

Later today...

**More in Common**



**Monday, 6 October**

**13:30 to 14:30**

**Central 6, Secure Zone,
Convention Centre**

Climate Crossroads: What's next for the Conservatives on Net Zero and Nature?



Adam Payne (Chair)
Politics
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House of
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Environment Network

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Conservative Thinking at the Cross-roads: Where Next for the Right?



Luke Tryl
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**Joe Robertson
MP**
MP for Isle of
Wight East



**Esther
McVey MP**
MP for
Tatton



**David Davis
MP**
MP for Goole &
Pocklington



**Penny
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Former Leader of the
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**Marc
Stears**
UCL Policy
Lab

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Britons and Blasphemy - Defending Free Speech in a Changing Britain



**Jemimah
Steinfeld (Chair)**
Index on
Censorship



**Luke
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This Place Matters: Social Cohesion for a New Age



**Kate Ferguson
(Chair)**
The Sun on
Sunday



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More in
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**Sunder
Katwala**
British
Future



**Miriam
Cates**
Centre for
Social Justice



**Greg
Stafford MP**
MP for Farnham
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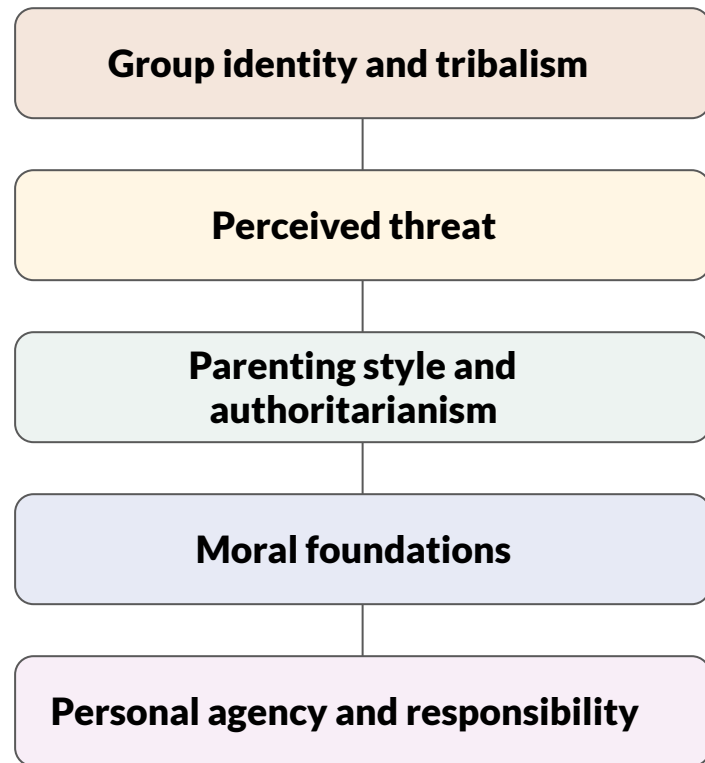


**Baroness
Spielman**

House of
Lords

Our unique lens - The British Seven Segments

- The 'British Seven' segments were formulated in our 'Shattered Britain' report, published in 2025
- They are created entirely from questions around areas of core beliefs, drawn from social psychology: group identity and tribalism, perceived threat, parenting style and authoritarianism, moral foundations, personal agency and responsibility
- No demographic information (race, class, or gender) is used for the segmentation, though the segments created by this process often have demographic differences
- Segmentation shows that values and beliefs are powerful in influencing how individuals form opinions about issues and their behaviour. Often, the segments are more predictive of beliefs than any other metric



Progressive Activists



Incrementalist Left



Established Liberals



Sceptical Scrollers



Rooted Patriots



Traditional Conservatives



Dissenting Disruptors



...an outspoken group that is politically engaged and globally minded, championing social justice but feeling alienated from mainstream politics

...a group that leans left and trusts institutions, often stepping back from the news and avoiding politically fraught debates

... a prosperous group that is confident in institutions, values expertise, and believes the system broadly works

...a disengaged group that has lost trust in mainstream institutions and increasingly looks online for sources of truth

...a patriotic group that feels overlooked by elites and wants leaders with common sense to protect local identity

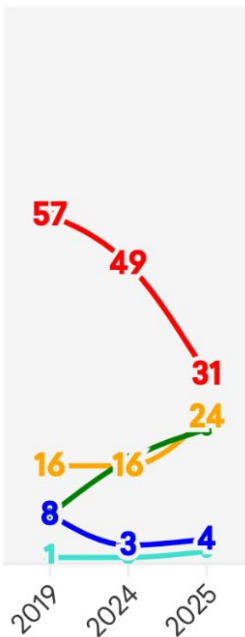
... a nostalgic group that respects tradition, authority and personal responsibility, while remaining sceptical of rapid change

... a frustrated group that craves radical change and backs strong leaders who promise to shake up a broken system

How would the seven segments vote?

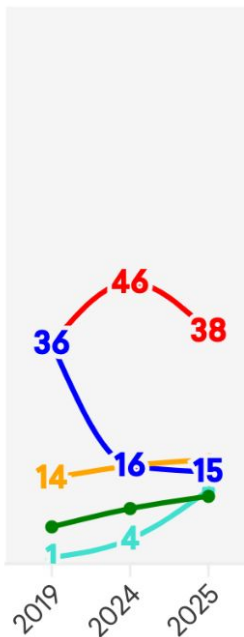
Progressive Activists

"Corbynites"



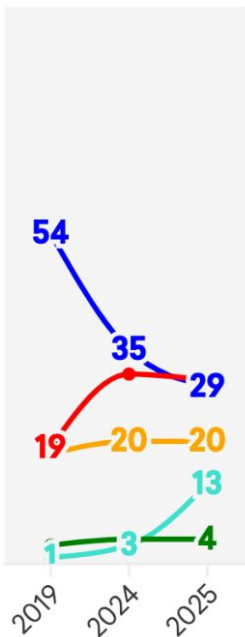
Incrementalist Left

"Social democrats"



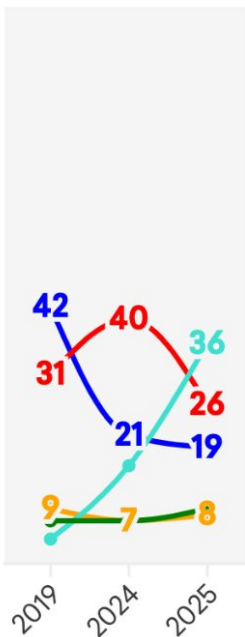
Established Liberals

"Blue Wall"



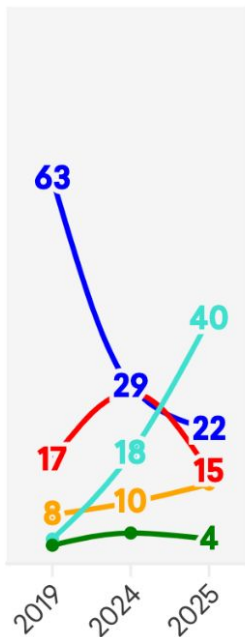
Sceptical Scrollers

"Online Disengaged"



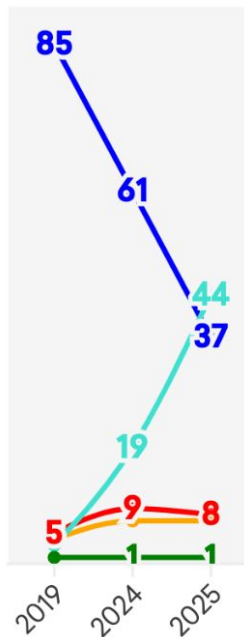
Rooted Patriots

"Red Wall"



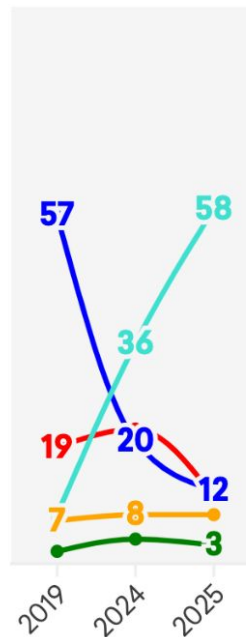
Traditional Conservatives

"Shire Tory"



Dissenting Disruptors

"Populist Right"

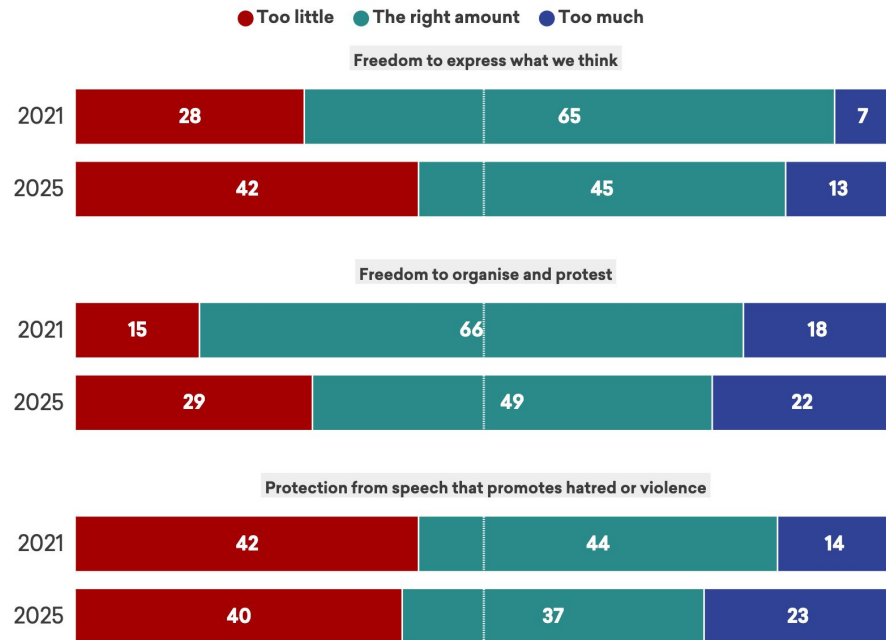




British attitudes to free speech

Falling satisfaction with the settlement on free expression

A growing number of Britons say we have too little freedom of expression



Britons tend to be happy with the current settlement on freedom of expression in Britain, yet levels of satisfaction are falling.

In 2021, 65 per cent of Britons thought we had the right amount of freedom to express what we think - a figure which has now fallen to 45 per cent. The number satisfied with our freedom to organise and protest had fallen from 66 per cent to 49 per cent in the same period.

One of Britain's fault lines: Free speech for all v Protection from hate speech

Few Britons have a completely libertarian approach to free speech; however while some prioritise everyone's right to express their views freely, others prioritise protecting minority groups from hate and discrimination.

62% think political correctness is a problem in the UK, but a similar number (58%) think it is important we protect people from hate speech. A third of the country (34%) say both.

Half the country (52%) say they feel a pressure to speak about subjects like immigration in a certain way.

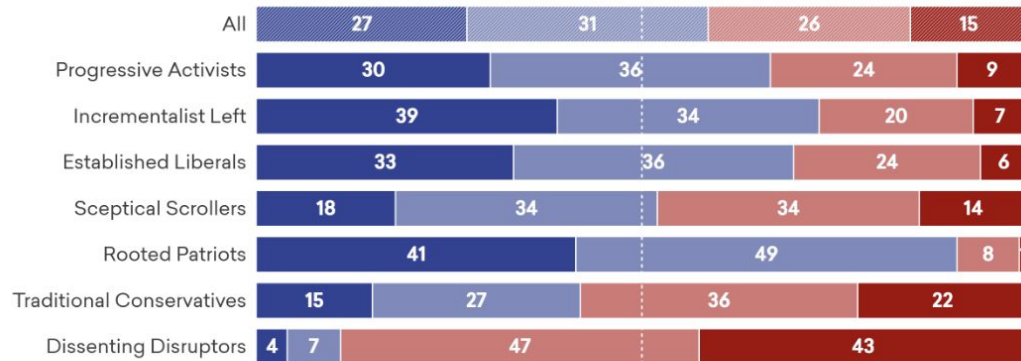
Which comes closer to your view?

● 1 - We need to protect people from dangerous and hateful speech.

● 2

● 3

● 4 - People should have the freedom to express their views, even if they are controversial or offensive.



"I worry about saying the wrong thing sometimes. I'm sort of like self-policing to make sure that I'm not saying the wrong thing because things that were acceptable a number of years ago are not anymore, and it's just a case of keeping up to date with what is okay and what isn't. Okay. So sometimes I just don't say anything because I'm not really sure if it's alright."

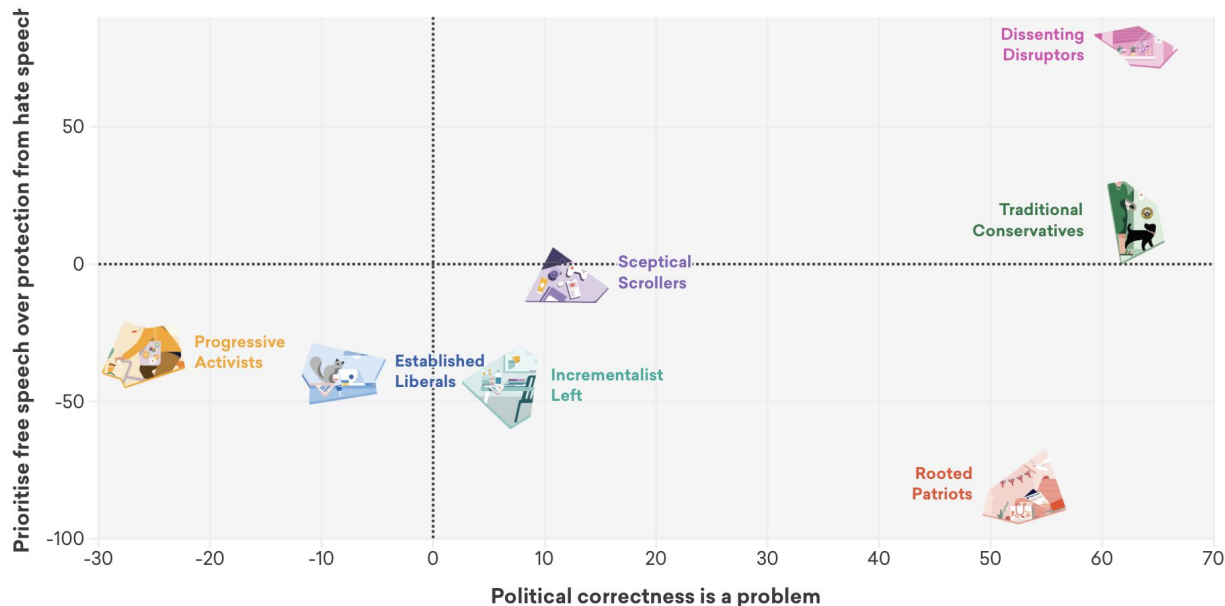
Annette, Rooted Patriot, Bury

Free speech, political correctness and hate speech

The more socially conservative segments believe political correctness is a problem, but differ on how to handle offensive speech. **Traditional Conservatives** and **Dissenting Disruptors** prioritise free speech, even if offensive, while **Rooted Patriots** lean toward protecting people from harmful speech.

Socially liberal segments see increased sensitivity to offence as positive, and often support no-platforming of extreme views.

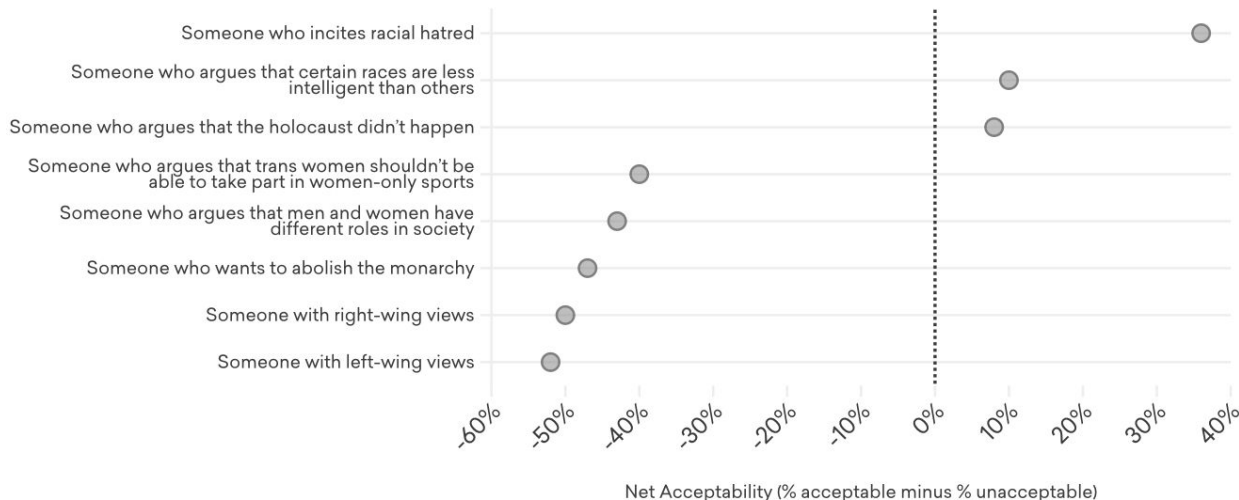
Exploring the segments' attitudes toward free speech



Attitudes on no-platforming: It depends...

There are occasions when the public thinks it is appropriate to restrict free speech in the interests of safety or public protection, with inciting racism being one clear line. However, all segments are likely to see no-platforming a speaker for expressing left- or right-wing views as unacceptable.

“No platforming” refers to preventing someone from taking part in a public debate or meeting, due to them holding views perceived as unacceptable or offensive. For each of the following speakers, please say whether you think it would be acceptable or unacceptable to prevent them from speaking in a public debate or meeting:



“It's not about limiting free speech, I think it's about making sure people are aware that freedom of speech doesn't mean freedom from consequences.”
Flo, Progressive Activist, Bristol



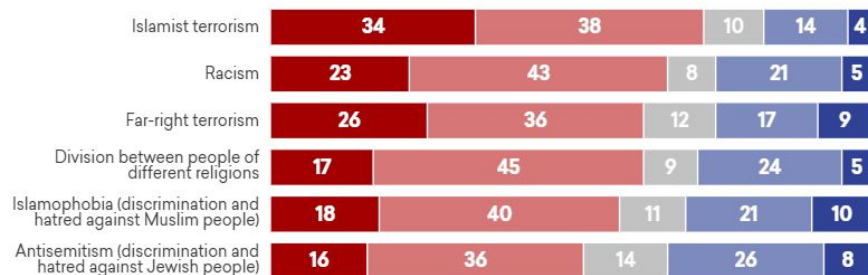
Attitudes to religious freedom and blasphemy

Broad concerns about division and extremism

A majority of Britons see racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia as serious issues

In your opinion, how serious are the following issues in the UK today?

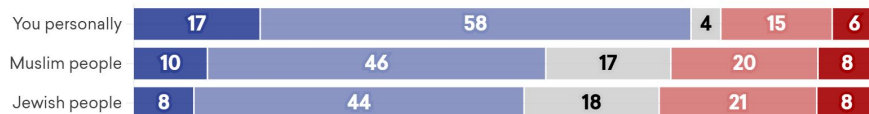
● Very serious ● Somewhat serious ● Don't know ● Not that serious ● Not serious at all



Source: More in Common • January 2025

Do you think the UK in 2024 is a safe or unsafe place for...

● Very safe place ● Mostly safe place ● Don't know ● Mostly unsafe place ● Very unsafe place



Source: More in Common, January 2025

There are high levels of concern about different types of extremism in the UK. However, the concern is far less politically polarised than in other countries, with overlapping concern across different political groups and broad agreement on the diagnosis of the problems facing the country. This is a strength when compared to elsewhere, including the US, where concern about extremism is more polarised.

75 per cent of those concerned about Islamist extremism are also concerned about far-right extremism, and 68 per cent are concerned about Islamophobia.

However there are worries about the safety of minorities in the UK - 3 in 10 think the UK is an unsafe place for Muslims and Jewish people.

Higher expectations on integration

Which of the following do you think should be part of the Government's policy on integration?

Select all that apply



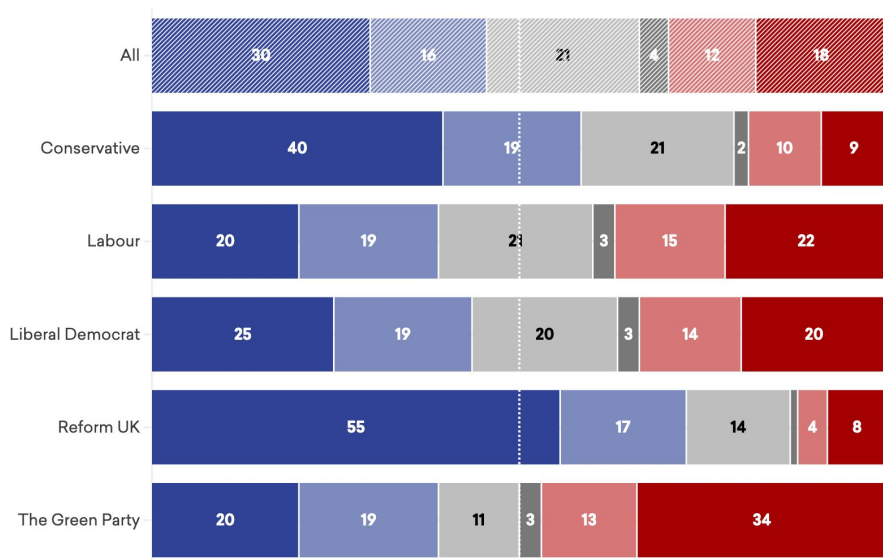
What's clear from our polling is that the public want the government to set higher expectations for new arrivals to the UK in terms of integration, with particular concerns about extremism and learning English.

There is a clear demand from the public that British law takes precedence over religious law, and that non-citizens who spread extremist ideology are deported.

Britons tend to support a Burqa ban

To what extent would you support or oppose a ban on Britons wearing a burqa in public - this is a religious face covering, including a covering of the eyes.

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Don't know
● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose



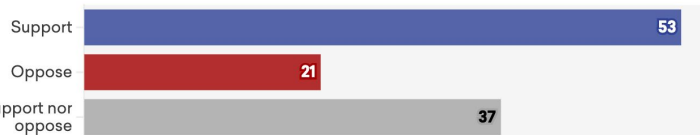
46 per cent of Britons support a ban on the burqa in public spaces and 30 per cent oppose - with Conservative and Reform voters much more likely to support the ban.

Asked why they support the ban, the top reason given is “because I think face coverings should not be allowed in public”, followed by “because I think burqas are used to oppress women”.

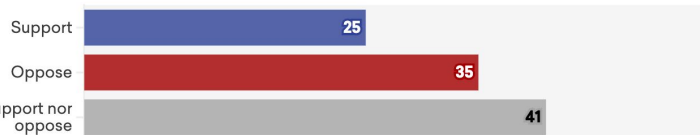
Support for banning non-stun slaughter

Support for banning no-stun slaughter, but more opposition for banning halal and kosher meat

To what extent would you support or oppose making it illegal to slaughter animals without stunning them?



To what extent would you support or oppose making halal meat illegal?



To what extent would you support or oppose making kosher meat illegal?



A majority of Britons want to ban non-stun slaughter, however this opposition falls when asked specifically about halal or kosher meat - where less than a quarter support banning it in each case.

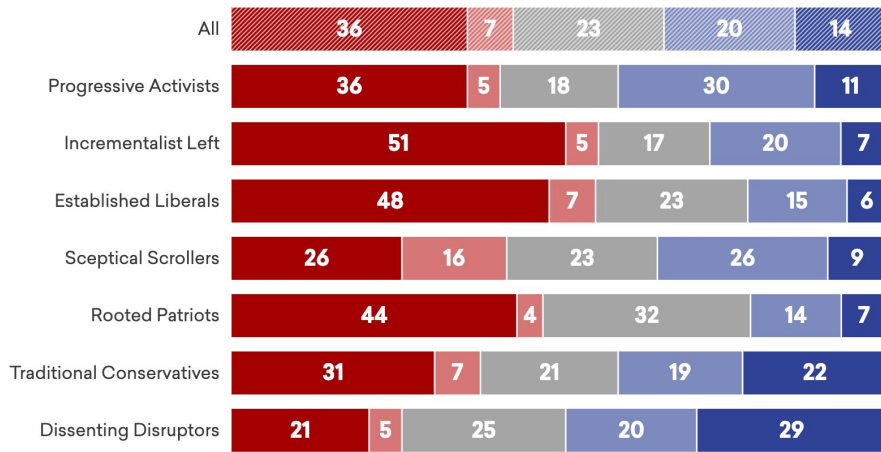
45 per cent of Reform 2024 voters would like to ban halal meat, as would just 27 per cent of 2024 Conservative voters.

Four in ten Britons think there should be legal consequences for damaging religious texts

43 per cent of Britons think there should be legal consequences for damaging religious texts

'Religious hatred' means hatred against people of a particular religion or belief
Which comes closest to your view...

- Damaging religious texts is an act of religious hatred and should have legal consequences
- Damaging religious texts is not an act of religious hatred but should have legal consequences
- Don't know
- Damaging religious texts is an act of religious hatred but should not have legal consequences
- Damaging religious texts is not an act of religious hatred and should not have legal consequences



While there is not majority support, Britons do tend to agree with the idea that there should be legal consequences for damaging religious texts.

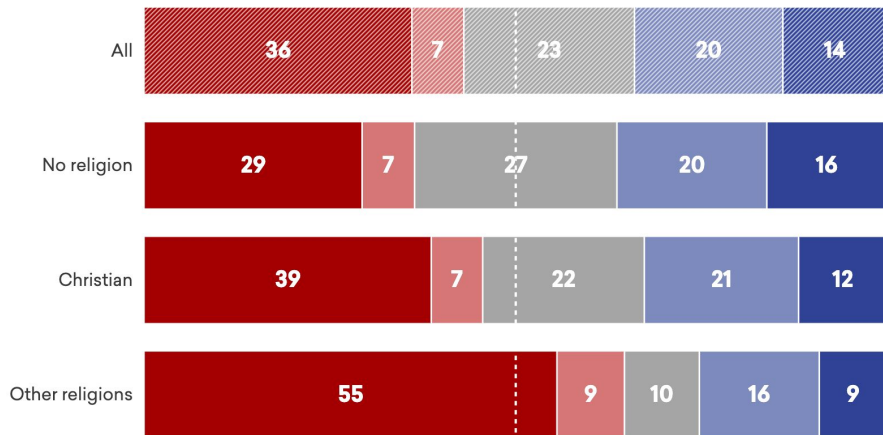
Dissenting Disruptors and Progressive Activists are the most likely to oppose the concept of legal consequences, whereas segments with higher trust in institutions tend to be more supportive of blasphemy laws - perhaps because they have greater trust that the rules would be implemented fairly.

Religious people are more likely to support blasphemy laws

Religious people, and particularly non-Christians, are more likely to support blasphemy laws

'Religious hatred' means hatred against people of a particular religion or belief
Which comes closest to your view...

- Damaging religious texts is an act of religious hatred and should have legal consequences
- Damaging religious texts is not an act of religious hatred but should have legal consequences
- Don't know
- Damaging religious texts is an act of religious hatred but should not have legal consequences
- Damaging religious texts is not an act of religious hatred and should not have legal consequences



Despite this, there is significant variation in attitudes to blasphemy laws across Britain's religious groups. Atheists are more likely to say there should not be legal consequences for damaging religious texts, whereas Christians are more likely to say there should.

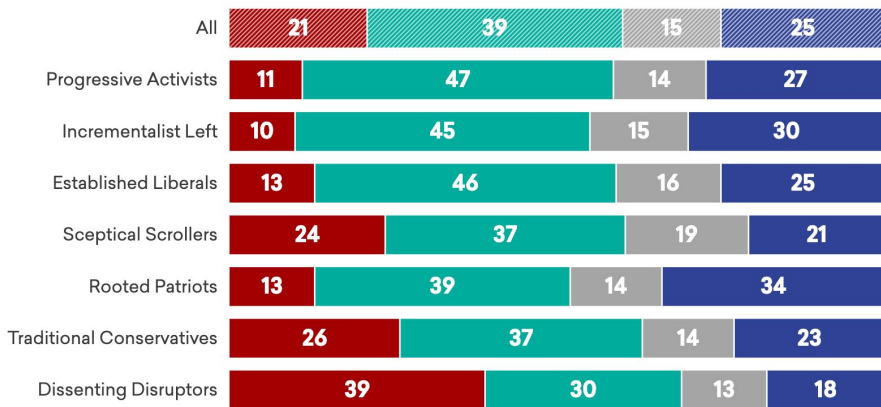
Members of non-Christian religions (most of whom are Muslim) are the most likely to support legal consequences for damaging religious texts.

Blasphemy laws: A case study

Britons tend to think a £300 fine for burning a Quran was about right

Below is a specific legal case which was taken to court in the UK earlier this year. An atheist asylum seeker from Turkey burned a Quran outside the Turkish Embassy in London while shouting, 'F*** Islam' and 'Islam is religion of terrorism'. He was convicted for disorderly behaviour within the hearing or sight of a person likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress thereby, which was motivated in part or in full by hatred towards a religious group, and ordered to pay fines of £336. Do you think this punishment was...

● Too harsh ● Fair ● Don't know ● Too lenient



When presented with information about a case earlier this year - in which somebody burned a Quran outside the Turkish Embassy in London - Britons tend to think that the £336 fine that person received was about right.

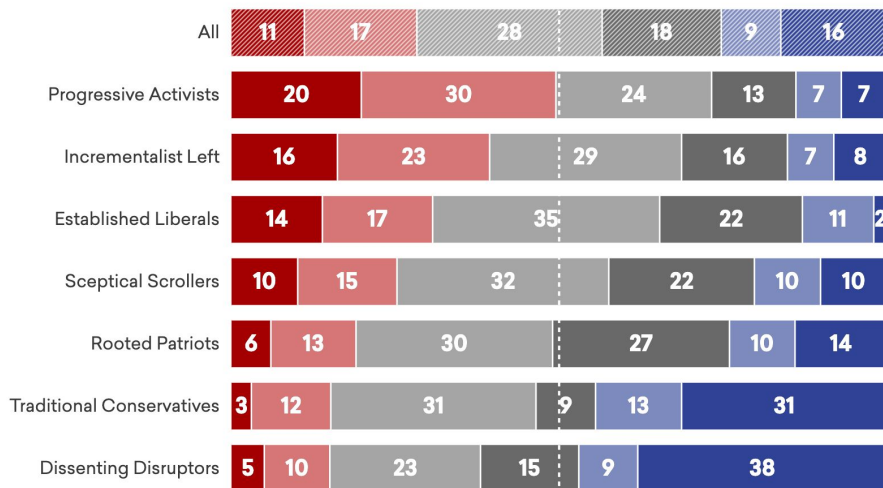
A quarter of the country think that this punishment was too lenient - most prominently the Rooted Patriots (the segment most concerned about hate speech more generally). In contrast, Dissenting Disruptors (who hold the most critical views of Islam and are most concerned about Government speech regulations) are most likely to think that the punishment was too harsh.

Widespread indifference on Islamophobia definition

Britons tend to be indifferent on the creation of a definition of Islamophobia

The UK government has set up a working group to develop a working definition of Islamophobia. To what extent do you support or oppose the government developing a definition of Islamophobia?

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Don't know
● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose



Few Britons have a strong view on the Government's plan to develop a definition of Islamophobia - with 46 per cent taking no view either way.

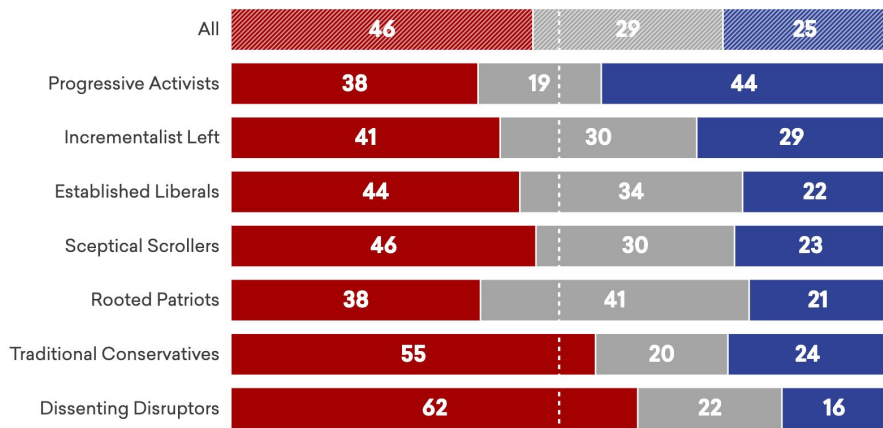
Progressive Activists - the group generally most concerned about Islamophobia - are most in favour of the policy (although even then just 50 per cent support). Conversely, Dissenting Disruptors are most likely to oppose the proposals, driven by their generally more critical views of Islam and their scepticism towards government regulation of speech.

Defining Islamophobia - impact on free speech

46 per cent of Britons would be concerned that an Islamophobia definition would shut down legitimate criticism of Islam

Which comes closest to your view?

- ☒ I would be concerned that if the government developed a formal definition of islamophobia it could be used to shut down legitimate criticism of Islam or actions of members of the Muslim community
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ I would not be concerned that if the government developed a formal definition of Islamophobia it could be used to shut down legitimate criticism of Islam or actions of members of the Muslim community



Although almost half the public express indifference to the creation of a definition of Islamophobia, many Britons have serious concerns about the plans.

46 per cent of Britons say they are worried that a definition of Islamophobia could be used to shut down legitimate criticism of Islam, with just 25 per cent not worried.

Progressive Activists are clear outliers on this as the only segment more unworried than worried about the impact of this definition.

The segments' key attitudes

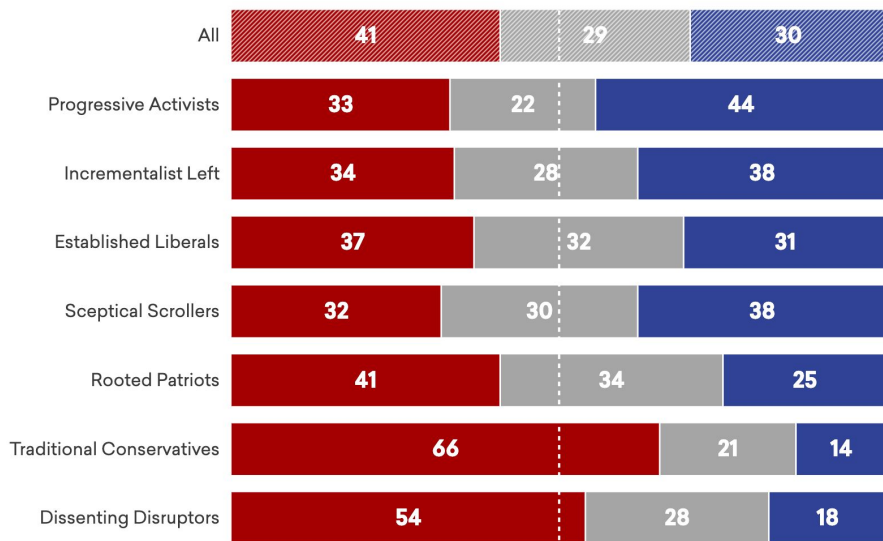
	Progressive Activists	Sceptical of religious institutions, but hold deep concern about hatred against minority groups - They are easily the group most likely to support a new definition of Islamophobia
	Incrementalist Left	Concerned about discrimination against religious groups - They have the least absolutist approach to free speech, and are much more worried about hate speech than any other segment
	Established Liberals	Committed to liberal values of freedom of expression, but worried about hate speech - With the Incrementalist Left, they are the most likely to support legal consequences for damaging religious texts
	Sceptical Scrollers	Fairly likely to think that people should be able to say what they want, even if it is offensive
	Rooted Patriots	Take a hard line on hate speech, and are happy with tough punishments for it (particularly compared to other conservative groups), but worry about political correctness and unfair policing of language
	Traditional Conservatives	Concerned about certain views being sidelined - The Segment the most likely to be worried that some religions will get greater protections than others
	Dissenting Disruptors	Most concerned about government regulation of free speech, particularly silencing of critical views on Islam

Defining Islamophobia - three in ten think it is necessary

41 per cent of Britons think existing definitions of racism are enough to tackle discrimination against Muslims

Which comes closest to your view?

- Existing definitions of racism are enough to tackle discrimination against Muslims
- We need a specific definition of Islamophobia to tackle discrimination against Muslims
- Don't know



Few Britons think the proposal to create a definition of Islamophobia is strictly necessary. More Britons (41 per cent vs 30 per cent) say that existing definitions of Islamophobia are enough to tackle discrimination against Muslims.



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