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An End to the Culture Wars: Can Labour reset the government-civil society partnership?

Labour Party Conference Fringe Event 2024

Progressive Activists



Civic Pragmatists



Disengaged Battlers



Established Liberals



Loyal Nationals



Disengaged Traditionalists



Backbone Conservatives



...a group for whom politics is an important part of their identity and who seek to correct long-standing injustices

...a group that cares about others, at home or abroad. They wish for less conflict and more compromise.

... a group that are just getting by. They blame the system for its unfairness, but not other people.

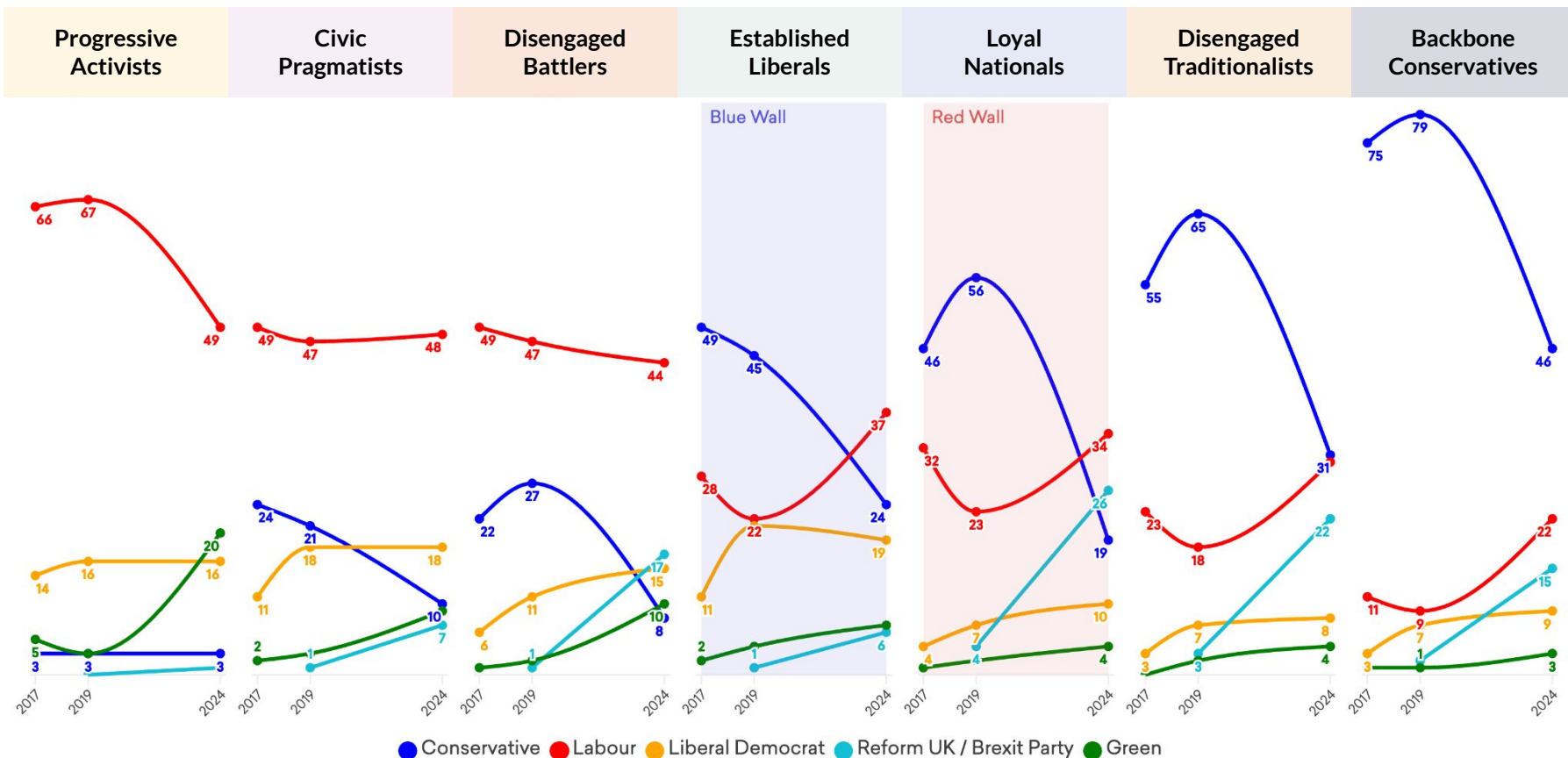
...a group that has done well towards others, but also sees a lot of good in the status quo.

...a patriotic group, who worry that our way of life is threatened and also feel our society has become more unfair.

... a group that values a well-ordered society and prides in hard work. They want strong leadership that keeps people in line.

... a group who are proud of their country, optimistic about Britain's future, and who keenly follow the news.

How did the Seven Segments vote?

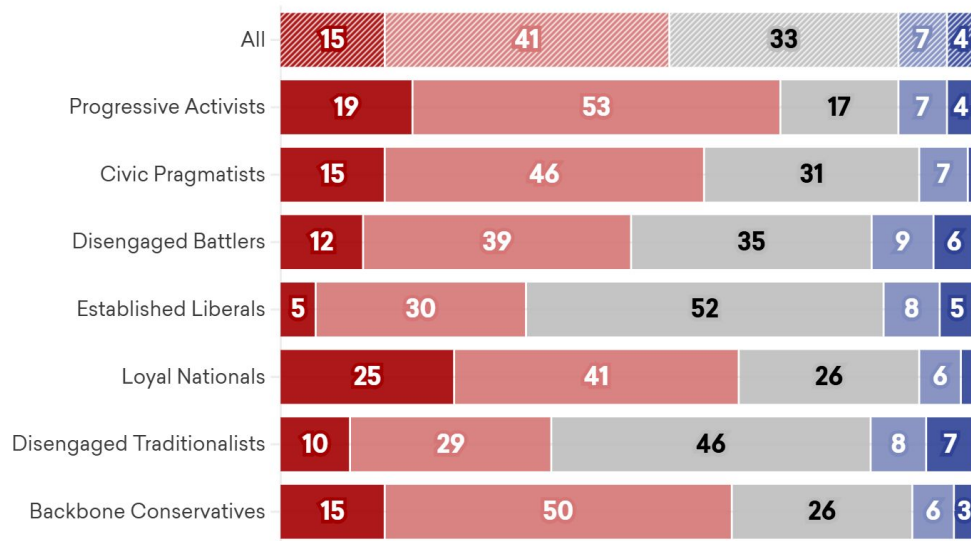


**Would the public
end the culture wars?**

The public are worried about culture wars

To what extent are you worried about culture wars causing social divisions in the UK today?

Very worried Somewhat worried Neither worried nor unworried Somewhat unworried Very unworried



A majority of the public are concerned about culture wars causing social divisions in the UK today - including majorities across five of the British Seven segments - including both Progressive Activists and Loyal Nationals.

Why aren't you concentrating on the big issues? It's so low down on my priority of what I want done in the country. I'd read the first bit and then they'd be both in the bin.

Janette, 59, Wokingham

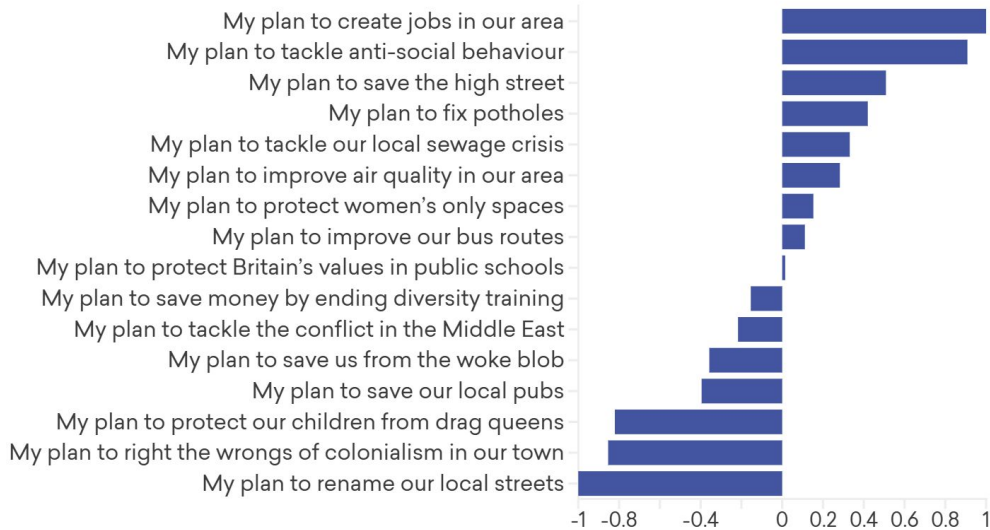
[They] should be campaigning on getting Britain booming again - the country is part broke and there are far bigger issues to be writing and campaigning about. So if I got that rubbish in my letterbox, it would go right into the bin.

Philip, 56, Wokingham

The electoral benefits of culture wars are limited

You have received the following leaflets from your local candidates for Parliament. Based on the titles of the following leaflets, which of them are you most and least likely to continue reading?

Relative importance of issue



The public are more likely to engage on electoral campaigns which focus on bread-and-butter issues rather than so-called 'culture war issues' from the right or left.

In focus groups, voters tell us that politicians pushing culture war agendas show them that they don't understand their priorities or the everyday challenges they face

I think that there are much more pressing issues that could be dealt with... we could be progressing like changes like the economy, like the NHS, like immigration, like knife crime – I just can't see how that's come to the top of the list

Lauren, Wokingham

Voters' see through politician-led culture wars

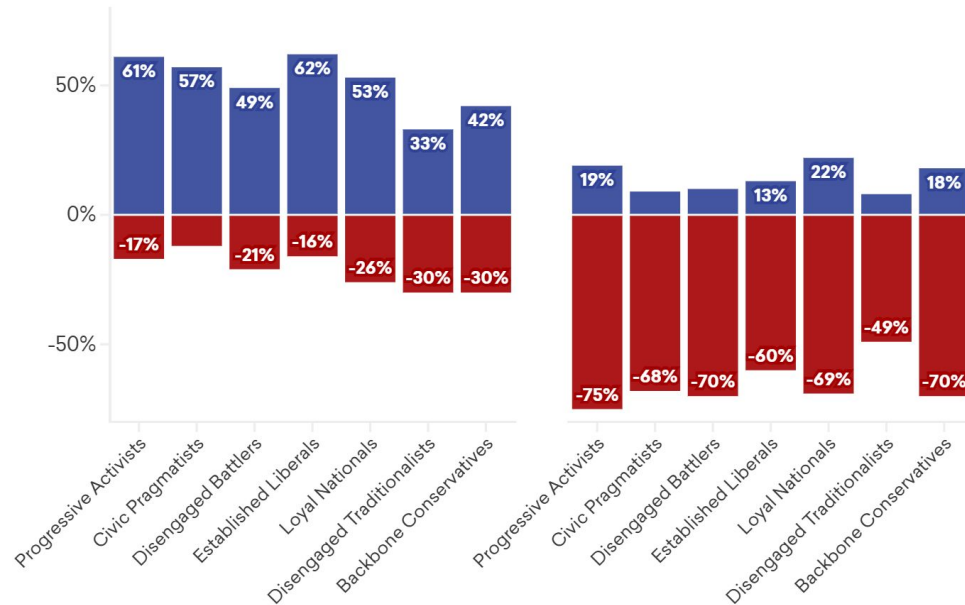
Which of the following comes closest to your view?

Ordinary people / Politicians usually talk about divisive issues because...

● ... it is something they care deeply about ● ... they want to attract attention

Ordinary People

Politicians



The British public see through politicians talking about divisive culture war issues, most believe politicians pursuing culture war debate are doing it to attract attention.

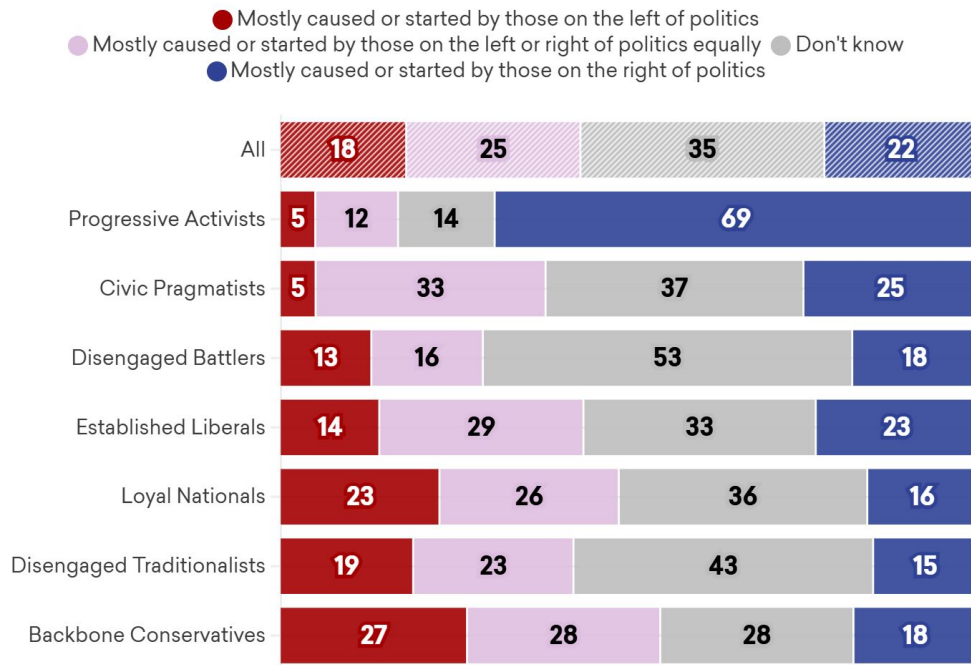
However, when it comes to ordinary people pursuing so-called 'culture war' debate, the public are more likely to take them at face value and see it as something they care about.

It's like hot potato politics. It's a statement that's getting made to polarise the population where maybe certain areas of the country will vote a certain way to that statement. And it's like a cheap way to try and win somebody's vote

Gareth, Blyth

Public think both left and right are responsible for culture wars

Thinking about culture wars in the UK, do you think they are...



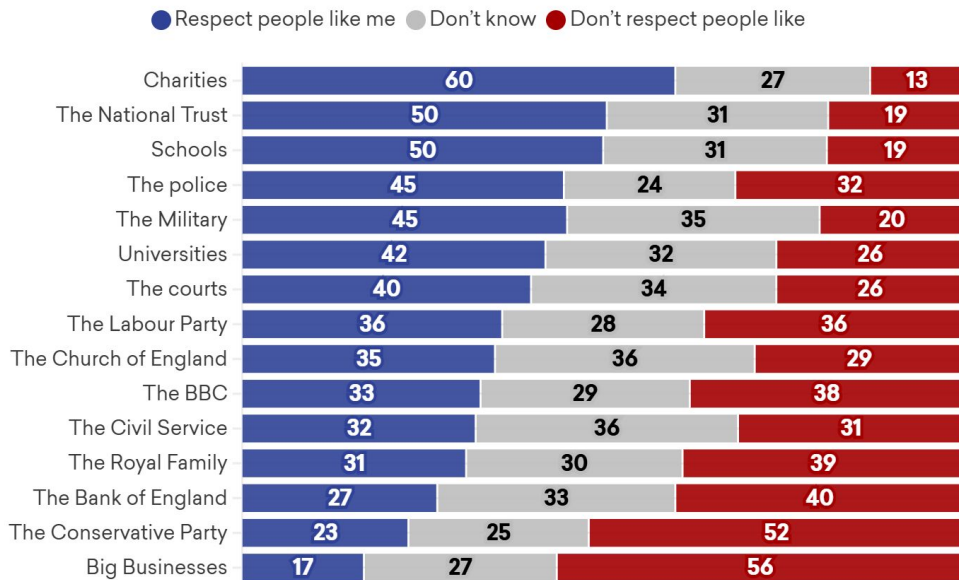
The public are as likely to see culture wars as the fault of the left of politics as they are the right of politics

Progressive Activists are the only segment who overwhelmingly blame one side of politics for causing culture wars - the other segments have a more split view, with many saying they don't know.

Progressive Activists are over-represented among the Labour Party membership which puts their view of the causes of culture wars beyond median public opinion

Ending culture wars requires more than decree

Thinking about whether the following institutions in Britain respect people like you, which of the following comes closest to your view?



Ending the culture wars won't happen by decree but it requires proper engagement with the public and dealing with a series of trust and respect challenges that both the government and majority institutions across the country face

Significant minorities of the public think the Labour Party, BBC and Civil Service do not respect people like them

Charities and institutions such as the National Trust do much better

The challenge of ending the culture wars

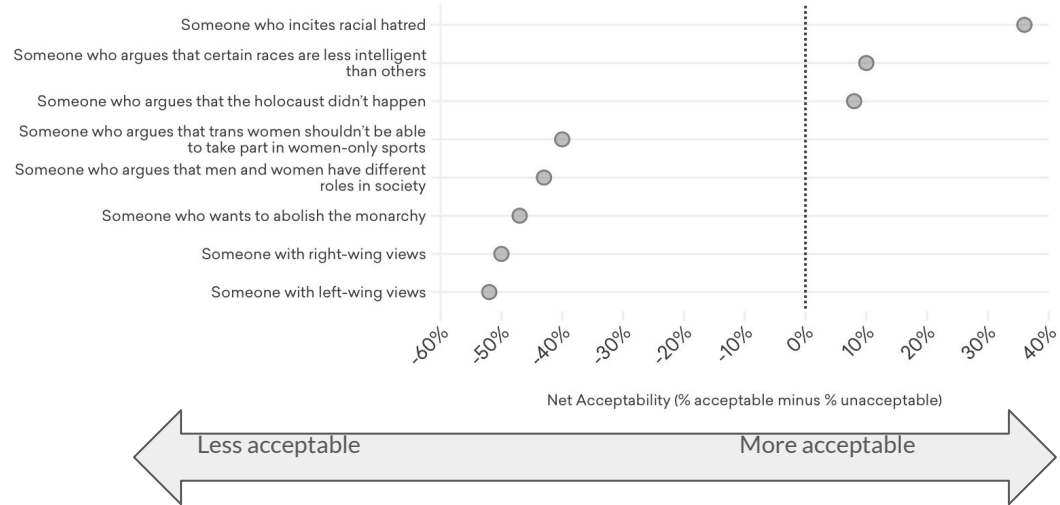
On issues such as free speech, public attitudes are nuanced

Britons see free speech as fundamental to our democracy, and **6 in 10 people consider free speech under threat.**

The public see the nuance - in focus group discussions, people express a sentiment that **free speech does not mean freedom from consequences.**

Effectively ending the culture wars means creating a space for discussion and understanding rather than closing debates down.

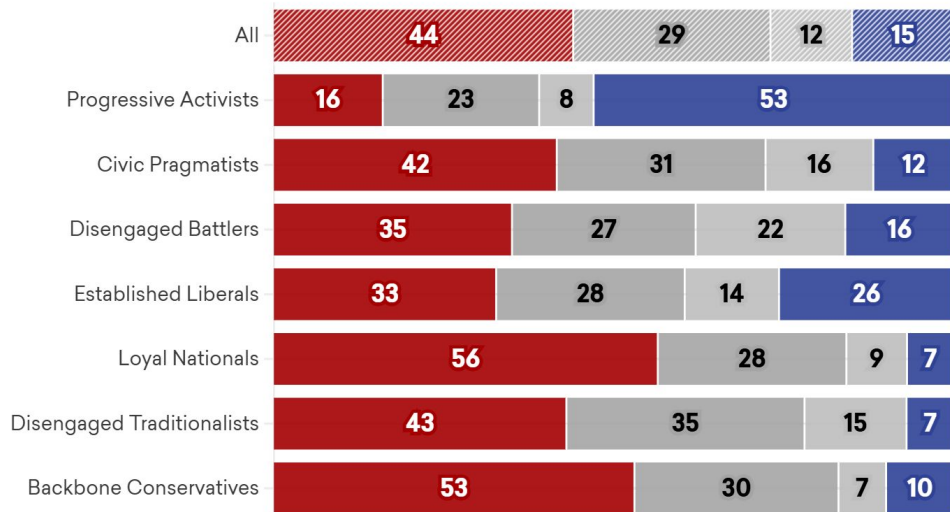
“No platforming” refers to preventing someone from taking part in a public debate or meeting, due to them holding views perceived as unacceptable or offensive. For each of the following speakers, please say whether you think it would be acceptable or unacceptable to prevent them from speaking in a public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



Public are more likely than not to think society is too woke

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- UK society has become too woke
- Don't know
- Don't care
- UK society has not become too woke



Progressive Activists are the only segment where more than not they believe that society is not too woke.

Every other segment believes that UK society is too woke, with majorities among Loyal Nationals and Backbone Conservatives.

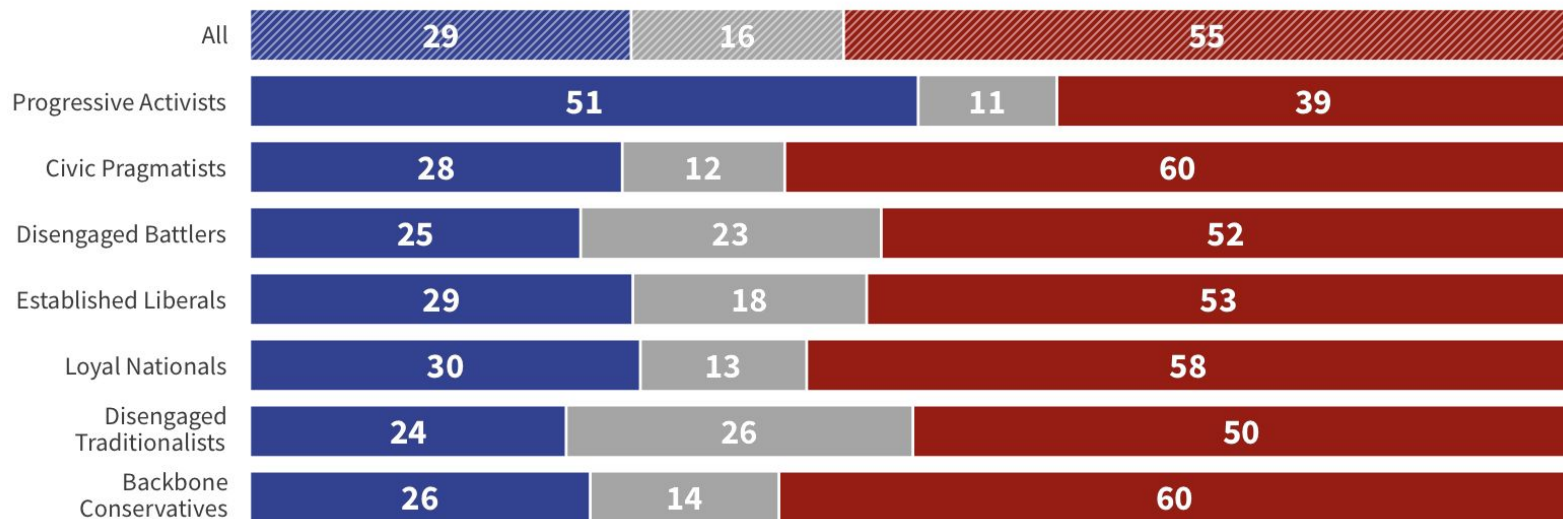
For many Britons, an 'end to the culture wars' will mean avoiding Britain becoming too 'woke'

Appreciate that progressives are often outliers

Only Progressive Activists think it is helpful to criticise mistakes.

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

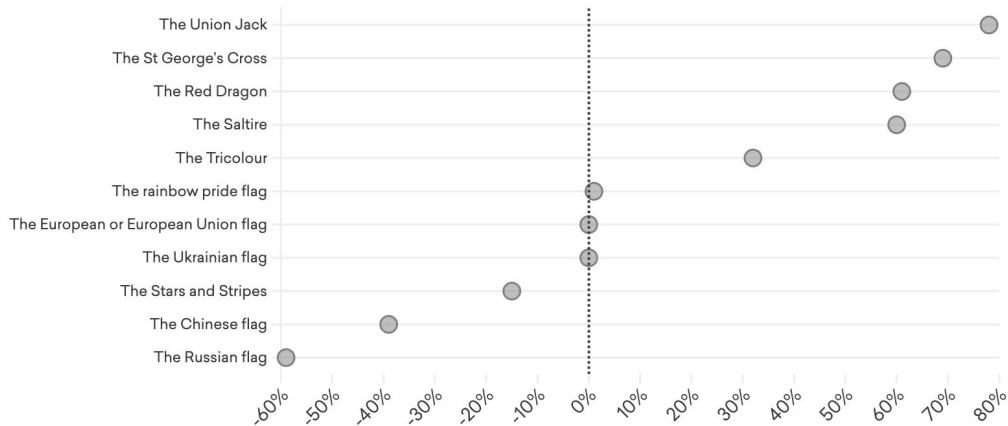
- ☒ It is helpful to criticise people for making mistakes on diversity issues so that they can learn from them
- ☐ It is unhelpful to criticise people for making mistakes on diversity issues as it is more likely to make them feel embarrassed or stupid
- ☐ Don't know



Beware of over-politicising institutions

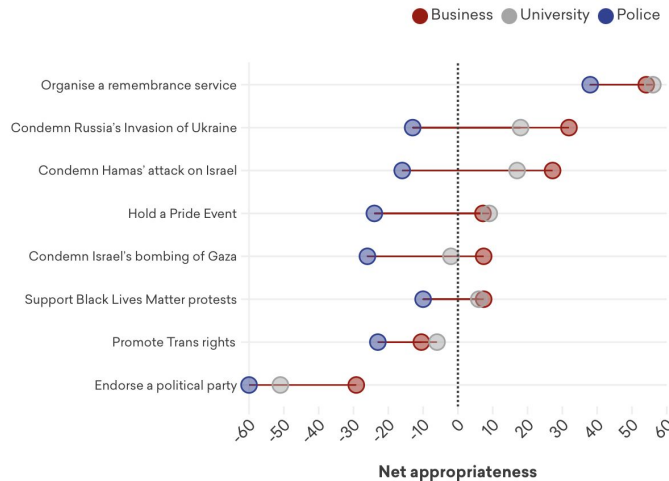
Ending the culture wars shouldn't just mean ending Conservative criticism of institutions, it also requires institutions themselves to consider whether what they are doing enrages or douses the flames of a culture war

The Last Night of the Proms is the finale of the world's biggest classical music festival at the Royal Albert Hall in London. It celebrates British tradition with patriotic music of the United Kingdom. Audience members typically wave flags. Please indicate whether you think it is appropriate or inappropriate to wave each flag at this event.



Source: September 2024 • Net responding appropriate minus inappropriate

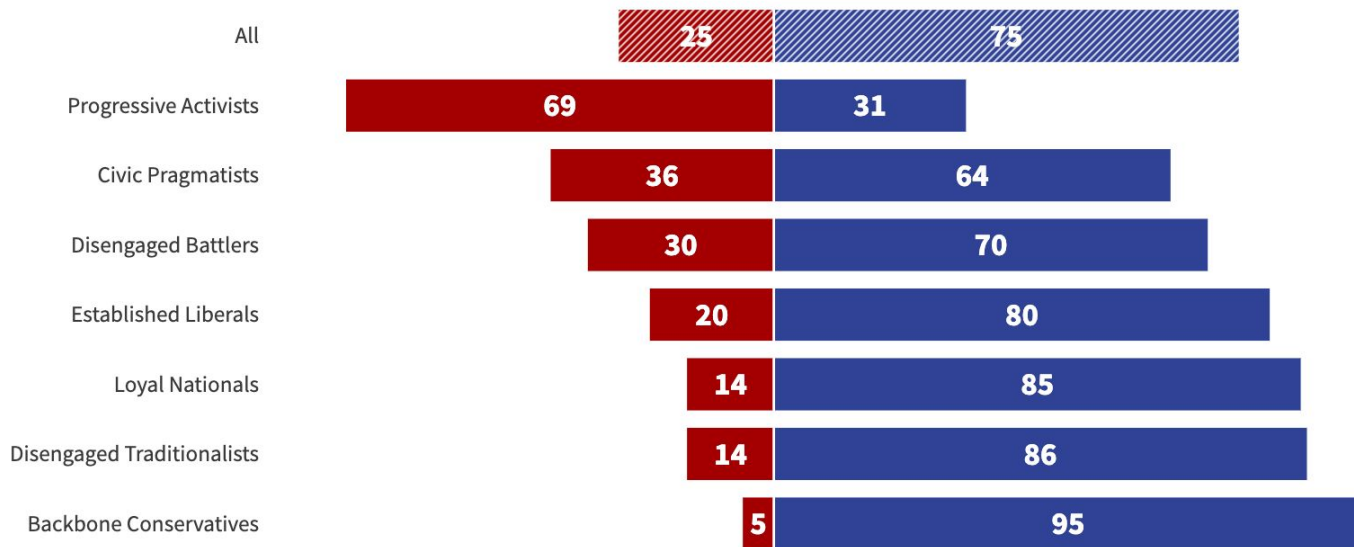
For each of the following please say whether you think it is appropriate for a [business/university/police force] to:



Understand that progressives can be outliers

When you see the British flag flying, how does it make you feel?

● Bad ● Good





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Mon 23 September



10:30 - 11:30



Museum of Liverpool
People's Republic Gallery



**Rachel
Sylvester
(Chair)**

The Times
@RSylvesterTimes



**Tom
Rutland MP**

MP for East
Worthing
@tomrutland



**Hilary
McGrady**

National
Trust
@HilaryMcGrady



**Matthew
McGregor**

38
Degrees
@mcgregormt



**Alex
Just**

Forward
Global



**Luke
Tryl**

More in
Common
@LukeTryl



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