

**BFPG**

British Foreign Policy Group



# The UK's Foreign Policy Tribes:

Understanding Polarisation and  
Cohesion on International Affairs

Sophia Gaston and Evie Aspinall

## Table of Contents

---

This Report .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Introducing the Foreign Policy Tribes .....	6
1. Social Groups and Demographics .....	7
2. The Political Dynamics of the Four Foreign Policy Tribes .....	10
3. National and International Identities .....	13
4. Mobility, Knowledge and Engagement .....	15
5. Foreign Policy Attitudes .....	17

---

# This Report

This report presents the findings of an ongoing partnership between the BFPG and Opinium to investigate the complex, evolving nature of UK public opinion on foreign affairs. Opinium conducts the fieldwork for the BFPG's Annual Survey of Public Opinion on Foreign Policy and Global Britain – the most comprehensive dataset of public attitudes towards international affairs. To bring the results to life, the BFPG and Opinium have worked together to segment the UK adult population into four foreign policy 'tribes' across the full spectrum of public opinion.

The segmentation demonstrates both the important areas of convergence and divergence in public opinion on international affairs, as well as helping to quantify the electoral power of each of the tribes. The findings reveal a deeply polarised nation, but with important pathways to unity and consensus, which must be harnessed as the UK seeks to become 'a truly Global Britain'.

## The British Foreign Policy Group

The British Foreign Policy Group (BFPG) is an independent, non-partisan think tank dedicated to advancing the UK's global influence, at a crucial time in the nation's modern history. Our core objective is to bridge the link between the domestic and international spheres – recognising that Britain's foreign policy choices are shaped by our social landscape at home, and the social, economic and political constraints of both our allies and strategic rivals. BFPG works as the connective tissue between the UK's policy-makers, businesses, institutions, and ordinary citizens, to promote the connectivity and understanding needed to underpin Britain's national resilience and global leadership in the 21st Century. The BFPG believes that a strong and united nation at home is the essential foundation of a confident and effective British foreign policy.



[www.bfpg.co.uk](http://www.bfpg.co.uk)

## Opinium

Opinium an award-winning strategic insight agency, built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on the pulse of what people think, feel and do. Reliable public opinion data and its interpretation is crucial to helping policy makers make better decision that respond to and take account of the views of citizens.



[www.opinium.com](http://www.opinium.com)

---

# Introduction

Public opinion on foreign policy has traditionally been an under-studied area, and certainly has not been afforded the same weight as the ‘bread and butter’ issues of domestic policy. Yet, studying Britons’ attitudes towards international affairs reveals much about citizens’ instincts, and the ways in which aspects of life in modern Britain have come to shape these. In particular, foreign policy provides the lens through which the UK’s challenges of governance, and the fragile and dynamic nature of the coalitions within the two major political parties, are laid bare. Working through the enormous dataset produced for the BFPG’s 2021 Annual Survey of UK Public Opinion on Foreign Policy and Global Britain this year, it quickly became clear that while foreign policy attitudes are being shaped in real time, there are also distinct constituencies to be distinguished, which are not always visible within our horse-race politics.

Working with our partners at Opinium Research, we have segmented the British adult population into four distinct foreign policy tribes: The Humanitarians, The Globalists, The Patriots and The Isolationists. Of these, we can see that the single largest tribe is in fact ‘The Humanitarians’, bringing together 32% of the population, followed by ‘The Isolationists’, at 28% of the population. The fact that the two most substantial groups are deeply polarised in their instincts indicates the scale of the challenge to govern to the heart of the nation, and underscores the roots of the volatility and the emotional nature of public debate over recent years. Of the two other groups, ‘The Patriots’ is the next largest, at 22% and ‘The Globalists’ is the smallest, at 17%.

What is important to note, is that the genuine political realignment that has taken place around Brexit identities cannot accommodate the full spectrum of tribal political party loyalties. For example, a considerable cohort of Conservative voters who backed Remain in the EU Referendum continued to vote with the party under Boris Johnson’s leadership in the 2019 General Election. And while they are no longer the dominant force in the party, they continue to represent an important constituency. Moreover, it increasingly appears that it will often be their principles which will serve as the lodestar to guide the substance of the Government’s Global Britain agenda – even if this agenda is balanced against principles of resilience and security more amenable to their Leave-voting counterparts. Similarly, although committed Remain voters are now the primary cohort within the Labour Party, they exist within the Party alongside a cabal of dogged Leave voters. At times, their foreign policy instincts align, but more often than not these groups find themselves at the extremities of public opinion.

Moreover, it is important to recognise that the same positions towards issues may be formed through very different instincts or life experiences, or may act as a proxy expression for a desire towards different outcomes. At the BFPG, we certainly emphasise the need to understand citizens as individuals, and that it is equally valuable to interrogate the formation of public opinion as to have access to the opinions themselves. That said, it is instructive to present the information in this manner so as to better articulate the electoral agency and influence of groups who may, at times, cleave closely onto different political affiliations, and at others, may reveal themselves to hold the potential to serve as a bridge across them.

Our four tribes demonstrate both the stubborn gulfs between different groups of citizens’ foreign policy instincts, but also the capacity for dynamic and meaningful political influence, and the powerful axis of the ‘centre ground’ of British attitudes. It is important to give credence to each of these phenomena – in particular, the gravity of the force underpinning this ‘pulling apart’, and the resilient foundation of commonality. These two powerful dynamics, evolving in new and unusual ways, will chart both the obstacles and opportunities facing the Government in building an enduring degree of public consent towards the UK’s foreign policy ambitions.

## Introduction

---

We recognise that the BFPG's annual survey – being the most comprehensive study ever undertaken into British foreign policy attitudes – is an enormous dataset that can feel overwhelming and unwieldy in its scope. We hope that this segmentation will help to bring its stories to life, in a way that provides a snapshot of the nation as a whole, and where the points of friction and consensus are likely to eventuate in the public sphere. Moreover, to underscore just how important foreign policy attitudes are to understanding the broader social and political landscape in contemporary Britain – and that conjuring a sense of shared purpose and values around foreign policy will be essential to breaking down some of the polarisation that has gripped our society and our politics in recent years.

**Sophia Gaston**  
**Director of the British Foreign Policy Group**

---

# Introducing the Foreign Policy Tribes

## The Humanitarians

The Humanitarians are disproportionately likely to live in London or the South of England more generally, or the Midlands – likely concentrated within Birmingham, and are less concentrated in Wales. They are predominantly younger in age, comprising both white- and blue-collar workers, with their age being the primary defining characteristic in shaping their preference for a values-driven foreign policy. They are also more likely to be women. There is a strong relationship with both Remain in the EU referendum and support for the Labour Party, with 69% of all Labour-Remain voters falling into the Humanitarians tribe. Half of Liberal Democratic-Remain voters are also members of this tribe, as are just over a fifth (21%) of Conservative-Remain voters. This tribe are more likely to adopt internationalist than patriotic identities, and 40% of this tribe are readers of The Guardian newspaper.

## The Globalists

The Globalists are much more geographically dispersed around the UK, although they are somewhat more concentrated in London and Scotland, and less concentrated in the Midlands. They are principally defined by their professional and ‘white-collar’ status, bringing together both older and younger members. They tend to assume both internationalist and patriotic identities and disproportionately tend to be men. The most popular newspaper among this group is The Times. They are primarily constituted by Conservative-Remain voters, of whom 51% reside in this group, with the second-largest cohort represented by Liberal Democrat-Remain voters, of whom 28% fall into this tribe.

## The Patriots

The geographical distribution of The Patriots brings together a number of different groups. Its members are disproportionately likely to reside in Wales, and less likely on average to live in London. This group is also primarily defined by its age – bringing together older citizens in both the professional and more blue-collar occupations. They are disproportionately White British men and are most likely to be readers of the Daily Mail. Around half (48%) of Conservative-Leave voters belong in this group, and are the largest single constituency, followed by Leave voters affiliated with smaller parties or who do not vote, and just over a fifth of Labour-Leave voters (22%). They are more likely to adopt patriotic rather than internationalist identities, with 39% identifying only as ‘patriots’.

## The Isolationists

The Britons who fall into the Isolationists tribe are most concentrated in the North of England and least concentrated in London. But they are also over-represented in Scotland – emphasising the degree of mythology underpinning the concept of a homogeneously progressive, internationalist vision for an independent Scotland. The defining characteristic of this group is their socio-economic status – bringing together ‘blue-collar’ workers from both younger and older age groups. They are disproportionately female and school-leavers, and 43% do not read newspapers. A higher proportion of Labour-Leave voters are to be found within this tribe (43%) than Conservative-Leave voters (32%), but the larger size of the Conservative-Leave cohort – in part, due to the exodus of Leave voters from the Labour Party – means that Conservative-Leave voters are more numerous. They tend to reject both patriotic and international identities.

# Social Groups and Demographics

## Demographic Characteristics

The UK's foreign policy tribes bring together different social and political groups, but also feature distinct demographic compositions. Ethnically, White Britons are most likely to be found in the Patriots tribe, followed by The Isolationists, The Globalists and The Humanitarians. Hence, BAME Britons are most heavily concentrated in the Humanitarians tribe. Men are more likely to be found in The Globalists (55%) and The Patriots (55%) tribes, which comprise 10 percentage points fewer women. In turn, women are more likely to be situated in the two tribes at the extreme ends of British foreign policy, The Humanitarians (53%) and The Isolationists (58%). The gender distinctions within these tribes emphasises the correlation between gender and other factors influential in shaping citizens' confidence, engagement, instincts and values.

Age also plays a fundamental sorting role between our four tribes. Britons under 35 years are most likely to be found in the Humanitarians group, in which they represent 38% of its members. They are also much more likely to be situated in the Globalists (27%) or Isolationists (25%) groups – in part due to the outsized relationship between patriotism and the particular world view of the Patriots group, and generational differences. Significantly, most of the working-age population between 35 and 65 years are relatively evenly distributed across the four tribes, however distinct patterns emerge again amongst the older group of citizens, with those aged over 65 years distinctly more likely to be situated in the Patriots tribe (33%) than any other.

Significant distinctions can be observed around education. The best-educated group are the Globalists tribe, of whom 57% are graduates, followed by the Humanitarians tribe, of whom 52% are graduates – compared to 42% of the population as a whole. The two more 'conservative' and less internationalist tribes both have significantly lower proportions of their members with graduate degrees, with only 36% of the Patriots tribe and 28% of the Isolationists tribe having attended university. The majority of members of these tribes have no further education and are therefore classified as school leavers, at significantly higher levels than the population as a whole.

	UK Overall	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
Graduate	42 %	52 %	57 %	36 %	28 %
FE College	13 %	13 %	12 %	13 %	14 %
School Leaver	44 %	36 %	31 %	51 %	58 %

Geographically, Britons who live in cities are most likely to be found in the Humanitarians group, where they make up 39% of its members, followed by the Globalists group (37%). Those in towns are most likely to be found in the Patriots (41%) and Isolationists (40%) groups, indicating a particular city-town divide in foreign policy instincts. Interestingly, rural voters are evenly dispersed across the four tribes.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
City	39 %	37 %	30 %	33 %
Town	34 %	36 %	41 %	40 %
Rural	27 %	27 %	28 %	27 %

## 1. Social Groups and Demographics

Some distinctions are also evident in terms of lifetime mobility, with Britons who have moved the furthest distances within the UK from their place of birth, representing the largest single group in the Humanitarians tribe (33%), those born outside of the UK being most heavily concentrated in both the Humanitarians and Globalists tribes, and – interestingly – the single largest cohorts in both the Globalists and Isolationists tribes having continued to live in the same city, town or village where they were born. This last phenomenon likely reflects the distinctions in foreign policy instincts between those born in less prosperous communities with low levels of lifetime mobility, and those born in more prosperous communities – particularly large cities – who do not need to move around the nation in search of employment opportunities.

Looking at the geographical distribution of citizens throughout the UK, it is striking the degree to which citizens within these regions are relatively evenly distributed across the four tribes. There are three clear exceptions – residents in London are twice as likely to be situated in the Humanitarians and Globalists tribes, residents in the North are around 4-6 percentage points more likely to be found in the Isolationists camp, and residents in the South of England are around 4-7 percentage points less likely to be found in the Globalists tribe.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
North	21 %	23 %	23 %	27 %
Midlands	17 %	15 %	16 %	16 %
London	17 %	18 %	10 %	9 %
South	32 %	27 %	34 %	31 %
Wales	4 %	5 %	7 %	4 %
Scotland	8 %	9 %	7 %	10 %
Northern Ireland	2 %	3 %	3 %	4 %

Our four tribes capture the profound influence of socio-economic factors in shaping foreign policy attitudes, and the important ways that these compound with age to produce distinct preferences and instincts. For example, younger professional workers are concentrated in the Humanitarians and Globalists camps, where they make up 31% and 28% of the tribe's membership respectively. By contrast, younger blue-collar workers are split between the Humanitarians and Isolationists tribes, in which they represent 24% of each group. Older professionals tend to be situated in the two 'middle ground' tribes of The Globalists and The Patriots, while older blue-collar workers are distinctly located in the Patriots and Isolationists camps.

It is important to note that there are some differences in the relative size of these four groups of citizens, with the smallest group being the younger blue-collar workers (20% of the electorate), with both older blue-collar workers and younger professionals making up a quarter (24%) of the electorate each, and the largest single group being older professionals (32%) – emphasising the relationship between this group and the 'mid-point' of the nation.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
Younger professionals	31 %	28 %	17 %	19 %
Younger blue collar	24 %	14 %	14 %	24 %
Older professionals	31 %	41 %	39 %	22 %
Older blue collar	15 %	17 %	30 %	35 %

## 1. Social Groups and Demographics

---

### Newspaper Readership

Given their close relationship to political identities, it will come as no surprise that newspaper readerships sort themselves between our four tribes – although the degree to which they are concentrated in any one political tribe varies significantly between the newspapers. The most heavily condensed readers are those of The Guardian, who make up 40% of the Humanitarians tribe, followed by Daily Mail readers, who represent 34% of the Patriots tribe. Britons who do not read newspapers are also heavily concentrated in the Isolationists camp – representing 43% of its members – emphasising the relationship between social and political disengagement and isolationist impulses.

Other notable trends include the fact that both Daily Mail and The Sun readers are more likely to be aligned with the Isolationists camp than any other newspaper readership, and readers of the Financial Times, The Times, The I/Independent and The Guardian are distinctly unlikely to be found in the Isolationists tribe. The Globalists tribe is somewhat more dispersed than others amongst newspaper readership, with the largest proportion of its members readers of The Guardian, followed by the Daily Mail, and The Times.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
Daily Mail	16 %	26 %	34 %	24 %
The Guardian	40 %	29 %	11 %	6 %
The Times	16 %	19 %	14 %	5 %
The Sun	9 %	11 %	18 %	14 %
Daily Telegraph	12 %	16 %	15 %	9 %
The I / Independent	20 %	15 %	9 %	5 %
Daily Mirror	10 %	10 %	13 %	9 %
Daily Express	7 %	12 %	14 %	7 %
Financial Times	8 %	10 %	7 %	3 %
None of these	27 %	23 %	29 %	43 %

# The Political Dynamics of the Four Foreign Policy Tribes

## Leave and Remain

The Remain-Leave split that emerged in the 2016 Referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union has allowed our political debate to fall into the seemingly immovable framework of a fixed dichotomy, with two sides pitted against one another in an endless battle fought at the margins. However, it is clear from our survey that, with the exception of the question on the ballot nearly five years ago, neither of these camps is especially cohesive. Foreign policy and international affairs, in particular, appear to expose this complex underbelly.

Broadly, two 'tribes' align strongly with each Brexit position, emphasising the importance of focusing not only on the distinctions between Leave and Remain but those which also persist within the camps themselves. Moreover, just how misplaced and reductive many of the generalisations directed across the aisle have been. The Remain vote is distributed between the Humanitarians and Globalists tribes, and the Leave vote is distributed amongst the Patriots and Isolationists tribes. It is important to note that the Humanitarians and Patriots tribes are the most homogenous in terms of their representation of one side of the Leave or Remain divide, while The Isolationists is slightly more mixed and The Globalists is considerably more mixed.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
Remain	83 %	63 %	20 %	26 %
Leave	17 %	37 %	80 %	74 %

We can interpret the relative diversity of Leave and Remain membership of the Isolationists tribe – with just over a quarter of The Isolationists having voted for Remain – as capturing the distinctive isolationist impulse of a small sub-section of Remain voters. We can deduce from our broader dataset that these Britons are likely to be from lower socio-economic and ethnic minority backgrounds, and carry a high level of both generalised insecurity and disengagement from UK foreign policy and political life more generally. In turn, the Leave voters which fall into the Globalists camp are likely to be younger, more liberal and internationalist in their instincts than other Leave voters.

That said, it is essential to underscore once again the relative size of each of these tribes within the electorate. In absolute numbers, the vast majority (78%) of the Leave vote is concentrated in the Patriots and Isolationists camps, with just 12% of the Leave vote in the Globalists tribe and around 10% in the Humanitarians camp. Similarly, 52% of Remain voters are in the Humanitarians tribe, 23% are in the Globalists tribe, 11% are in the Patriots tribe and 14% are in the Isolationists tribe.

## Brexit Tribes within the Major Parties

One of the most fascinating aspects of this segmentation analysis work is that it enables us to understand the scale of the different tribes within the political electorate – their electoral agency, which may not always align with their political agency. We can see, for example, that Conservative-Leave voters (34% of the electorate) are by far and away the largest single political group in Britain today – demonstrating the value in having found a way to reconcile this previously disparate group of voters. However, the second-largest single group is Labour-Remain voters (21% of the electorate), underscoring their ongoing significance to not only the Labour Party, but their voice and stake in the UK's political future. Conservative-Remain (10%),

## 2. The Political Dynamics of the Four Foreign Policy Tribes

Leave voters aligned with smaller parties (10%), Remain voters in smaller parties (9%) and Liberal Democrat-Remain (9%) voters are the next-largest groups, and the Leave voters who have continued to stay loyal to the Labour Party are the smallest group (8%).

2019 General Election and 2016 EU Referendum	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
Conservative-Remain	7 %	28 %	4 %	6 %
Conservative-Leave	7 %	26 %	61 %	43 %
Labour-Remain	47 %	11 %	8 %	9 %
Labour-Leave	6 %	6 %	7 %	14 %
Lib Dem-Remain	15 %	15 %	4 %	3 %
Smaller Parties Remain	15 %	8 %	3 %	8 %
Smaller Parties Leave	4 %	5 %	13 %	17 %

Overall, it is evident from this exercise that there are two key intersections of foreign policy attitudes with political significance. The first is the synergy within the 'centre ground' of Conservative Leave and Remain voters; however, the proportion of these groups that come together is relatively small – just a fraction of both sides. In examining this meeting point, we can clearly see the distinction of the 'Liberal Leave' cohort, which tends to be vocal and visible in Westminster, but is less representative of the Leave coalition as a whole.

The second congruence is found between Conservative-Remain and Liberal Democrat-Remain voters, who are perhaps more united on many aspects of foreign policy than other policy areas. It is clear, however, that these views were not held with such conviction by Conservative-Remain voters so as to trump their other voting motivations – whether their support for other aspects of the Conservative platform, their party loyalty, or their aversion to Jeremy Corbyn or the Liberal Democrats.

### Political Leadership

Given the broad intersection between the Leave-Remain divides and the political parties, it will come as no surprise that there are strong political trends pertaining to preference of Prime Minister between these four tribes. However, beneath the surface, we can also discern some nuances in terms of the role that foreign policy plays in questions of political leadership. This allows us to consider the more diffuse aspects of foreign policy attitudes outside of the issues areas themselves, the framework of security which helps citizens to sleep soundly at night.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
Boris Johnson	15 %	33 %	57 %	32 %
Keir Starmer	51 %	38 %	17 %	17 %
None of these	24 %	22 %	18 %	28 %
Don't know	10 %	7 %	9 %	23 %

It is often said that Britons' voting behaviour is not driven by foreign policy, but this fails to capture the importance of perceptions about leadership in foreign, defence and security policy in the construction of citizens' broader outlooks. Ultimately, if citizens are cautious or fearful about a leader's capacity to govern the nation in a time of global risk, crisis or upheaval, they are likely to develop a 'gut instinct' that turns them towards a more securitising candidate.

## 2. The Political Dynamics of the Four Foreign Policy Tribes

---

Head-to-head, Boris Johnson appears to have the upper hand against Keir Starmer, commanding the primary support of one dedicated tribe (The Patriots) and two further tribes with a substantial base of support (The Globalists and The Isolationists), with only one tribe (The Humanitarians) distinctly repelled. Keir Starmer holds the support of one tribe (The Humanitarians), and although the Globalists tribe also leans slightly more towards supporting him than Boris Johnson, two further tribes (The Patriots and The Isolationists) have not yet warmed to the Labour leader. However, it is certainly true that the somewhat higher degree of support commanded by Starmer amongst the Globalists cohort may concern the Government, as much of this tribe's foreign policy preferences align closely with its ambitions for the UK's international engagement.

The other particularly striking aspect of this data is the large proportion of voters who are either unimpressed with both candidates or unsure of their positions – with the most isolationist voters (The Isolationists) and the most values-driven (The Humanitarians) the most likely to fall into this cohort. Further research should be undertaken to map the issues that may support the movement of these voters between political parties and candidates, and the role that foreign policy may play in shaping those decisions.

Our surveys have repeatedly emphasised the clear link between Britons' trust in the Government overall, and their trust in the Government to act in the public interest on foreign policy. This politicisation of 'the national interest' is clearly observed between our tribes. There is a strong correlation between the tribes' views about the best leader for the nation and their levels of trust on foreign policy, with the Patriots tribe (in which Conservative-Leave voters are over-represented) holding the highest levels of trust, at 61%, followed by the Globalists tribe (in which Conservative-Remain voters are over-represented), at 51%, and both the Isolationists (31%) and Humanitarians (25%) tribes considerably less inclined to trust the Government to act in the public's interest.

# National and International Identities

## International Identities

Looking at the tribes in terms of their international identities, we can see The Humanitarians are the most likely to see themselves solely as a global citizen or European (49%), followed by the Globalists tribe (24%). Curiously, the Isolationists (15%) tribe is somewhat more likely to only carry international identities than Patriots (10%) – likely due to the relatively lower degree of salience in this group about the Brexit identities and the vehement aversion held within the Patriots group towards the concept of European identity, as well as their expected attraction to only a singular patriotic identity.

The Globalists tribe is most inclined to carry both international and patriotic identities (55%), followed by the Patriots tribe (38%), and the Humanitarians tribe (32%). It is important to note that the Patriots tribe members are effectively equally inclined to carry both international and patriotic identities as they are to only regard themselves as patriots (39%). Both Ethical Britons (6%) and Global Britons (10%) are as distinctly disinclined to only hold a patriotic identity as Patriotic Britons (10%) are to only hold an internationalist identity. The Isolationists tribe, for its part, is most likely to not feel any affiliation with either a patriotic or international identity – likely relating to its members' lower levels of trust and engagement with British politics and institutions.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
Internationalist	49 %	24 %	10 %	15 %
Internationalist and Patriotic	32 %	55 %	38 %	19 %
Patriot	6 %	10 %	39 %	26 %
No real identity	13 %	11 %	13 %	40 %

## National and International Identities

Our survey has consistently revealed close and solidifying relationships between international identities and domestic political identities, and these are captured clearly within the distinct domains of our four tribes. Members of our Humanitarians and Globalists tribes are clearly aligned with both the 'global citizen' and 'European' identities, which we know have been generally held in an interchangeable way since the European Referendum. The Patriots and Isolationists tribes, by contrast, are considerably less likely to be receptive to these identities, with half the proportion of their members subscribing to them. In a simplistic fashion, we can discern that there are two fundamentally internationalist tribes and two fundamentally nation-focused tribes. That said, as ever, it should be noted that even these tribes do contain some degree of diversity, and hence, 23% of the Humanitarians tribe do not see themselves as global citizens, and 35% of the Patriots tribe do.

Patriotism cuts across the tribes in a fundamentally distinct manner. Although the Patriots tribe is clearly the most likely to identify with the 'patriotic' identity, with 77% of its members doing so, two-thirds (65%) of the members of the Globalists tribe also describe themselves as patriots. By contrast, the Humanitarians and Isolationists tribes are then distinct in their weak association with a patriotic identity, particularly the Humanitarians tribe, of whom only 37% describe themselves as patriots – even fewer than the Isolationists tribe, the most otherwise

### 3. National and International Identities

---

detached from the UK state and its institutions, of whom 45% self-identify as patriots. Interestingly, the two tribes with the weakest support for patriotism are the most likely to have significant portions of their members unsure about their positions, emphasising that the rejection of the patriotic identity can be a passive process, as much as an active force.

Turning to national identities, although the majority of citizens are relatively evenly distributed throughout our four tribes – including those who identify as ‘British’, the largest single group of citizens – the English identity is revealed to be distinct in its heterogeneous distribution. English identity is held by 50% of The Patriots and 44% of The Isolationists, compared to just 29% of The Humanitarians and 27% of The Globalists. The relative size of the Patriots cohort in the British electorate amplifies the significance of this English identity in terms of its relationship to foreign policy preferences and instincts.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
British	55 %	57 %	56 %	52 %
English	29 %	27 %	50 %	44 %
Welsh	6 %	5 %	6 %	6 %
Scottish	6 %	8 %	4 %	7 %
Northern Irish	3 %	2 %	1 %	2 %
Other	13 %	9 %	2 %	3 %

# Mobility, Knowledge and Engagement

## Travel Abroad

The research we have been undertaking over recent years at the BFPG to better understand the relationship between lived experiences of mobility and foreign policy preferences is made clearer in this segmentation process. It also reveals much about the misconceptions ascribed to certain political groups.

It is true that both the Patriots and Isolationists tribes are distinctively less likely to travel abroad than their more internationalist counterparts – particularly the Isolationists cohort, only half of which (53%) travelled abroad in the year before the pandemic. However, it is also the case that a larger proportion of members of the Globalists tribe (70%) travelled abroad in 2019 before the pandemic compared to any tribe – including the Humanitarians tribe, who were only half as likely to have travelled frequently.

The Humanitarians tribe of course brings together both very internationalist citizens with those who favour a values-driven foreign policy, and not all members of this group – for example, many of its BAME members – may possess the socio-economic circumstances that permit them to experience mobility with such ease. The Globalists tribe, by contrast, captures a larger proportion of economically secure internationalist citizens.

Interestingly, while the Globalists tribe was least deterred by the barriers put in place by the pandemic towards travel, with 39% of its members continuing to travel in 2020 for leisure, the pandemic appears to have encouraged a levelling out of the other distinctions between tribes. In effect, a similar proportion of Britons across all tribes were able to travel once or didn't travel at all, which rebalanced the disparities more visible when looking at the population as a whole. This suggests that the pandemic did promote some areas of common experience, with the interruption to international borders being one of them.

## Interest, Knowledge and Engagement in Foreign Affairs

Citizens' interest and engagement in foreign affairs varies dramatically between social groups, but also reflects something about citizens' instincts as well as their life circumstances. Considering the differences in engagement tells us something about the voice, representation and agency of these four tribes in our foreign policy and political culture. The distinctions are staggering – while half (49%) of citizens in the Globalists tribe and 46% of citizens in the Patriots tribe claim to be very interested in foreign affairs, just 2% of citizens in the Isolationists tribe feel the same. Overall, all members of the Patriots tribe self-report as being interested in foreign policy, followed by 85% of the Globalists tribe, 78% of the Humanitarians tribe and just 33% of the Isolationists tribe.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
Very interested	33 %	49 %	46 %	2 %
Fairly interested	45 %	36 %	53 %	31 %
Neither interested nor uninterested	16 %	12 %	0 %	50 %
Fairly uninterested	4 %	2 %	0 %	12 %
Very uninterested	2 %	1 %	0 %	5 %
INTERESTED	78 %	85 %	100 %	33 %
UNINTERESTED	5 %	3 %	0 %	17 %

#### 4. Mobility, Knowledge and Engagement

---

Moreover, although a knowledge gap exists for all citizens, the gaps are even larger amongst the less engaged groups. As such, while 94% of The Patriots members believe themselves to be informed about foreign policy, and 72% of The Globalists and 64% of The Humanitarians feel the same, just 10% of those in the Isolationists camp describe themselves as such.

#### Pride in UK Foreign Policy

One striking finding of our 2021 annual survey was the degree to which no particular aspect of the UK's foreign policy leapt out at the British people as a source of pride, with their pride being expressed in a diffuse way across a range of different areas. In effect, it appeared that foreign policy is seen as the sum of its parts. Nonetheless, there are variations to be observed across our four tribes. Members of the Patriots tribe are distinct for their level of pride in the UK's security and defence capabilities, leaning towards emphasising the armed forces and our national security and intelligence services. In turn, members of The Globalists and The Humanitarians are distinct from the Patriots and Isolationists tribes for their pride in the UK's global leadership role and promotion of the UK's values, as well as their shared support for our membership of multilateral organisations.

Members of the Isolationists tribe (39%) are by far the most likely to not view any of the UK's primary foreign policy activities as a source of pride, followed by members of The Humanitarians (29%), whose antipathy towards the Conservative Party colours their capacity and willingness to trust the UK Government and feel connected to the UK's foreign policy. By contrast, members of The Globalists (14%) and The Patriots (14%) are distinctly less likely to hold this view.

# Foreign Policy Attitudes

## Foreign Policy Spending and Priorities

Knowledge and interest in foreign affairs, however, does not cleanly translate into a desire to support Government investments in our international policy. In particular, although the largest group (38%) within the Patriots tribe supports maintaining the UK's current levels of spending, the rest of the tribe is also quite evenly divided between those who wish to spend more (27%), and those who in fact wish to spend less (28%). This contrasts with the Globalists tribe, whose members are twice as likely (34%) to favour increases in spending than to favour reductions (18%). They are also more likely than the Humanitarians tribe to support increases in foreign expenditure. And although the Isolationists tribe is the least likely to advocate for raising international budgets, at just 10%, the large proportion of unsure respondents within this tribe (29%) means they are in fact less inclined to actively support reductions than the Patriots tribe – the most likely to do so overall. It should be noted that there are also considerable numbers of citizens in the Humanitarians tribe who are unsure of their sentiments on the question of foreign policy budgets, breaking the perceived relationship between values-based foreign policy and support for government spending.

Our four tribes also hold unique views about the extent to which the UK's foreign policy should exclusively advance our economic and strategic defence interests, or democracy and human rights – or an equal combination of the two. Unsurprisingly, the Humanitarians group is an outlier in its support for a values-driven foreign policy, with 39% of its members favouring this; however, a quarter of the Globalists tribe also support a values-driven foreign policy. The Patriots tribe is also an outlier in its specific emphasis on economic and strategic interest, with 60% of its members supporting this, compared to around 40% of both the Globalists and Isolationists tribes. Interestingly, a relatively even proportion of each tribe favours a balance between the two, and as ever, a notable 27% of all Isolationists tribe members say they are unsure.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
Much more by what is in the UK's economic and strategic defence interests	7 %	19 %	35 %	18 %
Slightly more so by what is in the UK's economic and strategic defence interests	14 %	22 %	25 %	22 %
An equal balance between the two	30 %	30 %	31 %	27 %
Slightly more so by values such as democracy and human rights	17 %	14 %	3 %	3 %
Much more by values such as democracy and human rights	21 %	9 %	2 %	2 %
Don't know	10 %	6 %	5 %	27 %
ECONOMIC AND DEFENCE INTERESTS	21 %	41 %	60 %	40 %
HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY	39 %	23 %	5 %	5 %

## 5. Foreign Policy Attitudes

### Global Britain

When asked about their understanding of the meaning of the 'Global Britain' project, both the Patriots (46%) and Globalists (43%) tribes are aligned in their strong belief that it means the UK championing free trade, with support for this interpretation markedly lower amongst members of The Humanitarians (30%) and The Isolationists (23%). The Patriots and The Globalists also agree on their second most-popular choice, being for the UK to act as a 'diplomatic powerhouse'. These groups are, in many other respects, quite contradictory in their opinions on foreign policy, but this appears to be the strong shared foundation of the Conservative Party's messaging around the Global Britain project on which both its Leave and Remain voters have been able to come together.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
A champion of free trade and globalisation	30 %	43 %	46 %	23 %
A diplomatic powerhouse	26 %	33 %	34 %	19 %
A nation with strong and secure borders, focused on issues at home	9 %	19 %	33 %	25 %
A light on the hill for liberal democracy	21 %	23 %	14 %	7 %
A leading military power	9 %	16 %	18 %	14 %
A nation open to migrants from around the world	21 %	16 %	6 %	3 %
A leading aid donor, helping to alleviate global poverty	17 %	16 %	7 %	3 %
Don't know	22 %	10 %	10 %	32 %
I do not support the idea of a 'Global Britain'	13 %	7 %	6 %	13 %

However, these two tribes begin to diverge as we move further down the list. The notion of Global Britain as meaning 'a nation with strong and secure borders focused at issues at home' is supported by 33% of The Patriots, but just 19% of The Globalists. This definition is also the most popular single choice amongst the Isolationists tribe, but only resonates with 9% of The Humanitarians, who are distinctly more likely to view Global Britain as a nation open to migrants from around the world (21%). Just 6% of The Patriots and 3% of The Isolationists support Global Britain as a nation open to migrants.

The Globalists and The Humanitarians also align on a number of liberal, open interpretations of Global Britain. Similar proportions of both of these groups understand Global Britain as 'a light on the hill for liberal democracy, promoting liberal values across the world', and as 'a leading aid donor, helping to alleviate global poverty', with little support for either of these narratives from the Patriots and Isolationists tribes.

Notably, a third (32%) of the Isolationists tribe and a fifth (22%) of the Humanitarians tribe are unsure of their understanding of Global Britain, compared to just 10% of both The Globalists and The Patriots. And members of the Isolationists and Humanitarians tribes are twice as likely than The Globalists and The Patriots to oppose the idea of Global Britain.

## 5. Foreign Policy Attitudes

### The UK's Global Alliances

The foreign policy tribes hold very distinct views regarding the UK's closest friendships, reflecting their own values, identities, and perspectives about the nature of geopolitical threats and opportunities. The Patriots tribe (28%) are 7 percentage points more likely than the Isolationists tribe (21%) and twice as likely as the Globalists (14%) and Humanitarians (13%) tribes to view the United States as the UK's best friend. Members of the Patriots tribe (16%) are also four times as likely as those in The Isolationists (5%), The Globalists (4%) and The Humanitarians (4%) to view Australia as the UK's best friend. This is driven, in large part, by low levels of support for the European Union as the UK's best friend among the Patriots tribe (6%), despite a broader recognition of the UK's closest alliances.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
The United States	13 %	14 %	28 %	21 %
The Commonwealth	9 %	24 %	17 %	14 %
The European Union	23 %	18 %	6 %	3 %
Australia	4 %	4 %	16 %	5 %
The UK does not have a 'best friend'	40 %	28 %	28 %	47 %

*Please note: responses that have not garnered more than 5% of support from any one tribe have been excluded from presentation in this table, however the data has not been altered to reflect this omission and therefore all percentages remain correct.*

The largest proportion of the Humanitarians tribe (23%) view the European Union as the UK's best friend. This is four times the proportion of the Patriots tribe (6%) and eight times the proportion of the Isolationists tribe (3%) who view the European Union as the UK's best friend. At 18%, the Globalists tribe are the second most likely to view the European Union as the UK's best friend. The Globalists tribe (24%) are also the most likely to view the Commonwealth as the UK's best friend, followed by those in the Patriots (17%) and Isolationists (14%) tribes. Those in the Humanitarians tribe are significantly less likely (9%) to view the Commonwealth as the UK's best friend, likely reflective of their discomfort with the UK's imperial past.

An unusual convergence emerges between The Humanitarians and The Isolationists over whether the UK has a best friend. 47% of The Isolationists and 40% of The Humanitarians believe the UK does not have a best friend, in stark contrast to 28% of those in the Globalists and Patriots tribes. While among The Isolationists this is likely driven by isolationism, among The Humanitarians this is likely driven by an internationalist view of the morality and practicality of having a best friend in a globalised world.

### Trust in Nations to Act Responsibly in the World

There is a stark divide in levels of trust in other nations to act responsibly in the world, between those in the Humanitarians or Globalists tribes, and those in The Patriots or The Isolationists. The starkest of these is in relation to the European Union, which is trusted by 81% of those in The Humanitarians and 78% of those in The Globalists, compared to 45% of those in The Isolationists and 44% of those in The Patriots. This trend emerges in relation to trust levels for individual European countries as well, with 75% of those in The Globalists and 75% in The Humanitarians trusting France to act responsibly in the world, compared to 50% in The Patriots and 46% in The Isolationists. Similarly, those in The Globalists (87%) and The Humanitarians (83%) are significantly more likely to trust Germany to act responsibly in the world than those in The Patriots (61%) or The Isolationists (57%).

Attitudes towards the United States are particularly interesting. Members of the Patriots tribe are by far the most likely to trust the United States (60%). The Globalists and Isolationists tribes

## 5. Foreign Policy Attitudes

---

are divided in their levels of trust in the United States to act responsibly in the world, and trust in the United States is significantly lower within the Humanitarians tribe, at just 31%.

There are only two nations which a majority across all four tribes trust to act responsibly in the world – Australia and Canada – however, even in relation to these nations, significant disparities in trust exist. Britons in the Patriots tribe (93%) are 16 percentage points more likely than Britons in the Isolationists tribe (77%) to trust Australia, and 14 percentage points more likely to trust Canada (93% to 79%). The Isolationists tribe are consistently less trusting across the board, extending from their lower levels of trust in the UK Government, their relative disengagement and poor knowledge about foreign affairs, and their relative lack of enthusiasm for our allies and partners.

Turning to our adversaries, we can see that all four tribes are more united and closely aligned in their levels of distrust for Russia; yet, their levels of trust vary considerably more in relation to China. The Globalists tribe are the most likely to trust China (30%), followed by The Isolationists (23%) and The Humanitarians (21%). Britons in The Patriots (19%) are the least likely to trust China, with 55% having a 'high level' of distrust of China.

### The UK-EU Relationship

---

There is very little consensus between the four foreign policy tribes over the future of the UK's relationship with the European Union. For example, while the majority of the Humanitarians tribe (51%) support the UK pursuing a much closer relationship with the European Union, including the possibility of re-joining, just 10% of the Isolationists and Patriots tribes agree. While the largest plurality of The Globalists (30%) support a much closer relationship with the European Union, they are still 21 percentage points less likely than members of The Humanitarians to do so.

The largest pluralities of both The Patriots (40%) and The Isolationists (28%) support maintaining the current level of distance between the UK and the EU, as secured in the Brexit deal. In contrast, 22% of the Globalists tribe and just 13% of the Humanitarians tribe agree. A notable proportion of The Patriots (22%) support moving even further away from the alignment agreed in the Brexit deal, compared to 13% of The Isolationists, 12% of The Globalists and 5% of The Humanitarians. The Isolationists tribe (28%) are by far the most likely to be unsure of their position, and are four times as likely to be unsure as members of The Patriots (8%) or The Globalists (7%).

When asked to assess the importance of the UK's relationship with the European Union, relative to the importance of the UK's relationship with the United States, the Patriots tribe are the only tribe more likely to favour the UK's relationship with the United States (48%) over its relationship with the European Union (32%). By contrast, Britons in the Humanitarians tribe (76%) and Britons in the Globalists tribe (66%) overwhelmingly prioritise the UK's relationship with the European Union over its relationship with the United States. Members of the Isolationists tribe are divided evenly in their preferences, with a significant 35% of members of this tribe being unsure of their opinion.

### The UK-China Relationship and the Indo-Pacific Tilt

---

The Humanitarians tribe is the most supportive of a constructive, values-driven approach to China, and is therefore simultaneously the most likely to support cooperation with China on shared global challenges (56%) and to support challenging China on its human rights record (56%). They are also the most likely to support Chinese students attending UK universities (44%) and to support research collaboration with China (39%). Britons in the Globalists tribe are the next-most-supportive of a balanced level of engagement with China, and are notable for being the most supportive of economic engagement with China (29%).

## 5. Foreign Policy Attitudes

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
Challenging China on its human rights record	56 %	47 %	36 %	21 %
Cooperation on climate change	56 %	44 %	32 %	18 %
Chinese students attending UK universities	44 %	37 %	23 %	15 %
Research collaboration	39 %	30 %	24 %	14 %
Economic engagement	26 %	29 %	22 %	13 %
I do not support the UK Government having any engagement with China	5 %	11 %	22 %	25 %
Don't know	14 %	8 %	9 %	29 %

However, the starkest disparity between tribes emerges in relation to support for cooperation on shared global challenges such as climate change, which is supported by 56% of those in the Humanitarians tribe and 44% of those in The Globalists, compared to 32% of The Patriots and just 18% of those in The Isolationists. Britons in the Patriots (22%) and Isolationists (25%) tribes are significantly more inclined to oppose the UK having any relationship with China than those in the Globalists (11%) and Humanitarians (5%) tribes.

Importantly, a large proportion of the Isolationists tribe (29%) are unsure what approach the UK should take in terms of its engagement with China, compared to 14% of The Humanitarians, 9% of The Patriots and 8% of The Globalists, highlighting significant knowledge and confidence gaps between the tribes on this issue.

On the Indo-Pacific tilt, the largest plurality of members of The Patriots (44%), The Globalists (43%) and The Humanitarians (38%) think the Indo-Pacific is important to global power dynamics and economic growth but that the UK's involvement in this region should be balanced against involvement elsewhere. In contrast, just 18% of The Isolationists agree, driven by the fact the majority of The Isolationists (58%) are unsure of their views on the Indo-Pacific tilt. Members of The Humanitarians (34%) and The Patriots (29%) are the next most likely to be uncertain of their views, while those in the Globalists tribe are less likely to be uncertain (21%).

Members of the Globalists tribe (14%) are the most likely to agree that the Indo-Pacific is a crucial hub of economic, security and diplomatic activity which should be at the centre of the UK's foreign policy. In contrast, just 9% of The Patriots, 7% of The Humanitarians and 7% of The Isolationists agree. However, the Globalists tribe (20%) are also the most likely to believe that there is no strong argument for the Indo-Pacific tilt, followed by the Humanitarians (16%) and Patriots (15%) tribes. Members of The Isolationists (12%) are the least likely to think this, highlighting how the defining distinction between the tribes, in relation to the Indo-Pacific tilt, is in levels of understanding.

## 5. Foreign Policy Attitudes

### Immigration and Asylum Policy

Britons in the Patriots tribe are by far the least supportive of immigration of all four of our foreign policy tribes, and those in the Humanitarians tribe are the most supportive. Members the Patriotic Britain tribe are more than twelve times as likely (63%) as Britons in the Humanitarians tribe (5%) to believe that immigrants take away jobs from other Britons, and ten times as likely (78%) to think immigrants are a burden on our social welfare system than those in the Humanitarians tribe (8%). They (90%) are also three times as likely as those in the Humanitarians tribe (29%) to think the UK's population is already too high.

Britons in the Isolationists tribe align with Britons in the Patriots tribe in strongly believing that immigrants take jobs away from other Britons (58%) and that immigrants are a burden on our social welfare system (64%), although they are still less likely to support these statements than Britons in the Patriots tribe. However, the Patriots tribe are more likely to hold positive perceptions of immigration (alongside their strongly held negative perceptions) than those in the Isolationists tribe. 17% of the Patriots tribe believe that immigration makes the UK stronger, compared to 10% of the Isolationists tribe, and 24% of The Patriots think immigrants strengthen the UK through their hard work and talents, compared to 15% of The Isolationists.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
Overall, immigration has a positive impact on the UK economy	84 %	87 %	20 %	13 %
Immigrants strengthen the country because of their hard work and talents	87 %	87 %	24 %	15 %
Accepting immigrants from many different countries makes the UK stronger	84 %	80 %	17 %	10 %
The UK's population is already too high	29 %	54 %	90 %	70 %
Immigrants are a burden on our social welfare system	8 %	24 %	78 %	64 %
Immigrants take away jobs from other Britons	5 %	21 %	63 %	58 %

Immigration is a point of some alignment between the Humanitarians and Globalists tribes, with 87% of both believing that immigrants strengthen the country through their hard work and talents and 84% of Britons in the Humanitarians tribe, and 80% in the Globalists tribe, believing that accepting immigrants from many countries makes us stronger. However, Britons in the Globalists tribe are more likely than those in the Humanitarians tribe to also perceive negative effects of immigration, with 24% of Britons in the Globalists tribe believing that immigrants are a burden on our social welfare, compared to 8% of those in the Humanitarians tribe.

When asked about their views on how best the UK Government should respond to the rising numbers of migrants and asylum-seekers crossing the English Channel, the tribes are once again divided on their assessments of the best course of action.

The majority of Britons in the Patriots tribe (55%) favour deploying the Royal Navy to intercept and turn back asylum-seekers boats, as do 38% of Britons in the Isolationists tribe. Britons in the Isolationists (15%) and Patriots (11%) tribes are also the most likely to favour constructing a wall, barriers or deploying deterrence mechanisms in the Channel. Britons

## 5. Foreign Policy Attitudes

---

in the Humanitarians tribe are the most accepting of asylum-seekers, with the largest plurality (45%) favouring accepting all migrants, regardless of how they arrive the UK, and 14% favouring processing their claims in offshore detention facilities. The Globalists tribe are the most likely to favour processing migrants' claims in offshore detention facilities (27%).

### Free Trade Negotiations

When asked about their primary concern in the UK's free trade negotiations, across all tribes, standards of food and beverages stands out as the primary concern. However, Britons in the Patriots tribe (21%) show particularly high levels of concern about these. Other concerns are quite diffuse and spread across a wide range of issues. One notable distinction is the higher degree of concern about protecting workers' rights amongst those in the Humanitarians (18%) or Globalists (16%) tribes than those in the Patriots (7%) and Isolationists (6%) tribes – this is particularly interesting because those in the Isolationists tribe are more likely to be working in the kinds of occupations where these rights and standards offer significant protections.

Indeed, while a quarter of the Patriots tribe say they have no concerns in free trade negotiations, the second-largest proportion of nonplussed Britons is found in the Isolationists (16%) tribe. In part, this may be influenced by the fact that Britons in the Isolationists tribe (30%) are significantly more likely than those in other tribes to be unsure of their concerns in relation to free trade.

When given the opportunity to cite two further concerns in free trade negotiations, some more perceptible trends emerge. In addition to the divides around workers' rights, the Humanitarians tribe stands out for its concern around environmental issues. An unusual convergence emerges between The Globalists (40%) and The Isolationists (40%) in their high levels of concern about standards of food and beverages, which are significantly higher than the levels of concern shown by those in the Patriots (31%) and Humanitarians (29%) tribes. These two tribes are sharply polarised in relation to a number of their other concerns – fascinatingly, Britons in the Isolationists tribe (29%), who tend to not be led as much by values in other senses, are twelve percentage points more likely to be concerned about the impact of trade negotiations on animal welfare than those in the Globalists tribe (17%). However, Britons in the Globalists (28%) and Patriots (29%) tribes are more concerned about agricultural standards than those in the Isolationists tribe (19%).

### The Benefits of Globalisation

Attitudes to globalisation are closely cleaved onto the four foreign policy tribes – hardly a surprise, given the role that instincts towards globalisation have played in the formation of contemporary domestic and social identities. Overall, Britons in the Globalists tribe are the most likely to perceive benefits of globalisation to the UK as a whole (84%), London (93%), the rest of the UK outside of London (73%) and to themselves and their families (73%). They are also the most likely to 'definitely' believe that these benefits exist, with 52% believing that globalisation has 'definitely' benefitted London and 30% believing it has 'definitely' benefitted the UK as a whole.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
The UK as a whole	76 %	84 %	59 %	50 %
London	84 %	93 %	80 %	62 %
The rest of the UK	62 %	73 %	45 %	40 %
Me and my family	66 %	73 %	44 %	32 %

## 5. Foreign Policy Attitudes

---

Their enthusiasm is most closely matched by Britons in the Humanitarians tribe, of whom 84% believe globalisation has benefited London and 76% believe it has benefited the UK as a whole. Britons in the Patriots and Isolationists tribes are significantly less likely to view globalisation as beneficial, although Britons in the Isolationists tribe believe this more emphatically than those in The Patriots. The starkest of these disparities, by far, is in relation to the perceived personal benefits of globalisation. Just 44% of Britons in the Patriots tribe and, strikingly, just 32% of those in the Isolationists tribe, feel that they have seen the benefits of globalisation on a personal level or within their family.

Furthermore, while the Patriots tribe tends to align more closely with Isolationists than any other tribe in their views on globalisation, the one exception to this is in relation to perceptions of the role of globalisation in shaping London. As such, 80% of Britons in The Patriots believe globalisation has benefited London, aligning more closely with both the Humanitarians (84%) and Globalists tribes (93%) than the The Isolationists (62%). This reveals something interesting about the distinct roots of scepticism towards globalisation between those in The Patriots and those in The Isolationists. While those in the Isolationists tribe fundamentally question the value of globalisation in and of itself, those in the Patriots group recognise it can provide benefits, but that these are asymmetrically distributed.

### Foreign Aid Spending and Priorities

---

Despite their emphasis on values in their UK foreign policy preferences, it is not in fact Britons in the Humanitarians tribe who are most supportive of individual foreign aid programmes and a wide range of foreign aid priorities, but their counterparts in the Globalists tribe. This includes nearly universal support within the Globalists tribe for implementing basic health programmes (94%) and providing emergency support in a crisis (93%). Support among this tribe is lowest for supporting economic growth in developing countries, although it is still supported by 80% of the tribe. It should be noted that their greatest degree of support is actually for using aid to create new investment opportunities for the UK (95%), which indeed features an explicit frame of self-interest.

Britons in the Humanitarians tribe are also particularly inclined to be supportive of aid spending to implement basic health programmes (84%) and to provide emergency support in a crisis (81%). However, they are less receptive to the narratives of self-interest than their counterparts in The Globalists, and as such, they are the least likely (51%) to support spending to provide investment opportunities for the UK and to support using aid spending to discourage migration to wealthier countries such as the UK (24%).

With the exception of aid spending designed to directly benefit the UK, Britons in the Isolationists tribe are consistently less likely to support all aid priorities than those in other tribes. They are particularly less receptive to aid spending to stimulate economic growth in developing countries (32%) and to support girls' education and women's security (45%). They are most supportive of aid spending to create new investment opportunities for the UK (57%) highlighting how self-interest is a key motivating factor in their (limited) support for aid priorities. Similarly, Britons in the Patriots category are most supportive of aid spending to create new investment opportunities for the UK (81%) and to discourage migration to wealthier countries such as the UK (77%).

When presented with the facts about the extent to which the UK economy has suffered during the pandemic, but also the risks to backsliding in the developing world, a clear majority of citizens overall believe that foreign aid spending should be reduced or stopped during the pandemic. Support for this disruption to aid spending is most ardent among Britons in the Patriots (91%) and Isolationists (88%) tribes, who overwhelmingly believe the UK should stop or reduce aid spending during the pandemic. These two tribes are closely aligned in their views on aid spending during the pandemic, with 33% of both believing the UK should stop aid spending during the pandemic, and 22% of the Isolationists tribe and 19% of the Patriots tribe believing

## 5. Foreign Policy Attitudes

it should be stopped altogether. The majority of the Globalists tribe (68%) also believe that the UK should reduce or stop aid spending during the pandemic, with the largest plurality (36%) believing the UK should temporarily reduce aid spending as a result of the pandemic.

Britons in the Humanitarians tribe, however, stand in stark contrast to Britons in the other three tribes, with just 47% believing the UK should stop or reduce aid spending during the pandemic. The largest single plurality of the Humanitarians tribe (40%) believe the UK should maintain current levels of aid spending during the pandemic, and 13% believe it should be increased, in order to meet the challenges to global equality posed by the pandemic.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
Increase UK government spending on aid and development abroad	13 %	5 %	3 %	4 %
Maintain the current levels on UK government spending on aid and development abroad	40 %	27 %	6 %	8 %
Reduce government spending on aid and development, until the UK recovers economically to pre-pandemic levels	35 %	36 %	39 %	34 %
Stop all government spending on aid and development, until the UK recovers economically to pre-pandemic levels	9 %	19 %	33 %	33 %
Stop all government spending on aid and development for the future	2 %	13 %	19 %	22 %
<b>REDUCE OR STOP (TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY)</b>	<b>47 %</b>	<b>68 %</b>	<b>91 %</b>	<b>88 %</b>

Britons' rationale for supporting aid spending also varies significantly between the four tribes. Members of the Humanitarians and Globalists tribes are more persuaded by moral arguments for aid spending than members of The Isolationists and The Patriots. Members of the Humanitarians (33%) and Globalists (28%) tribes are particularly persuaded by a sense of moral duty to help the world's poorest people, as a leading global power, a sentiment that is not shared by the Patriots (13%) and Isolationists (7%) tribes. Members of The Globalists (15%) and The Humanitarians (12%) are also more likely to believe we have a special responsibility as a former imperial nation, than members of The Patriots (8%) and The Isolationists (6%).

Members of The Globalists (19%) are also more compelled by arguments that aid is an important investment in global security, compared to members of The Humanitarians (13%), The Patriots (11%) and The Isolationists (10%). Meanwhile, the largest proportion of The Patriots (19%) are motivated by the view that lifting up other nations helps to lift the global economy as a whole, and creates new opportunities for British businesses, higher than the proportion of the Humanitarians (17%), Globalists (17%) and Isolationists (10%) tribes who believe this. Finally, the Isolationists (31%) and Patriots (28%) tribes are significantly more likely than the Globalists (5%) and Humanitarians (3%) tribes to oppose the UK's investment in aid and development. The Isolationists tribe (31%) are also, once again, distinctly more likely to be unsure of their position than those in the Humanitarians (14%), Patriots (12%) and Globalists (6%) tribes.

## 5. Foreign Policy Attitudes

---

### Security Threats and Perceptions of Personal Safety

---

Our survey asked Britons to assess their individual perceptions of personal safety, in light of the direction of travel of world events. Members of the Isolationists tribe (25%) are the most likely to feel unsafe, followed by members of the Humanitarians (22%) and Patriots (22%) tribes. Members of the Globalists tribe (18%) are the least likely to feel unsafe – reflecting their greater degree of individual economy and democratic security, and their relative comfort with a rapidly changing global landscape. Interestingly, these perceptions of individual and personal safety are not reflected in perceptions about international risks, and while the Globalists and Patriots tribes are the most likely to feel safe, they are more acutely aware of a range of security threats than members of the Isolationists or Humanitarians tribes, except in relation to climate change.

Members of the Patriots tribe show particularly high levels of concern for the ‘conventional’ defence and security threats, which have dominated public discourse in recent years. Britons in the Patriots tribe are the most likely to view international terrorism as a threat (93%) and are particularly likely to view it as a critical threat (60%), relative to those in the Globalists (52%), Isolationists (39%) or Humanitarians (32%) tribes. They are also more likely to view a nuclear arms race as a threat (79%), compared to those in the Globalists (77%), Humanitarians (69%) and Isolationists (62%) tribes. Members of the Patriots (90%) and Globalists (89%) tribes are also distinctly more likely than those in The Humanitarians (73%) or The Isolationists (71%) to view the rise of China as a threat.

Members of the Globalists tribe are considerably more attuned to what we can describe as transnational and domestic ‘democratic’ threats. 87% of the Globalists tribe view foreign interference in UK politics and democracy as a threat, compared to 84% of The Patriots, 76% of The Humanitarians and 67% of The Isolationists. Furthermore, 78% of those in the Globalists tribe view the break-up of the United Kingdom union as a threat, compared to 69% of The Patriots, 68% of The Humanitarians and 54% of The Isolationists.

Britons in the Globalists tribe also show the highest level of concern about technological threats, and are the most likely to view automation and economic change as a threat. Meanwhile, with the exception of a new international migration crisis – which is considerably less threatening to the Humanitarians tribe – the Isolationists tribe are consistently the least likely to be concerned about a wide range of international risks. To a degree, this is driven by high levels of uncertainty among this tribe. For example, 31% of the Isolationists tribe are uncertain about whether democratic backsliding in Western nation is a threat, compared to 19% of The Humanitarians, 14% of The Patriots and 10% of The Globalists.

### Security and Defence

---

Members of the Patriots (79%) and Globalists (78%) tribes are more likely than Britons in the Humanitarians tribe (71%) and significantly more likely than those in the Isolationists tribe (45%) to support the UK’s membership of NATO. However, active opposition to NATO membership is relatively equal across tribes, at between 8% and 10%. As such, rather than actively opposing NATO membership, lower levels of active support for NATO membership within The Isolationists and The Humanitarians appears to be driven by a lack of certainty and understanding about the strategic purpose of NATO. At 32%, members of the Isolationists tribe are by far the most likely to be uncertain about NATO membership, followed by members of The Humanitarians (16%). Members of The Patriots (11%) and The Humanitarians (9%) are notably less likely to be uncertain. Furthermore, 14% of the Isolationists tribe have never heard of NATO, compared to 5% of The Humanitarians, 4% of The Globalists and 2% of The Patriots.

Support for adherence to Article 5 of the NATO treaty, which requires allies to provide troops and other defence support if a fellow NATO ally is attacked, follows a similar trend. Support is highest within the Globalists (91%) and Patriots (89%) tribes, followed by the Humanitarians tribe (86%). It is significantly lower among those in the Isolationists tribe (77%).

## 5. Foreign Policy Attitudes

In line with views on NATO membership, members of the Patriots (26%) and Globalists (25%) tribes are significantly more likely than those in The Humanitarians (14%) or The Isolationists (12%) to trust the decisions of leaders and support British military action regardless of circumstances. The Patriots (48%) and The Globalists (44%) are also more likely than those in The Humanitarians (38%) and The Isolationists (32%) to support military action across a wider range of circumstances, including an attack on British soil, overseas assets, or in response to humanitarian disasters and genocide.

	Humanitarians	Globalists	Patriots	Isolationists
I trust the decisions of our leaders and support British military action abroad under any circumstances	14 %	25 %	26 %	12 %
I support British military action only in circumstances where there is a direct attack on British soil, British Overseas Territories or assets, or in the case of humanitarian disasters or genocide	38 %	44 %	48 %	32 %
I support British military action only in circumstances where there is a direct attack on British soil or assets	11 %	11 %	15 %	22 %
I support British military action only in response to humanitarian disasters or genocide	18 %	11 %	4 %	6 %
I do not support British military action under any circumstances	5 %	2 %	2 %	4 %
Don't know	14 %	7 %	5 %	25 %

Support for military action among members of The Humanitarians and The Isolationists is noticeably more conditional. However, while members of The Isolationists are significantly more likely to support military action when there is an attack on British soil or assets (22%) than in response to a humanitarian disaster or genocide (6%), the reverse is true for members of The Humanitarians. 18% of the Humanitarians tribe support military action only in response to humanitarian disasters or genocide, while just 11% support military action only when there is a direct attack on UK soil or assets. Once again, members of The Isolationists (25%) are significantly more likely to be unsure of their position than any other tribe.

Of those who do not think the UK should always take an active role in world affairs, a large plurality across all tribes is motivated by a desire to avoid being drawn in conflicts, including 51% of the Patriots tribe, 46% of the Globalists tribe, 42% of the Isolationists tribe and 42% of the Humanitarians tribe. However, beyond this, the rationales for not supporting military action vary significantly between the tribes. In particular, those in the Humanitarians tribe (53%) are significantly more likely to be motivated by a sense that the track record of UK involvement in other countries is bad, compared to 35% of The Globalists, 23% of The Isolationists and 21% of The Patriots. In addition, members of The Patriots (35%) and The Isolationists (35%) are significantly more likely to believe military intervention spends money abroad that should be spent at home, than members of The Globalists (22%) and The Humanitarians (21%).

## 5. Foreign Policy Attitudes

---

### Climate Change

Support for the UK taking a leading role in tackling climate change brings together members of the Globalists (86%), Humanitarians (79%) and Patriots (72%) tribes – although with varying degrees of enthusiasm – and clearly separates the Isolationists tribe, of whom only 41% support this role. This disproportionately large gap captures the high degree of ambivalence within the Isolationists tribe (35%), rather than their active opposition. It is also worth noting that while members of The Humanitarians, The Globalists and The Patriots all overwhelmingly support UK leadership on climate action, the strength of their support varies significantly. The majority of members of the Globalists (57%) and Humanitarians (53%) tribes ‘strongly support’ UK leadership on climate action, while members of the Patriots tribe are more likely to somewhat support (38%) the UK’s leadership on climate action than to strongly support (34%) this.

Turning to individual action to tackle climate change, across all tribes, Britons are most willing to reduce plastic usage and food waste and to buy fewer clothes and consumer products – in effect, the areas that have received the greatest level of consistent political, media and celebrity attention. However, the extent to which Britons are willing to commit to these actions varies significantly, and while 69% of The Humanitarians, 65% of The Globalists and 61% of The Patriots are willing to reduce their plastic usage, just 46% of The Isolationists are willing to do the same. Overall, Britons in the Isolationists tribes are consistently the least willing to take individualised actions to tackle climate change, and are considerably more likely to be unwilling to commit to any of the proposed actions to tackle climate change.

By contrast, it is members of the Humanitarians tribe are consistently the most likely to commit to each of the proposed individual actions to help tackle climate change, with the exception of using heating in the house less frequently – an action that appears to be most amenable to Britons from lower socio-economic groups who may already be conscientious about their energy use. Particularly stark disparities exist in the willingness to buy fewer clothes and consumer products, which 54% of The Humanitarians are willing to do, compared to 48% of The Globalists, 38% of The Patriots and just 30% of The Isolationists. The disparities between the tribes are also particularly stark in relation to eating less meat and transitioning to a more plant-based diet which 41% of The Humanitarians are willing to commit to, compared to 31% of The Globalists, 24% of The Patriots and just 12% of The Isolationists.

The British Foreign Policy Group is an independent, non-partisan think tank dedicated to advancing the UK's global influence, at a crucial time in the nation's modern history. To achieve this, we produce dynamic events and high-quality research, and facilitate networks amongst stakeholders with a vested interest in Britain's international engagement.

Our core objective is to bridge the link between the domestic and international spheres – recognising that Britain's foreign policy choices and obstacles are shaped by our social landscape at home. Through pioneering research into the UK's social fabric, we seek to build understanding of the nuances of public opinion, and how our foreign policy can become more inclusive, responsive and relevant to citizens' lives.



**British Foreign Policy Group**