



Housing, hard work and identity: generational experiences and attitudes

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generations-book.org

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Three-quarters of the public recognise broader economic factors are preventing young adults from getting on the housing ladder – but around half still think a key reason is that young people are spending too much on things like takeaway coffees and Netflix.

And younger generations *themselves* are more likely to agree than disagree with this view.

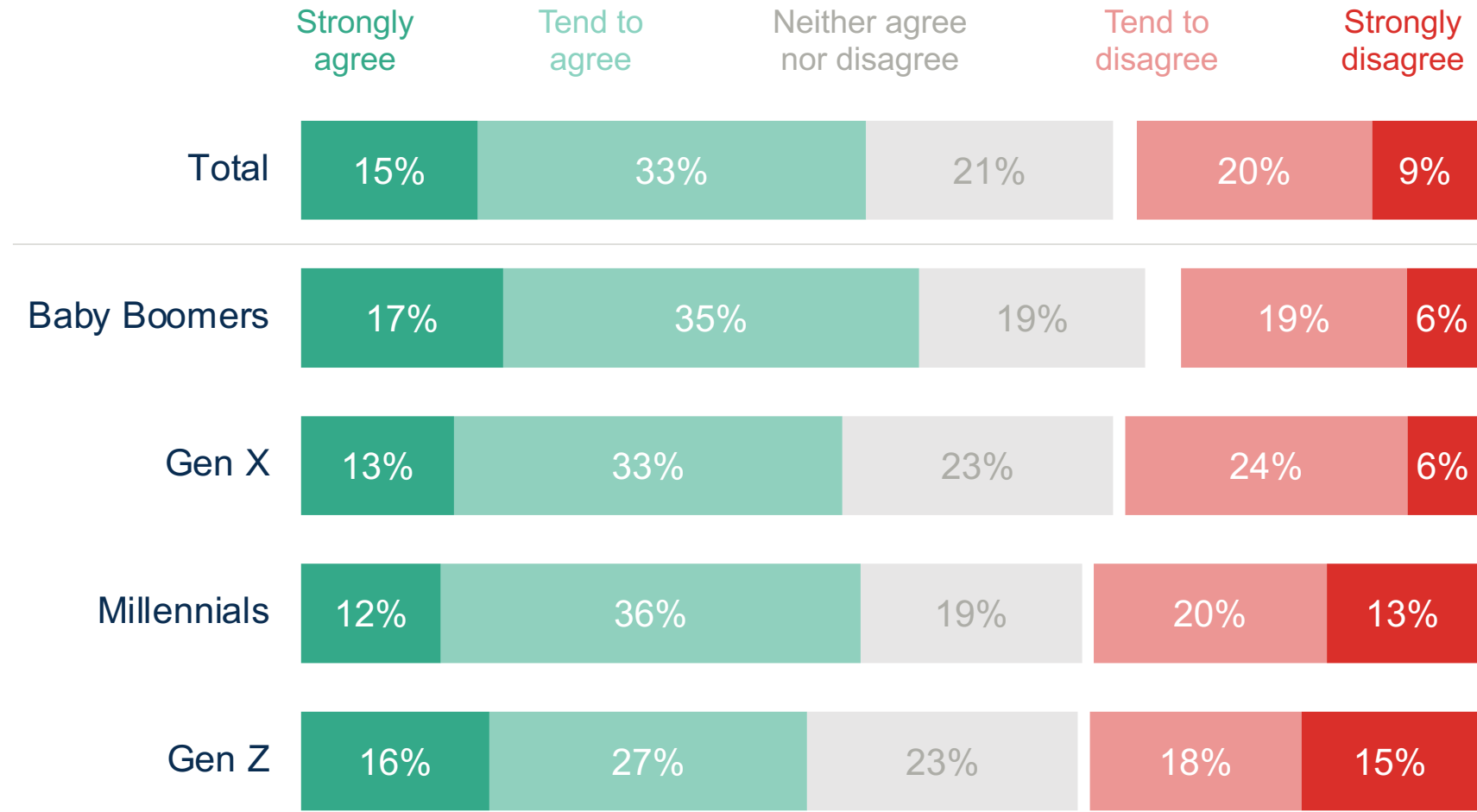


Half (48%) the UK public think a key reason more young adults today cannot afford to buy their own home is they spend too much of their income on things like takeaway coffees and food, mobile phones, subscription services like Netflix and holidays abroad. This compares with three in 10 (29%) who disagree with this view.

And young adults *themselves* are more likely to agree than disagree that such spending is a reason for their failure to get on the housing ladder.

For example, 48% of Millennials agree with this view, compared with 33% who disagree, and there is a similar split among members of Gen Z (43% vs 33%).

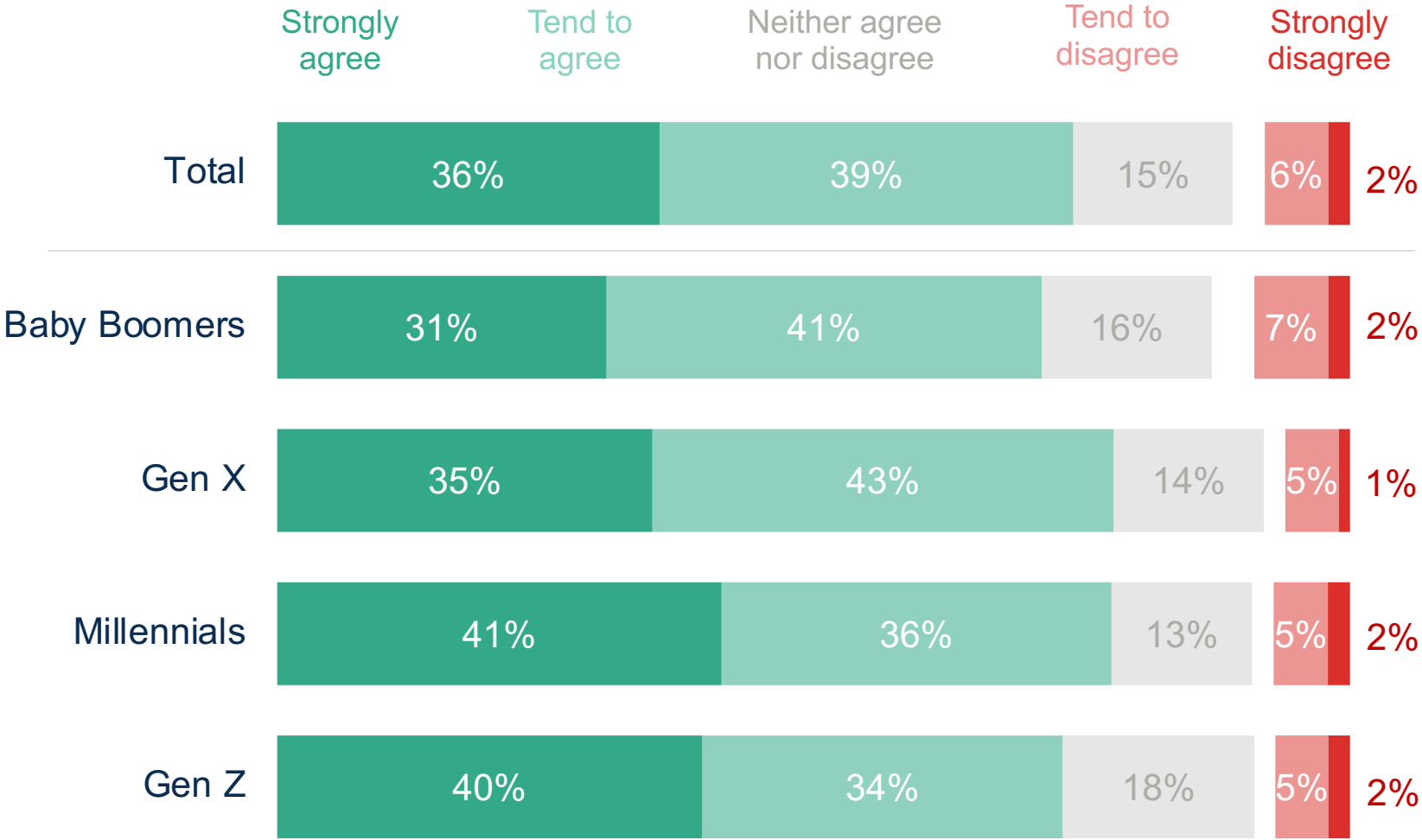
To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following: **A key reason more young adults today cannot afford to buy their own home is they spend too much of their income on things like takeaway coffees and food, mobile phones, subscription services like Netflix and holidays abroad**



But at the same time, there is a high level of recognition among the public that economic factors are also preventing young people from buying a home, with three in four (76%) agreeing the key reasons young adults today cannot afford to buy their own home are things like the increase in house prices, stricter lending rules and low wage growth.

While around seven in 10 or more of all generations think such factors are key reasons that young people can't get on the housing ladder, Millennials (41%) and Gen Z (40%) are more likely than Baby Boomers (31%) and Gen X to *strongly* feel this way.

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following? **The key reasons that young adults today cannot afford to buy their own home are things like the increase in house prices, stricter lending rules and low wage growth**

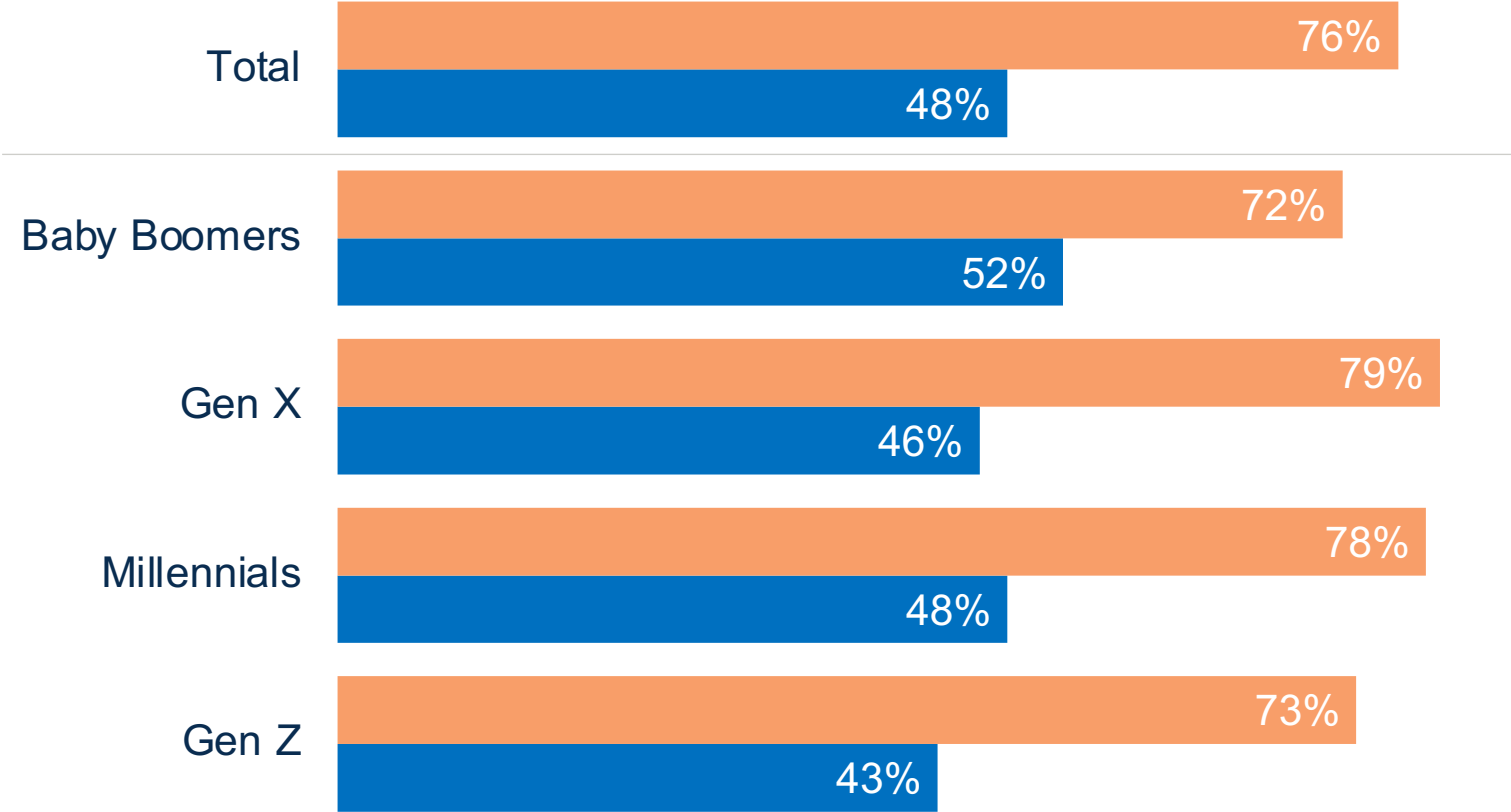


Base: 2,291 UK adults aged 18+, interviewed 13 to 15 May 2022

Looking across the two questions, there is little difference in views between generations, with between four in 10 and half of each cohort thinking things like takeaways and Netflix subscriptions are a reason young adults can't buy their own home, and around three-quarters of each saying economic factors are behind this.

% who **strongly agree/agree** with each statement

- The key reasons that young adults today cannot afford to buy their own home are things like the increase in house prices, stricter lending rules and low wage growth
- A key reason that young adults today cannot afford to buy their own home is they spend too much of their income on things like takeaway coffees and food, mobile phones, subscription services like Netflix and holidays abroad



Base: 2,291 UK adults aged 18+, interviewed 13 to 15 May 2022

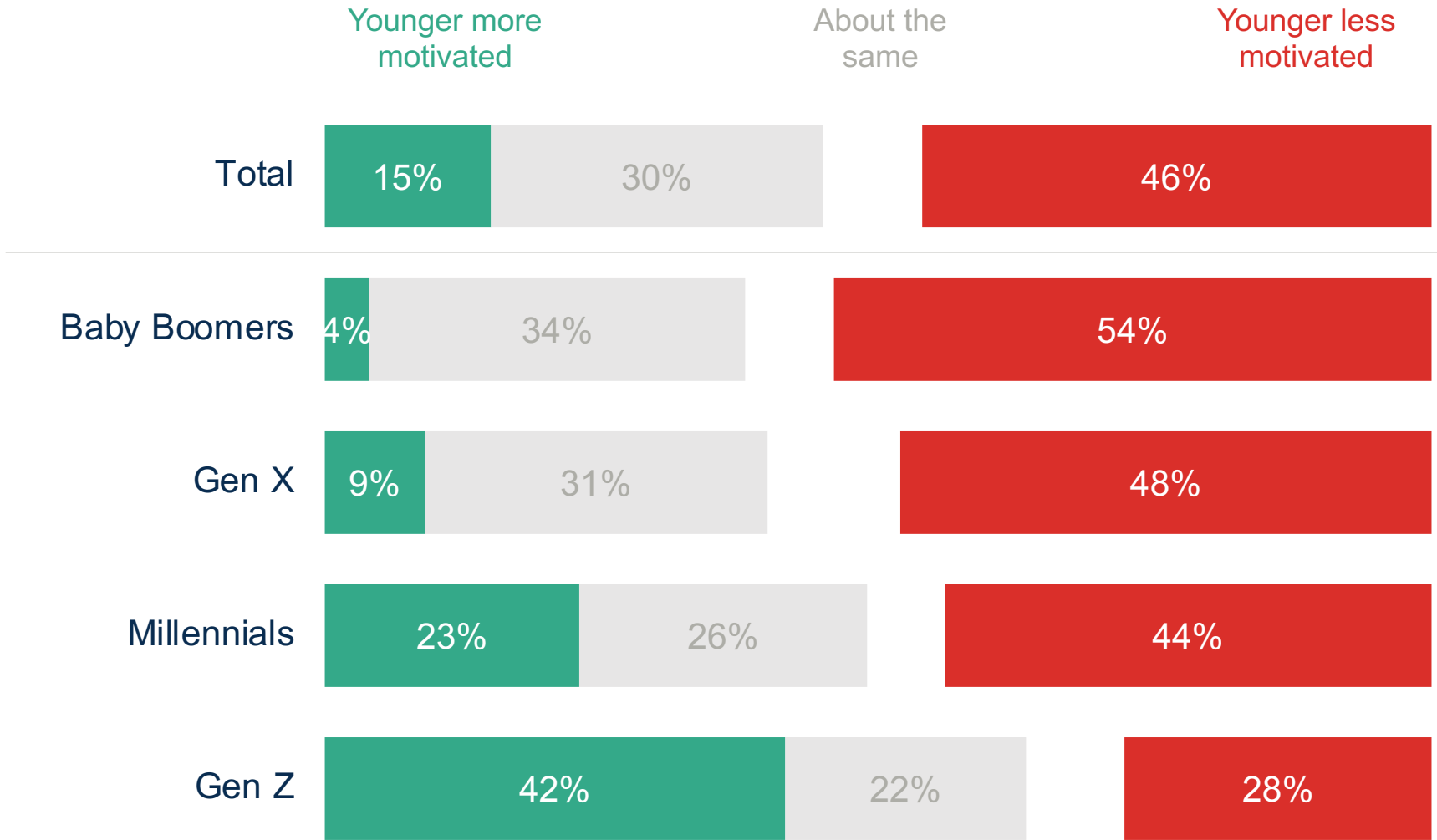
It's easy to see why much of the public think young adults don't put in the effort needed to save for a home – they tend to view young people today as less hardworking than older people, as well as less hardworking than they were in their youth.



The public are three times as likely to say that younger workers are less, rather than more, motivated and hardworking than older workers (46% vs 15%).

This is the most common view across all generations surveyed, except Gen Z, 42% of whom say younger workers are more motivated, compared with 28% who say less.

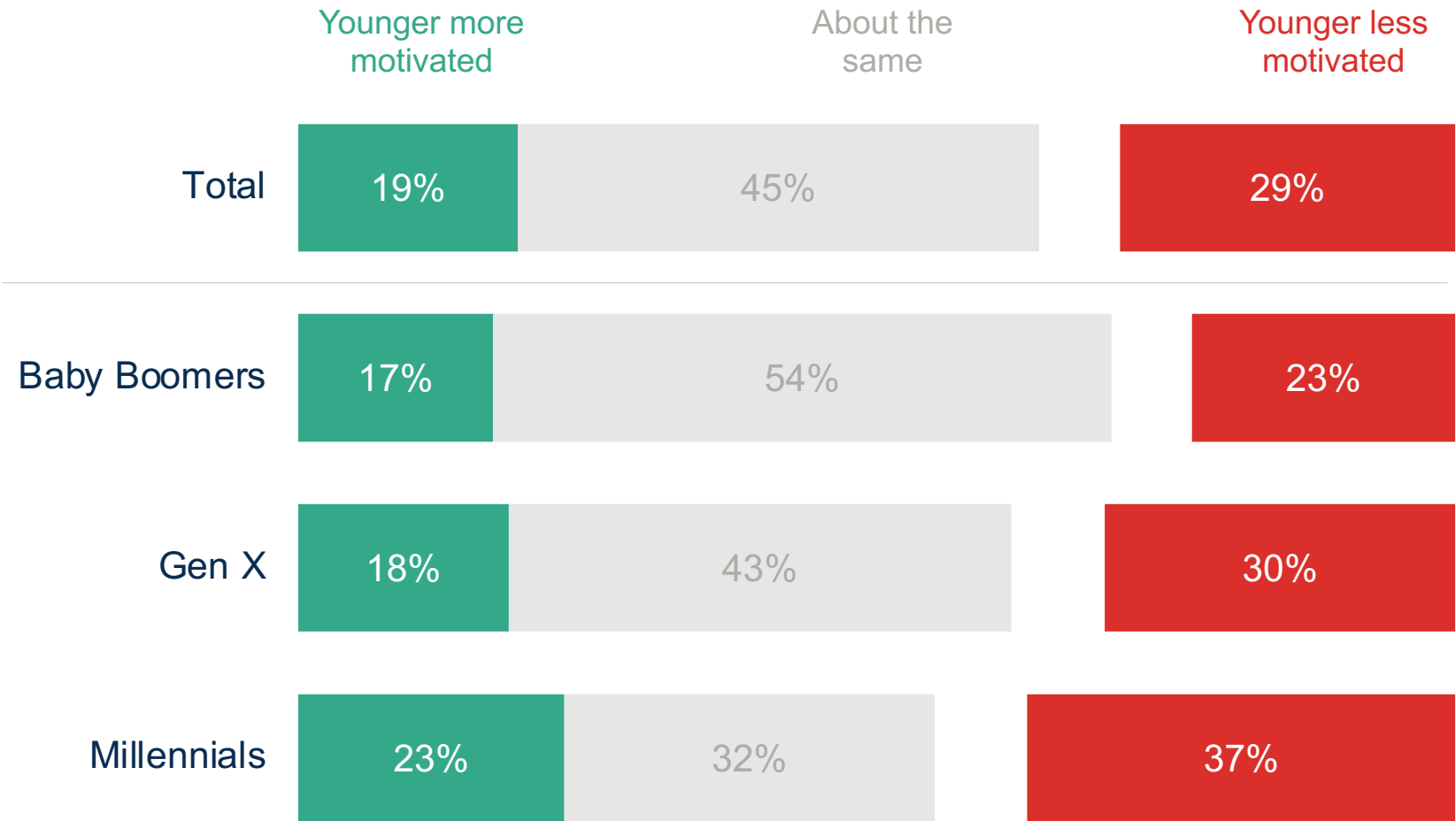
In general, do you think that younger workers (that is, those in their teens and twenties) tend to be more or less motivated and hardworking than older workers in the workplace, or are they about the same?



But when they think back to when they themselves were young, those aged 30 and above have less of a tendency to see younger workers as being lazy.

Nearly half (45%) say that, back when they first began their careers, younger workers were about as motivated and hardworking as older ones – the most common response given – while three in 10 (29%) thought younger workers were less motivated.

When you first started working, in general, did younger workers then tend to be more or less motivated and hardworking than older workers in the workplace, or were they about the same? (Asked to those aged 30+ only)



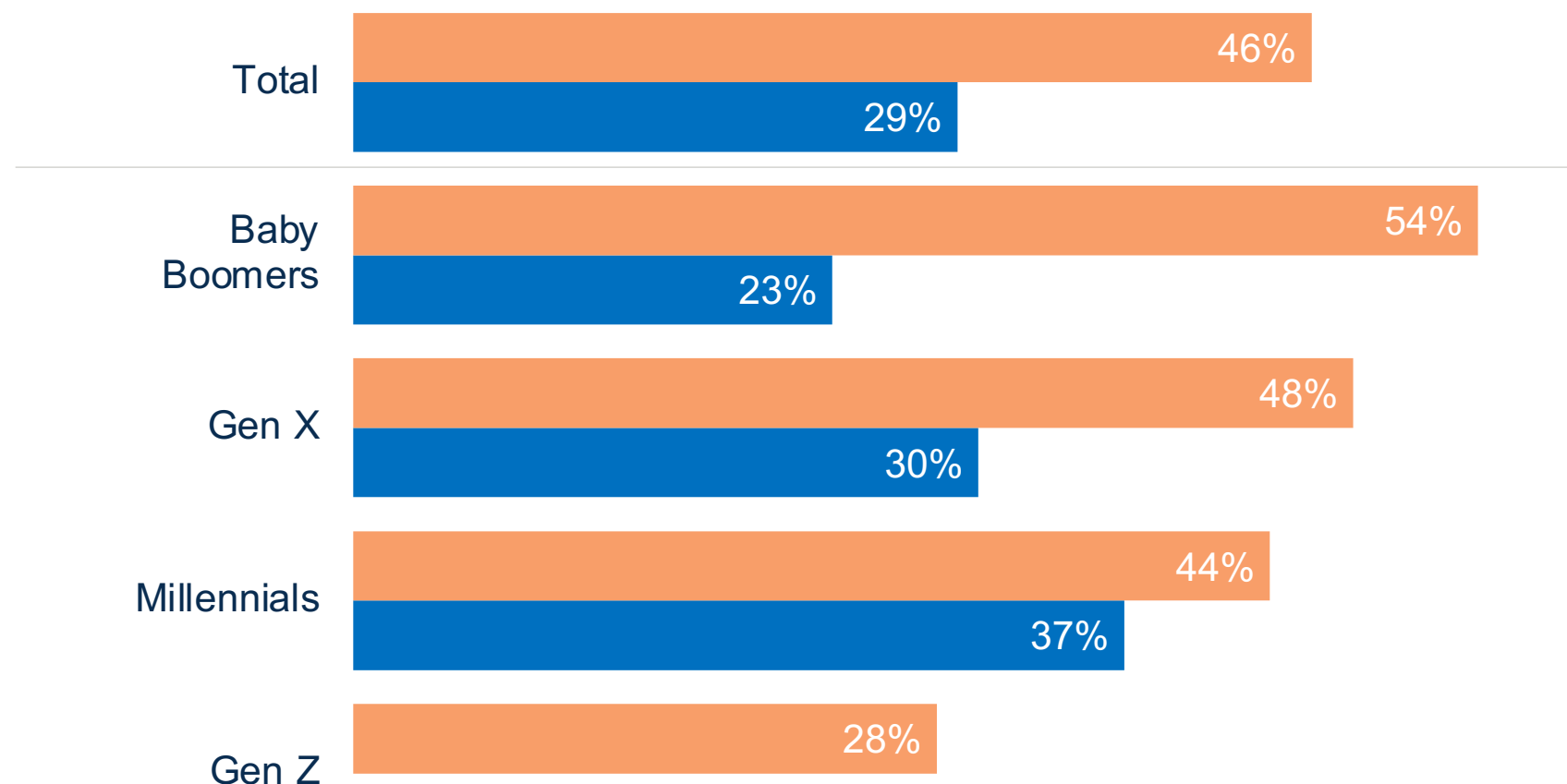
Looking across the two questions, there is a clear sense that today's youth do not work as hard as previous generations of young people.

46% of the public say that younger workers today are less motivated and hardworking than older workers – compared with 29% of those aged 30 and above who feel this way about younger workers back when they first began their careers.

Baby Boomers have the biggest difference in perceptions of the two sets of young workers – however, all generations think today's youth are less hardworking, even if Millennials are only slightly more likely than not to hold this view.

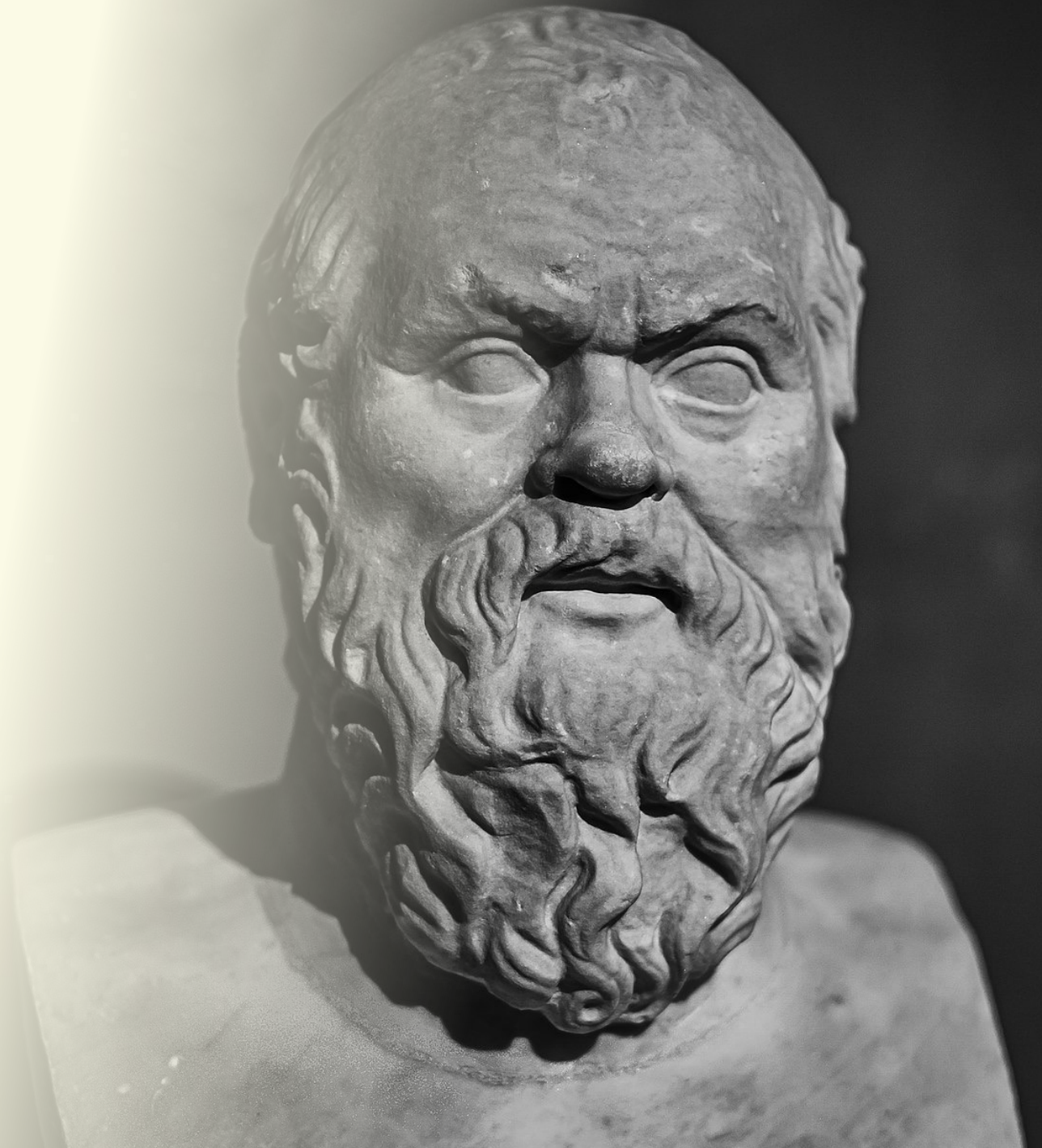
% who **strongly agree/agree** with each statement

- Younger workers are less motivated than older workers today
- Younger workers were less motivated than older workers when you first started working (asked to those aged 30+ only)



The perception that today's youth are especially inferior to past generations of young people is nothing new.

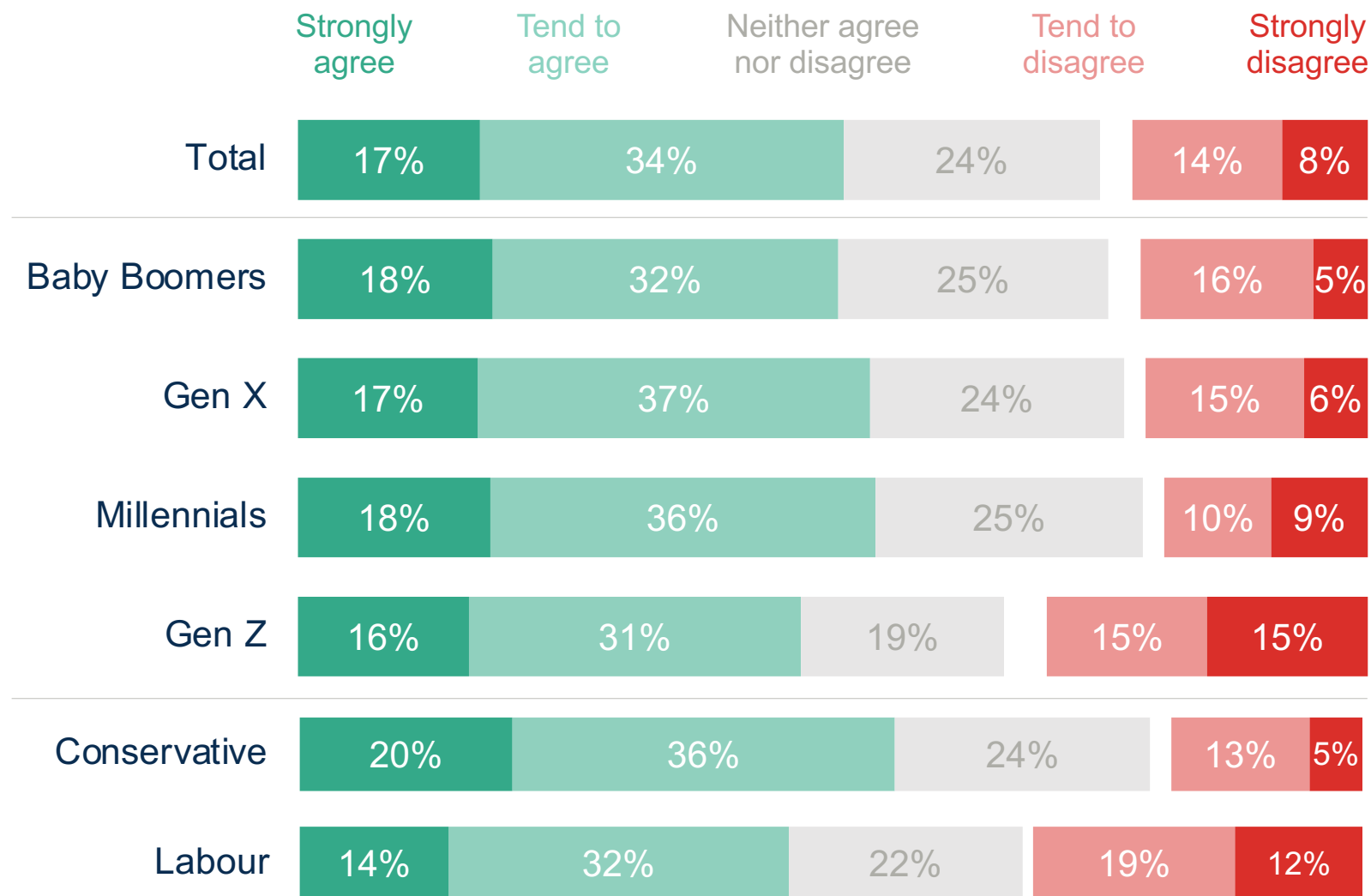
It even stretches back to ancient Greece – people back then had a particularly negative view of the youth of their day, but half the UK public think this applies to young people in 2022.



51% agree with the following quote that is often cited to describe attitudes towards young people in ancient Greece: “Young people today love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love gossip in place of activity”. Far fewer – 22% – disagree with this statement.

There is little difference in views between generations, but among each, a greater proportion agree than disagree with the statement. For example, even Gen Z – the youngest surveyed – are more likely to agree than disagree with it (47% vs 30%).

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statement? **'Young people today love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love gossip in place of activity.'**



Base: 2,291 UK adults aged 18+, interviewed 13 to 15 May 2022

The public believe it is harder for young people today to buy a home, save for the future and pay for university than it was for their parents' generation – but easier for them to get into university and to stay in touch with people.

Younger generations are more likely than older generations to believe it is easier today to buy a house or save for the future, although most still think its harder today.

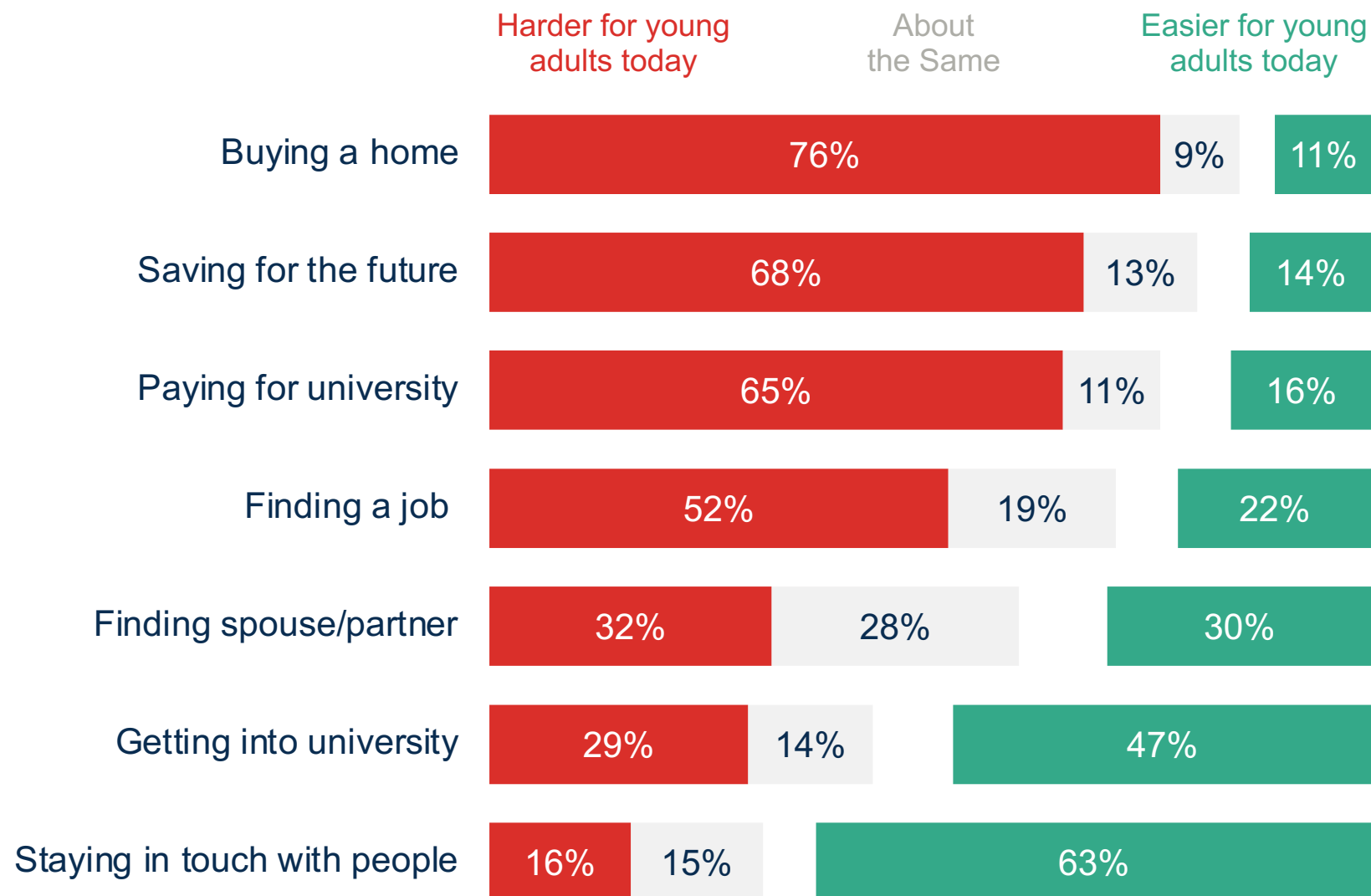


There is a clear sense among the public that today's youth face more financial struggles than their parents' generation: 76% think buying a home is harder for young adults now, with only 11% believing it is easier than it was in the past.

At the same time, 68% believe it is harder for young adults to save for the future and 65% feel it is harder for young people to pay for university today.

The public are also twice as likely to say that finding a job is harder (52%) rather than easier (22%) for today's young compared with their parents' generation.

How do you think young adults today compare with their parents' generation on each of the following?

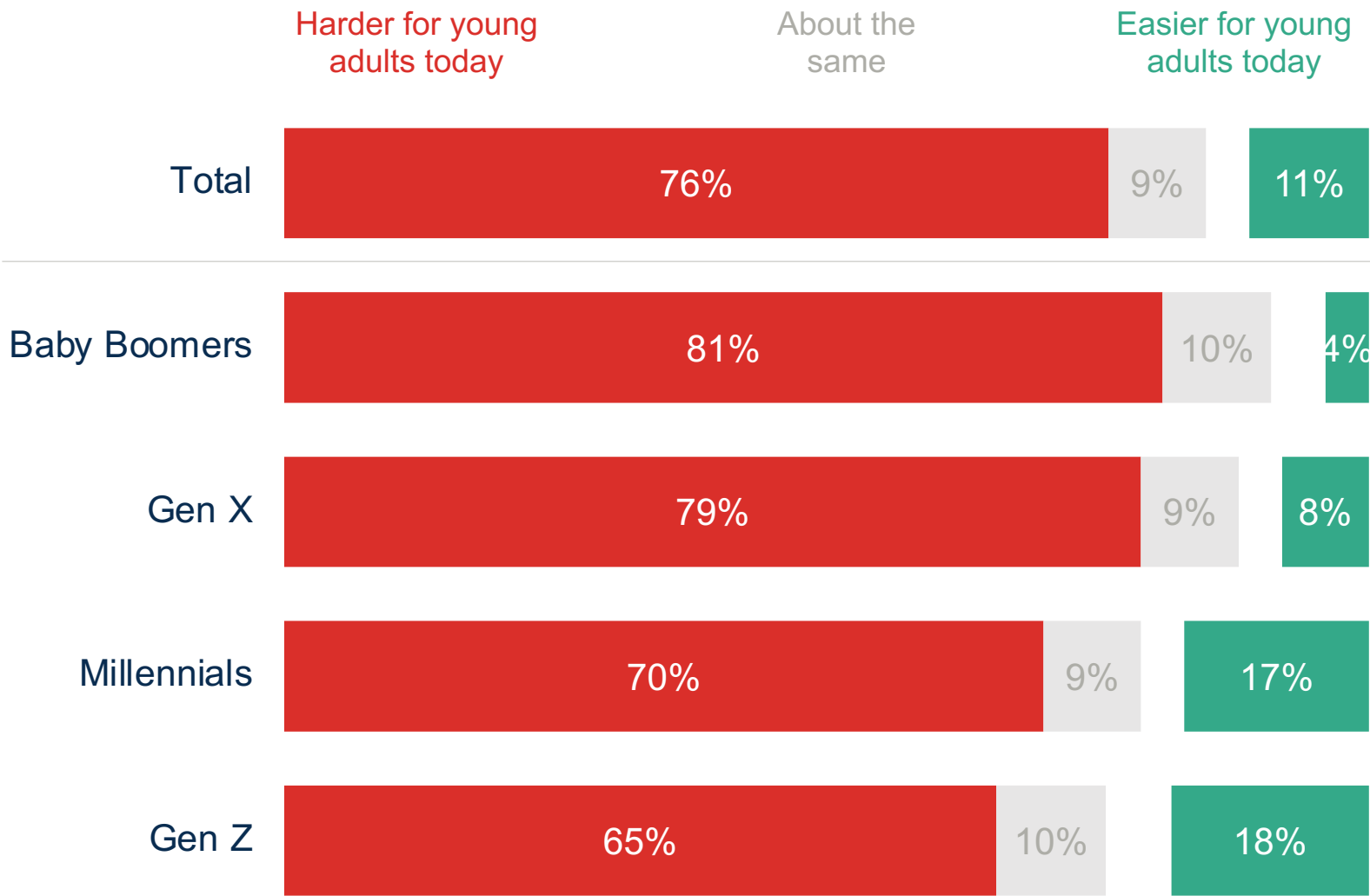


Base: 2,291 UK adults aged 18+, interviewed 13 to 15 May 2022

Looking at views across generations in the UK, majorities of all cohorts believe it is harder for young adults to buy a home than it was for their parents' generation.

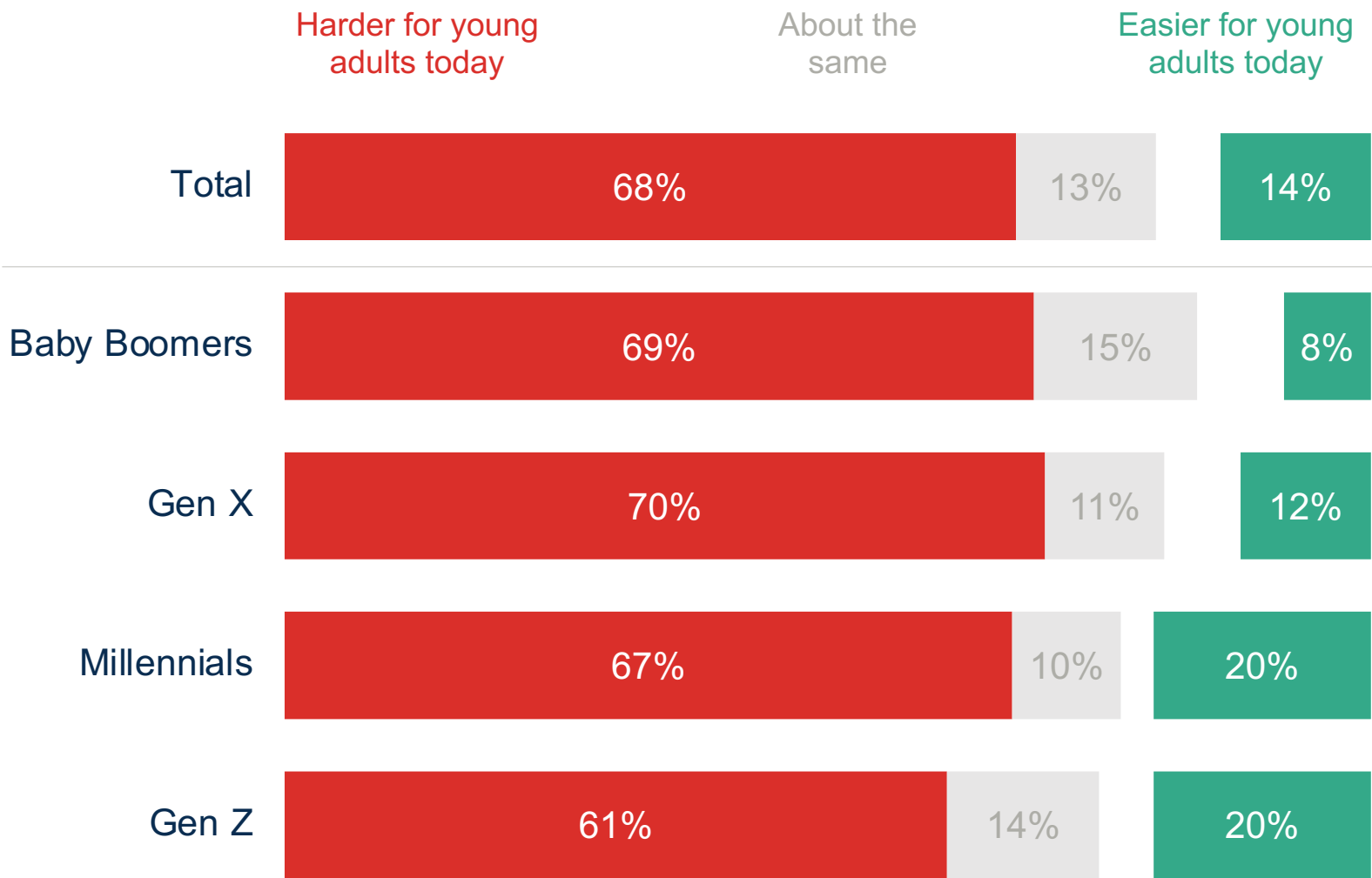
However, younger generations are actually more likely than older ones to think it is easier for young adults today to get on the housing ladder. For example, one in five (18%) Gen Z think this is the case, compared with 4% of Baby Boomers.

How do you think young adults today compare with their parents' generation on each of the following? **Buying a home**



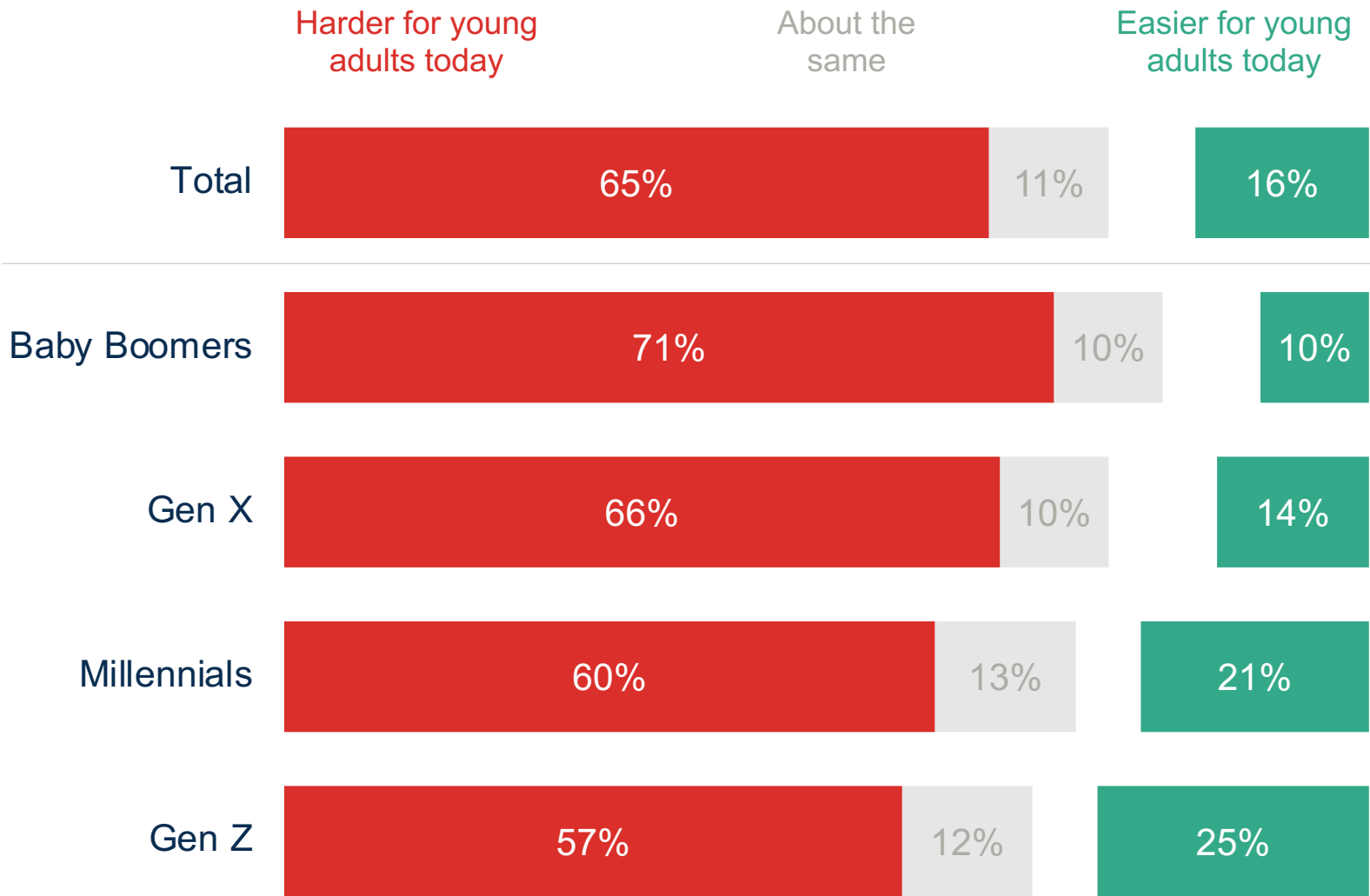
Again, while all generations are more likely than not to believe it is harder for young adults today to save for the future, younger generations are less likely to feel this way. One in five (20%) Gen Z and Millennials believe this is easier for today's youth, versus 8% of Baby Boomers and 12% of Gen X who hold this view.

How do you think young adults today compare with their parents' generation on each of the following? **Saving for the future**



One in four (25%) Gen Z think it is easier today to pay for university education than it was for older generations – more than double the proportion of Baby Boomers who hold this view (10%).

How do you think young adults today compare with their parents' generation on each of the following? **Paying for a university education**

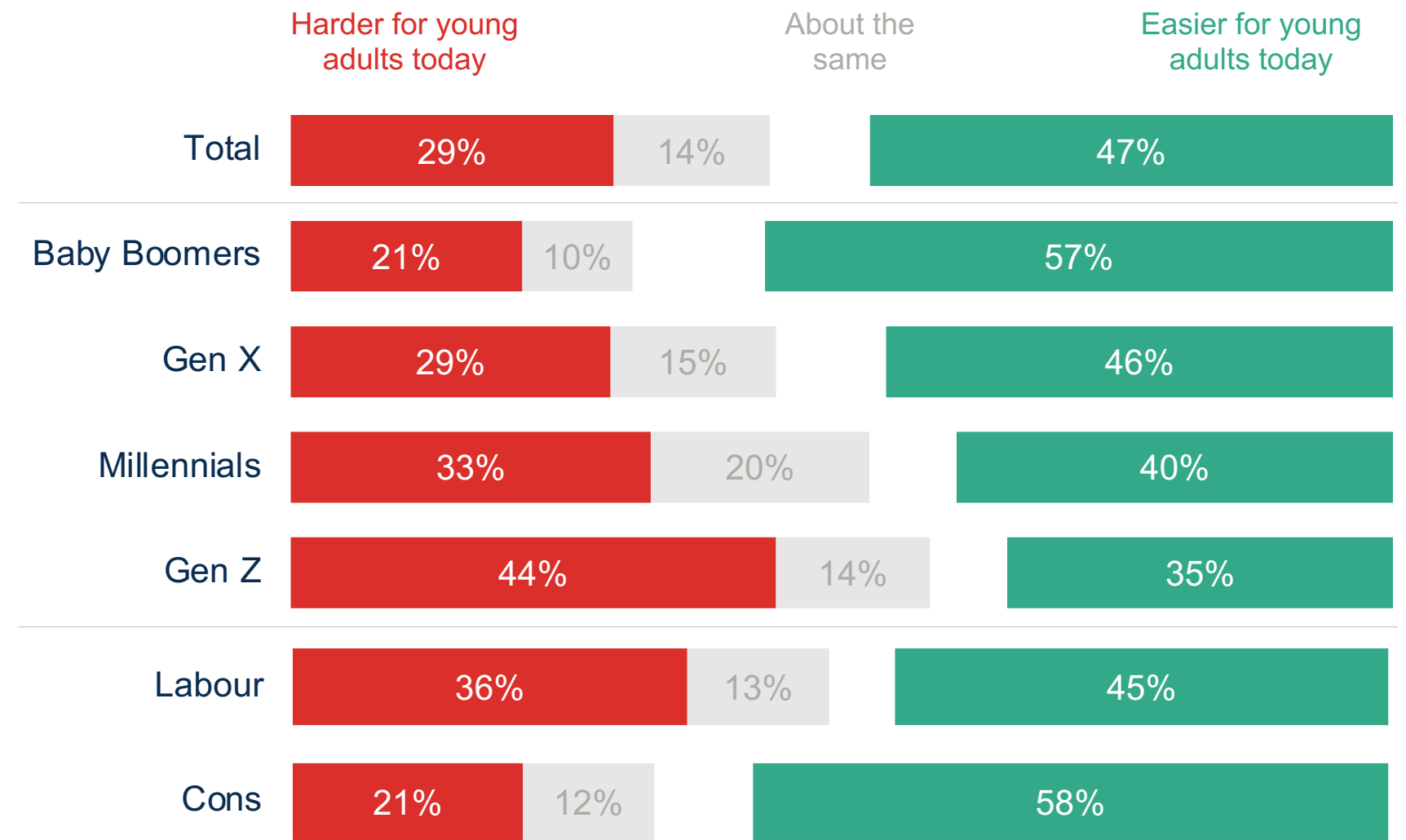


Older generations are more likely to say that it's easier for young adults today to get into university than it was for their parents' generation.

Gen Z are the only cohort with a higher proportion who feel this is harder than easier for young people today (44% vs 35%).

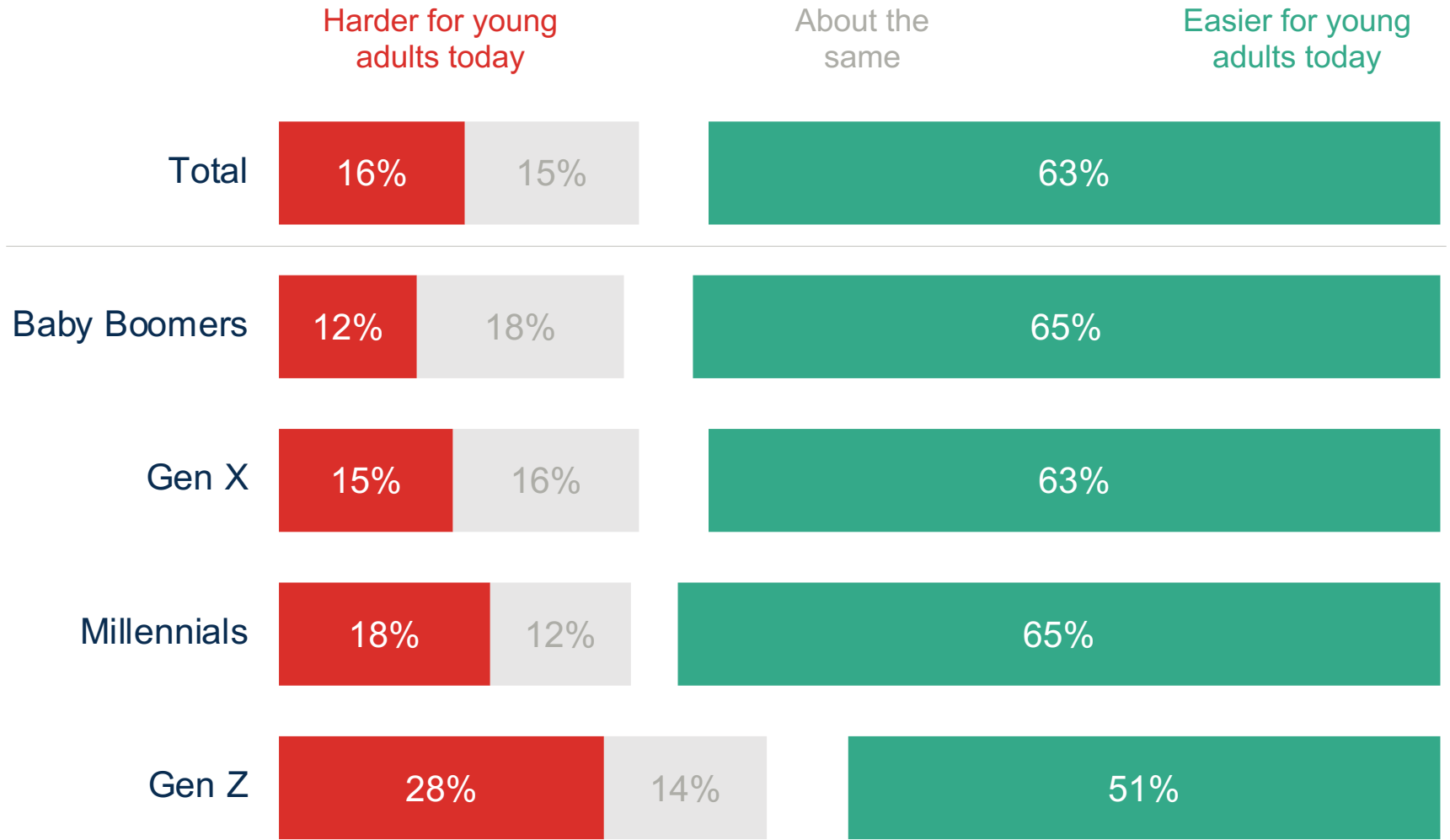
And there is a political divide in views, with 36% of 2019 Labour voters saying that entering university is harder today for young people, compared with 21% of Conservative voters who feel the same.

How do you think young adults today compare with their parents' generation on each of the following? **Getting into university**



Around two-thirds of all generations believe it is easier for young adults today to stay in touch with family and friends than it was for their parents' generation – except Gen Z, 51% of whom believe this is easier for today's youth.

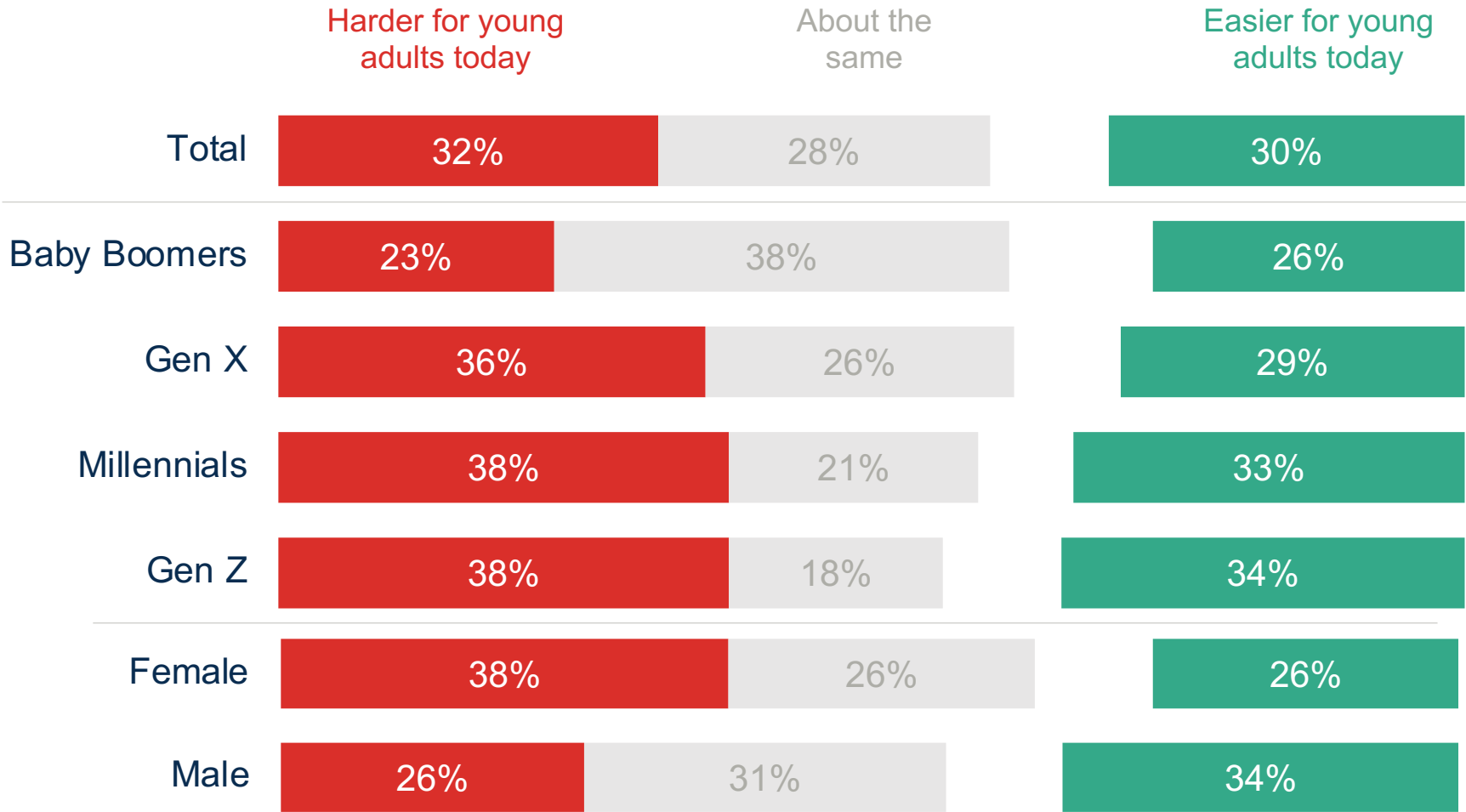
How do you think young adults today compare with their parents' generation on each of the following? **Staying in touch with family/friends**



Opinions are relatively divided across the generations on whether it is easier or harder today for young people to find a spouse or partner – but Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z are more likely than Baby Boomers to say it’s more difficult.

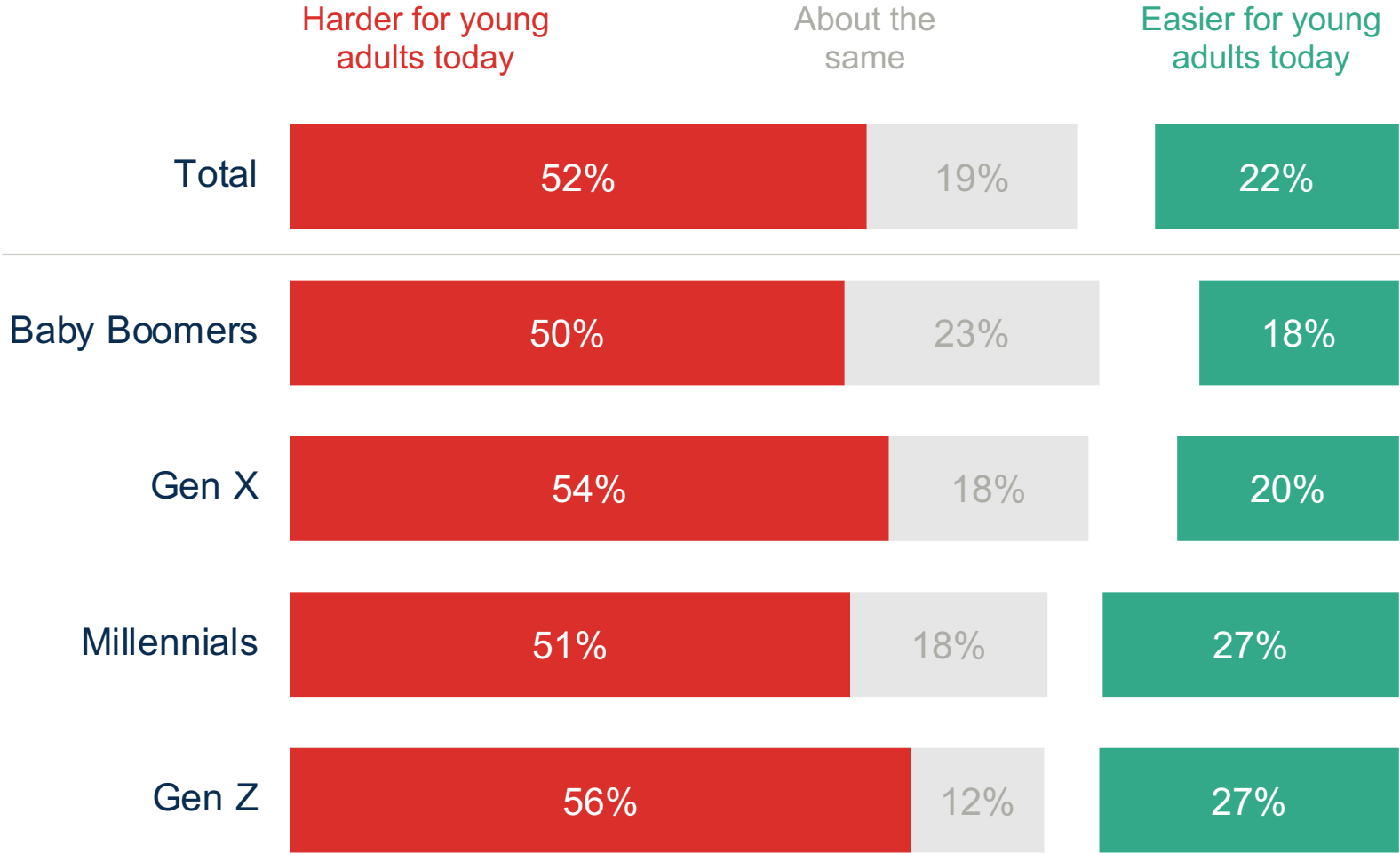
By 38% to 26%, women are also more likely than men to believe this is harder for young adults today.

How do you think young adults today compare with their parents' generation on each of the following? **Finding a spouse or partner**



There is relatively little variation in views on finding a job across the different generations – around half of all cohorts think it is harder for young adults today, compared with a fifth or more who believe it is easier.

How do you think young adults today compare with their parents' generation on each of the following? **Finding a job**

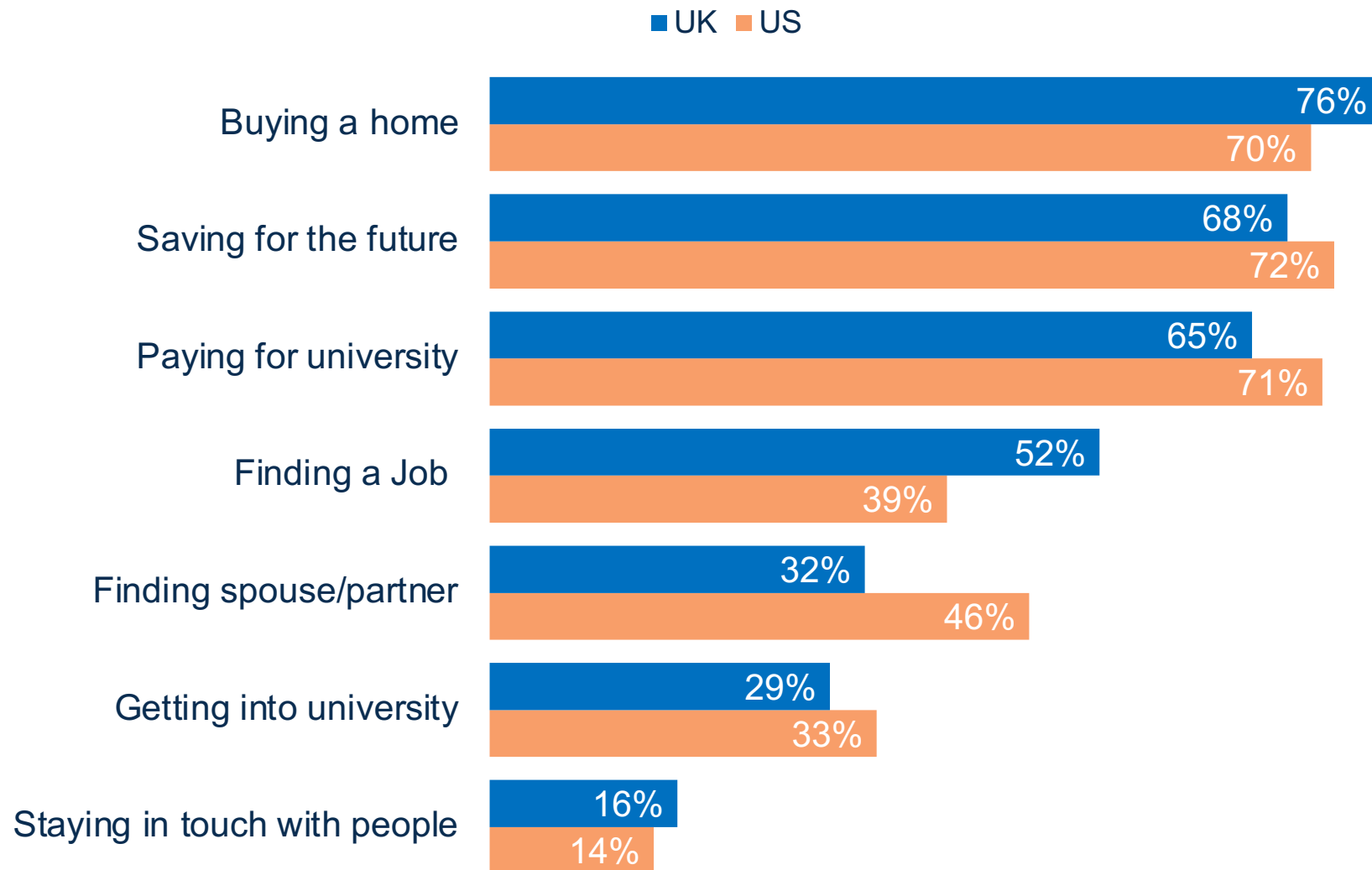


The US and UK show very similar attitudes towards the main challenges for young people today, with buying a home, saving for the future, and paying for university most likely to be seen as harder than it was for their parents' generation.

However the UK and US differ in views on some things: 39% in the US believe it is harder for young people today to find a job, compared with 52% of people in the UK who say the same.

And 46% of people in the US believe it is harder for today's youth to find a spouse/partner today, versus 32% in the UK.

How do you think young adults today compare with their parents' generation on each of the following? % who believe _____ is **harder** for young adults today...



Base: 2,291 UK adults aged 18+, interviewed 13 to 15 May 2022. US Data from [Pew Research Center](#).

Half the public correctly identify which generation they belong to – but there is considerable variation across cohorts, with Baby Boomers twice as likely as Gen Z to recognise which generation they're in.

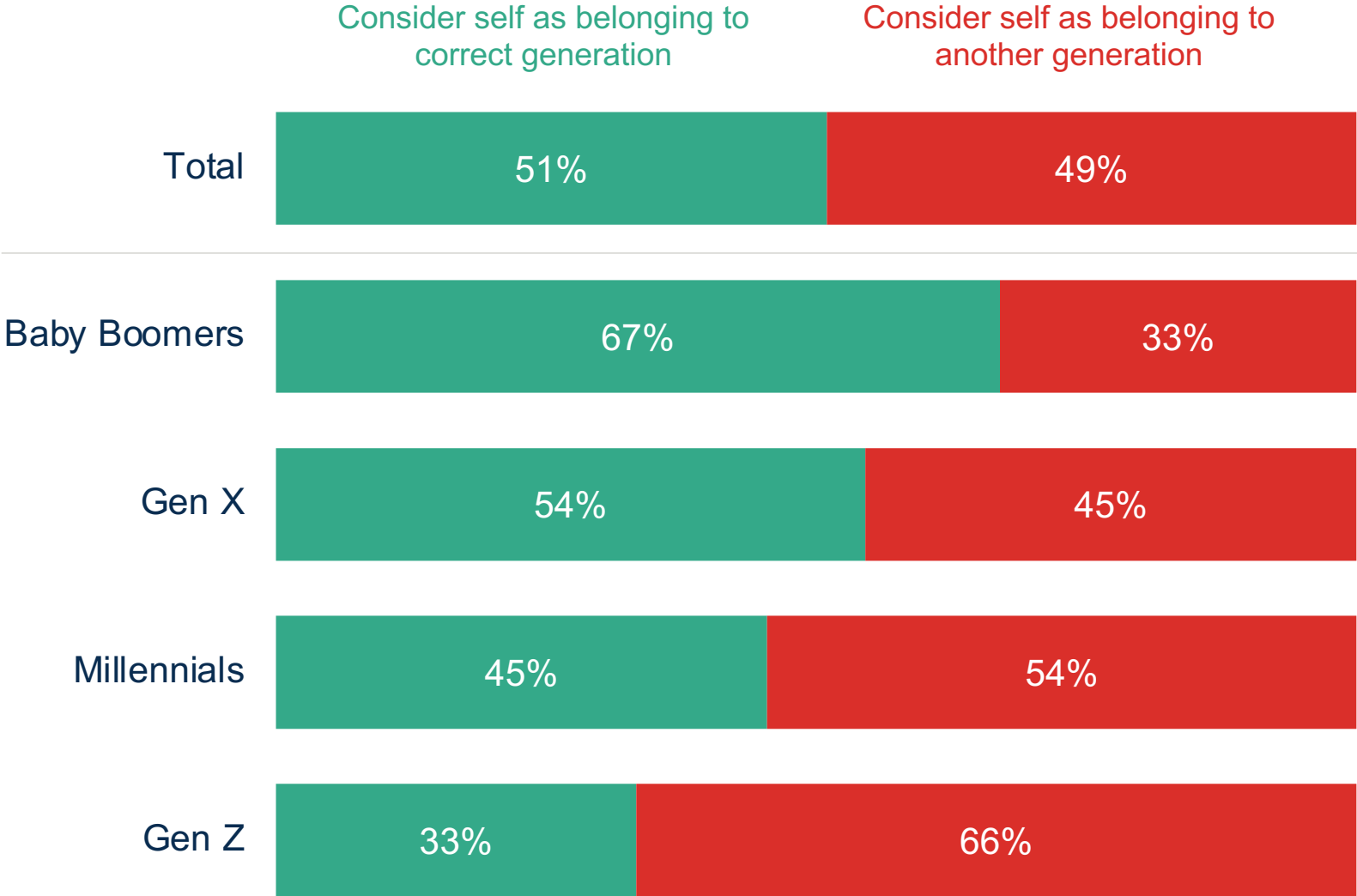
And only minorities of each group say they identify with their generational label.



Half (51%) of the public identify the correct generation for their age, while another half (49%) think of themselves as belonging to a different generation.

And there are big differences across the various cohorts: 67% of Baby Boomers recognise they are part of this generation, compared with 33% of Gen Z who correctly identify the generation they belong to.

These are some commonly used names for generations. Which of these, if any, do you consider yourself to be?



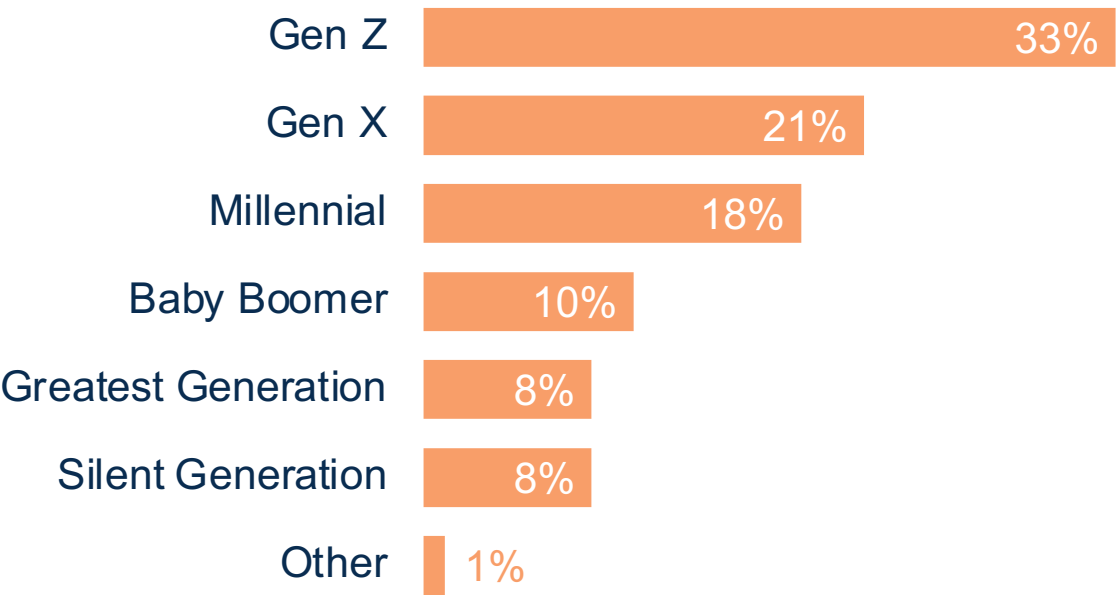
Of all the generations, Gen Z consider themselves to be part of the widest range of cohorts.

One in five (18%) think of themselves as Millennials, while another one in five (21%) think they are part of Gen X, and one in 10 (10%) see themselves as Baby Boomers.

These are some commonly used names for generations. Which of these, if any, do you consider yourself to be?



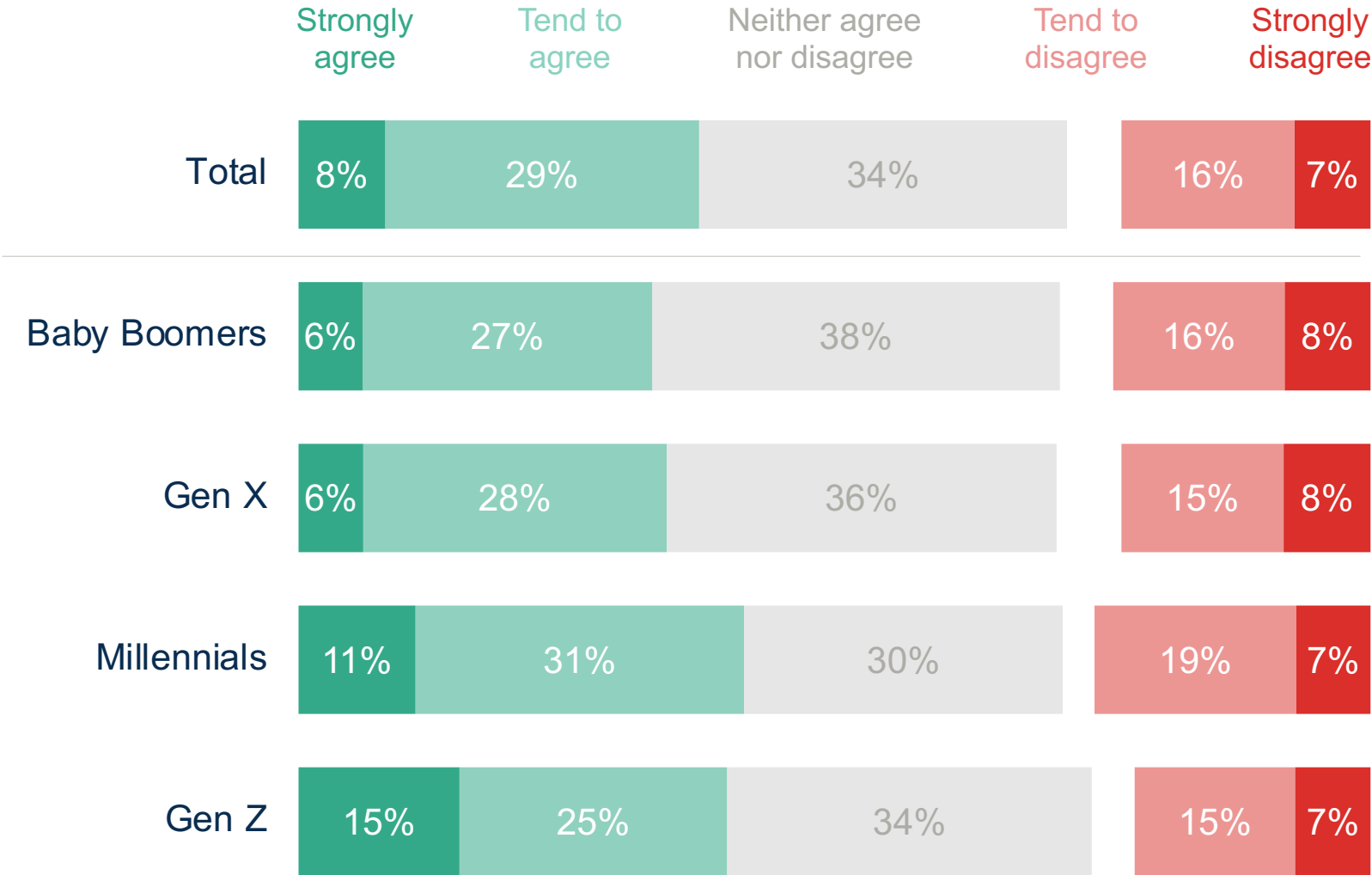
Which generations Gen Z think they belong to



37% of the public agree that they identify with their generational label, while 24% disagree and 34% neither agree nor disagree.

Although Baby Boomers are much more likely than other cohorts to correctly recognise which generation they belong to, only 33% say they identify with the label.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: **I identify with my generational label**



Base: 2,291 UK adults aged 18+, interviewed 13 to 15 May 2022

A majority of the public say they think generational labels are about as useful as star signs, and that other characteristics are much more important to analyse.

But at the same time, around half also say that differences between generational groups are real and important to understand.

And while younger generations are most likely to feel that generational labels are largely used to promote lazy stereotypes, they're also most likely to say they enjoy reading articles about differences between generations.

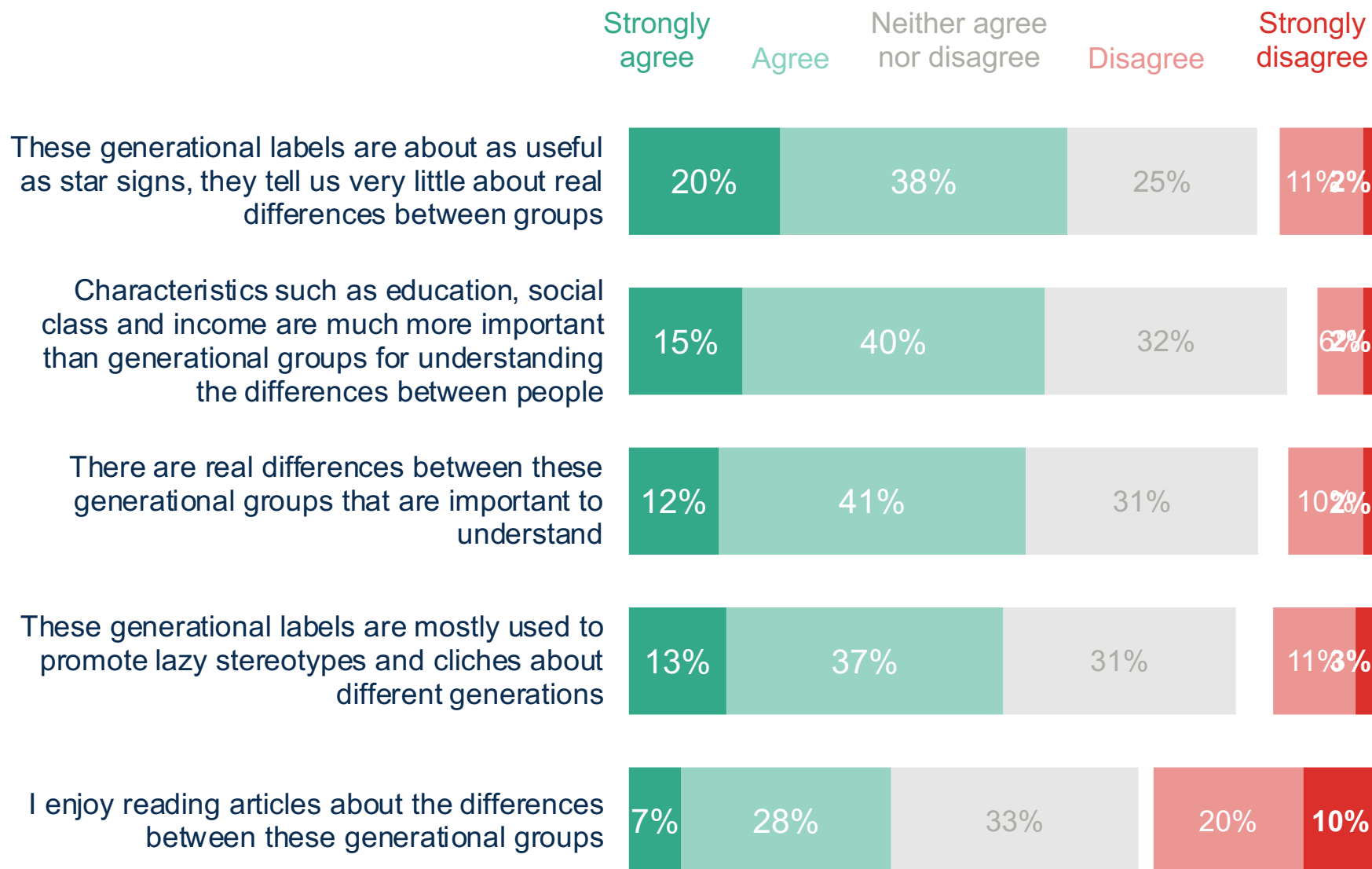


Six in 10 (58%) people think that generational labels are as useful as star signs, and tell us little about differences between groups, with a similar proportion (56%) saying they believe characteristics such as education, class and income are more important in understanding differences between people.

However, at the same time, around half (53%) the public do believe there are real differences between generational groups that are important to understand.

And the public are much more likely to agree (50%) than disagree (14%) that generational labels are mostly used to promote lazy stereotypes.

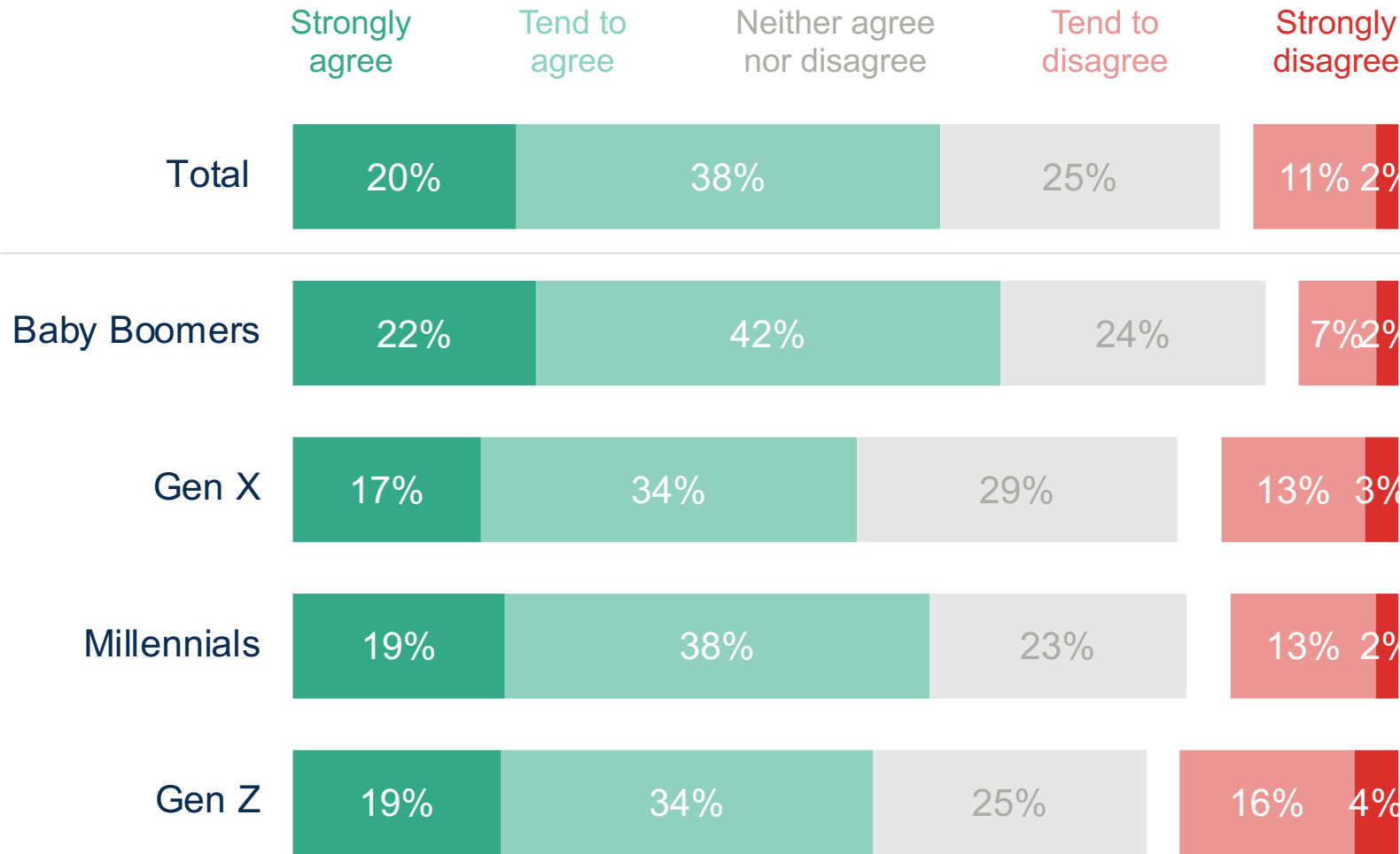
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements...



Baby Boomers (64%) are the cohort most likely to say generational labels are about as useful as star signs, even though this group do best at identifying the generation they belong to.

Nevertheless, majorities of all generations feel generational labels are about as useful as star signs.

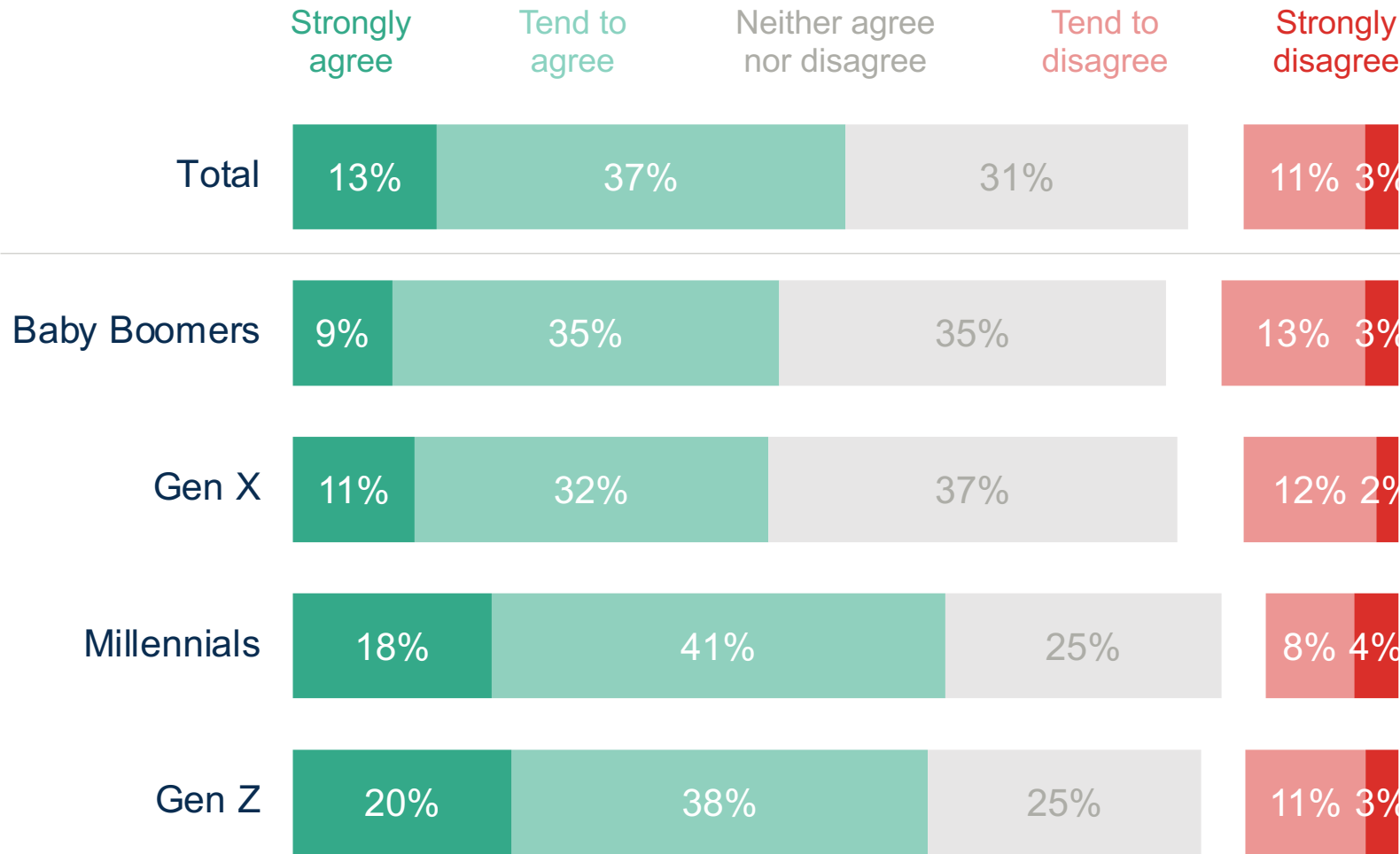
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: **These generational labels are about as useful as star signs, they tell us very little about real differences between groups**



On the question of whether generational labels are mostly used to promote lazy stereotypes, younger generations are more likely than older ones to agree with this view – for example, 59% of Millennials hold this opinion, compared with 44% of Baby Boomers.

However, each generation is more likely to agree than disagree with this statement.

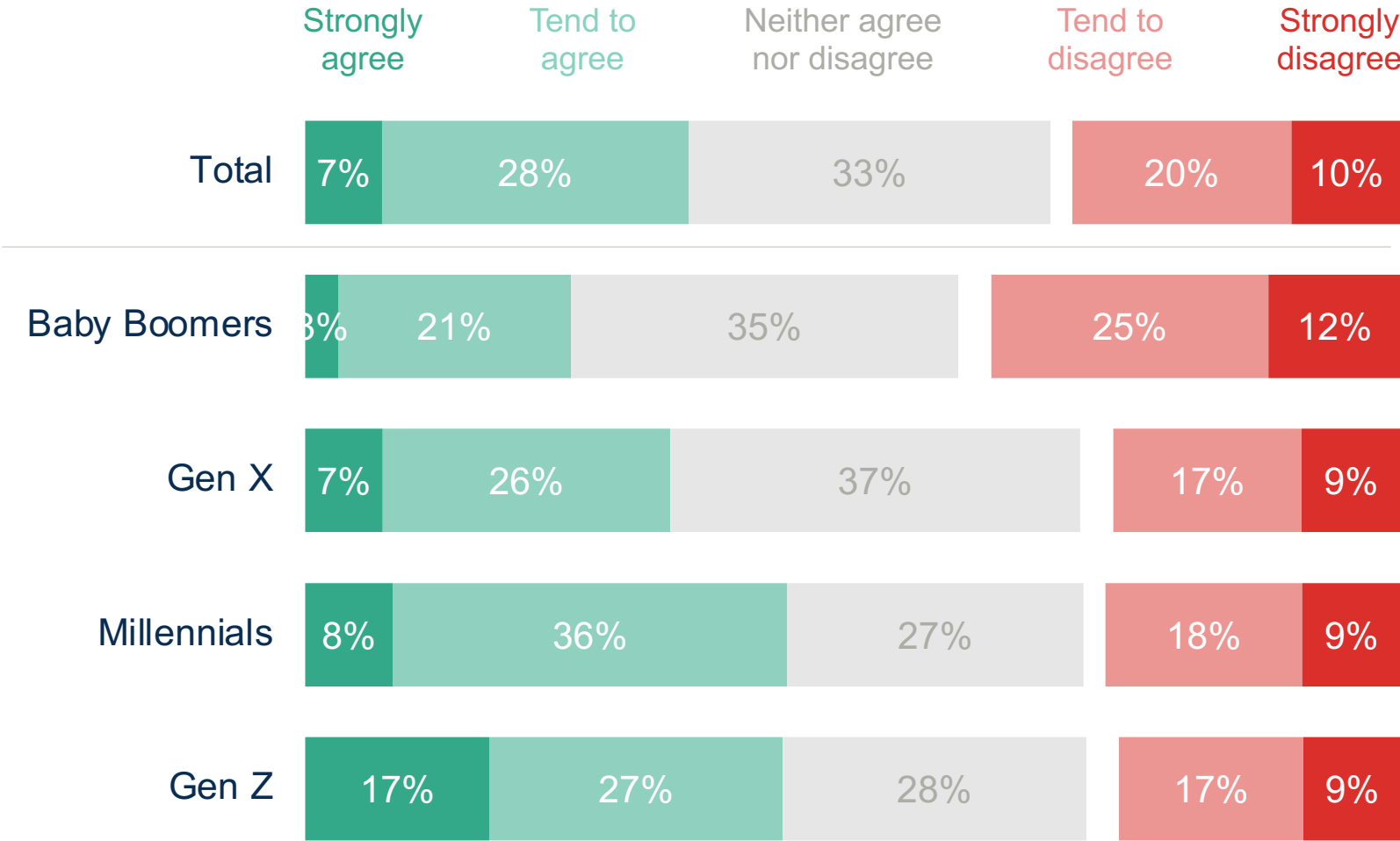
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: **These generational labels are mostly used to promote lazy stereotypes and clichés about different generations**



But while younger generations are most likely to say generational labels are largely used to promote lazy stereotypes, they are also most likely to say they enjoy reading articles about the differences between generational groups.

For example, 44% of Gen Z say they enjoy doing so – almost double the 24% of Baby Boomers who say the same.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: **I enjoy reading articles about the differences between these generational groups**

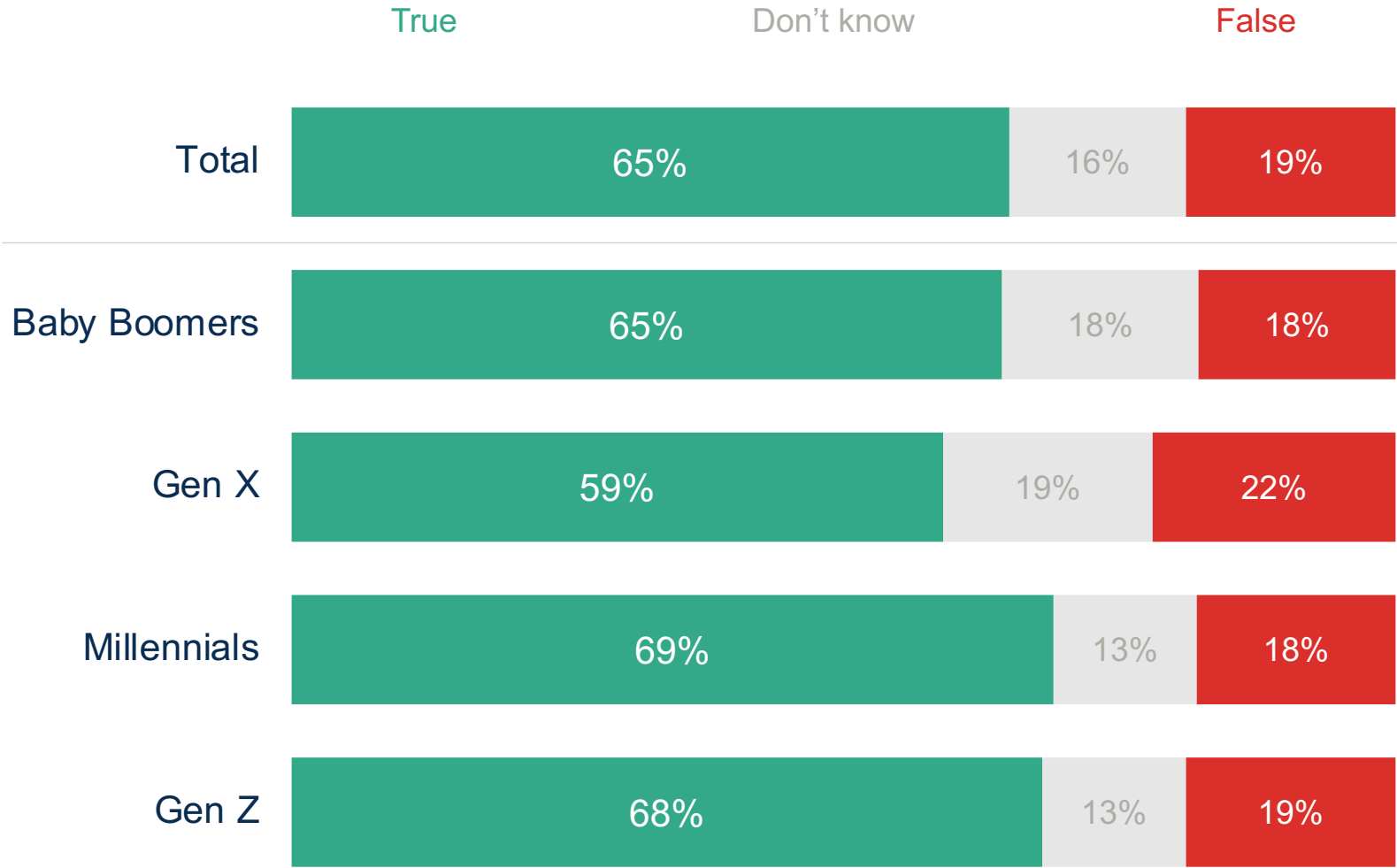


Generational separation is an issue in the UK today – and most of the public correctly recognise that younger people and older people tend to live in different types of places, but they wrongly believe this has always been the case, when in fact it's a more recent development.



Two-thirds of the public, and similar proportions of all generations, correctly recognise that there is a geographical divide in where younger and older people live in the UK.

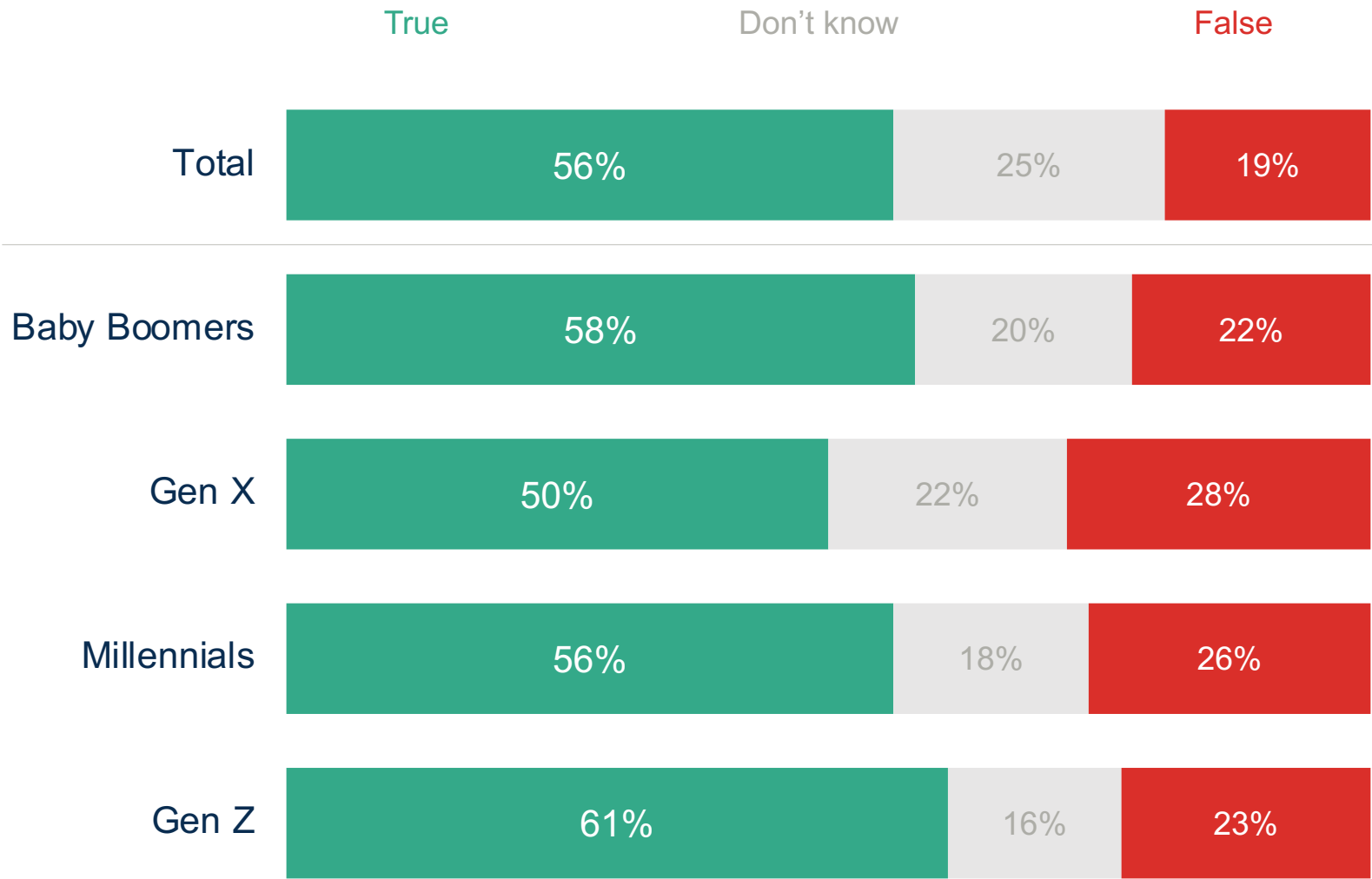
Are the following statements true or false? **Young adults in the UK are more likely to live in large cities, while older people are more likely to live in smaller towns, villages and rural areas**



Base: 2,291 UK adults aged 18+, interviewed 13 to 15 May 2022

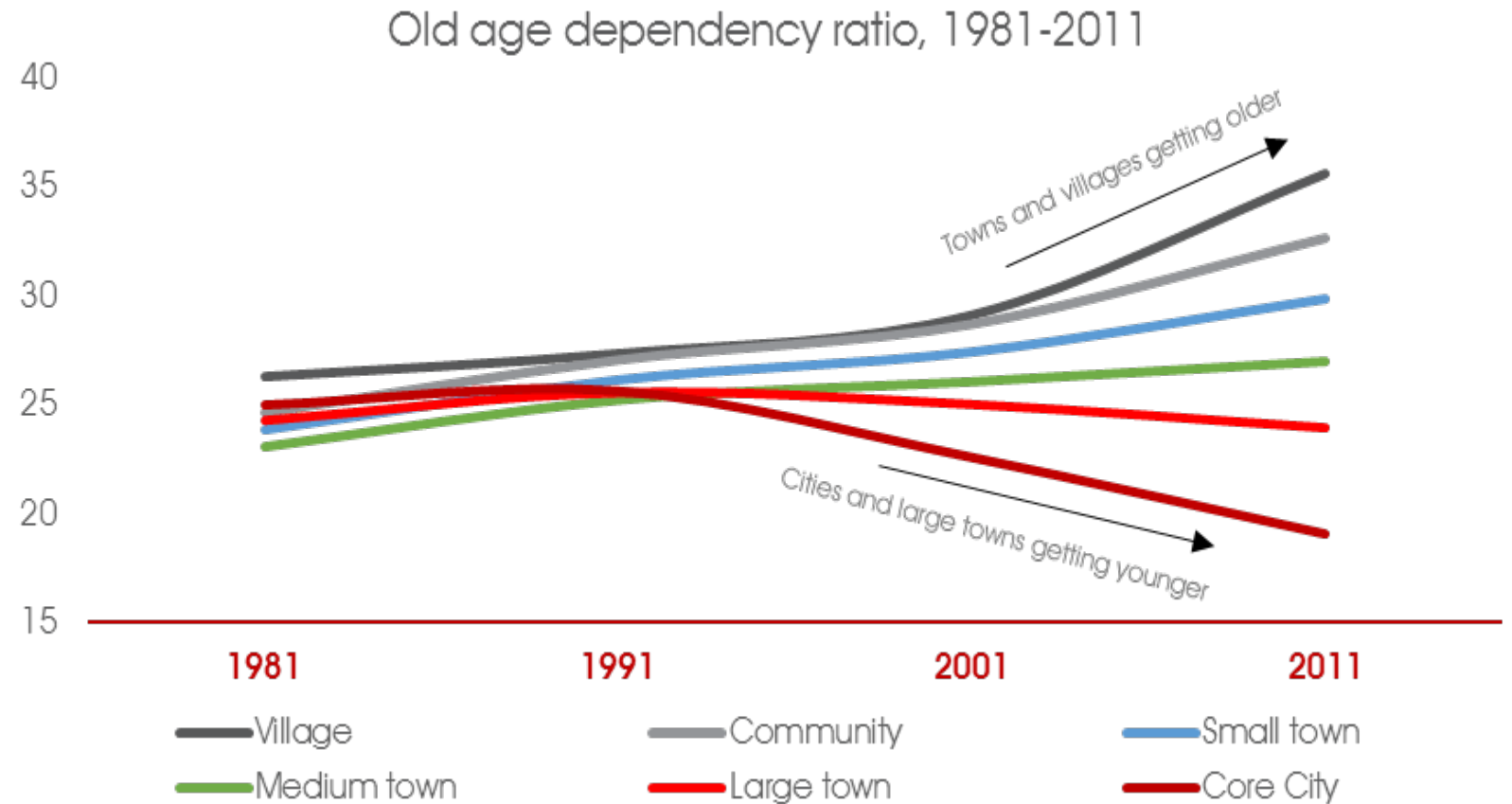
But most of the public also – wrongly – think this geographical divide has always been the case, when the reality is it began in the 1990s. Until then, there was less of a difference in where older and younger generations lived...

Are the following statements true or false? **It's always been the case in the UK that young adults were more likely to live in cities and older people in smaller towns, villages and rural areas**



Base: 2,291 UK adults aged 18+, interviewed 13 to 15 May 2022

...as research by the Centre for Towns shows, comparing the old age dependency ratio between different types of settlement, using Census data.



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Technical details

Savanta ComRes surveyed 2,291 UK adults aged 18+ online between 13 and 15 May 2022. Data were weighted to be representative of UK adults by age, gender, region and social grade. Savanta ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Data tables are available at www.comresglobal.com

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