



Third Annual Report On US Attitudes Toward Socialism

Prepared in partnership with the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation



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Annual Report On US Attitudes Toward Socialism

The State of Collectivism Study has been active since 2016 as a collaboration between the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation and YouGov.

The goal of the report is to explore perceptions of collectivist systems, such as communism and socialism, among Americans ages 16 or older. This has been explored through direct questions concerning different economic systems and knowledge about the history of collectivist systems and their leaders and movements.

The last two reports have garnered wide attention from media outlets across the country, highlighting the knowledge gaps and of perceptions of collectivism among the American public. This research has furthered VOC's mission of educating people about the ideas, history, and legacy of communism.

Annual Report On US Attitudes Toward Socialism Key Insights 2016-2018

2016 Takeaways

- Approximately one in four Americans (26%) and one in three Millennials (32%) believe more people were killed under George W. Bush than Joseph Stalin.

2017 Takeaways

- More Millennials would prefer to live in a socialist country (44%) than in a capitalist one (42%) or a communist country (7%).

NEW Potential 2018 Takeaways

- Over half of Americans learned about communism in high school, while only about one quarter learned about it through college coursework. A full quarter have never been taught about communism in any education or professional setting.
- Only 15% of Americans are aware of the political repression of the Uyghur people in China.
- Over 1 in 3 Americans associate socialism with access to healthcare, especially those that feel favorable towards the system.
- Half of Americans associate socialism with welfare states in Western Europe and Scandinavia.
- When asked to associate social benefits with various economic systems, Americans think there are fewer benefits to communist systems.

Findings That Existed In 2016, 2017, and 2018

- 6 in 10 Americans would be insulted if they were called a communist; a trend held consistent from 2016.
- 3 in 4 Americans could not correctly identify how many people were killed by communism; a trend held consistent from 2016

Americans Are Concerned About Communism

Knowledge Is Still Lacking

Americans are concerned about communism

- Half of Americans are concerned about communism today.
- Viewpoints on communism differ with age: Millennials and Generation Z are three times as likely than Boomers to favor communism.
- Six in ten Americans would be insulted if they were called a communist.

Knowledge about communism remains low

- Two in three Americans incorrectly identified the number of people killed by communism in the past 100 years. This is consistent over the past two years of research.
- Six in ten older Americans (Baby Boomers+) were able to correctly identify how many people were killed by communism while less than three in ten Millennials could do the same.
- Over half of Americans learned about communism in high school, while only about one quarter learned about it through college coursework. A full quarter have never been taught about communism in any education or professional setting.
- Only 15% of Americans are aware of the repression of the Uyghur people by China.

Capitalism Is In Favor, Socialism Close Behind

The American Economic System Works, Income Inequality Concerns Remain

Socialism Seen As Increased Access And Equality

Capitalism is the favorite system in America, socialism is close behind

- Just over a majority of Americans have a positive view on capitalism and it is still the most favorable system.
- Socialism was found to be favorable among four out of ten Americans.
- Approximately half of younger Americans (Generation Z and Millennials), are more favorable towards socialism than Baby Boomers (37%).

The American economic system works for most people, but Americans still have some concerns

- About two-thirds of Americans feel that the current American economic system works for them.
- Another two out of three Americans also feel that the higher earners don't pay their fair share of taxes.
 - Among these Americans, half are calling for a complete economic system change or increased taxes.
- Three in four Americans feel that income inequality is a serious issue.
- Also among those who favor socialism, concerns about income inequality are significantly higher.

What could be driving interest in socialism? Access, equality, and/or word association?

- Over 1 in 3 Americans associate socialism with access to healthcare, especially those that feel favorable towards the system.
- Concerns about the divide between the rich and poor are much higher among those with favorable views of socialism, nine in ten.
- People who favor socialism are not necessarily more educated on the tenets and ideas of socialism, but associate it with other positive things that they might like.

Americans Don't Fully Understand Socialism

But They Know It's Not Communism

There could be some confusion on what socialism really is in American minds

- Half of Americans associate socialism with welfare states in Western Europe and Scandinavia.
- Americans associate socialism with:
 - Bernie Sanders - 51% (five times more so than Karl Marx at 9%)
 - Occupy Wall Street - 17%
 - Access to healthcare - 37%
- Only one in four Americans associate socialism with “total control.”

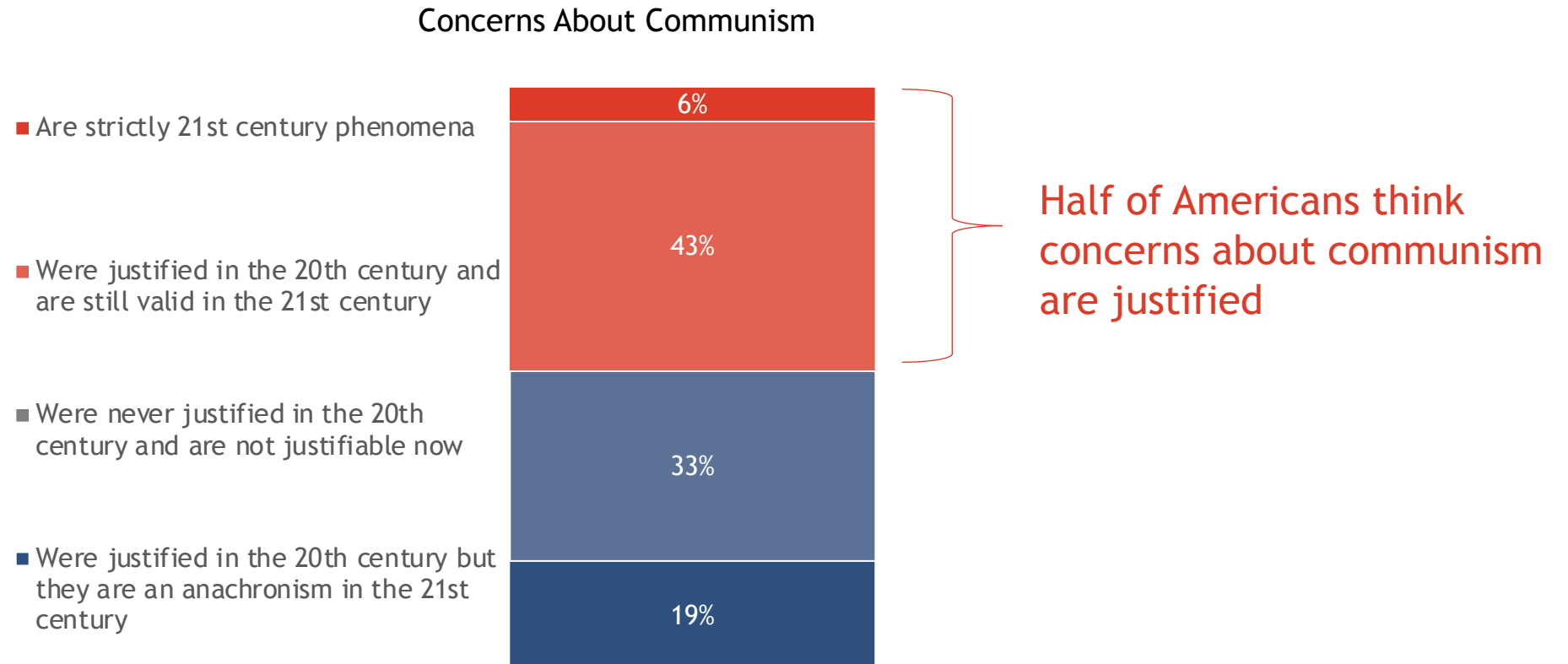
When Americans are favorable towards socialism it doesn't mean they also favor communism

- Among those who have a favorable opinion of socialism, there is a stronger likelihood they will be more favorable towards capitalism (56%) than communism (28%).
- When asked to associate social benefits with various economic systems, Americans think there are fewer benefits to communist systems.

Sentiment Towards Communism

Concerns About Communism

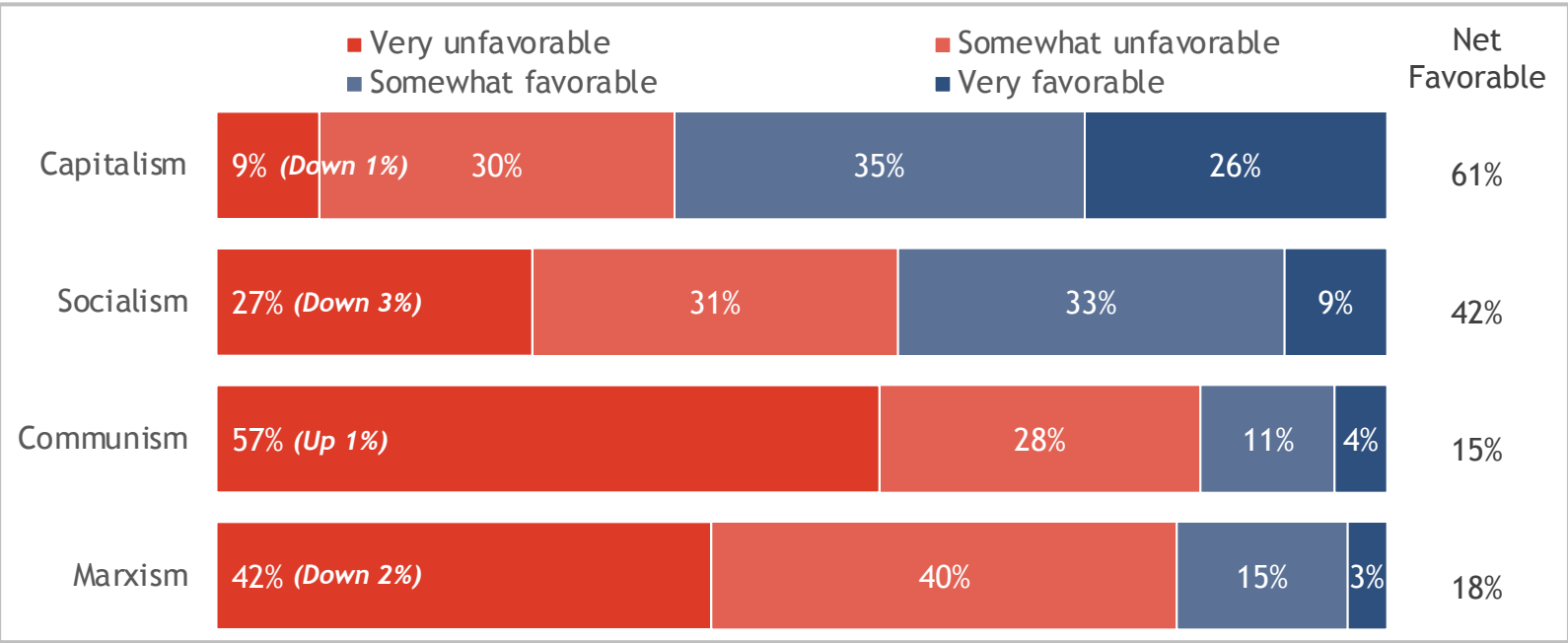
A third of Americans think concerns about communism are not currently justified and were never justified.



Communism Is The Least Favored, But Younger Americans Are More Likely To Favor The System

Socialism is also more favored among younger Americans.

How Much Americans Favor Each System

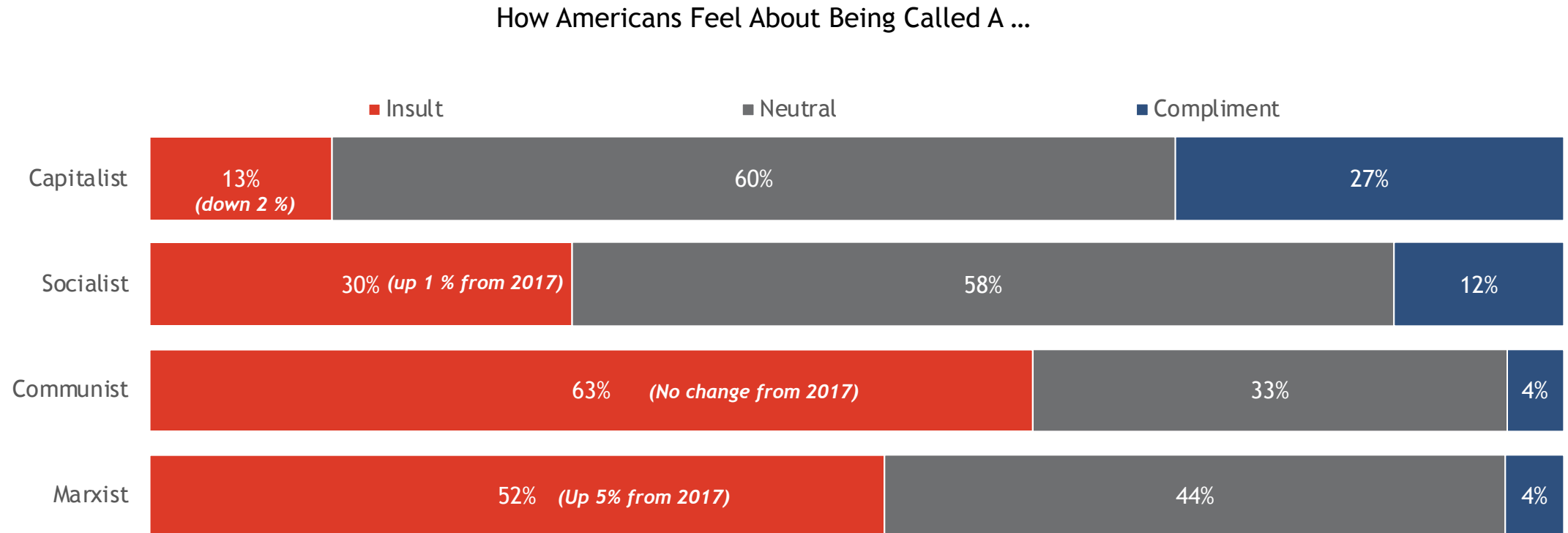


Somewhat Favorable/Favorable

| Gen Z | Millennials | Gen X | Baby Boomers | Matures |
|-------|-------------|-------|--------------|---------|
| (315) | (498) | (556) | (592) | (139) |
| 55% | 58% | 59% | 64% | 72% |
| 48% | 50% | 43% | 37% | 18% |
| 26% | 28% | 15% D | 4% | 9% |
| 28% | 29% | 21% | 5% | 5% |

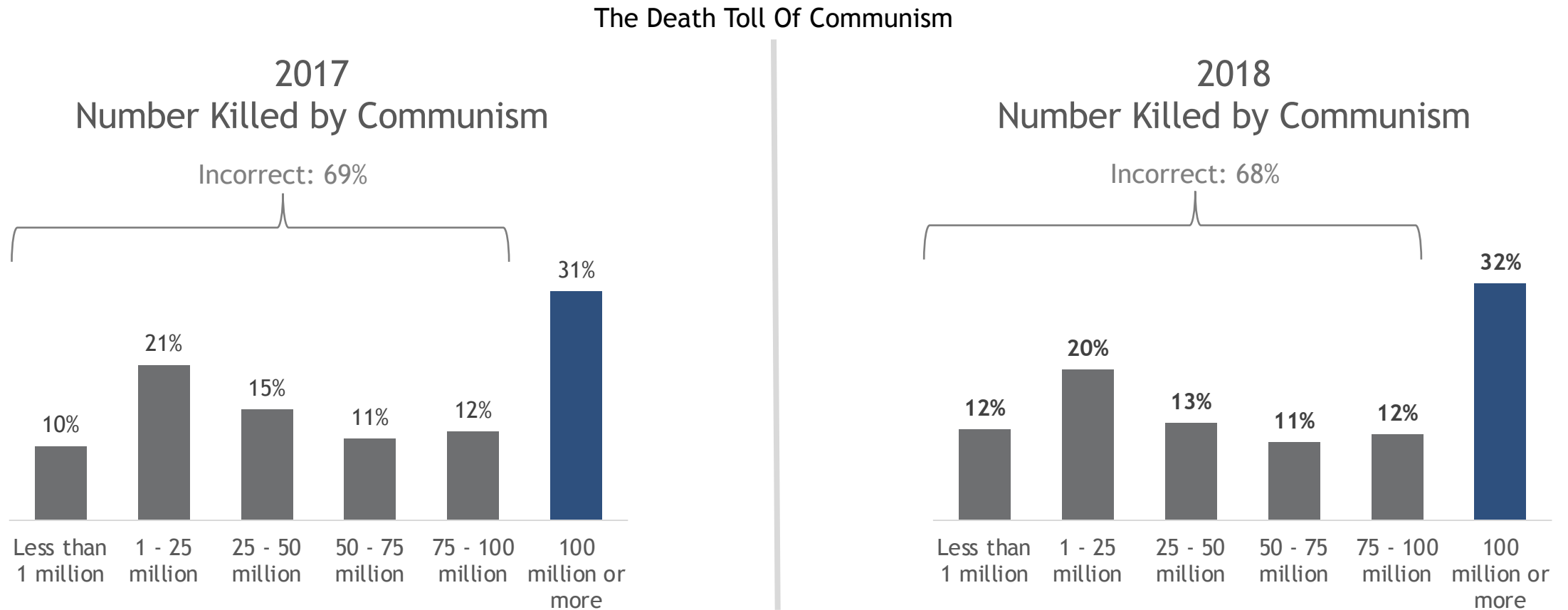
Americans Insulted By Being Called A Communist

Results were similar to 2016 and 2017.



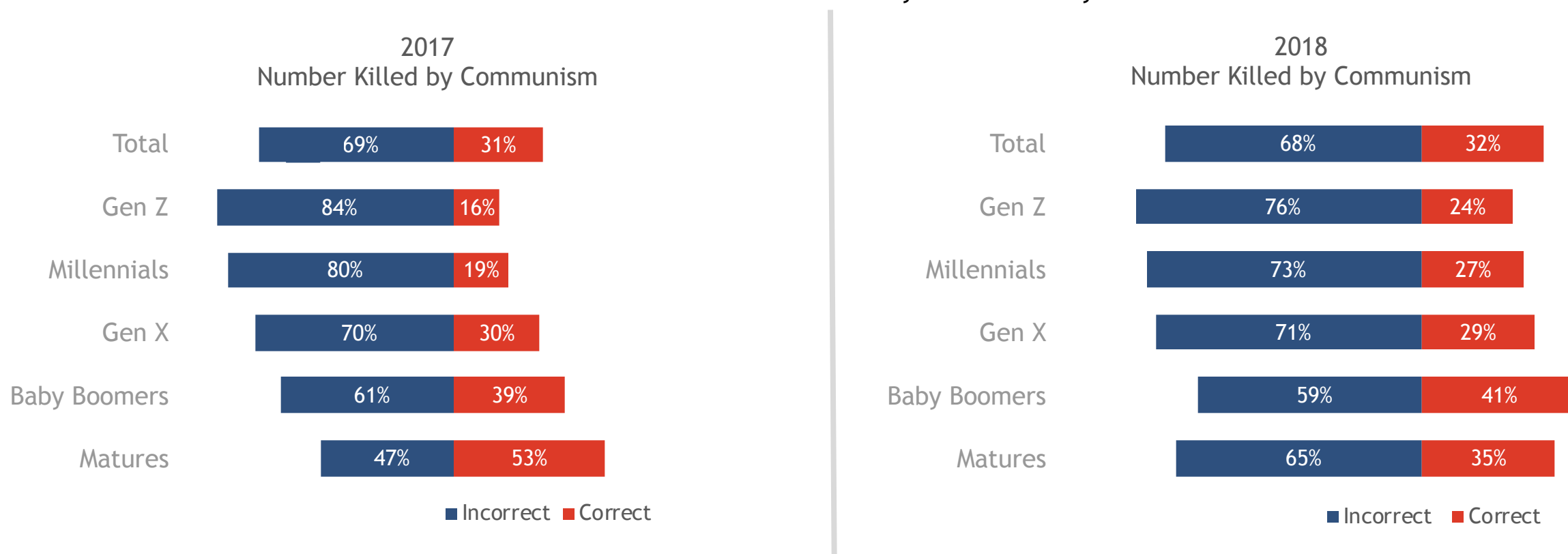
Still Underestimating The Death Toll Of Communism

Results were similar to 2016 and 2017.

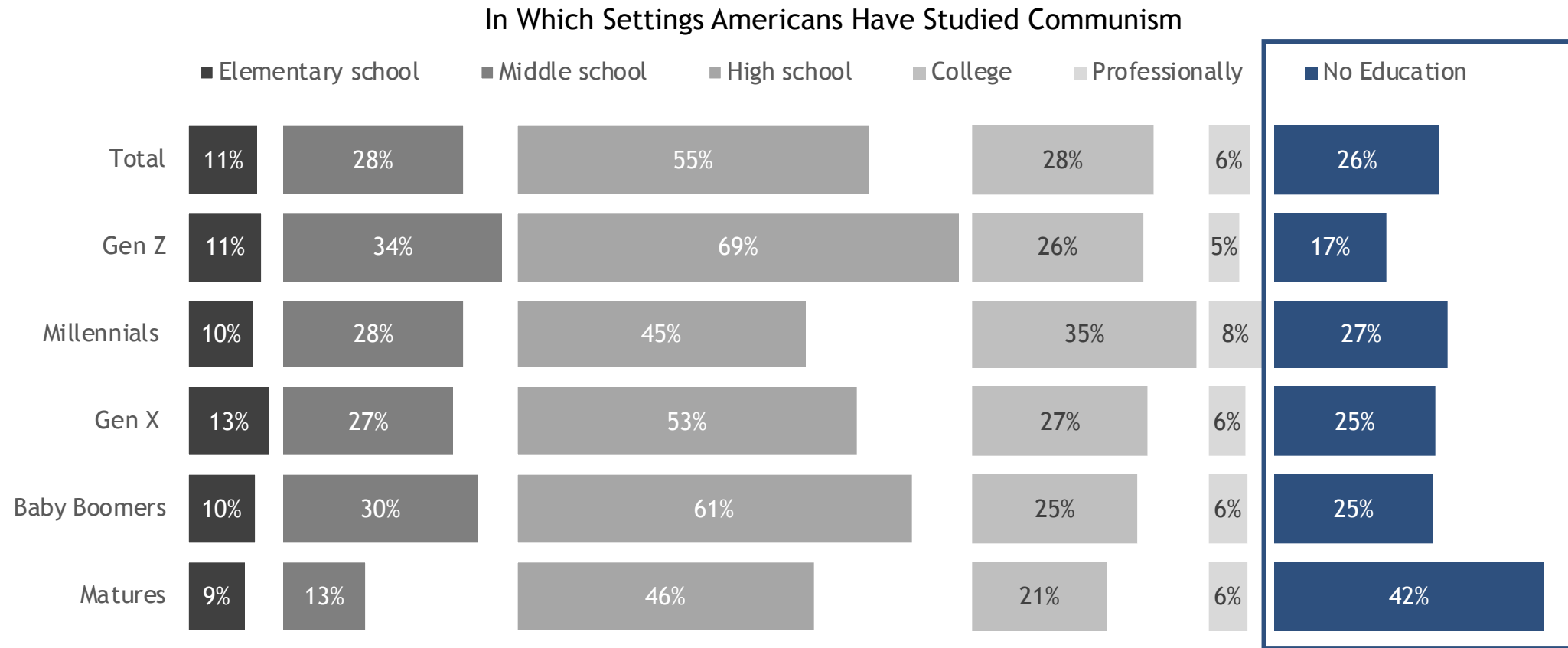


Younger Respondents Remain Less Likely To Correctly Identify The Death Toll Of Communism In 2018

Correct Identification Of Number Killed By Communism By Generation



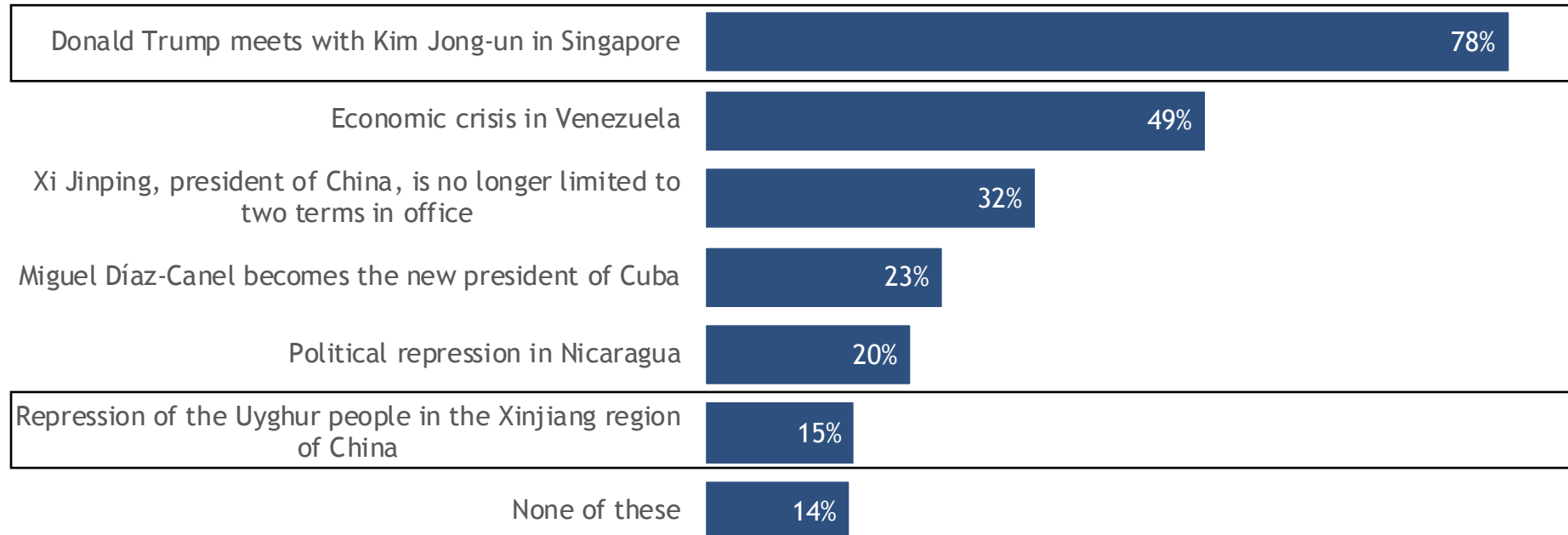
1 In 4 Americans Have Never Studied Communism



The Vast Majority Of Americans Recall The Meeting Between Kim Jong-Un And Donald Trump

Interestingly, only 15% of Americans are aware of the political repression of the Uyghurs.

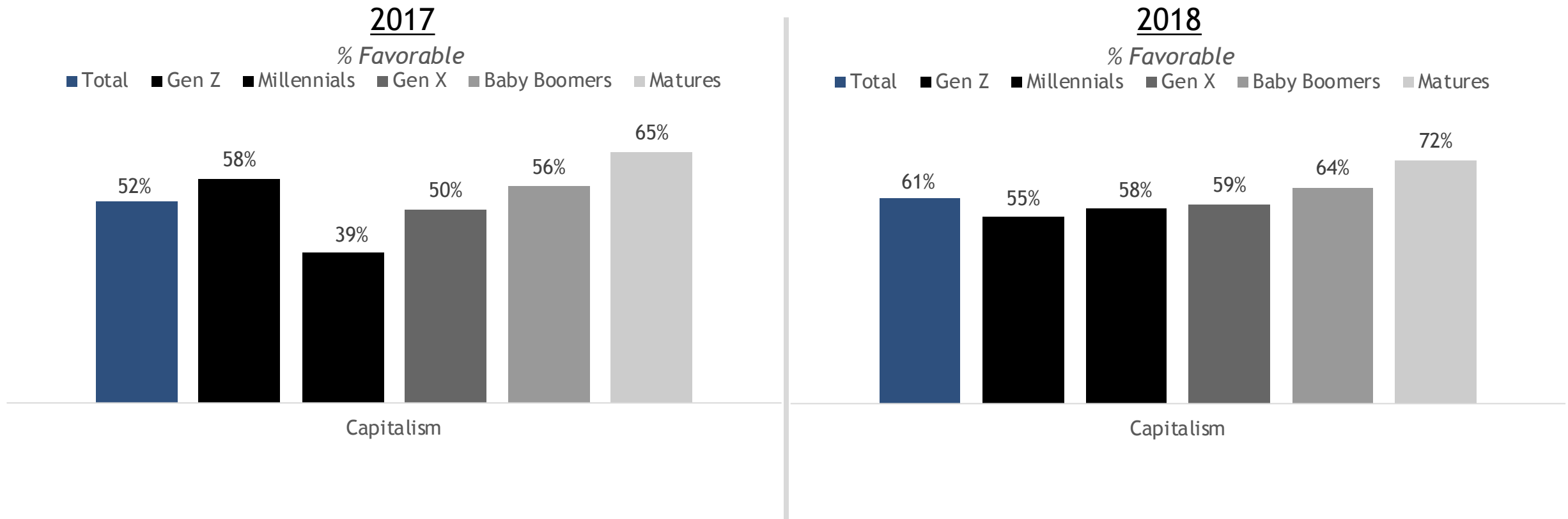
Awareness Of Events Involving Communist And Socialist Nations



American Viewpoints On Capitalism And Socialism

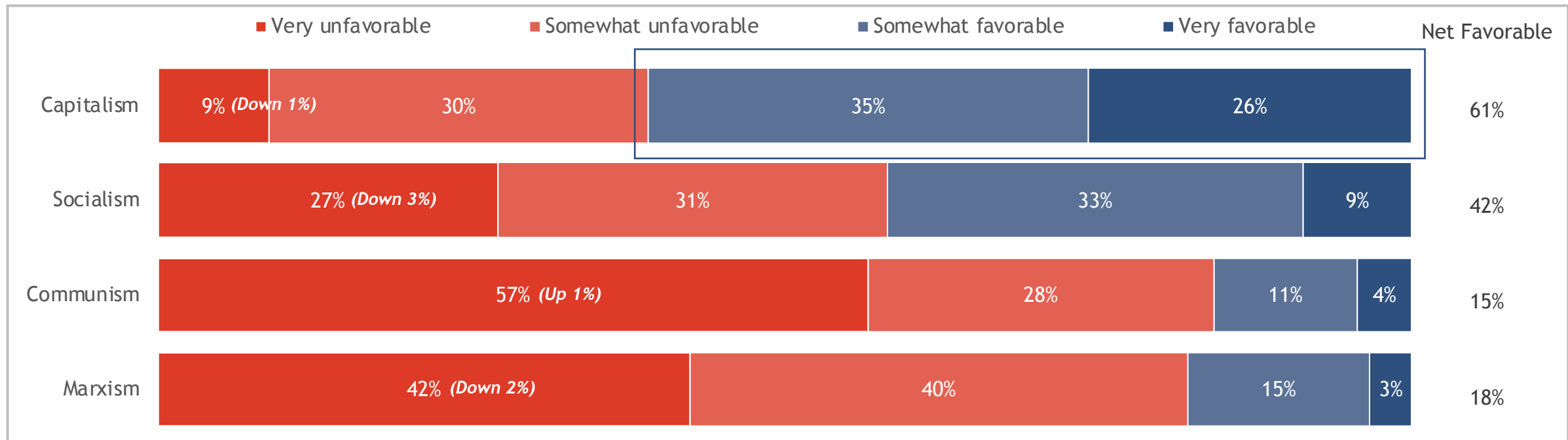
Capitalism Remains Popular

Americans continue to have a favorable view of capitalism across generations, although favorability of capitalism is higher among older generations.

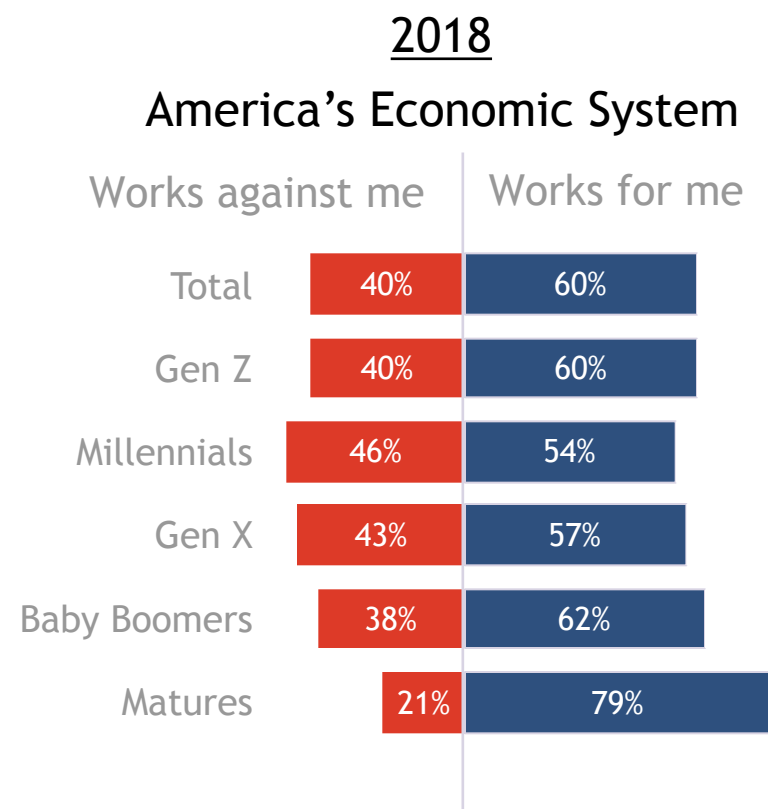
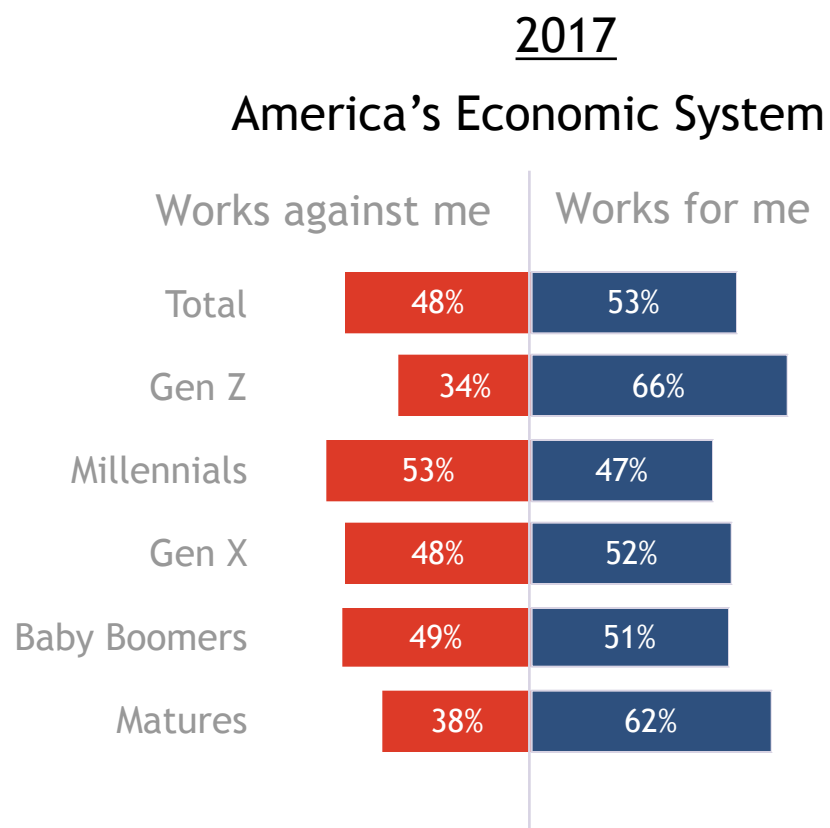


Capitalism Most Favorable System, Socialism Close Behind

How Much Americans Favor Each System



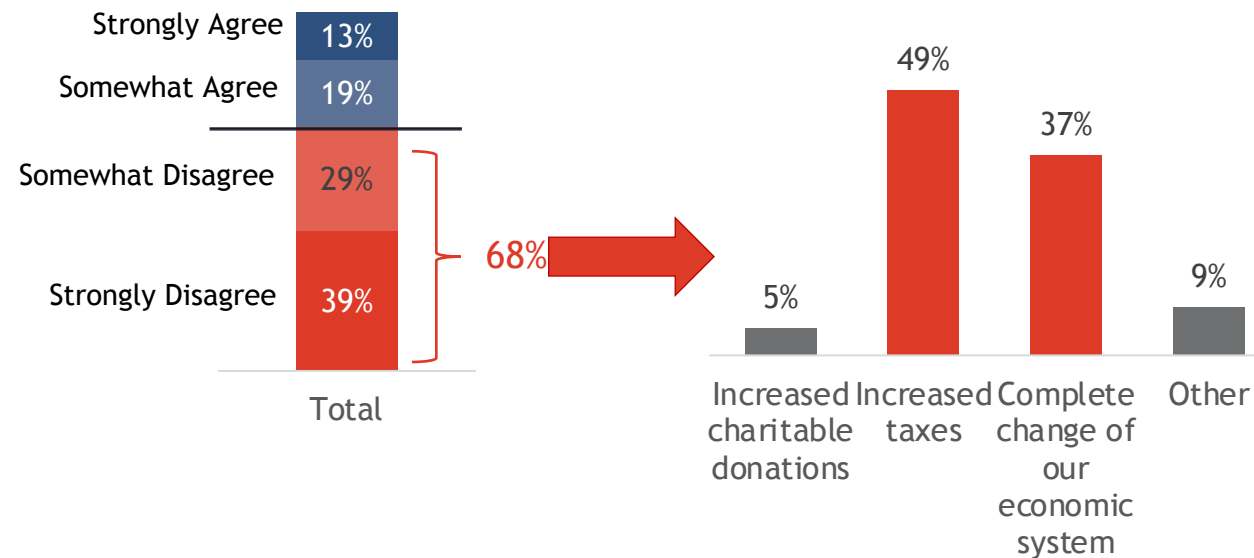
More Americans Say The Economy Is Working For Them Than In 2017



7 In 10 Feel Highest Earners Do Not Pay Their Fair Share, Think Taxes Or System Change Can Fix It

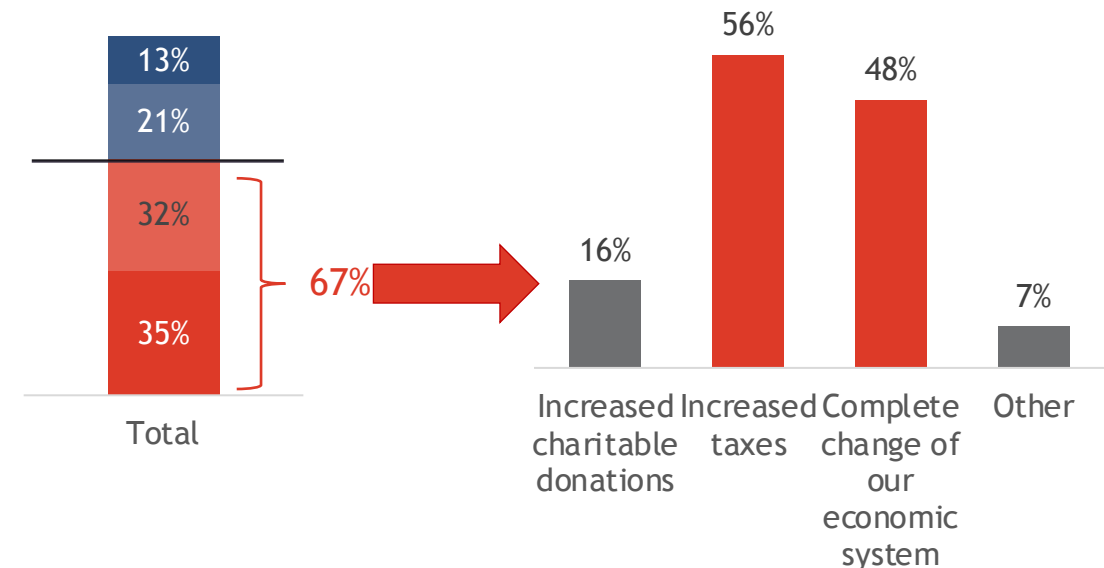
"The highest earners in the United States pay their fair share."

2017 *How to ensure high earners pay fair share*



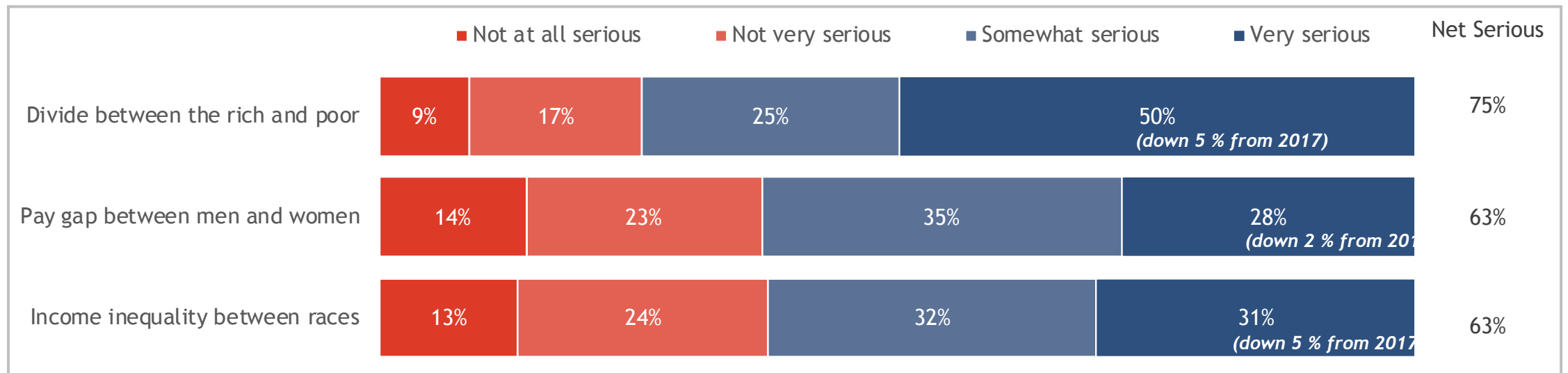
"The highest earners in the United States pay their fair share."

2018 *How to ensure high earners pay fair share*



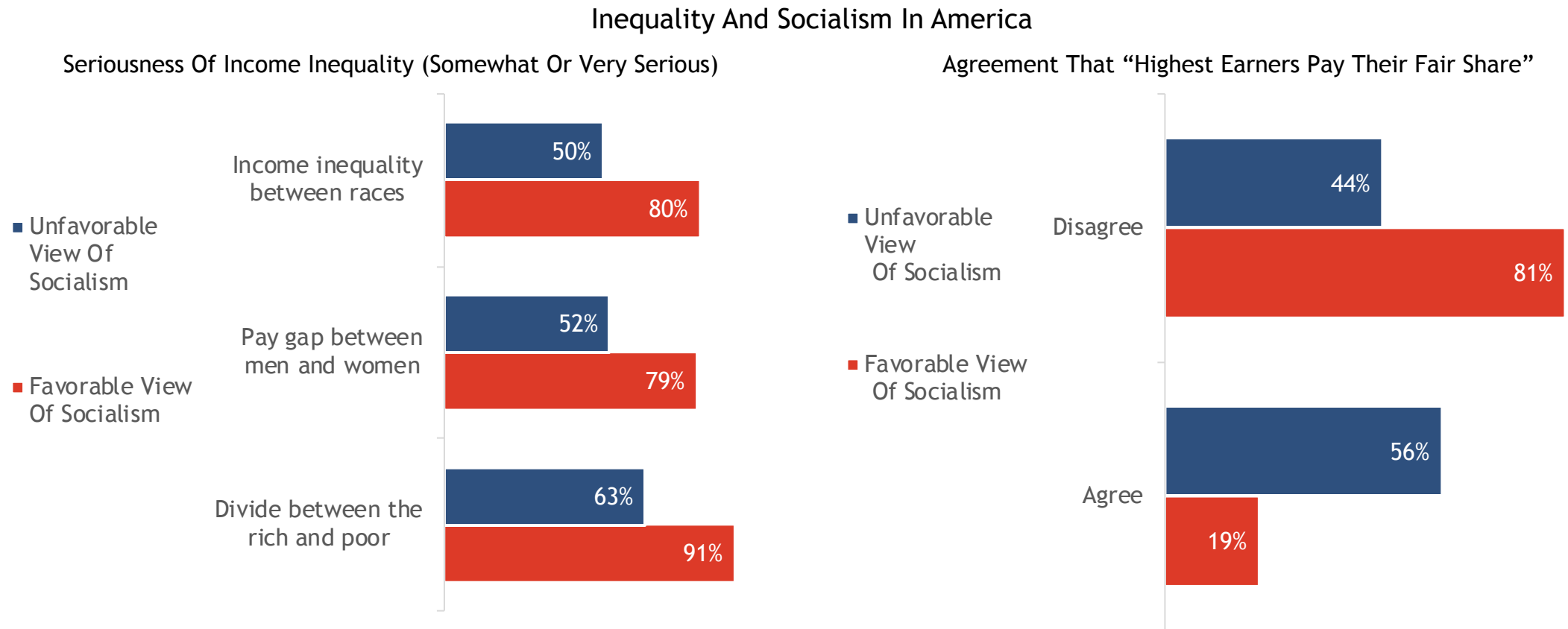
3 In 4 Think Income Inequality Is A Serious Issue

How Serious Are Facets Of Income Inequality

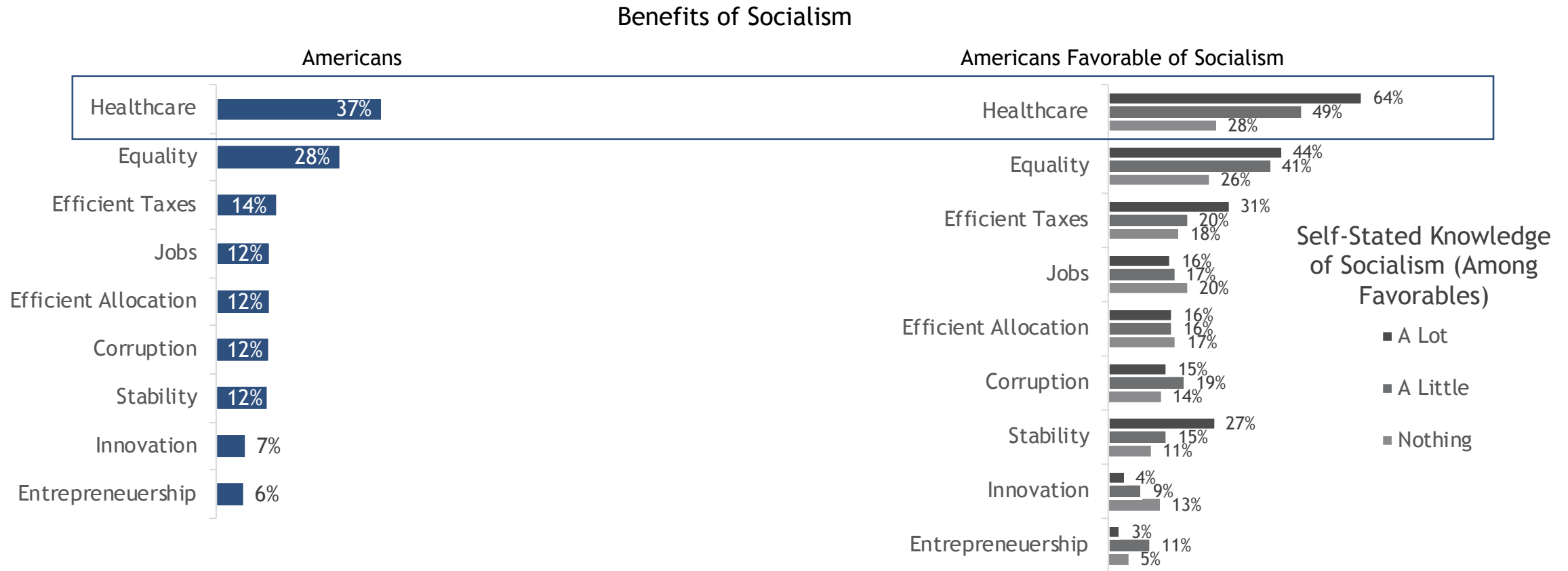


Perceptions And Misperceptions Of Socialism

Is Socialism Seen As A Cure For Inequality?

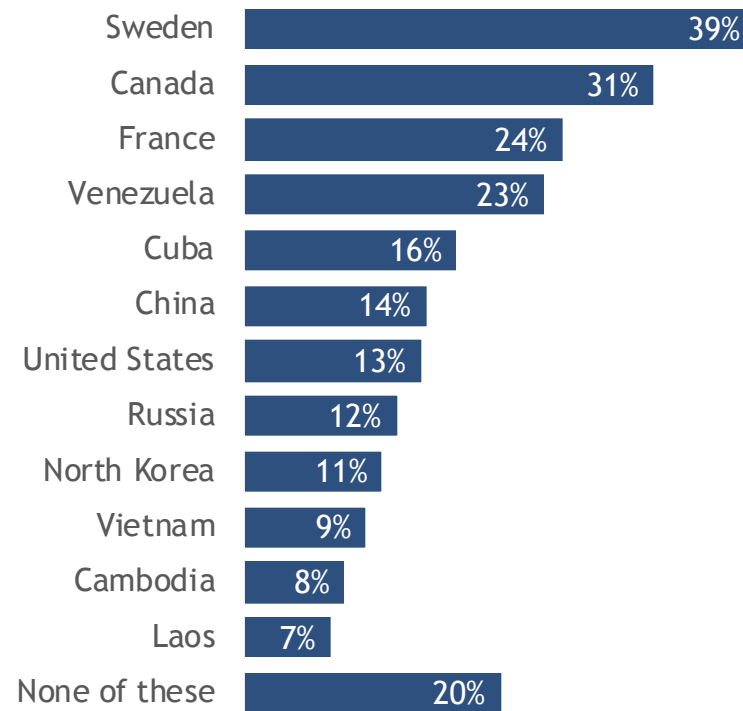


Americans See Healthcare Access As A Benefit Of Socialism



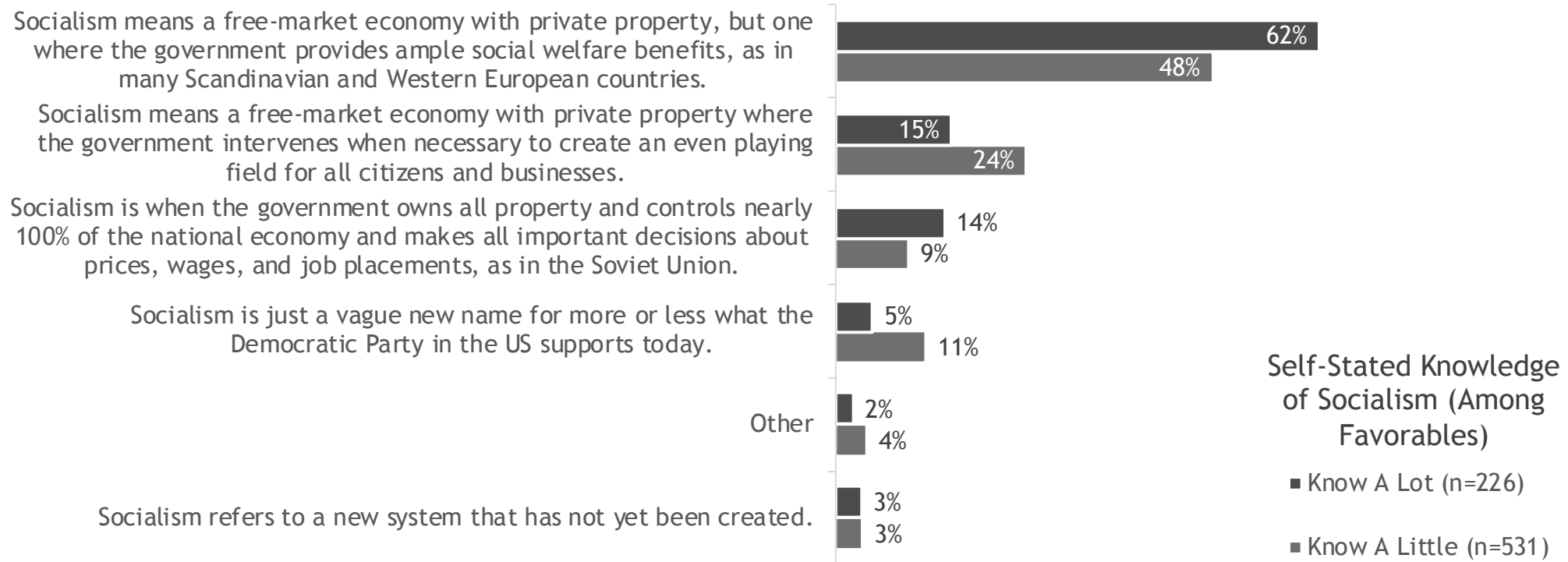
When Americans Think Of Socialism, They Think Of Western Democracies

Which Countries Americans Identify As Socialist



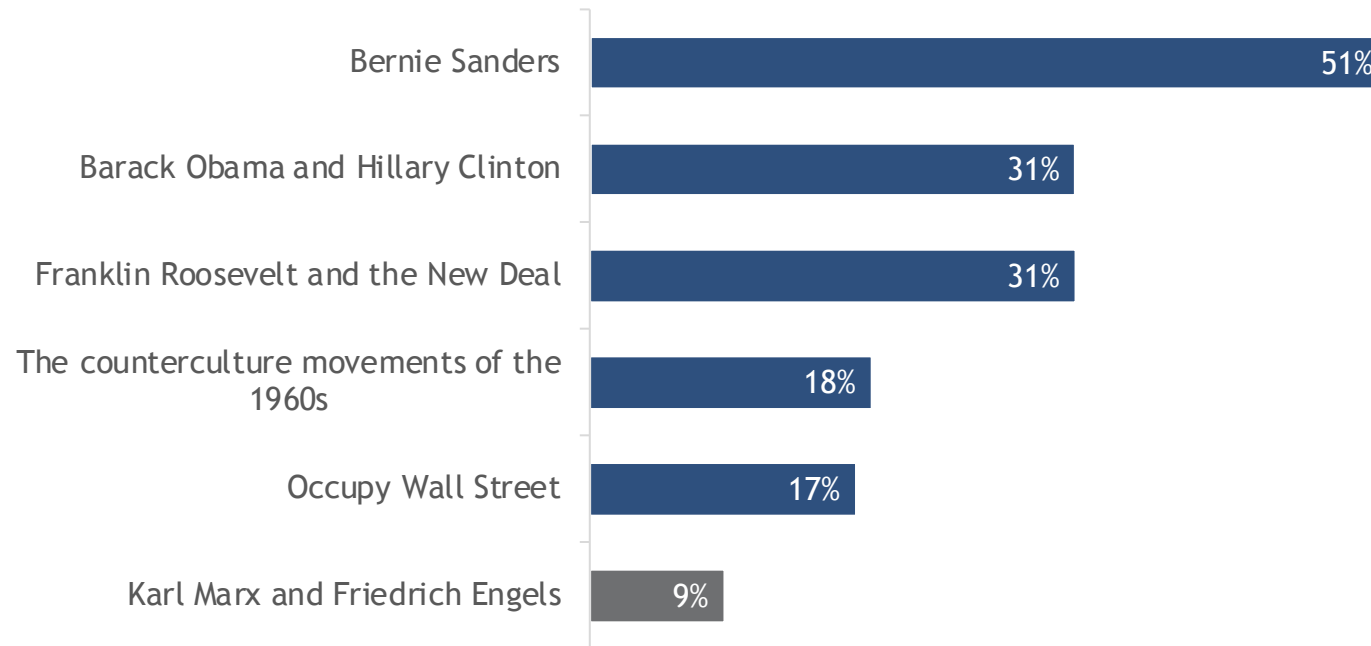
Among Americans, Opinions Vary On What Socialism Means

What Those Who Have A Favorable Opinion Of Socialism Think Socialism Is
What They Think Socialism Means



Sanders Defines Socialism More Than Marx

Which Figures/Movements People Who Favor Socialism Are Thinking Of



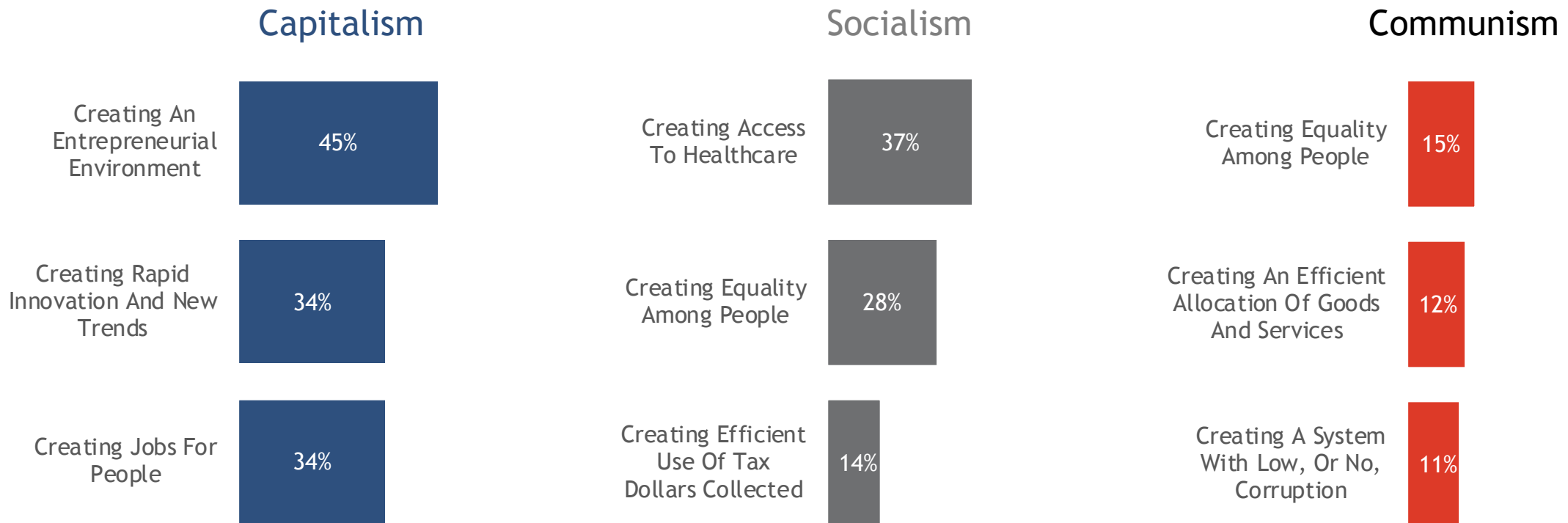
Only responses with a response rate higher than 10% shown, exception Marx and Engels

The Decoupling Of Socialism And Communism

Americans Think Communism Provides Fewer Benefits

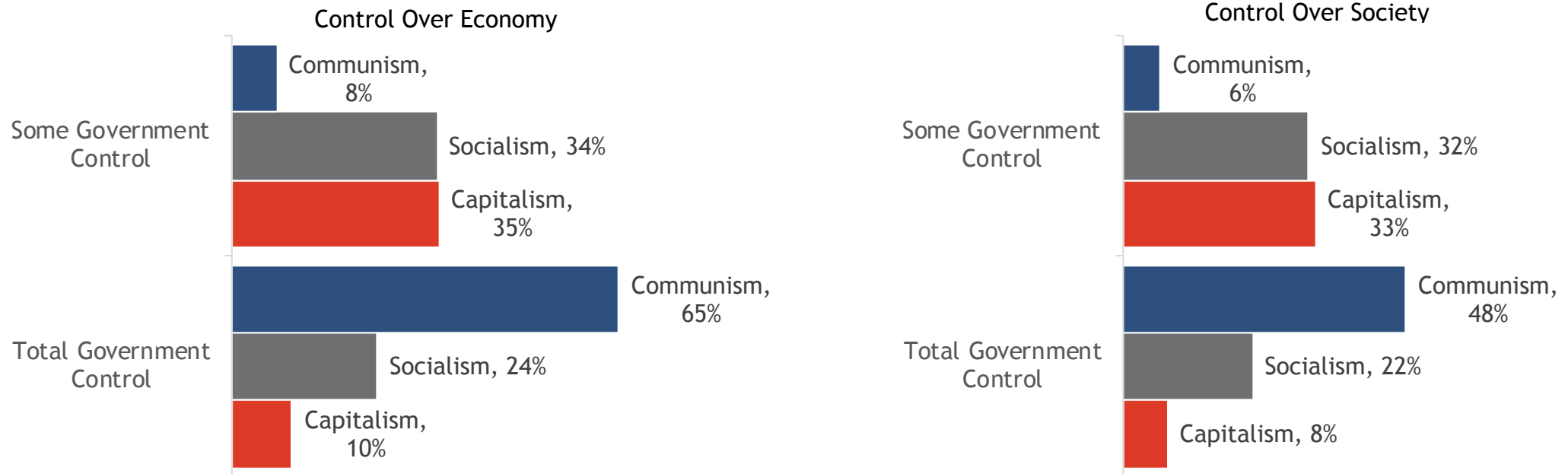
Americans think socialism and communism are different. The only commonality between the two systems is “creating equality,” and even then Americans are twice as likely to associate it with socialism than with communism.

What Benefits Americans Associate With Each Economic System: Top 3 Per System



Americans: “Socialism Has More In Common With Capitalism Than Communism”

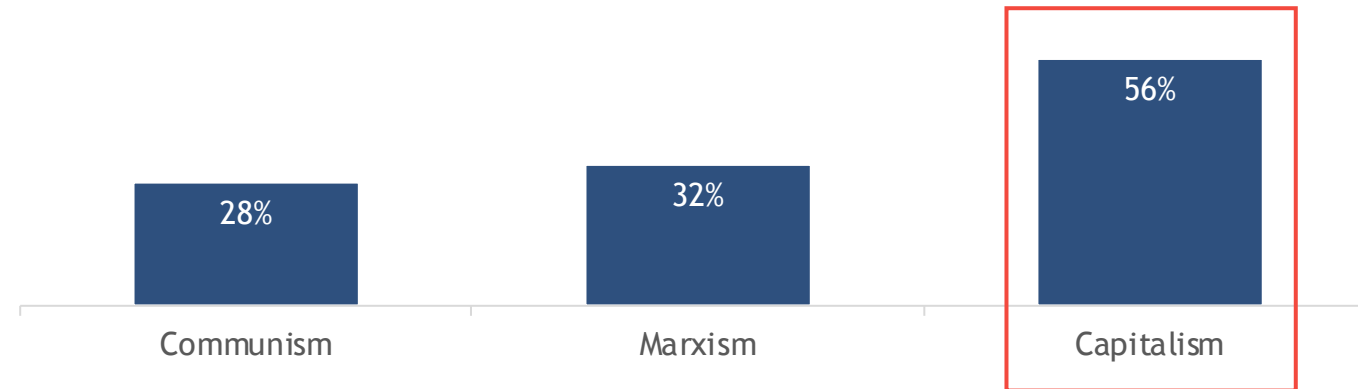
How Much Control Over Economy And Society Are Part Of Each System



Q26. Which of the following would you consider a feature of a capitalist system? Select all that apply
Q27. Which of the following would you consider a feature of a communist system? Select all that apply
Q28. Which of the following would you consider a feature of a socialist system? Select all that apply

— Favoring Socialism ≠ Favoring Communism

How Those Who Favor Socialism Think About Other Systems



How Americans That Favor Socialism View Other Systems

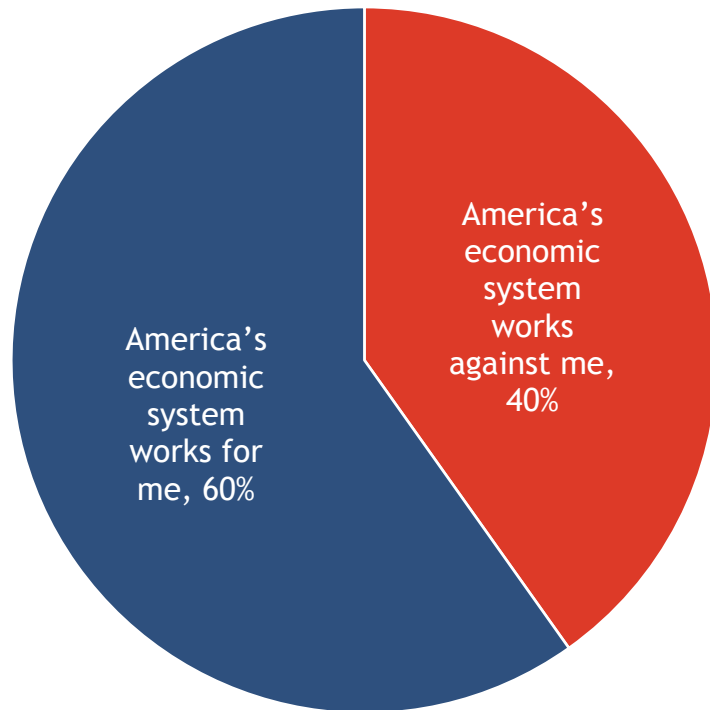
Appendix: Age

- Letters designate that one group's response rate is statistically significantly higher than the group with the corresponding letter, using a 95% confidence interval.

America's Economic System

Millennials are the age cohort least likely to think the economic system works for them.

America's Economic System Working For Americans

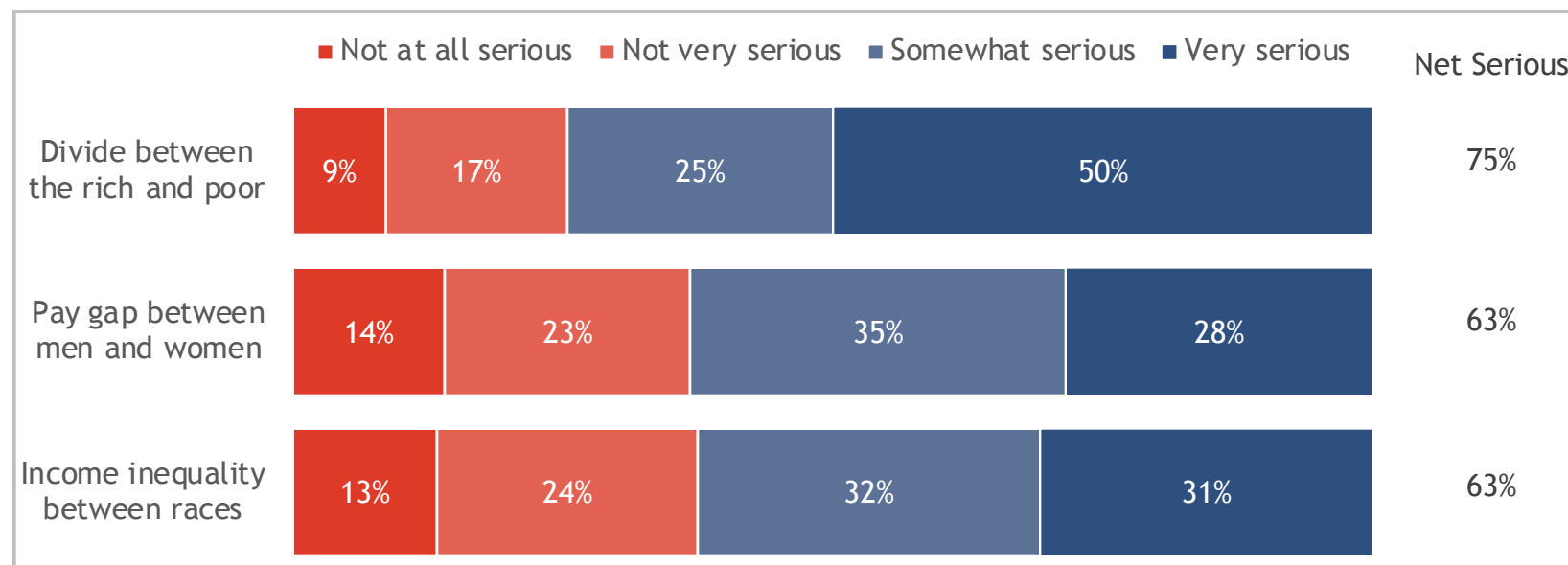


| Gen Z [A] | Millennials [B] | Gen X [C] | Baby Boomers [D] | Matures [E] |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| (315) | (498) | (556) | (592) | (139) |
| 40% E | 46% E | 43% E | 38% E | 21% |
| 60% | 54% | 57% | 62% | 79% ABCD |

Serious Issues For Income Inequality

Other than Matures, income inequality is considered a serious problem across generations.

How Serious Are Facets Of Income Inequality



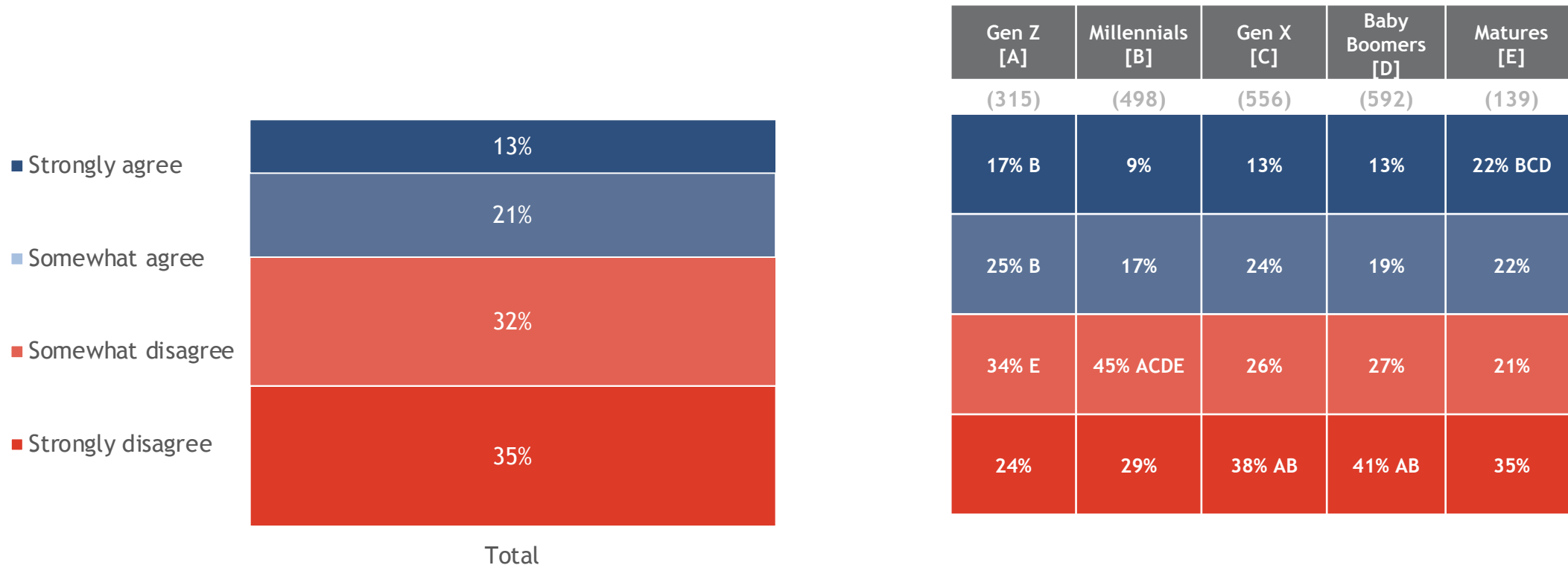
Somewhat/Very serious

| Gen Z [A] | Millennials [B] | Gen X [C] | Baby Boomers [D] | Matures [E] |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| (315) | (498) | (556) | (592) | (139) |
| 75% | 76% E | 76% E | 74% | 64% |
| 63% | 60% | 64% | 66% | 62% |
| 66% | 62% | 63% | 62% | 58% |

Highest Earners Paying Their Share

Younger age cohorts are more likely to think the highest earners don't pay their fair share.

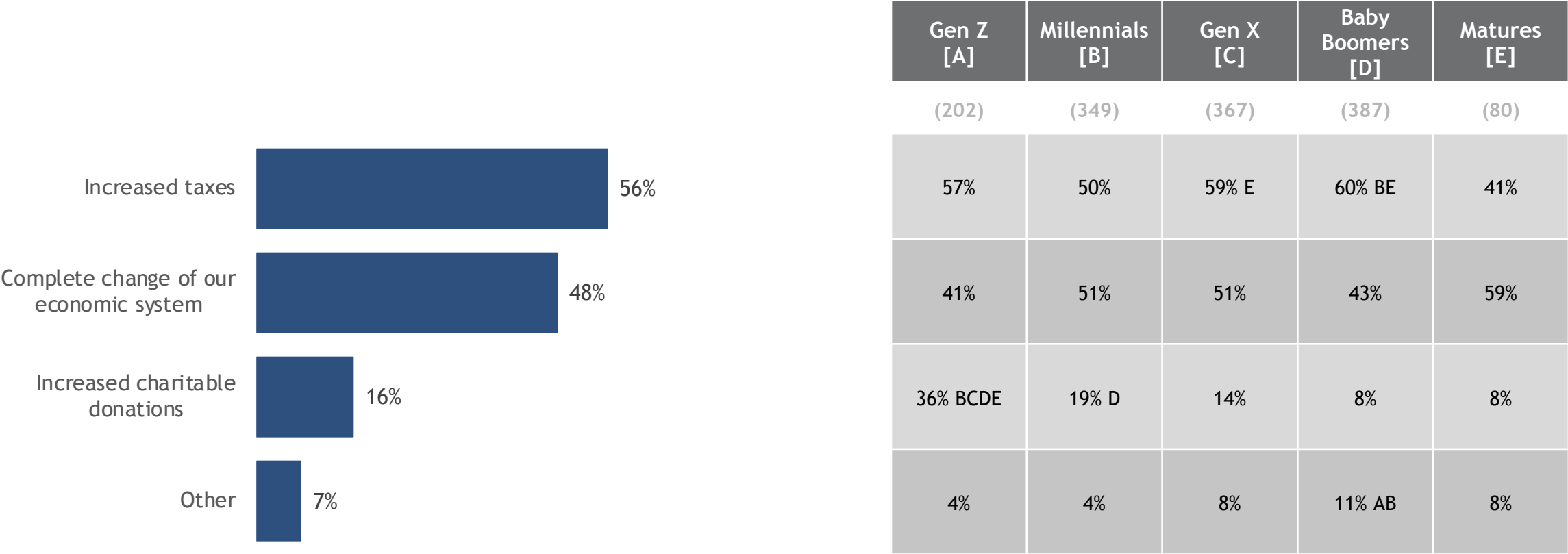
Agreement The Highest Earners Pay Their Fair Share



Increased Taxes Remain Solution To Inequality

Increased taxes remain the most prevalent method of resolving income inequality, at the top of most cohorts, excluding Millennials and Matures.

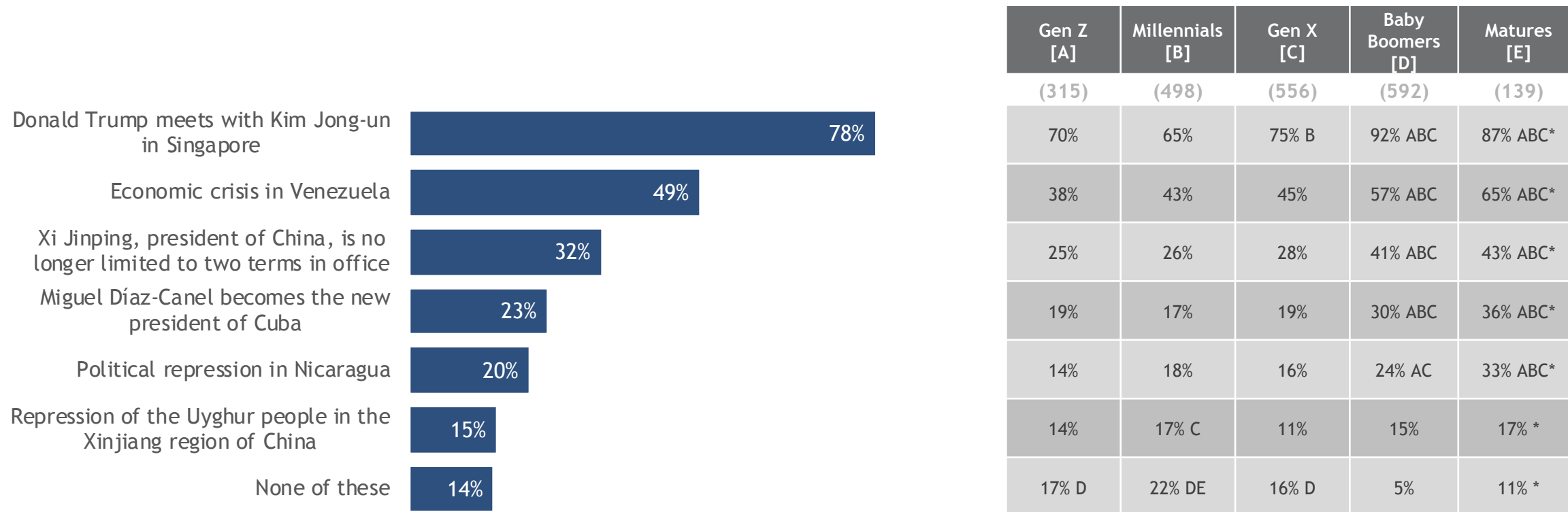
What Should Be Done To Make High-Earners Pay Their Fair Share



Communism And Socialism Fly Mostly Under The Radar

Younger respondents are consistently less aware of events involving communist and socialist countries.

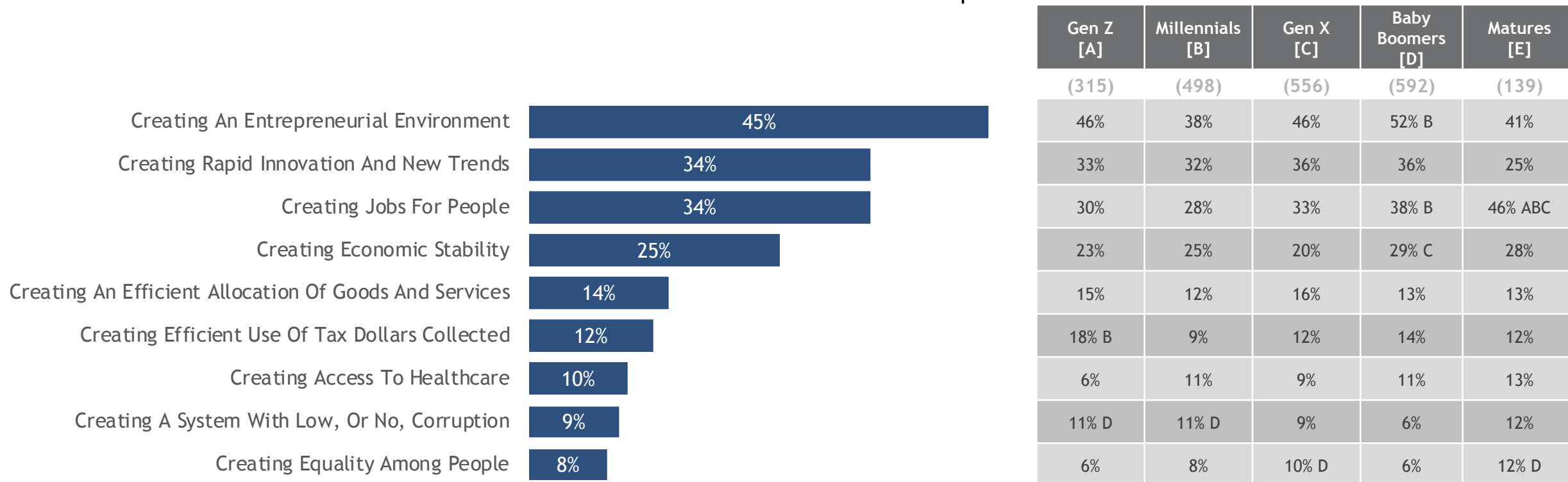
Awareness Of Events Involving Communist And Socialist Nations



The Benefits Of Capitalism

More than 1 in 3 Americans think capitalism provides jobs, innovation, and entrepreneurship as benefits, and these numbers are relatively consistent across generations.

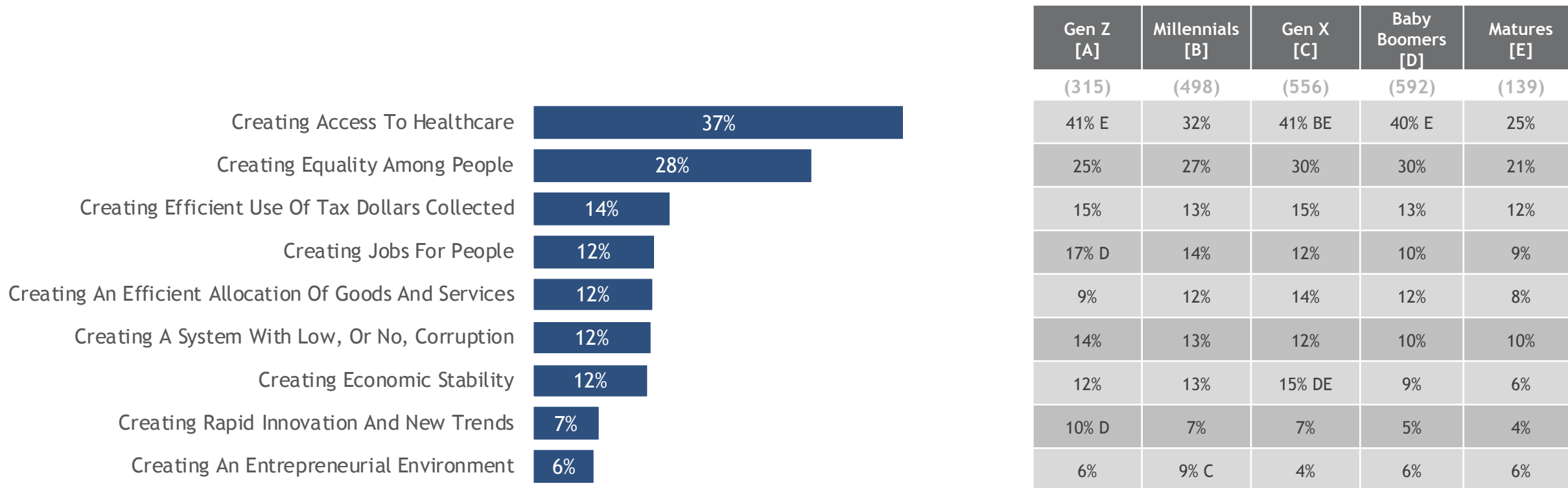
Which Benefits Americans Associate With Capitalism



The Benefits Of Socialism

More than 1 in 4 Americans think socialism provides equality and access to healthcare, and those figures are broadly consistent across generations.

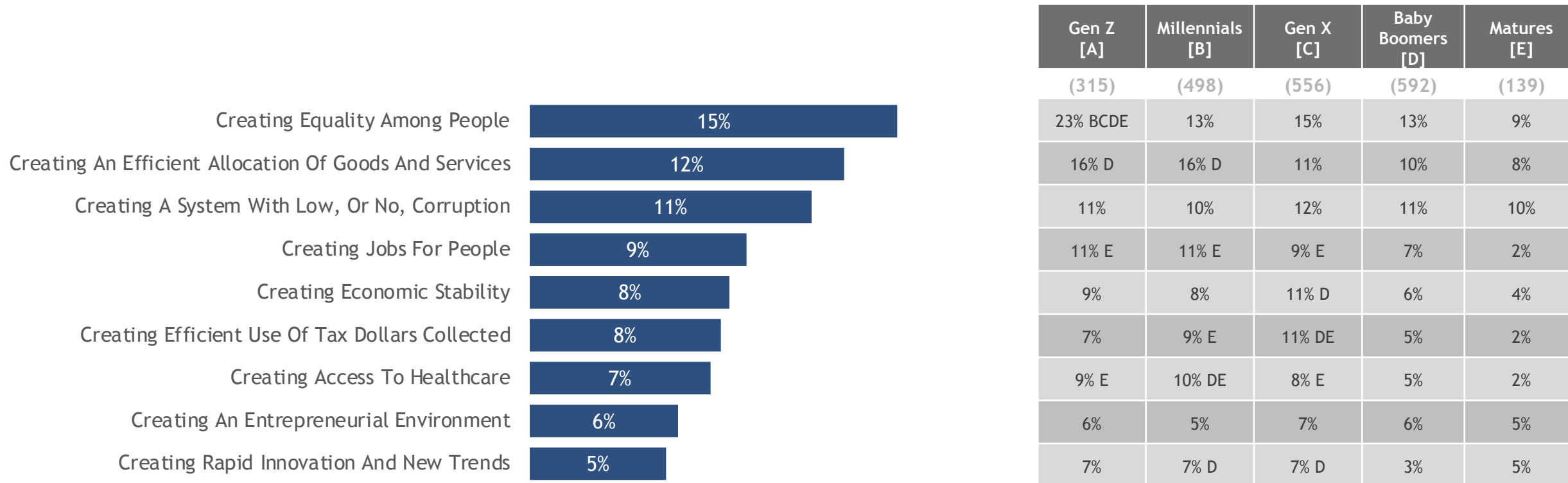
Which Benefits Americans Associate With Socialism



The Benefits Of Communism

Among all generations, there are no benefits that at least 1 in 4 respondents think are associated with communism.

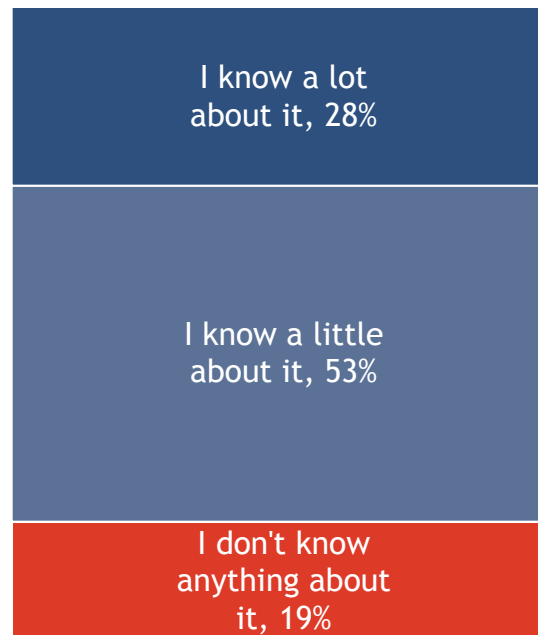
Which Benefits Americans Associate With Communism



How Much Do Americans Say They Know About Socialism?

With the exception of Gen Z, younger cohorts are more likely to indicate they don't know anything about socialism.

How Much Americans Say They Know About Socialism



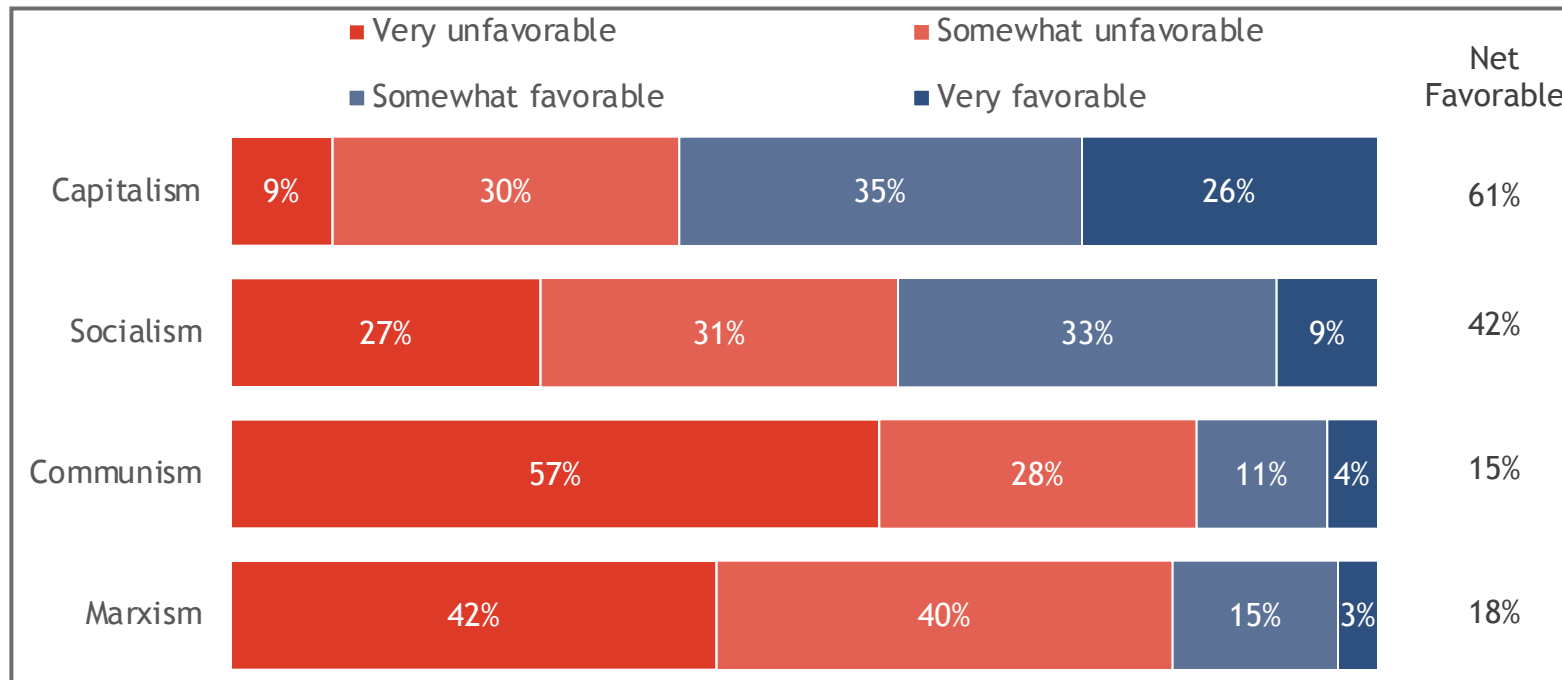
Total

| Gen Z [A] | Millennials [B] | Gen X [C] | Baby Boomers [D] | Matures [E] |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| (315) | (498) | (556) | (592) | (139) |
| 27% | 22% | 31% B | 30% B | 30% |
| 57% | 54% | 50% | 54% | 53% |
| 16% | 24% D | 19% | 16% | 17% |

Capitalism Remains Most Favorably Viewed System

Younger generations have more favorable opinions of socialism, communism, and Marxism while having less favorable opinions of capitalism.

How Much Americans Favor Each System



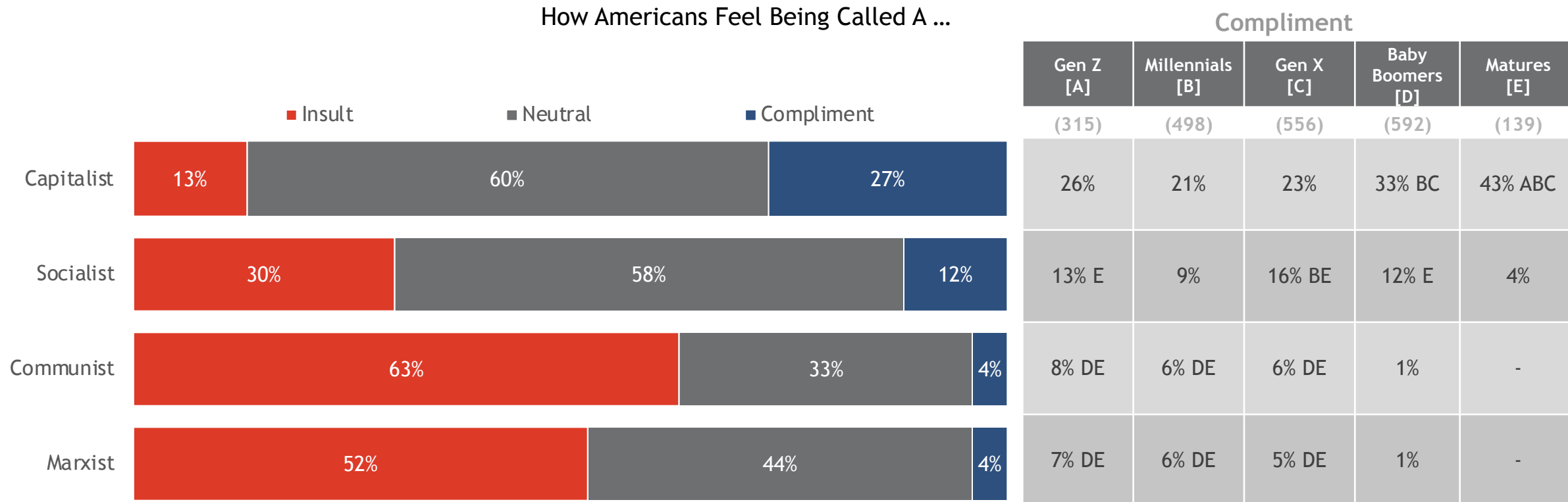
Somewhat Favorable/Favorable

| Gen Z [A] | Millennials [B] | Gen X [C] | Baby Boomers [D] | Matures [E] |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| (315) | (498) | (556) | (592) | (139) |
| 55% | 58% | 59% | 64% | 72% ABC |
| 48% DE | 50% DE | 43% E | 37% E | 18% |
| 26% CDE | 28% CDE | 15% D | 4% | 9% |
| 28% DE | 29% CDE | 21% DE | 5% | 5% |

Q8a. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the term capitalism? (n=2069)
Q7a. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the term socialism? (n=2062)
Q10a. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the term communism? (n=2067)
Q11a. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the term Marxism? (n=2100)

Americans Think Communist Is An Insult

More young people feel that “communist” and “Marxist” are not insults, and feel that “capitalist” is an insult.



Q8b. Do you consider calling someone a capitalist to be a compliment, an insult or a neutral description? (n=2073)

Q9b. Do you consider calling someone a socialist to be a compliment, an insult or a neutral description? (n=2066)

Q10b. Do you consider calling someone a communist to be a compliment, an insult or a neutral description? (n=2100)

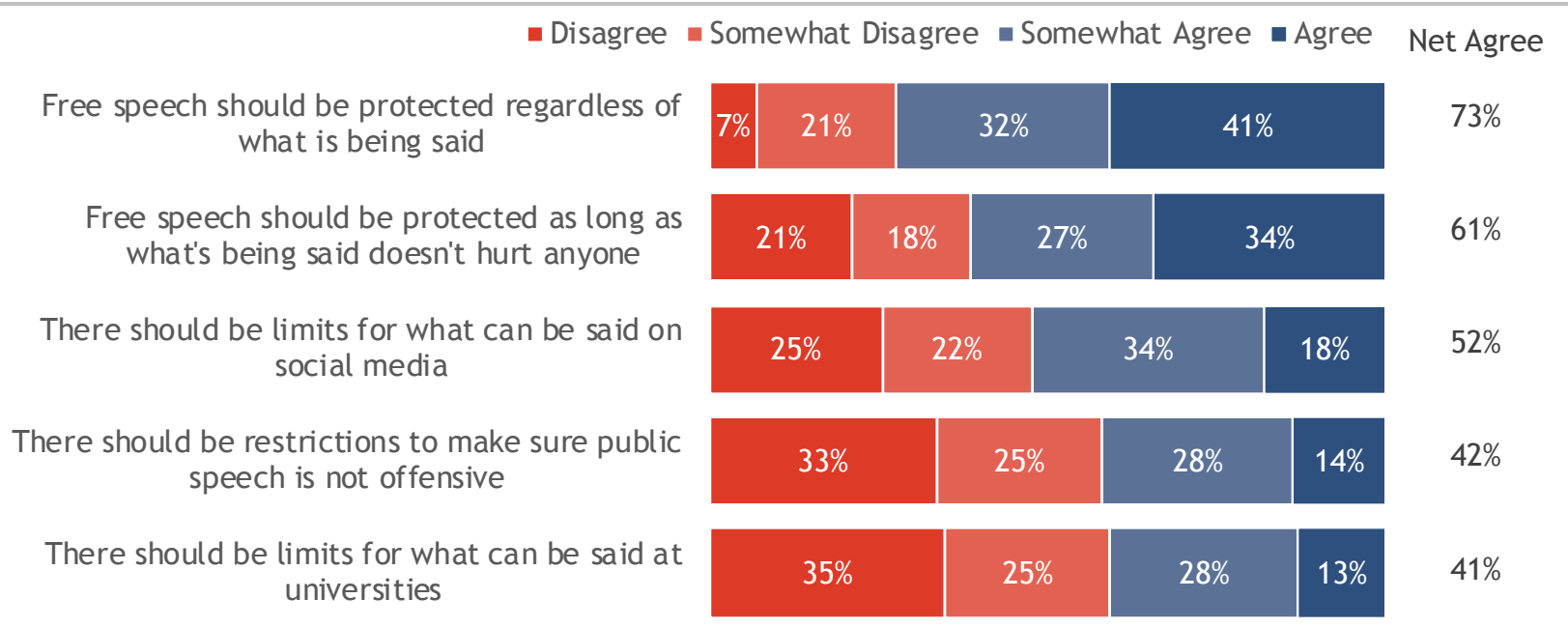
Q11b. Do you consider calling someone a Marxist to be a compliment, an insult or a neutral description? (n=2100)

Free Speech In America

The majority of every generation believes that free speech should be protected regardless of what is being said.

How Americans Feel About Free Speech In America

Somewhat Agree/Agree

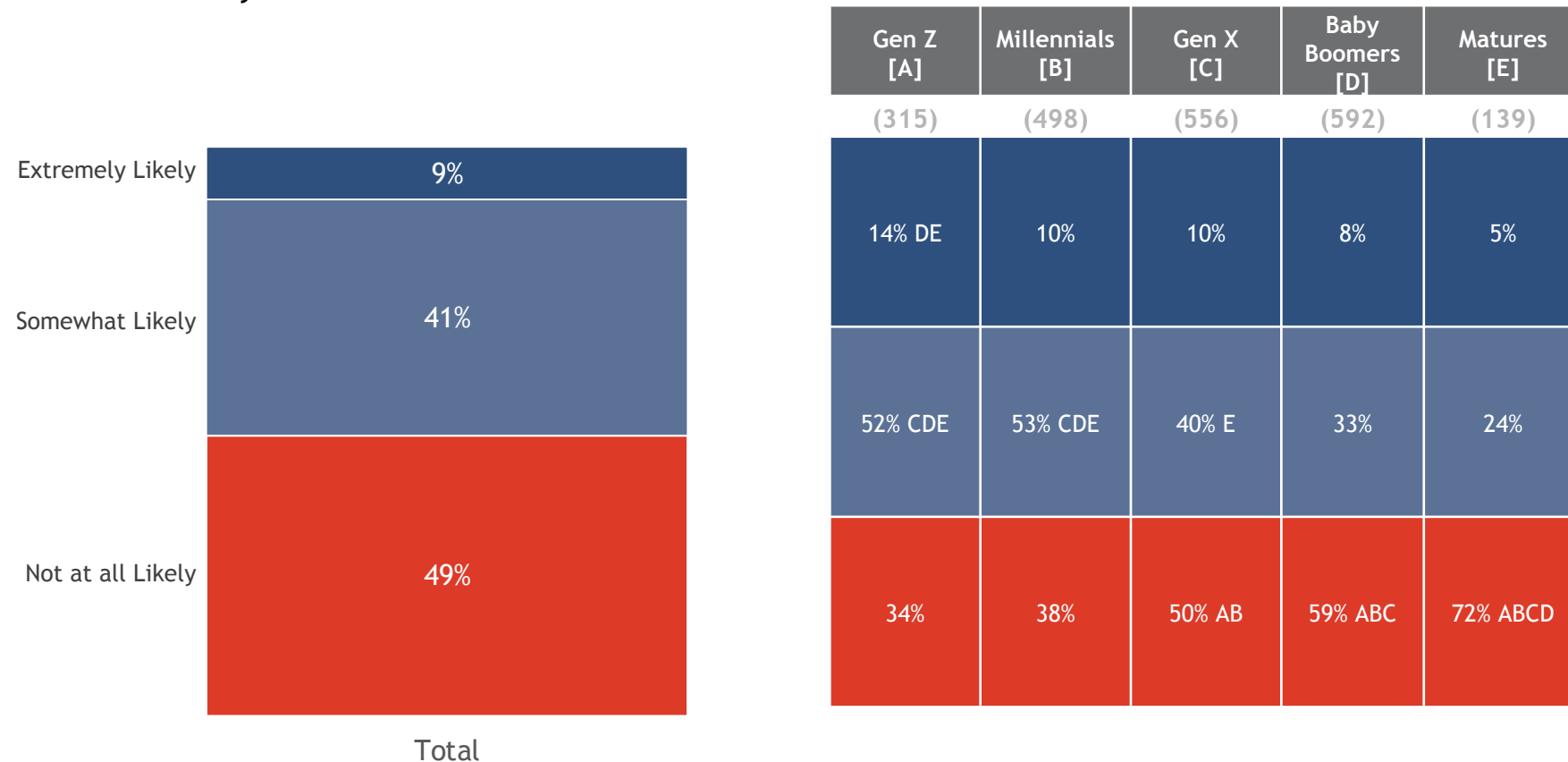


| Gen Z [A] | Millennials [B] | Gen X [C] | Baby Boomers [D] | Matures [E] |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|-------------|
| (315) | (498) | (556) | (592) | (139) |
| 69% | 70% | 74% | 74% | 74% |
| 67% | 60% | 59% | 61% | 66% |
| 43% | 49% | 52% | 57% A | 61% A |
| 38% | 47% D | 40% | 39% | 47% |
| 38% | 47% D | 41% | 37% | 42% |

Voting For A Socialist

Younger Americans are more likely to vote for a political candidate who identifies as socialist.

How Likely Americans Are To Vote For A Socialist



Voting For A Democratic Socialist

Younger Americans are much more open to voting for a democratic socialist, and are less negatively influenced by a politician who identifies with the term.

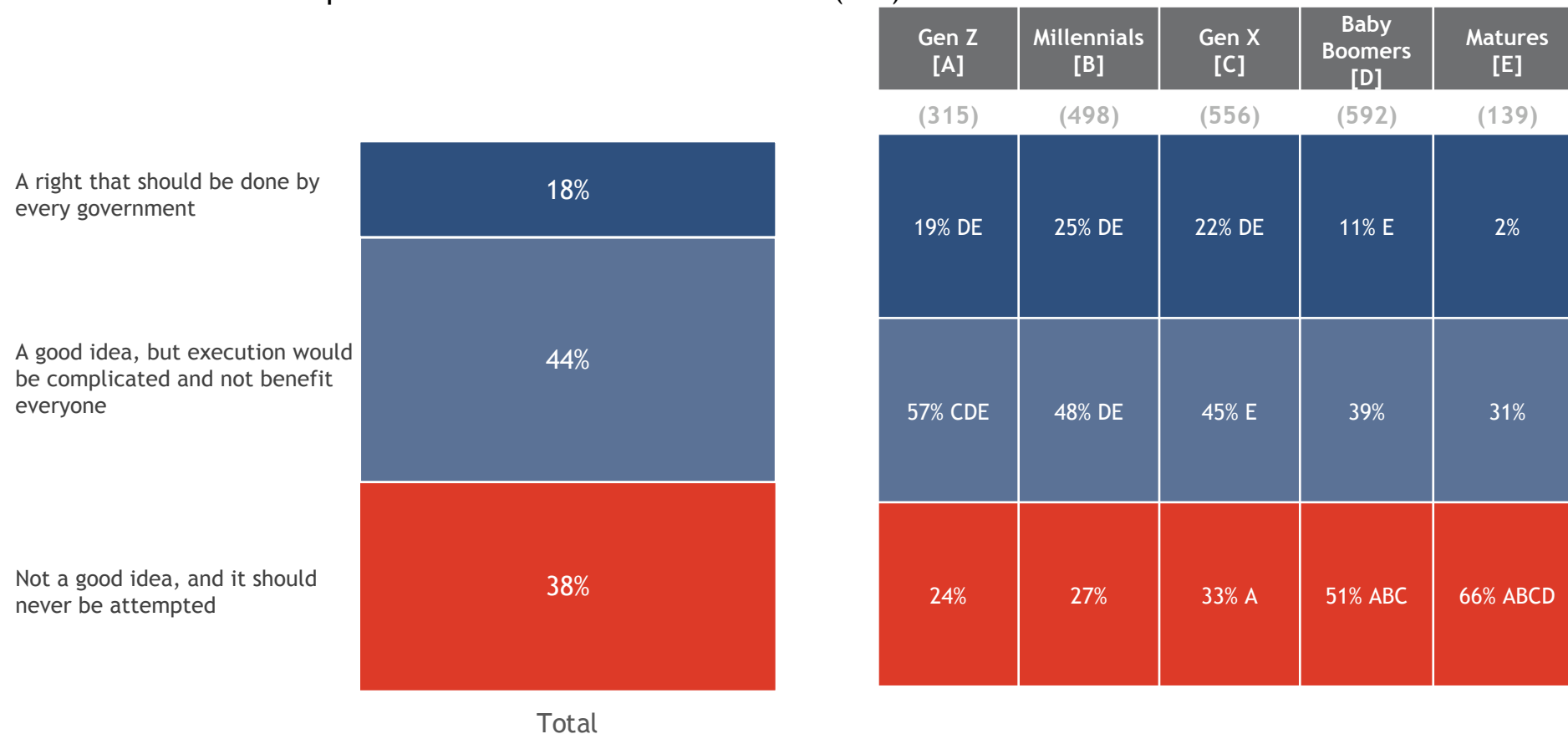
How Likely Americans Are To Vote For A Democratic Socialist



Universal Basic Income

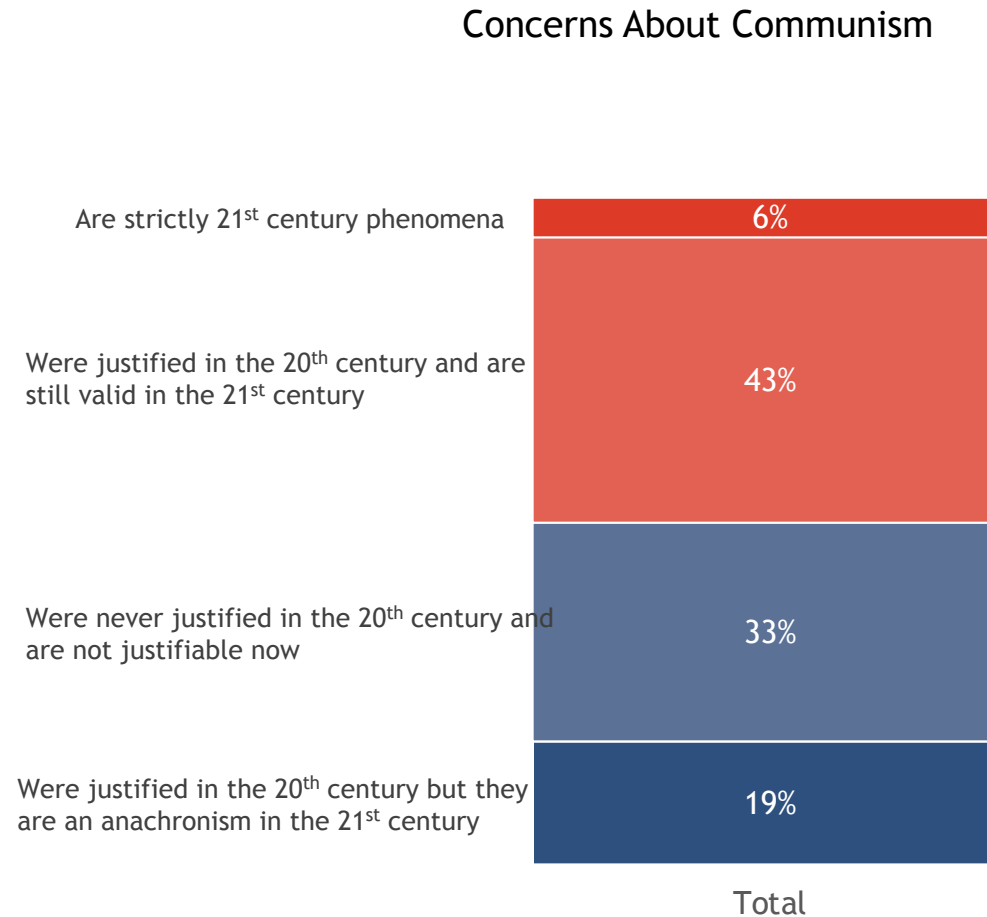
While all generations are skeptical of the implementation, younger respondents are much more open to the idea of Universal Basic Income.

American Impressions Of Universal Basic Income (UBI)



Concerns About Communism

The largest group in each age cohort thinks concerns about communism are and were always valid.

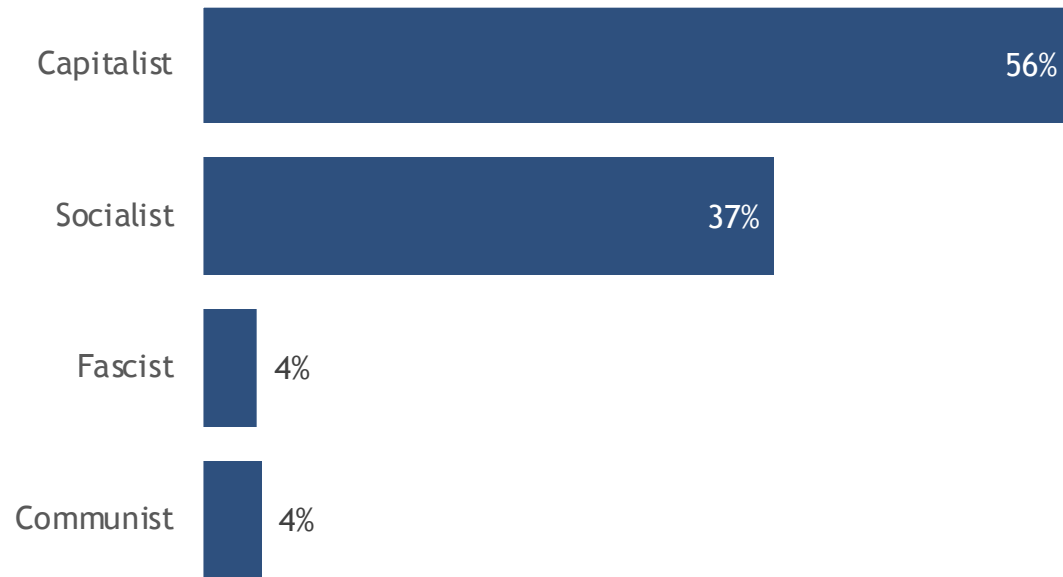


| Gen Z [A] | Millennials [B] | Gen X [C] | Baby Boomers [D] | Matures [E] |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| (315) | (498) | (556) | (592) | (139) |
| 7% D | 9% DE | 7% DE | 3% | 1% |
| 40% | 36% | 44% | 50% AB | 40% |
| 28% | 27% | 32% | 36% B | 50% ABCD |
| 26% CDE | 27% CDE | 17% D | 11% | 9% |

The Type Of System Americans Want

Among most generations, Americans want to live in a capitalist society, but among Millennials socialism is their first choice.

Which Type Of Socio-Economic System Americans Would Choose To Live In

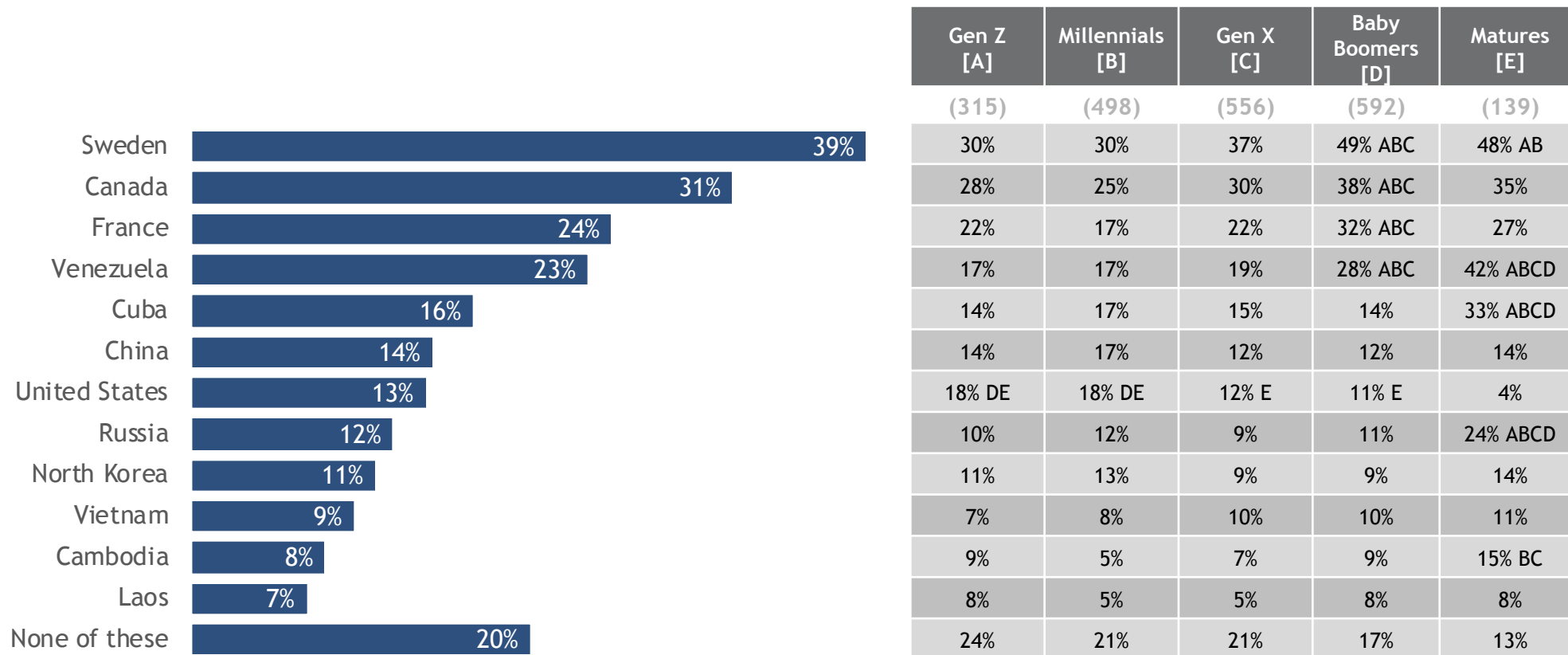


| Gen Z [A] | Millennials [B] | Gen X [C] | Baby Boomers [D] | Matures [E] |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| (315) | (498) | (556) | (592) | (134) |
| 53% B | 40% | 56% B | 65% ABC | 76% ABC |
| 41% E | 46% CDE | 34% | 33% | 23% |
| 4% | 8% CDE | 3% | 2% | 1% |
| 2% | 6% DE | 7% ADE | 1% | - |

What Is A Socialist Country

Americans are most likely to think of Sweden, Canada, and France as socialist countries and this is generally consistent across generations with the exception of Millennials.

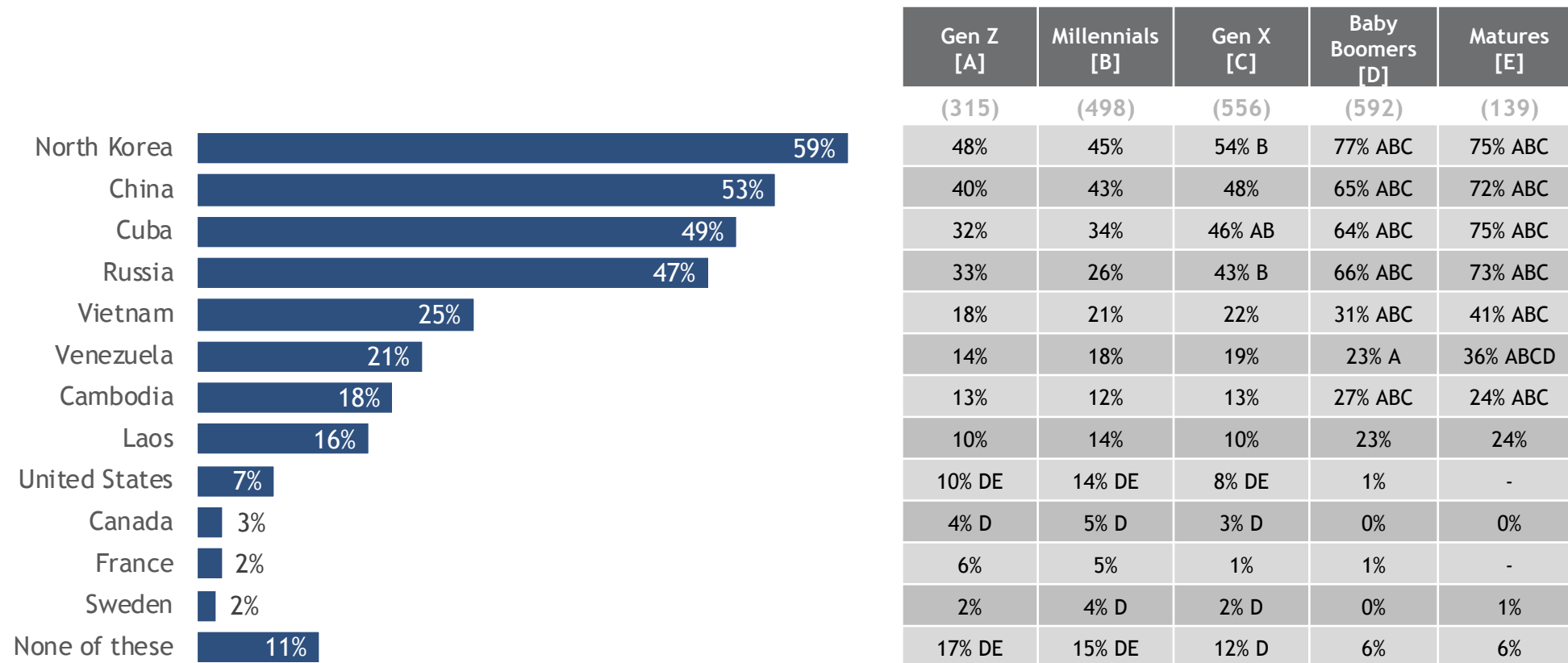
Which Countries Americans Identify As Socialist



What Is A Communist Country

Americans of all ages identify North Korea, China, and Cuba as communist countries. Older respondents still identify Russia as a communist country.

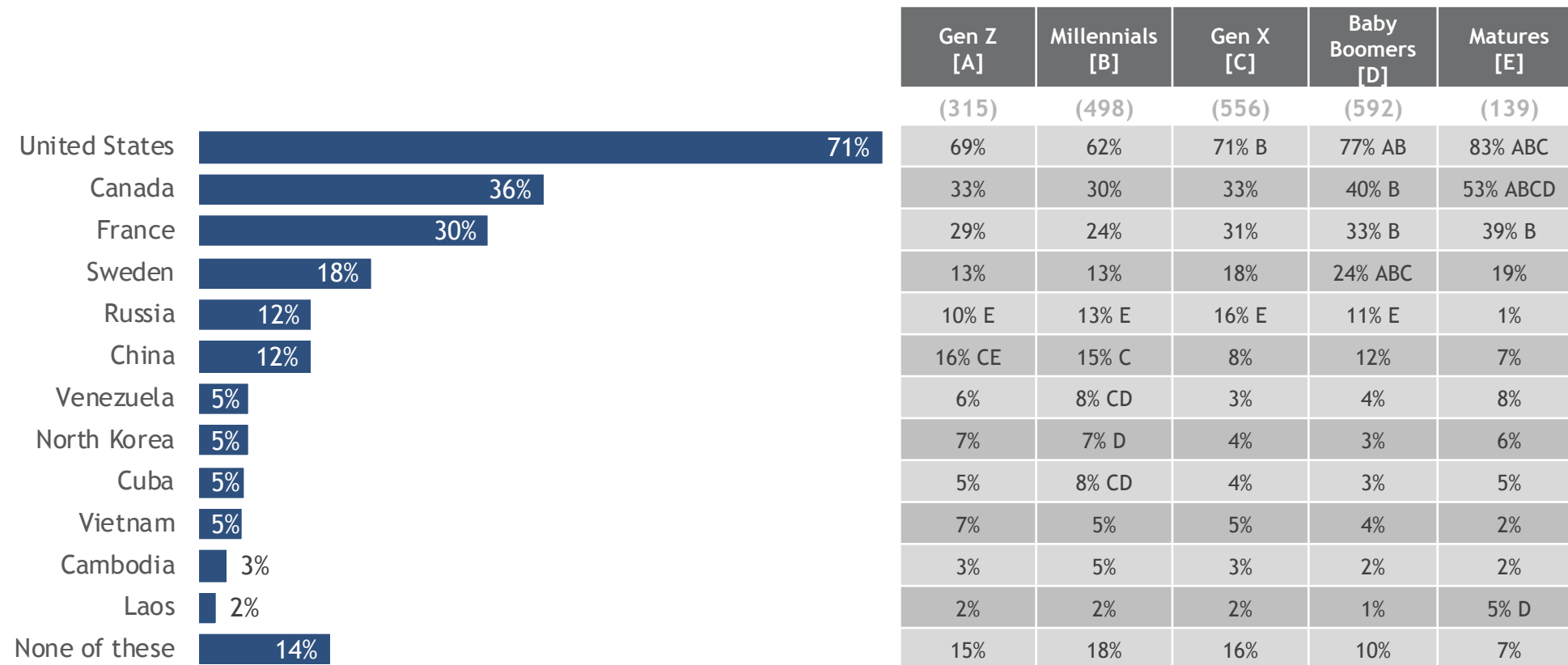
Which Countries Americans Identify As Communist



What Is A Capitalist Country

Among all generations the United States leads as a capitalist country by a large margin.

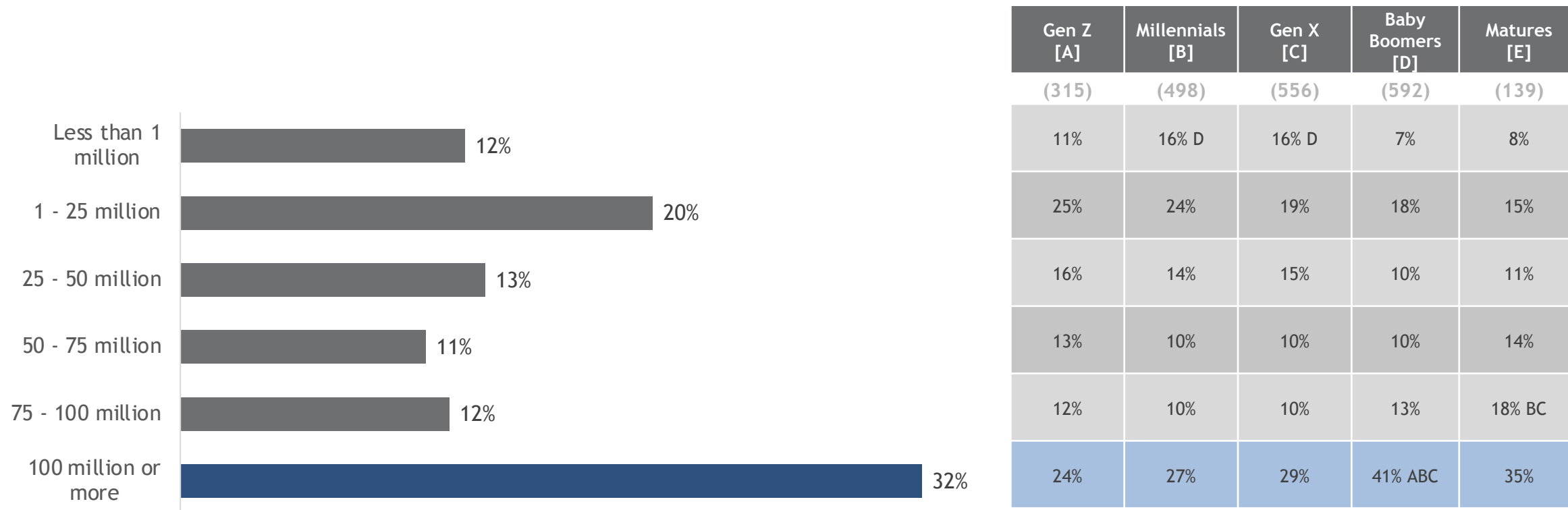
Which Countries Americans Identify As Capitalist



How Many People Communism Has Killed

Younger Americans are less aware of the human cost of communism and more likely to underestimate the number killed.

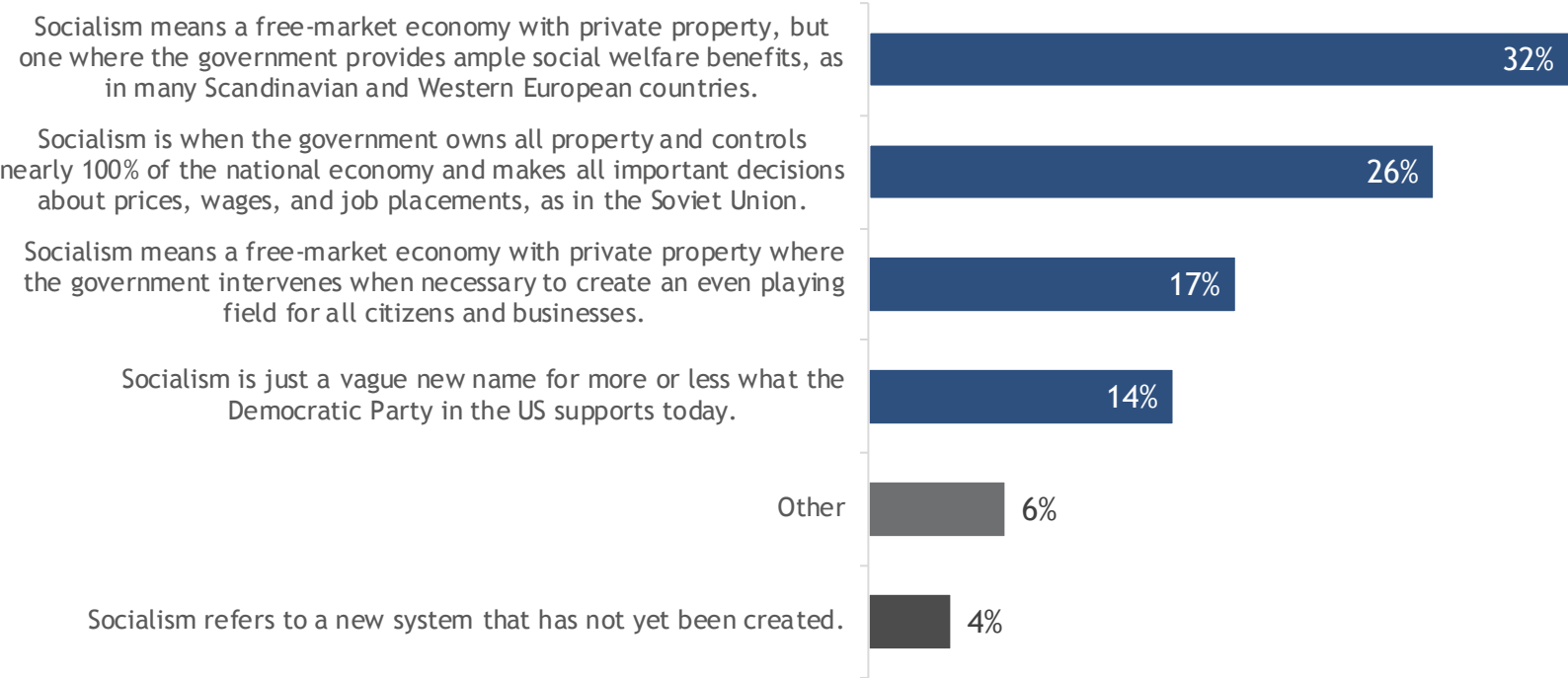
How Many People Americans Think Communism Has Killed



How Socialism Is Defined

Definitions of socialism are consistently applied to Scandinavian countries across generations, except Matures who associate socialism with the USSR.

How Americans Define Socialism

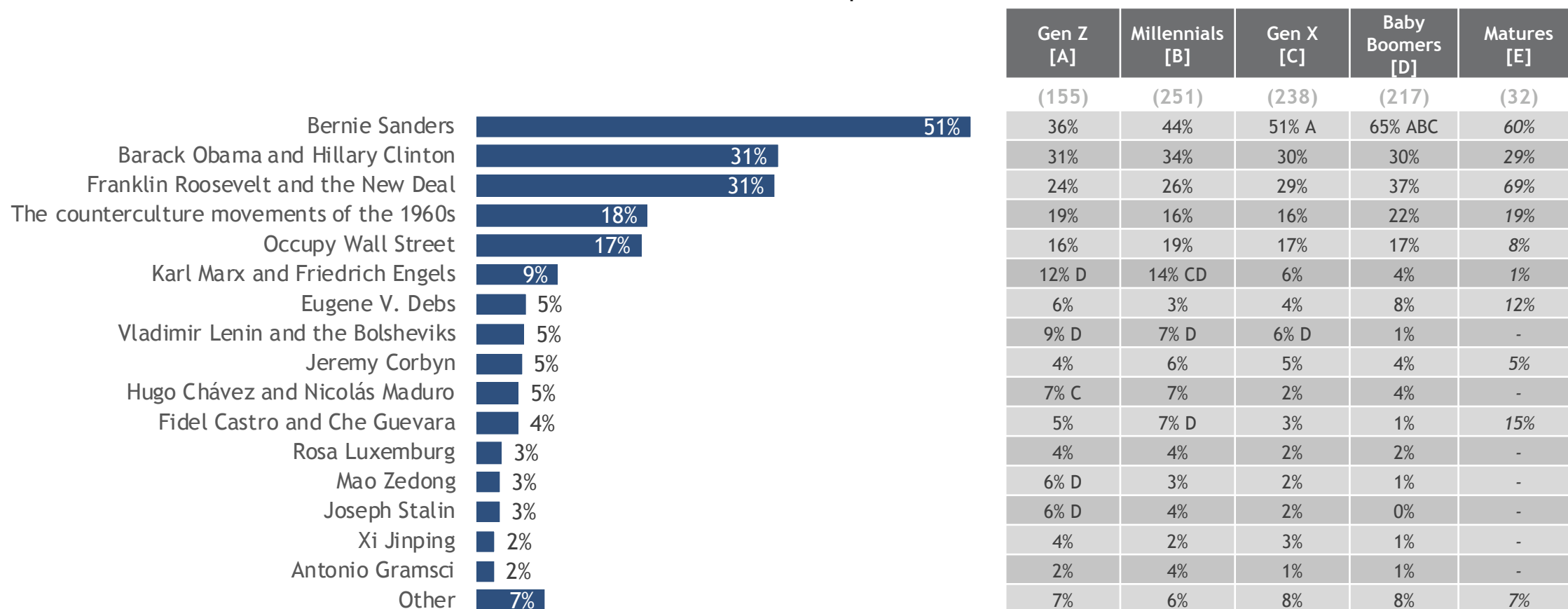


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|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| (315) | (498) | (556) | (592) | (139) |
| 29% | 27% | 37% B | 36% B | 26% |
| 26% | 27% | 24% | 25% | 36% CD |
| 23% CE | 18% | 14% | 18% | 11% |
| 9% | 13% | 15% | 14% | 20% A |
| 9% | 8% | 6% | 5% | 5% |
| 5% | 5% | 4% | 2% | 2% |

Who Inspires Socialists

Socialists of all generations are inspired by American figures and movements, with Bernie Sanders leading in most generations, except Matures, who prefer FDR.

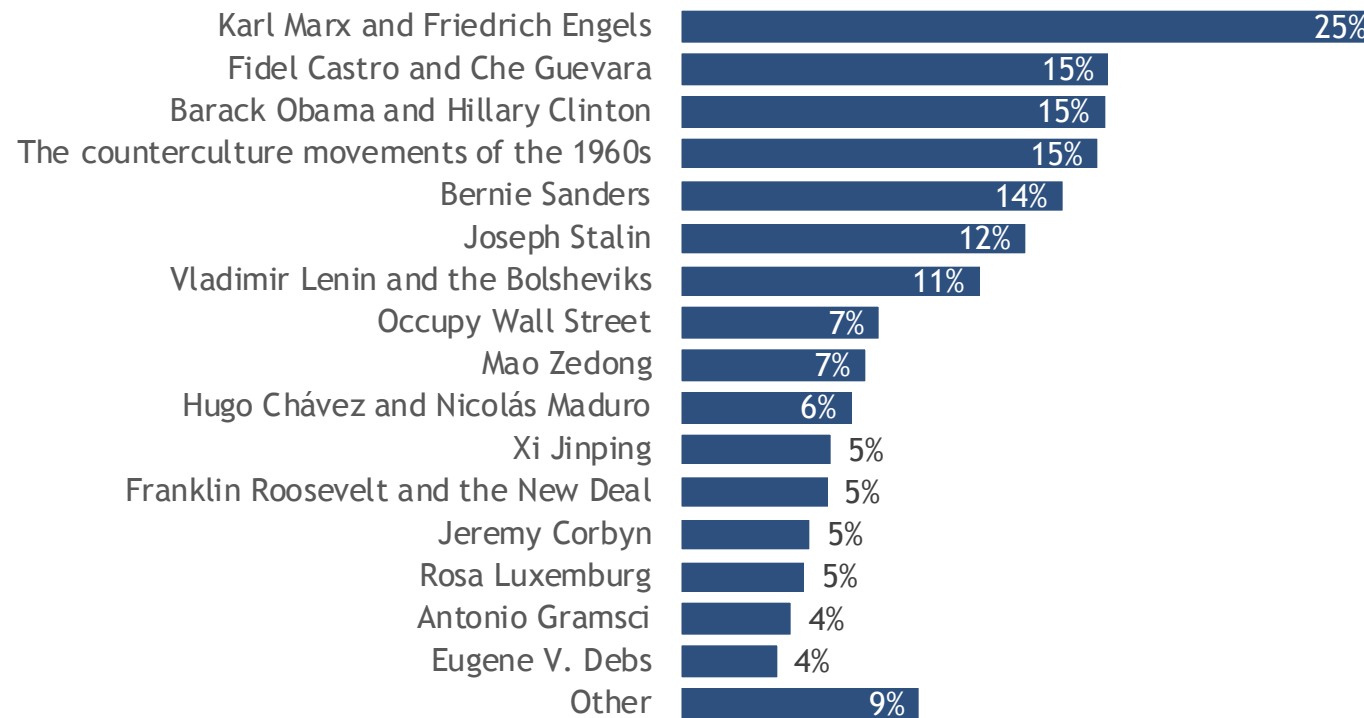
Who Americans Think Of In Their Favorable Opinion Of Socialism



Who Inspires Communists

Communists are mostly inspired by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels across generations.

Who Americans Think Of In Their Favorable Opinion Of Communism

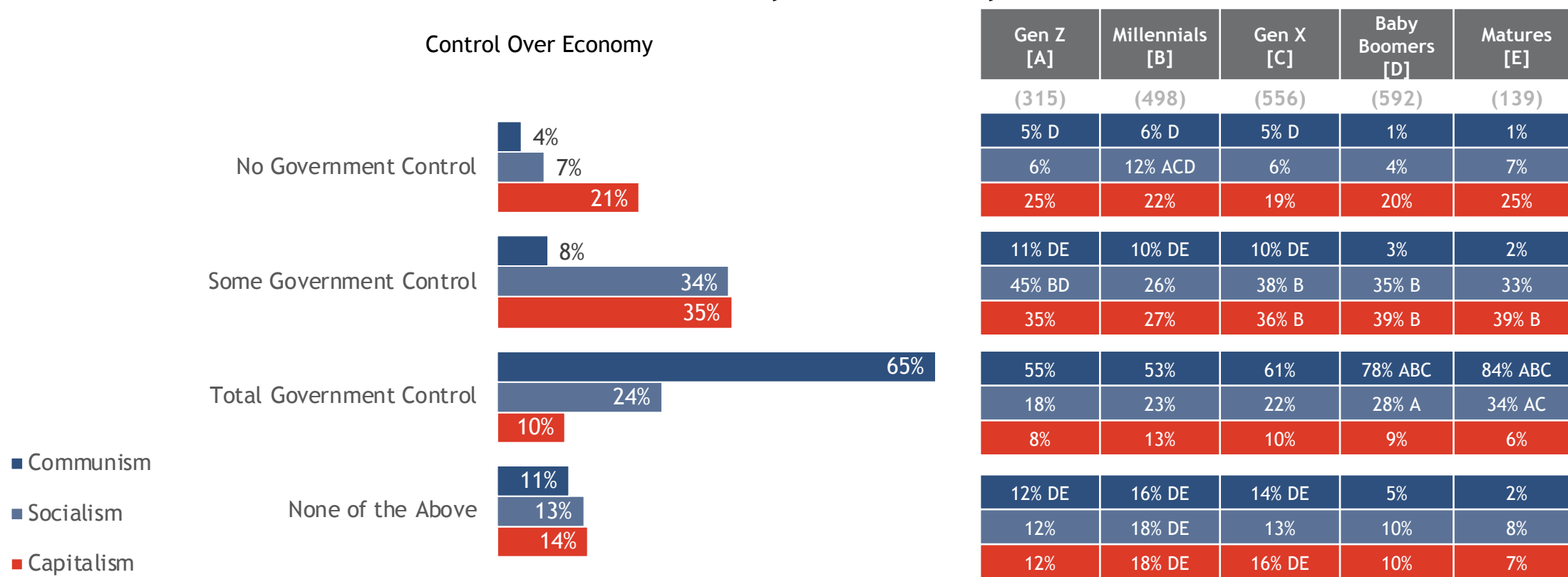


| Gen Z [A] | Millennials [B] | Gen X [C] | Baby Boomers [D] | Matures [E] |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| (87) | (139) | (99) | (34)* | (4) |
| 26% | 32% | 16% | 30% | - |
| 9% | 18% | 10% | 24% | - |
| 12% | 12% | 18% | 8% | - |
| 17% | 16% | 12% | 22% | - |
| 19% | 11% | 18% | 2% | - |
| 9% | 11% | 11% | 21% | - |
| 14% | 11% | 5% | 25% | - |
| 9% | 8% | 6% | 3% | - |
| 3% | 9% | 6% | 9% | - |
| 2% | 9% | 3% | 10% | - |
| 5% | 5% | 5% | 10% | - |
| 7% | 6% | 4% | 1% | - |
| 7% | 4% | 6% | - | - |
| 2% | 8% | 2% | 3% | - |
| 3% | 7% | 1% | 1% | - |
| 9% C | 4% | 1% | 1% | - |
| 4% | 5% | 15% | 15% | - |

Control Over The Economy

Younger Americans think communism and socialism imply less control over the economy than older generations.

How Much Control Over Economy Is Part Of Each System

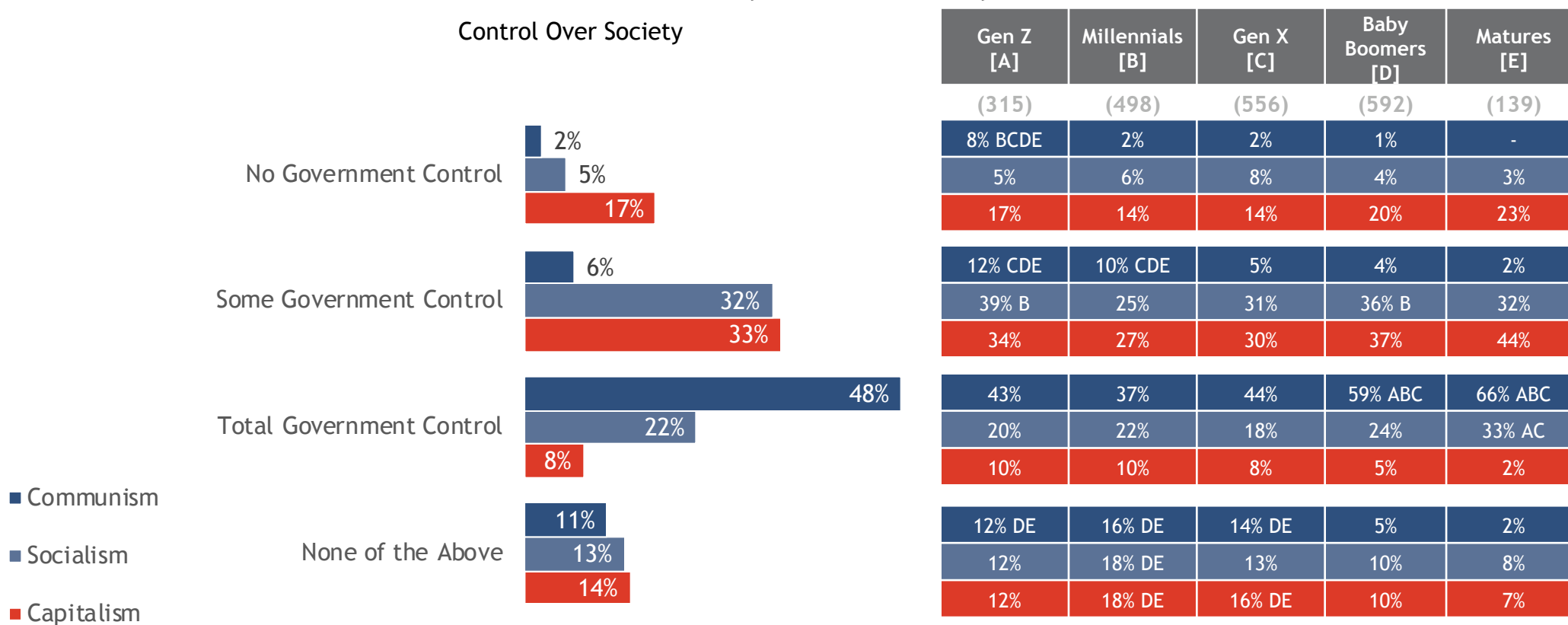


Q26. Which of the following would you consider a feature of a capitalist system? Select all that apply (n=2100)
 Q27. Which of the following would you consider a feature of a communist system? Select all that apply (n=2100)
 Q28. Which of the following would you consider a feature of a socialist system? Select all that apply (n=2100)

Control Over Society

Younger Americans think communism and socialism imply less control over society than older generations.

How Much Control Over Society Is Part Of Each System

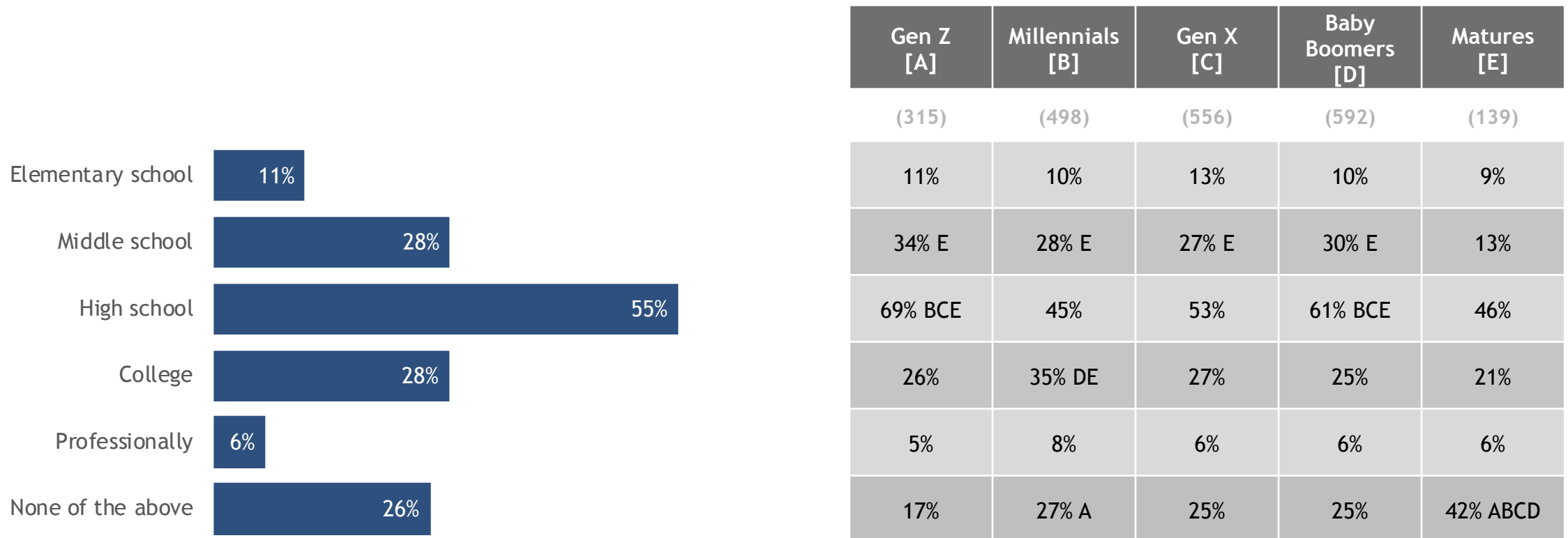


Q26. Which of the following would you consider a feature of a capitalist system? Select all that apply (n=2100)
 Q27. Which of the following would you consider a feature of a communist system? Select all that apply (n=2100)
 Q28. Which of the following would you consider a feature of a socialist system? Select all that apply (n=2100)

When Americans Studied Communism

Millennials are the least likely age cohort to have studied communism in high school and the most likely to have studied communism in college.

In Which Settings Americans Have Studied Communism



Demographics

Demographics

Education



| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| No HS | 12% |
| High school graduate | 30% |
| Some college | 21% |
| 2-year | 10% |
| 4-year | 17% |
| Post-grad | 9% |

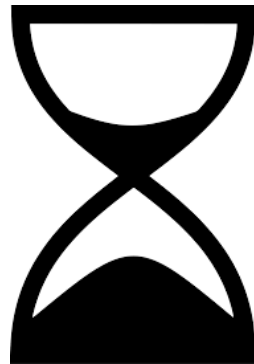


Income

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Less than 10,000 | 9% |
| \$10,000 - \$24,999 | 18% |
| \$25,000 - \$49,999 | 21% |
| \$50,000 - \$99,999 | 25% |
| \$100,000 or More | 13% |
| Prefer not say | 14% |

Age

| | |
|------------|-----|
| Gen Z | 12% |
| Millennial | 25% |
| Gen X | 26% |
| Boomer | 30% |
| Matures | 7% |



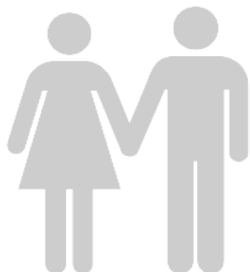
Ethnicity

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| White | 66% |
| Black | 12% |
| Hispanic | 15% |
| Asian | 4% |
| Native American | 0% |
| Middle Eastern | 0% |
| Mixed Race | 2% |
| Other | 1% |



Gender

Female
52%



Male
48%

Methodology

Methodology

YouGov interviewed 2100 Americans who were then matched into a representative sample to produce the final dataset. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, education, party identification, ideology, and political interest. The frame was constructed by stratified sampling from the full 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file). Data on voter registration status and turnout were matched to this frame using the November 2010 Current Population Survey. Data on interest in politics and party identification were then matched to this frame from the 2007 Pew Religious Life Survey as well as other media polls. Each set of matched cases were weighted to its sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, ideology, non-identification with a major party, political interest, and census region. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles. For the final dataset, both samples were combined, and the sample weights were post-stratified to match the full stratification of a five category age, four category race, two category gender, and four category education.



Surveys conducted
9/14- 9/20



Interview Length
10 minutes

Statistical significance testing was conducted on the results across demographic variables such as age. A weighting variable adjusted proportional t-test was run to compare responses across respondent identities (e.g., comparing Gen Z respondents to Matures) using a 5% confidence interval.

In this report, statistical significance testing is demarcated in the following form:

- Each respondent identity is associated with a letter
- When a response set corresponding to a respondent identity is statistically significantly higher compared to the response set for a different respondent identity, the higher response set is marked with the letter of the lower response set, according to respondent identity.