PARTY

In order to test young people's support for a new radical or reactionary right political party, we polled the same question in a specific poll of 1,010 18-24-year-olds living in Britain between 15 and 19 April 2022 via Focaldata, weighted to be representative of the national 18-24 year old population.

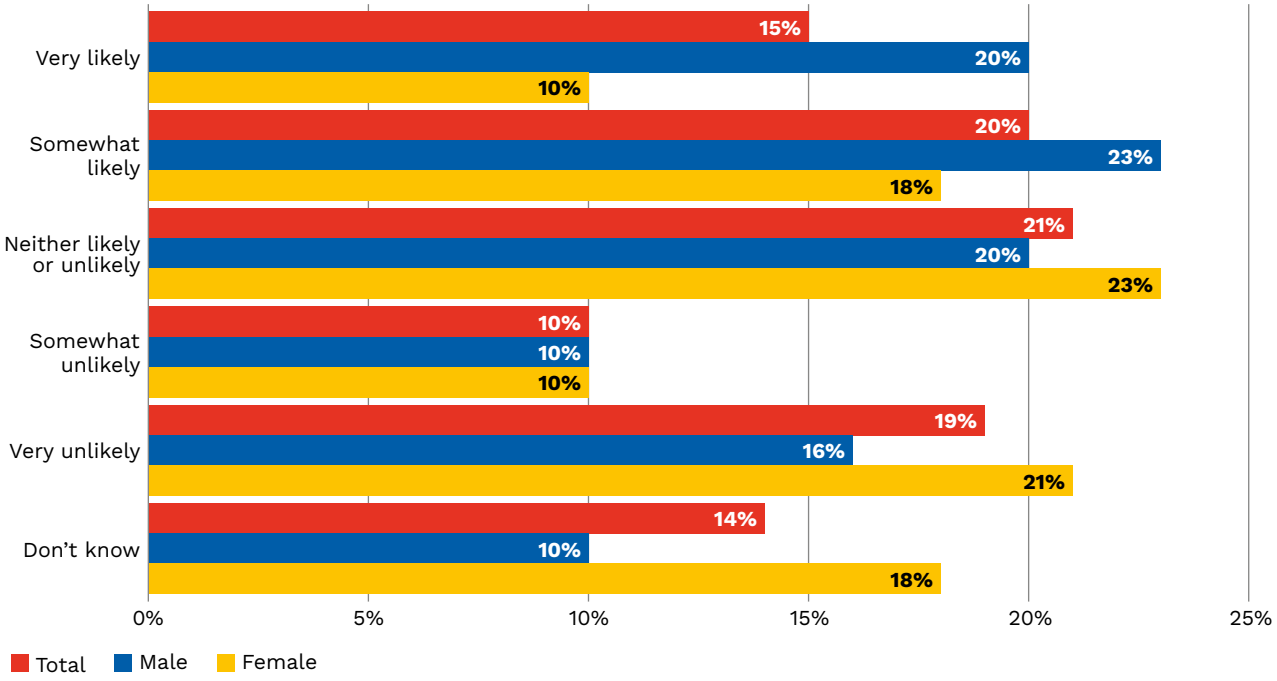
Consistent with our findings of 18-24s from the full nationally representative poll (37% supported), 35% of 18-24 year olds said they would be likely to support a new party that says it wants to push back against 'woke' culture, reduce Government spending, reduce taxation, rule out any future Covid lockdowns, privatise the BBC and Channel 4, challenge the 'islamisation of the UK' and support unrestricted freedom of speech.

Support was much higher among young men (43%) than young women (28%), and out of step with national trends, graduates were more likely to voice support for such a party (39%) than those without a degree (32%).

We also asked those who said they would support such a party (n=358) whether they would continue to support such a party if critics accused this new party of being far right, a characterisation the new party strongly denied. Worryingly, an association with the far right did not have an impact among the majority of young supporters – as 46% said they would continue to support this party, 31% said they would not now support the party, and 23% remained undecided.

Unlike among the general population, where violence and extreme views of populist and radical right parties can be disrupted by exposing associations with violence and extremism, support for reactionary politics among young people is unlikely to be easily unsettled by allegations of being far-right. New tactics will be needed to break the reach of reactionary right politics among young people.

A new party is going to be set up which says it wants to push back against 'woke' culture, reduce Government spending, reduce taxation, rule out any future Covid lockdowns, privatise the BBC and Channel 4, challenge the 'islamisation of the UK' and support unrestricted freedom of speech. To what extent would you say that you are likely to support this party?



(62% compared to 45% overall), to feel more suspicious of Muslims as a result of terror attacks in the UK (60% compared to 43% overall), and are more likely to agree that white people are unfairly made to feel guilty over historical racism (74% compared with 64% overall).

And a more fractious relationship with the political system among those who feel more disadvantaged in society steers some towards a more extreme form of politics. 78% of those who feel strongly that they are disadvantaged say the political system is broken, compared with 57% overall, and 58% feel that political violence can be acceptable in certain situations compared with 35% overall. 38% voice preference for a strongman style of politics over liberal democracy compared with 26% overall.

A sense of being disadvantaged is one of the most critical fault lines in the new politics of identity. Not least because it is rooted in truth. The UK is a highly unequal society, and OECD figures suggest that the UK has among the highest levels of income inequality in the European Union[12]. During the pandemic, incomes of the poorest have been squeezed, dramatically dropping standards of living for the poorest households, while better off households have accumulated wealth[13]. The cost of living crisis is only set to deepen these challenges and take a tight hold on millions across Britain.

The overlay of identity, status and inequality is undeniable, and most inequalities in the UK are highly racialized. Research from the Runnymede trust has shown that Indian households have 90–95p for every £1 of White British wealth, Pakistani households have around 50p, Black Caribbean around 20p, and Black African and Bangladeshi approximately 10p, while BME workers are more likely to participate in the 'gig' economy – up to 25% compared to 14% of the general population[14].

But, as the debate around 'white working class boys' educational attainment shows, there are complexities to patterns of inequality in Britain based on race and class. And often, that has been exploited to further a zero sum game of race and class and play on identity politics. The Government's highly criticised review into racial disparities in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests made the case that relative disadvantage of white working class boys at school, compared to pupils of other ethnic backgrounds, was evidence that 'white privilege' was simply a divisive tactic.

The debate around the 'white working class' in Britain has repeatedly been used to sow a divisive racialisation of class politics. Nonetheless, the point that many white working class pupils feel anything but privilege is an important one, and just as our polling shows, many do feel a 'status deficit'.

Disrupting the direct link between feelings of disadvantage and reactionary identity politics will mean addressing some of the root causes of inequality in Britain.

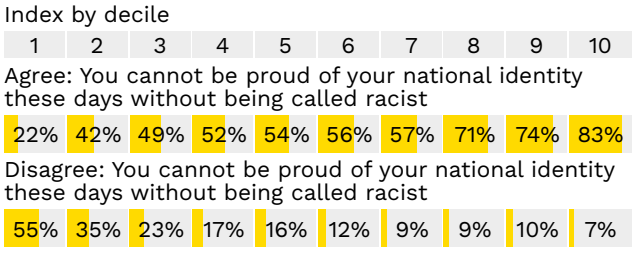
The reality is that for the vast majority of people, it is the issues behind inequality and disadvantage – the economy, decent jobs and housing, welfare benefits, education, health and social care – that are of far more importance than any 'culture war'. Reactionary identity politics are not a priority. But where people do not see a real solution to the challenges they face, a politics of identity based on 'status deficit' and a rejection of the establishment is a narrative that makes sense. For those who feel a sense of disadvantage, we need to offer hope.

A CRYSTALLISATION AMONG PROGRESSIVES

Another clear trend that emerges through our index model, is a crystallisation of views among progressives, whose attitudes on certain issues set them far apart from the majority.

Generally, there is a gradient of opinion across the index, with those scoring lower holding more progressive views, generally becoming more socially conservative or reactive across each decile. But on a number of questions, those with the lowest scores on the index sit apart from the majority of the population.

For example, when asked if you can be proud of your national identity these days without being considered racist, those in the lowest decile are the only cohort where a majority disagree.



Similarly, when asked their views on political correctness, the majority across the index are split on whether political correctness is a tool used by the liberal elite to limit what we can say or that concern about political correctness has been whipped up by the right wing media to undermine those who believe in tolerance and anti-racism. But among those with the lowest index scores, there is a firm rejection of the use of 'PC culture' by the right wing media.

Index by decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Political correctness is used by the liberal elite to limit what we can say	24%	38%	47%	53%	53%	52%	55%	58%	55%	55%
Concern about political correctness has been whipped up by the right wing media to undermine those who believe in tolerance and anti-racism	76%	62%	53%	47%	47%	48%	45%	42%	45%	45%

And this is particularly clear around Brexit. Across the deciles, how people say they voted in the EU referendum is split, with those with a lower score more likely to have voted remain, and those scoring higher more likely to have voted leave.

But when asked whether Brexit has been good or bad for the country, while views remain split across the index, with more overall saying the impacts have been bad for Britain, those with lower score remain more unanimous in their view that Brexit has been bad.

Index by decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Brexit has been good for Britain	25%	34%	40%	44%	44%	48%	50%	49%	54%	57%
Brexit has been bad for Britain	75%	66%	60%	56%	56%	52%	50%	51%	46%	43%

While these differences should largely be anticipated, they could also pose a challenge.

As our index model highlights, the politics of identity is increasingly being shaped by a reaction to progressive values, and where attitudes among those with the most socially liberal views are so set apart from mainstream opinion, a bloc is created to pushback against.

Moreover, the views of those in the lowest decile of the index have maintained a better relationship with 'the establishment' than those who score higher on the index. While they are just as likely, if not more, to see that the political system is broken, or say that Britain is going backwards, they are most vocal that voting is the best way to have your voice heard by those in power, while they unanimously support a model of liberal democracy that is more likely to be questioned by those with higher scores.

Index by decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Agree: The political system is broken	54%	53%	51%	45%	51%	47%	56%	59%	73%	84%
Disagree: The political system is broken	26%	25%	19%	20%	15%	13%	9%	12%	8%	2%
Agree: Voting is the best way to have your voice heard by those in power	81%	74%	71%	66%	59%	50%	53%	58%	62%	75%
Disagree: Voting is the best way to have your voice heard by those in power	11%	12%	13%	11%	13%	16%	18%	13%	13%	13%
Having liberal democracy with regular elections and a multiparty system	93%	77%	67%	60%	50%	41%	46%	34%	37%	26%
Having a strong and decisive leader who does not have to bother with parliament or elections	2%	8%	11%	14%	22%	26%	28%	40%	49%	64%

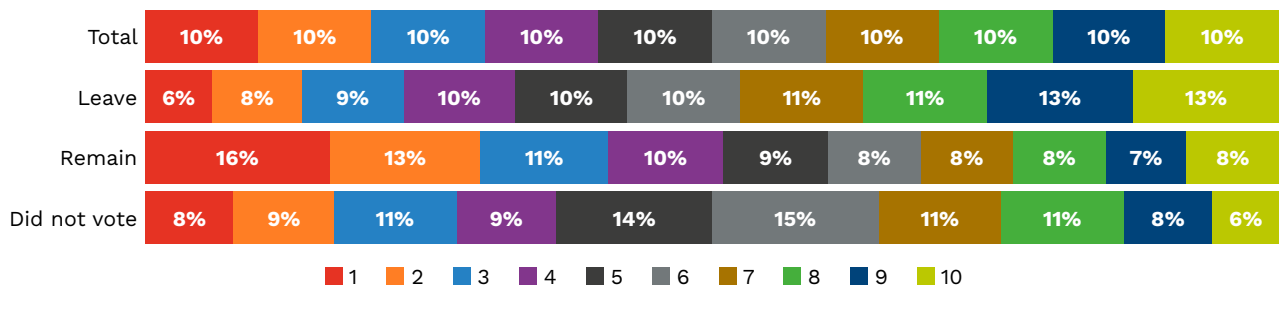
That those who have more progressive views are more in touch with 'the establishment' is more likely to make them a target by a reactionary or populist right.

There is clearly work for progressives to be done in understanding how to reach those who may not share their socially liberal views to the same extent, and to build confidence in the political system among others.

MOVING THE GOALPOSTS ON SOCIAL NORMS

In recent years, we have seen the far and reactionary right play on the increasingly issue-based landscape of identity politics to create an opponent of social liberals, framing them as an oppressor. Nowhere is this clearer than in the politics of 'cancel culture', where social liberals are framed as an over sensitive mob, ending the careers of politicians and pundits who push the boundaries of social acceptability in the name of 'free speech'.

Index deciles by EU referendum vote



This tactic works, not just because progressives are shunned as out of touch, but because at the same time, much of the far and reactionary right are using the defence of liberty and individual rights as a justification for intolerance and hatred directed towards specific groups. For example, in UKIP's proposal to step up protection of schoolgirls to reduce suffering from female genital mutilation (FGM)[15]. Of course, the co-option of women's rights or LGBT+ issues as concerns of the far-right is disingenuous, and simply a means of mainstreaming anti-Muslim hatred. UKIP's FGM campaign was more a tool to portray Muslims as 'barbaric' than a meaningful action against FGM.

But taking a two-way approach in which those fighting for and protecting the rights of everyone are framed as the authoritarian suppressor, while placing themselves as a defender of liberty, attempts to back progressives into a corner. The right are deliberately positioning themselves across a range of issues as a way to divide. Once lines are drawn in terms of liberty and freedom against a repressive opposition, coalitions can broaden, and hateful agendas can't be as easily undercut.

Framings of 'feminists having gone too far', 'discrimination against white people becoming as serious as discrimination against non-white people', and differences in understandings of everyday and systemic racism have become broadly accepted by people who may also hold socially liberal views.

Index by decile

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Agree: Feminism has gone too far and makes it harder for men to succeed	12%	18%	22%	28%	28%	29%	38%	41%	50%	68%
Disagree: Feminism has gone too far and makes it harder for men to succeed	75%	53%	46%	40%	28%	28%	20%	20%	25%	16%
Agree: White people are unfairly made to feel guilty over historical racism	39%	58%	63%	62%	66%	61%	64%	72%	76%	82%
Disagree: White people are unfairly made to feel guilty over historical racism	43%	23%	15%	13%	9%	12%	10%	6%	7%	5%
Agree: Black and Asian people face discrimination in their everyday lives										

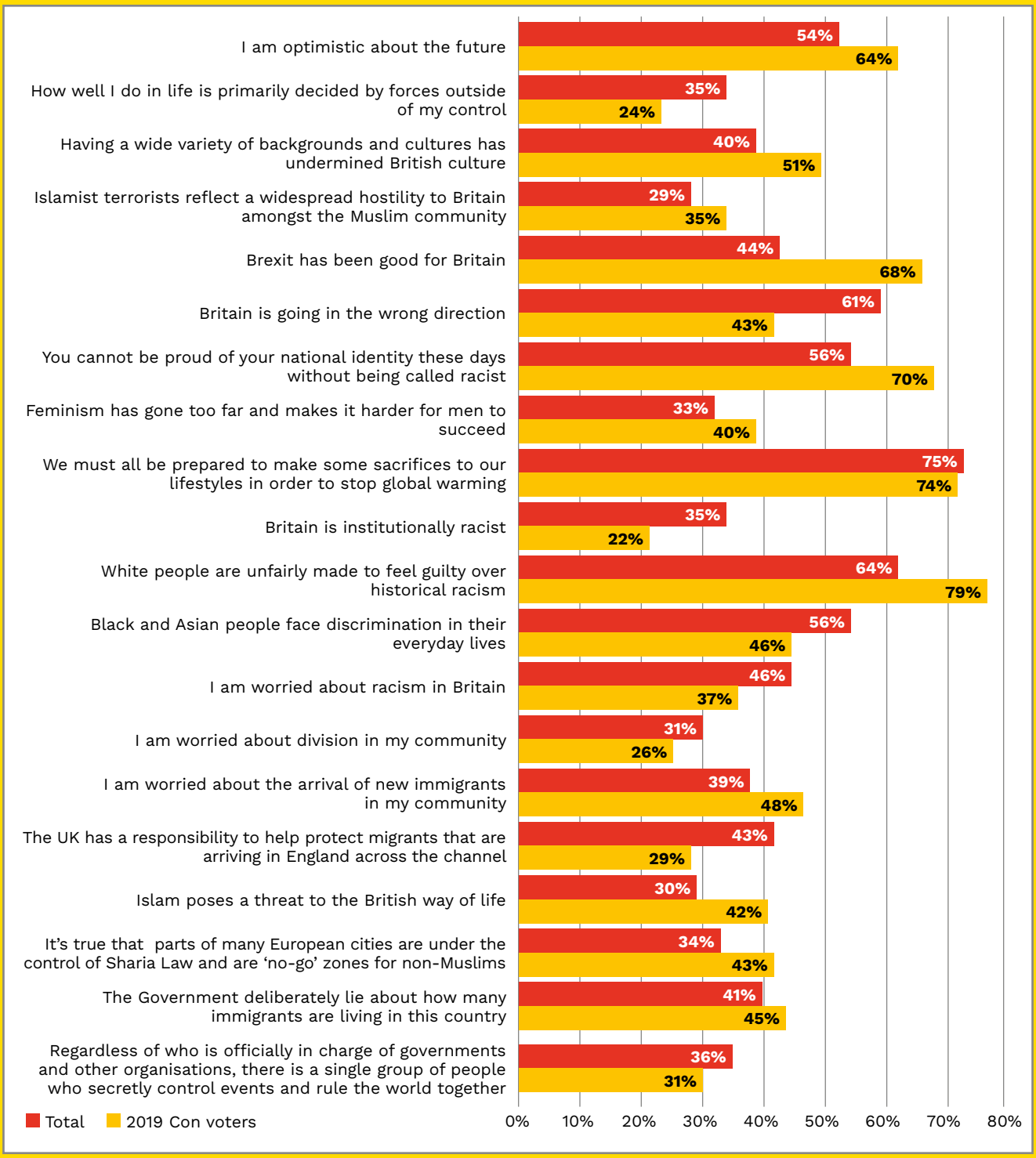
Limits on progress are a tactic that not just creates limits to action and maintains an unjust social order, but also combines issues to create a progressive bloc in opposition. By decrying certain political positions as going 'too far', those who hold these progressive views can be ostracised for their views on other things. The use of 'woke' is one example. A term originating in radical Black politics in the U.S., broadly referring to an awareness of racial injustices, is increasingly distorted in the UK context, with right wing commentators increasingly weaponising the term to undermine progressive politics. 'Woke' is often thrown at those who hold socially progressive views on one issue, aims to discredit their views on a range of other topics.

Fighting the far-right today, in a more issue-based landscape, means reaching out to stem their spread into the mainstream. This means that the battle stretches across multiple issues, including gender and racial equality, migrant rights, LGBT+ rights, environmental protection, challenging harmful conspiracies, misinformation and disinformation among many others.

But because politics is increasingly being shaped by a reaction to progressive, there is a challenge for campaigners to navigate working across multiple issues in a way that does not serve to create a 'progressive bloc' against which a broad opposition can be built.

CONSERVATIVE VOTERS

Looking at how those who voted for the Conservatives in the 2019 General election, it is clear that many are motivated by cultural and identity issues. Despite overall being more optimistic and feeling more in control of their own lives than the national average, they are vocally concerned about multiculturalism and are far less likely to see racism as a problem, voicing more reactionary views on questions of identity. Though they are less likely to believe a number of conspiracy theories, they are more likely to believe those that speak to their anti-Islam and anti-immigrant views.



A CHANGING STATE OF HATE: THE FAR RIGHT 2011-2022

Nick Lowles

The British far right has changed a lot since HOPE not hate's first *Fear and HOPE* report in 2011. Back then, the British National Party (BNP) was the single biggest far right organisation, with thousands of members, having stood 338 candidates in the 2010 General Election polling a total of 538,000 votes. The year before, the BNP had polled 6.4% of the national vote in the European Elections.

While the BNP had moderated its immigration position somewhat over time, replacing compulsory repatriation with a voluntary scheme, it was to all intents and purposes still a racial nationalist party that had characterised the British far right for the previous 40 years. They upheld a British identity based on race, not nationality, and while the party did not publicly say it, its eventual goal was for a white-only Britain.

Support for the BNP generally came from men aged over 50, with most drawn from post-industrial towns, areas that had been built up around one or two traditional industries which were now on the decline. Opposition to immigration was whipped up in these communities as a way to understand and apportion blame for the changing world. The group's nationalism and sense of superiority based on identity resonated with people who believed that the country's best days were behind them and they were being left behind.

Of course there were a number of other far right groups also operating at the time, but compared to the BNP these were generally smaller and if anything a lot more extreme. However, they all shared some common elements of how we would then define 'far right', which included those of the centre right of the political spectrum and primarily concerned race, immigration and/or identity. In practice this meant a belief in nationalism (exceptionalism) of either race or country rather than mere patriotism and a belief that the nation (either geographic or racial) is in decay or crisis and radical action is required to halt or reverse it. The 'nation', however defined, usually included an in-group that is under threat and an out-group or enemy.

However, just as Britain has changed dramatically over the past 11 years, so has the far right. The BNP collapsed soon after our first *Fear and HOPE* report and within a couple of years was replaced by UKIP, who began tapping into the same resentments that the BNP had aggravated, but without the national socialist trappings and reverence to a fascist past. While UKIP was ostensibly focused around pulling the UK out of the EU, it did so by heavily focusing on the threat of immigration to British identity, economic nationalism and harking back to a golden age that they believed was once more obtainable if only Britain was free to chart its own path.

The vote to leave the EU in the summer of 2016 was accompanied by the rapid decline of UKIP, as, many supporters felt the party had achieved its aims in winning the vote for Brexit. Frustrations with the delayed process of leaving the EU fielded short-lived support for Nigel Farage's Brexit Party, but then the vast majority of BNP and UKIP voters switched allegiance to Boris Johnson's Conservatives. Their support was instrumental in the Conservatives' success in the so called 'Red Wall' seats in 2019.

With all this happening, the space for a traditional far right party, certainly one in the image of the BNP, became negligible. There was no opening for a hard right racist party when some of the ideas and grievances were being taken up by the political mainstream.

THE CONSERVATIVE RIGHT

The policies and narrative of the current Conservative Government are far to the right of previous Conservatives administrations. Threats to turn boats around in the Channel, the constant attacks on "activist lawyers" and the deportation of migrants and refugees to Rwanda (a policy that would have been more at home in a BNP manifesto) are all populist policies to appear tough on immigration and demonise their political opponents.

The Government's right wing populist shift has been enabled because the Conservative Party membership has also shifted further right. An influx in support from former UKIP, Brexit Party and even old BNP voters in 2019 saw the attitudes of Conservative Party voters harden on issues such as immigration and multiculturalism.

Polling on Conservative Party members by HOPE not hate in 2020 highlight just how hardline they are on questions of immigration, race and Islamophobia. Almost half of Tory Party members

(47%) this Islam is a threat to the British way of life, compared to 30% amongst the general public, while 58% think that there are no-go areas in Britain where Sharia Law dominates and non-Muslims cannot enter. Over a third of party members (36%) think Islamist terrorists reflect a widespread hostility to Britain amongst the Muslim community, compared to 22% of the public at large.

A consequence of this shift to the right is that many of the most repugnant views and activities taken up by the traditional far right stem from policies or narratives driven by Conservative politicians, even if they are then taken to another level by them.

Recent anti-migrant activities carried out by the far right is a case in point, where far right activists are increasingly piggy backing on mainstream rhetoric from the Conservative right. Hardening attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers has been deliberately driven by the Government, and in particular the Home Secretary, with the willing cooperation of elements of the tabloid press. The conscious demonisation of lawyers, dubbed "activist lawyers" by Priti Patel, has led to lurid headlines in the newspapers and verbal and even physical threats by far right activists.

Another clear example of how the traditional far right plays off the narrative set by the Conservative right was over the reaction to Black Lives Matter, in the summer of 2020[16]. While Conservative politicians and media tried to switch the narrative from racial inequality to the preservation of statues and monuments, the nazi group Patriotic Alternative began an All Lives Matter campaign as a means to insert its racial nationalist ideology into this right wing backlash.

A SHIFTING FOCUS

The British far right has always evolved with the times and today's far right looks and feels quite different from the one we witnessed with the BNP. Just as the far right morphed from hard-core antisemitism to opposition to non-white immigration into Britain in the 1960s, so today's far right have changed again, both in tone and focus.

Even before 2011 we had seen the rise of a strongly anti-Muslim narrative replacing general opposition to immigration, which had been the hall mark of the BNP and the National Front before them. The events of 9/11 and the 7/7 attacks in London, coupled with the war on terror in Afghanistan and Iraq radically reshaped the world order and created a new enemy for the right and they were able to tap into unease, suspicion and hostility by a big chunk of British society towards Muslims. For the far right, this manifested itself intellectually in the counter-jihad movement and on the streets with groups like the English Defence League and the Football Lads Alliance. This same anti-Muslim ideology has inspired a wave of far right terrorism across the globe, from Anders Breivik in Norway to Christchurch in New Zealand.

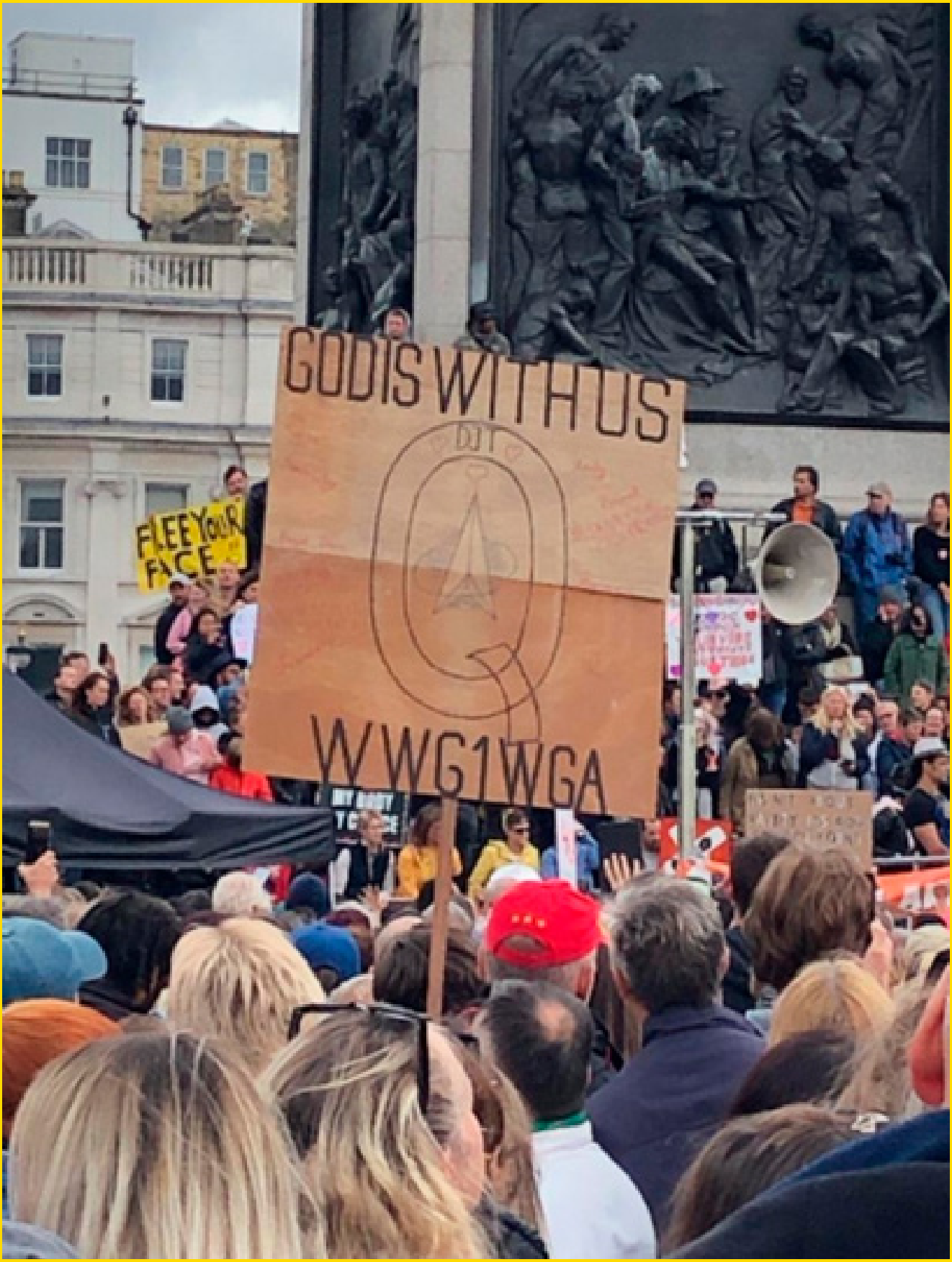
The focus on the incompatibility of, and threat posed by, Muslims has allowed the far right to broaden its appeal whilst also trying to claim that it is 'not racist', but motivated by cultural incompatibility. With our polling finding that 30% of Britons thinking that Islam is a threat to the British way of life, it is hardly surprising that videos by Stephen Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson) were watched by millions and as many as 50,000 people joined the football hooligan-led Football Lads Alliance demonstration in London in October 2017.

The last few years has seen the rise of the post-organisational far right, where traditional and hierarchically structured organisations have been replaced with more fluid networks and movements. These are often based online and centred around a single issue and/or personality. These new networks tend to be often short-lived and supporters appear to flit between issues and causes more than in the past, when activists pledged their loyalty to a single party. This has made it harder for far right groups to develop longer term strategies as they are forced to continually react to changing events in order to keep their audiences aligned.

The growth of social media and online networks have also radically changed the political landscape, with an alternative media springing up and established narratives increasingly challenged. This has drawn younger people into politics in new ways, especially on the far right. A quite stale and turgid movement in the early 2000s catering for men over 50 has been replaced by a burgeoning, thriving and innovative online scene, which has brought large numbers of young people in contact with the far right.

At the same time, the mainstream media is increasingly ignored and public trust in our institutions, partly deliberately whipped up by Conservative politicians, has worsened.

With a decline in public anger over immigration following the EU referendum, along with younger audiences being brought into the far right orbit, it is perhaps unsurprising that the far right of today is less preoccupied by the same issues as in the past. While race and immigration remain core



QAnon sign at the “Unite for Freedom” anti-lockdown rally in Trafalgar Square, London, 29 August 2020.

issues upon which the far right mobilise, other issues around which to agitate have become more and more prominent, many of which play on growing culture wars fed by the conservative right.

A backlash against racial, gender and sexual equality has become pronounced in recent years, partly driven and weaponised by the conservative right, but it is also a right-wing reaction to the progress in society on many social issues championed by the political left. This has manifested itself through aggressive anti-feminism and misogyny, white supremacy as seen in opposition to the Black Lives Matter movement and the 'All Lives Matter' narrative, as well as growing antipathy towards the Trans community.

This is partly the consequence of the rise of identity politics in society as a whole, but also reflective of the increasing importation of US politics into British political discourse. Anti-woke, anti-trans rights and attacks on so-called 'critical race theory', which are all major issues on the US conservative right, are increasingly being imported into the U.K through the internet, the rapidly expanding conservative media (such as GB News) and through right wing social media platforms (such as GETTR).

Whereas once the far right had a quite distinctive narrative on the issue or race and antisemitism, which helped created a cordon sanitaire between the far right and the more mainstream right, this separation no longer exists. Ideas and narratives are shared and amplified, with the far right given credibility when more mainstream voices say the same things and mainstream voices are weaponised by far right activists.

COVID-19 AND CONSPIRACY MOVEMENTS

The final, and perhaps biggest, change since 2011 has been the backlash against Covid-19 restrictions and the anti-lockdown movement. This movement, driven as it was by conspiracies, brought together people from a wide range of backgrounds and ideologies, all united by the belief that they were being lied to and that certain dark forces were creating a crisis in order to financially gain and exert control. The crowds on the anti-Covid demos were mixture of new age hippies, health fanatics, conspiracy cranks, survivalists and far right activists. Ideological differences were put aside or even merged.

This fluidity of ideology, and in the importance of it, perhaps explains why so many young people in our polling who would support a new party are not put off such a party when they are labelled as far right.

Conspiracy theories have been central to much of the anti-Covid movement and while not all conspiracies are far right in nature, people are getting introduced to these extreme conspiracies in a way they were not before. Moreover, once you start believing in one type of conspiracy you become more susceptible to another, and so what can begin as an innocent questioning of the truth, or eccentric belief can open the door to more extreme conspiracies.

FACING A DIFFERENT THREAT

The far right of together is different in so many ways from the far right of 2011. With the loosening of ideological attachment, particularly amongst young people, and changing political engagement, we are seeing people cherry pick issues and events, even if it might mean they hold seemingly contradictory beliefs.

While the core tenants of far right ideology remains the same – extreme nationalism, authoritarianism, conspiratorial thinking and supremacy – it is played out today on different issues and in different arenas. There are also so many more ways into the far right than in the past, complicating things still further. Some are obvious, while others less so. Some people quite quickly stumble across far right extremism, while for others it is the constant drip of more mainstream conservative right propaganda that eventually leads them to the extreme.

While HOPE not hate and the wider progressive society has to change to meet these new, diverse threats where they are and not where we have met them in the past, we must also remain vigilant about those organisations that still do exist. While they may be smaller in size and certainly less dominant that before, organised groups can still do more damage and create more tensions than individuals.

The far right might be less well defined than it was 11 years ago, but this in itself makes it more difficult to identify and defeat.

LESSONS FOR HOPE

A realignment of identity politics creates a significant challenge for antifascists and all progressives. The new politics of identity draws new lines of division on overlapping and intersecting issues, creating openings for a politics of hate that can appeal to new audiences. The current landscape of identity politics is more complex, but understanding how things have changed can help us to build hope, and push back against hate, more effectively.

Here are our lessons for hope.

UNDERSTANDING NEW AUDIENCES

The far right have, for a long time, targeted a stable demographic of older, non-graduate, white British voters, more often male than female, and generally living in areas outside of core cities. But our research highlights that with a shift away from ideologically structured views, demographic characteristics are less of an attitudinal predictor.

Rather than a unified bloc of 'far-right' voters, the new politics of identity opens up opportunities for those peddling hate to bring together a diverse collective of voters who hold reactionary views on certain issues. Our research highlights the importance of understanding how to engage with these new audiences.

This includes traditional social conservatives alongside young reactionaries, as well as those whose own real precarity and uncertainty is finding articulation though 'status deficit' and people who are generally socially liberal but become reactive when they see things pushed 'too far'. Clearly, different approaches will be needed to engage with different groups, and to widen resistance among others. But there can no longer be complacency about a stable base of support for progressive politics based on demographic characteristics.

- There is a lot we can learn from understanding how the conspiracy movement has brought together people of different political persuasions, the appeal and drivers of conspiracy and what can undermine the pattern of people who begin with soft curiosity being drawn into more extreme and dangerous ends of the movement.
- New tactics will be needed to break the reach of reactionary right politics among young people. Young people are likely to be disproportionately impacted by the current economic crisis, starting their adult lives at a time of great uncertainty, and inheriting the political decisions of older generations. It is not surprising that some are finding answers in mistrust and blame. Progressives must lose a complacency in assuming that young people will naturally share their values, and put forward a real offer of hope for the future that extends well beyond the freshers' fair circuit.
- Education programmes that build young people's resilience to violent extremist messaging and foster a positive sense of identity and belonging should be rolled out in schools and colleges across the country.
- Regulation of the online space must demand changes to social media platforms' design and processes that disincentivise legal harm, such as Holocaust denial, vaccine conspiracism and gendered hate. It should be treated as a design problem, and regulation should incentivise platforms to change their systems and processes to reduce it. However, we cannot reply on regulation alone. Progressives need to challenge and engage in debates, offering alternative narratives and perspectives.
- We have to recognise that banning certain ideas, concepts and words has created a backlash and allowed our opponents to portray themselves as free speech warriors when of course we know that they want to curtail the rights of others. We need to better define what content should be removed, why and what damage can be done if certain content is left online.

REBUILDING TRUST

While questioning the actions of political representatives is not always a bad thing, feelings of misrepresentation and voicelessness have increasingly found resonance in populist right narratives. A broken relationship with the political system can often be the target for broader feelings of resentment, somewhere to point the finger where people feel that society is

stacked against them. Populist framings of 'the elite' against 'the people' have further ebbed away at ties between voters and political parties, increasingly put liberal democracies under strain, and fuelled the appeal of 'strongman' politics.

Repairing some of the broken relationship many have with the political system will be increasingly important in the new landscape of identity politics. At the same time, it's important to understand that there is no simple solution to build trust without meaningful action from the institutions people do not see as serving them.

- The current cost of living crisis, which is set to be the worst in several decades, is set to place even greater strain on people's relationship with those in power. People who work hard not seeing this as enough to secure a good quality of life will rightly question why those in power are letting this happen. It is essential that the Government take immediate action to set an emergency budget and address this as the crisis it is, before it also becomes a crisis of democracy.
- The Government must scrap plans to introduce compulsory voter ID that will disenfranchise millions of people, and instead focus on expanding engagement in the political process and making it easier for people to vote. Democracy and civic engagement should be taught in schools.
- There are clear calls in our findings for politicians to listen to people, and to give back power to communities. There is a need to invest in opportunities for meaningful engagement, through deliberative and participatory decision making processes such as citizens' assemblies.
- Whilst recent Labour and Conservative Governments have all talked about localising power, political and economic power and decision making has been increasingly centralised over the past 40 years. This has only reinforced the impact of globalisation, which has increasingly moved power and decision-making away from the nation-state to international forums and the boardrooms of multinational companies. A real commitment to localism must see a substantial increase in funding and power given to local councils who are held accountable to local people, as well as giving power and ownership to communities themselves.
- Politicians need to do more to focus on the good of the country, instead of chasing short-term political gains that rarely pay off. For example, recent Government proposals to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda may have made headlines, but as an unworkable scheme at huge cost to the tax payer amidst a cost of living crisis will only serve to undermine political trust.

- Politicians and the media have a responsibility to support and uphold the democratic institutions that underpin our democratic society. Cheap attacks on the judiciary and the media might appeal to supporters, but in the long run they only further undermine trust in democracy.

ADDRESSING INEQUALITY THAT DRIVES 'STATUS DEFICIT'

Economic inequality continues to shape attitudes and create openings for division. It is the growing economic difficulties that many people will face over the next year that offer the far right, as well as a populist or reactionary right, their best hope to expand. The impacts of the cost of living crisis, and the wider economic impact as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the implications of Brexit will all hit the poorest in society hardest.

During economically tough periods, resentments and frustrations can brew as people look for someone to blame. It is not that economics alone drive hostility towards others, but a sense of displacement and loss feeds anxieties, and speaks to pre-existing prejudice. Identity issues are dialled up or down depending on how the economy is doing, while a sense of power and privilege slipping away fuels resentment.

When individuals have little hope for their own chances in life, it is harder for them to show openness and compassion for others. And it easier for opportunists to exploit real fears with hatred. They play on identity politics through reasserting social hierarchies and feeding a frustrated sense of entitlement based on identity.

The reality is that for the vast majority of people, it is the issues behind inequality and disadvantage – the economy, decent jobs and housing, welfare benefits, education, health and social care – that are of far more importance than any 'culture war'. Reactionary identity politics are not a priority. But where people do not see a real solution to the challenges they face, a politics of identity based on 'status deficit' and a rejection of the establishment is a narrative that makes sense.

- Disrupting the direct link between feelings of disadvantage and reactionary identity politics will mean addressing some of the root causes

of inequality in Britain. Only meaningful action on the real drivers of 'status deficit' will be able to turn the tables, and work towards solidarity for all who are struggling, not a race to the bottom.

- Issues such as housing, decent pay and access to healthcare cross communities. Campaigners on these issues must identify where these issues risk becoming points of division and ensure change through building solidarity, for example between migrant communities and veterans.

NAVIGATING THE 'CULTURE WARS'

While there are no specific 'culture war issues', and the 'war on woke' is more of a distraction to most than a core driver of political expression, our research does show that this approach of creating division is cutting through in reframing public opinion around identity. While there is little public salience in, for example, the existing polarised media debate around trans rights, on other issues, certain framings shift the debate to a more reactionary place. Narratives around the reframing of racial justice as something that is unfairly placing guilt on white people, or a view that feminism is going 'too far' and holds men back, create limits and pushback against an equalities agenda.

- Engaging in TV debate shouting matches or responding to newspaper columns that are intended to aggravate progressives are not effective means of intervention here. Barking at dog whistle politics does little but cement a picture of progressives as defenders of the status quo, and so can feed even more of a reaction. But it is also not enough to sit out the 'culture wars' where they are feeding a broader pushback against progressive values.
- Progressives need to present a clear vision for their cause, rooted in people's realities. Society has gradually become more and more socially liberal, but we must make space to build on that rather than being pushed to defend where we are.
- We need to understand where common ground can be found, but understand where these can easily be undercut by reactionary right framings.
- Progressives must be better skilled in having these cultural and divisive conversations, both to be better placed to win the argument but also not to antagonise other people needlessly. Initiatives like HOPE not hate's *Difficult Conversations* training, which focus on empathetic listening and socratic questioning, should be essential for all community and political activists.

GEOGRAPHIC DIVIDES

Linked to the question of economic inequality is the role of geographic divides. These are likely to become even more significant, as the interplay between cultural concerns and economic security will see clusters of voters emerge from shared experiences rooted in place.

Place based divides have grown over decades, as the changing nature of work has replaced traditional industry with warehouses and service work. Graduates congregate in urban areas which celebrate diversity, while our towns age and many struggle to adapt to the pace of change.

The link between geographic and cultural divides highlight the importance of local influence in shaping change across society. It is not just people's familiarity with difference and contact with diversity that shapes their social attitudes, but also how people experience a place – their daily interactions, the opportunities they can access and the frustrations they share – all have a role to play.

Place based divides are not clear cut, there is no binary between metropolitan cities and smaller towns. But understanding an ecological approach to public attitudes – in which demographics, economic experiences, and a sense of place play a significant role, we may be able to identify pockets of those who share identity politics on place based basis in order to build solidarity and resilience.

- A serious drive to improve resilience for all communities must acknowledge the place-based divides which drive social unrest – addressing these challenges as they exist at the local level. This means decision-makers looking at towns, cities and neighbourhoods as individual places, and seeking to understand their specific situation. People's everyday experiences of resilience challenges must come first.

CREATING MOMENTS FOR HOPE

The new politics of identity has not evolved, and will not play out, spontaneously. Shifts in public opinion are strongly influenced by events and their political framings. In an increasingly issue based setting, being able to create and capitalise on events, moments and opportunities is essential.

Just as the 'culture wars' have shifted the debate to a more reactionary place, the creation of moments and opportunities for positive change can turn the dial to a more progressive place.

There is a real need to create moments and opportunities for progress, but equally to be more prepared to respond quickly and

confidently at the moments created or seized by the reactionary right.

- In a more reactive political landscape, progressives need to make more of moments and events, and the potential to form coalitions around these. We need to be able to respond to significant public events to create space for change.
- An events based landscape has offered a springboard for far-right activity, who have capitalised on everything from terror attacks and grooming scandals to the vaccine rollout. At every level, from national government, to local authorities and within communities, we need to be better prepared to respond quickly and confidently to these.

WHAT NEXT

A decade ago, HOPE not hate's first Fear and Hope report concluded there was not a progressive majority in society. It revealed deep resentments to immigration, as well as scepticism towards multiculturalism that cut across society.

Today, we are looking at a very different picture. Attitudes to immigration and multiculturalism are far more positive than they were ten years ago. At the same time, anti-Muslim prejudice has remained widespread, anti-Roma, gypsy and traveller discrimination are deeply engrained. And we see the emergence of a reactionary right threat that seeks to undermine the fight against the inequalities that plague our society.

The new politics of identity draws new lines of division on overlapping and intersecting issues, creating openings for a politics of hate that can appeal to new audiences. In the context of an economic crisis and a swelling, broken relationship with the political system, there is potential for a new reactionary party on the right to gain ground, especially with young voters.

While overall our data tells a positive story, there are real warning signs in these findings for the progressive world. The political landscape as we know it has changed and we need to respond accordingly. We cannot allow a reactionary right to set the agenda, and be cornered into a position of defense. We cannot be complacent in thinking the demographic base that has traditionally supported our causes will remain constant. If a rising tide of reactionary right politics goes unchallenged, we leave the door open for hate to take hold in communities.

HOPE not hate will work to ensure that this does not happen. We will continue to explore, understand and tackle the far right, work with the communities who are susceptible to them and take on the issues and policies which give rise to them.

Endnotes

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