

The Impact of COVID-19 on German Society

Germany



About More in Common



More in Common is an international initiative set up in 2017 to build societies that are stronger, more united, and more resilient to the increasing threats of polarization and social division.

We work with a wide range of groups in civil society, politics, government, business, faith, education, philanthropy and the media to connect people across lines of division.

More in Common's teams in France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States work together and share a commitment to advancing our mission.

For more information please visit www.moreincommon.com or contact us at contact@moreincommon.com

About This Study



COVID-19 has up-ended the lives of people across the world, causing untold suffering and dislocation, with a death toll expected to exceed one million within days. The impact of the coronavirus on our health, economy and society will re-shape the world of the 2020s. It could result in societies becoming more deeply divided along existing fault-lines, but that is not inevitable. This study shows that COVID-19 has unleashed hopes for change in many societies, especially those who have struggled most with the virus. It has also made us more aware of our shared humanity, the value of strong local communities and the importance of our connection to nature.

Many choices lie ahead as we grapple with the fallout of the pandemic. The decisions being made in the months ahead – in families, communities and nations – will have consequences for a generation. This is why More in Common has compiled this snapshot of public opinion in France, Germany, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, with key findings on:

- The impact of the pandemic on personal health, family life, employment and finances
- How COVID-19 has impacted our societies – and people's feelings of togetherness, solidarity, empathy, trust and loneliness
- Whether people want a return to normal or wish to see significant change in the aftermath of the pandemic
- Whether countries need more European and international co-operation, or whether they should go it alone
- Views on political priorities and support for policies on issues such as the economy, jobs, the environment and taxation
- Hopes and fears for the future

Our snapshot combines a mix of country-specific and cross-country questions. We hope that the findings presented here, as well as the detailed national studies that form part of this project, will provide valuable insights into this once-in-a-generation moment. Most of all, we hope they will strengthen efforts to build more united and resilient societies.

Scope and Methodology



Scope

France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom, United States

Methodology

- N=2,000 per country; margin of error +/- 2%
- Research partners
- France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and Poland: Kantar
 - UK and US: YouGov
- Fieldwork dates
 - France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and Poland: 1-8 July, 2020
 - UK: 19-28 June, 2020
 - US: 19-22 June, 2020
- Online survey using representative demographic quotas
- Due to space constraints, not all questions were asked in every country.

Covid-19 in Germany



Situation (As of September 4)



Health crisis handled comparatively well, based on a combination of luck & preparation.

249,593 Infections
9,327 Deaths



Strong economic relief measures: drop in GDP growth expected to be larger than in 2008, highest number of short-time work ever registered (15% of labor force); second big stimulus package combines long- and short-term investment.

-7.8% Expected drop in GDP (2020)
6.2% Current unemployment rate



Partial lockdown with variations across federal states; the severity of lockdown never reached the same extent as France or Italy.

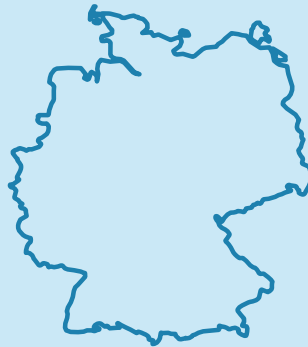
Most restrictions are currently lifted, subject to strict controls of infection rates.

National Context

With few deaths, high compliance, and strong government approval, Germany has braved the crisis comparatively well without resorting to a strict lockdown and by calling on citizens' sense of responsibility for society. In the initial days of the crisis, the German context was marked by broad political consensus, and a strong appeal to citizens' individual responsibility. With time however, demands to reopen the economy grew louder, and physical protests against the restrictions materialized in several German cities (protests were attended by a mix of anti-vaxxers, conspiracy theorists, far-right and far-left groups claiming threats to civil rights). By now (September 2020), most restrictions have been lifted, and the country has returned to a "new normal" with mandatory mask wearing in closed public spaces.

What sets Germany apart?

- Compared to most EU countries, lockdown was partial and relatively mild (not as liberal as NL, but not as strict as FR)
- Government narrative placed emphasis on solidarity and citizens' individual responsibility for the collective
- Disconnect between a mild lockdown and how it was perceived by the population; a few weeks into the crisis, notable anti-Corona protests materialized
- Relatively little visible suffering so far; (relatively low death toll/ health burden) possibly leading to a greater risk of complacency



Key Infos

- **Head of Government:** Angela Merkel (CDU)
- **Governing Coalition:** Grand Coalition (CDU/CSU/SPD)
- **Next Election:** August-October 2021

Findings at a Glance

At first sight, Germany has weathered the COVID-19 crisis disproportionately well.

- Germans are especially satisfied with government action: Around 70% of Germans view the government's handling of the crisis as competent, democratic, fair.
- Compared to other European countries, Germany has seen the highest increase in trust in national government: by 28%.
- Nonetheless: 24% fear for their jobs or employment, 79% worry about a severe economic crisis.

While Germans feel a certain pride in their country's handling of the crisis, this is not reflected on the interpersonal level.

- Around half of Germans have felt left alone during the crisis.
- 26% say, their trust in others has worsened – only 6% say the opposite.



Segmentation: 6 German Tribes



In our previous study „Fault Lines: Germany’s Invisible Divides“, published in October 2019, we incorporated methods from Social Psychology and Political Science to group people into six population segments, who each have a characteristic view of society based on their core beliefs and identities.

The six tribes identified in Germany are characterized by the following attributes:

The Open: value self-expression, open-mindedness, critical thinking

The Involved: are civic-minded, active democrats, value togetherness

The Established: value reliability, social harmony, most likely to feel satisfied with the status quo

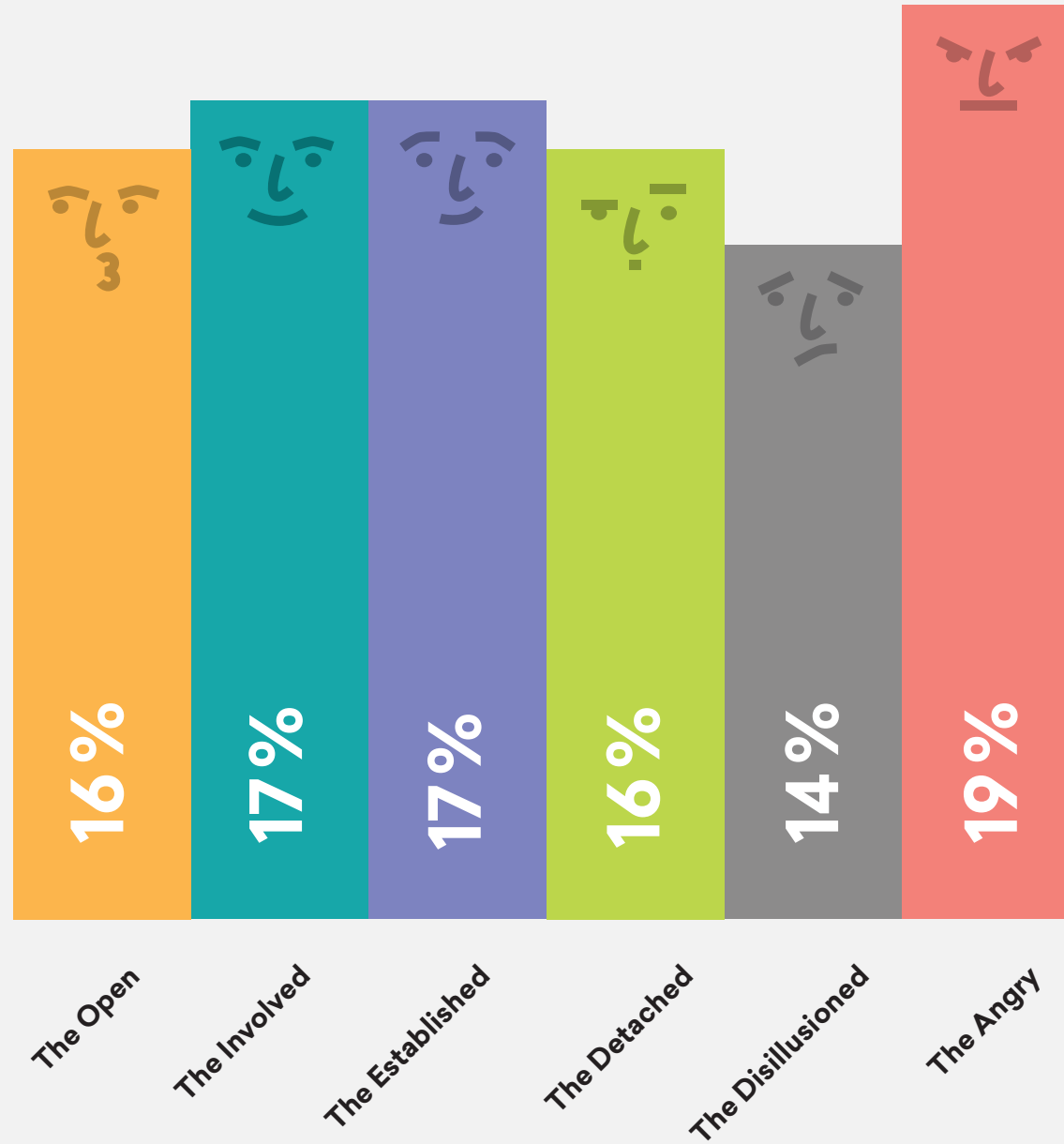
The Detached: value success and personal advancement, are less likely to think in abstract societal terms or to be interested in politics

The Disillusioned: have lost a sense of community and long for recognition and social justice

The Angry: value order and control in national life, anger at the system, very low levels of trust

For a more specific explanation of the segmentation methodology please see our previous study under www.dieandererteilung.de.

The German Tribes



Parallel experiences of the crisis

Politically:

- The Disillusioned (32 %) and the Angry (24%) continue to have extremely little trust in government, and its ability to address the important societal issues.

On a societal level:

- Feelings of injustice remain dominant for the Disillusioned (75%) and the Angry (85%), while the Stabilisers remain very content.
- Around half of the Disillusioned feel that society has come together during the COVID-19 crisis, while amongst the Established, 90% perceive a higher degree of unity.

On a personal/ human level:

- Around 6/10 Detached and 7/10 Disillusioned have felt left alone in this crisis, and less than half perceive that people have cared for each other in this crisis.



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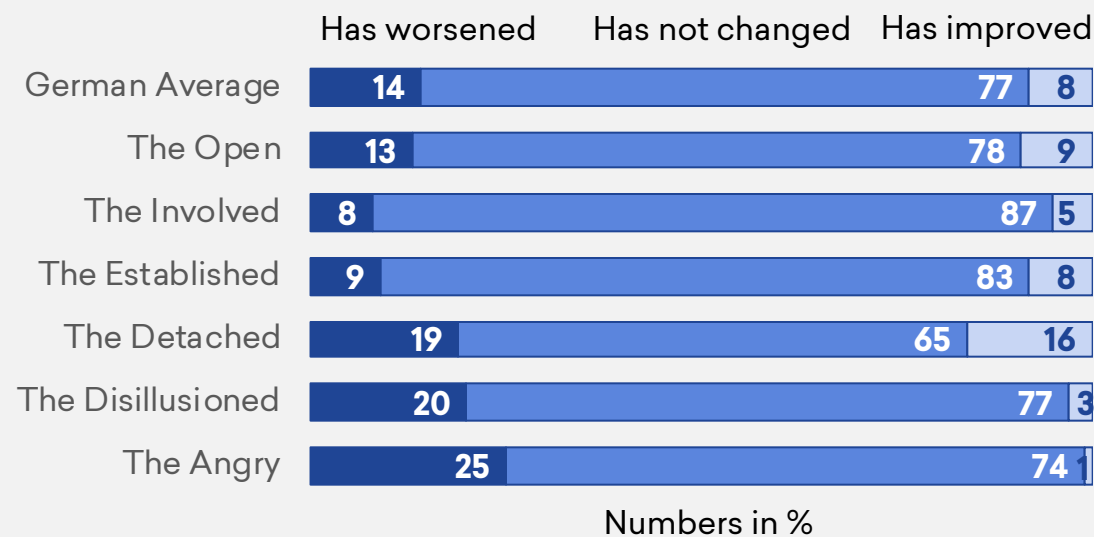
V. Views on the European Union, European Policies and Social Cohesion in Europe

I. The Impact of COVID-19 on People's Personal Lives

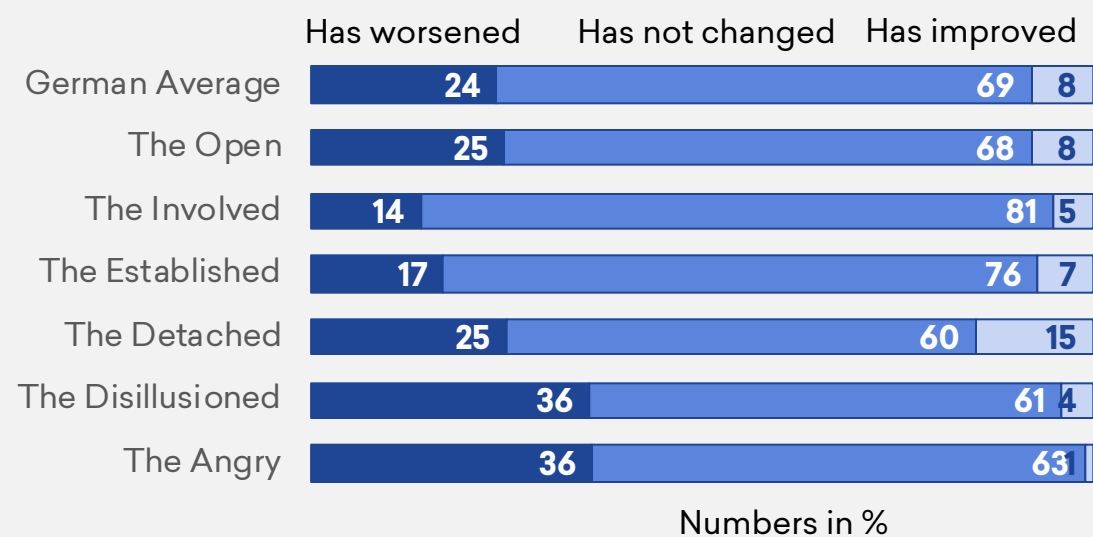
Physical and Mental Health



Physical Health



Mental Health

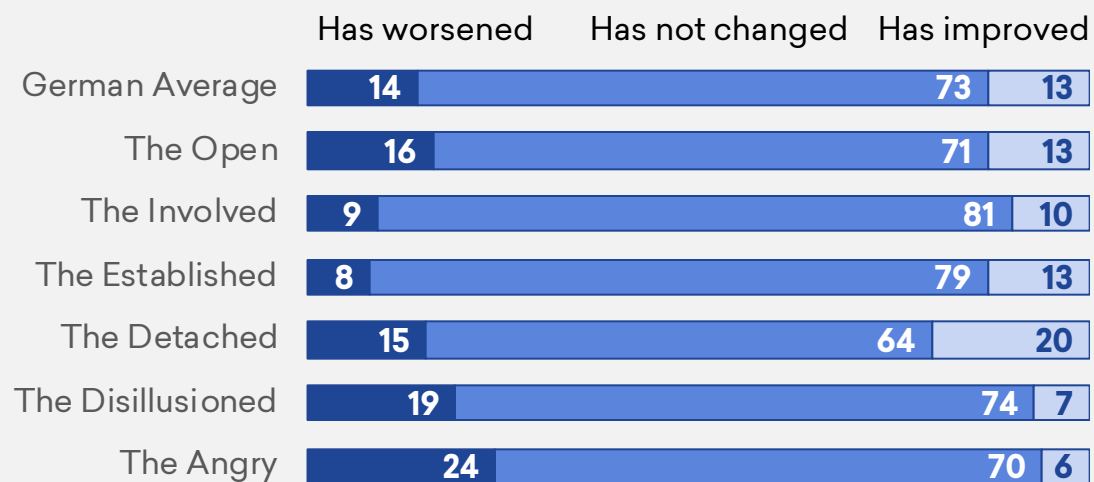


Question: To what extent are the following aspects of your life different due to the COVID-19 pandemic?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Family Life and Financial Situation

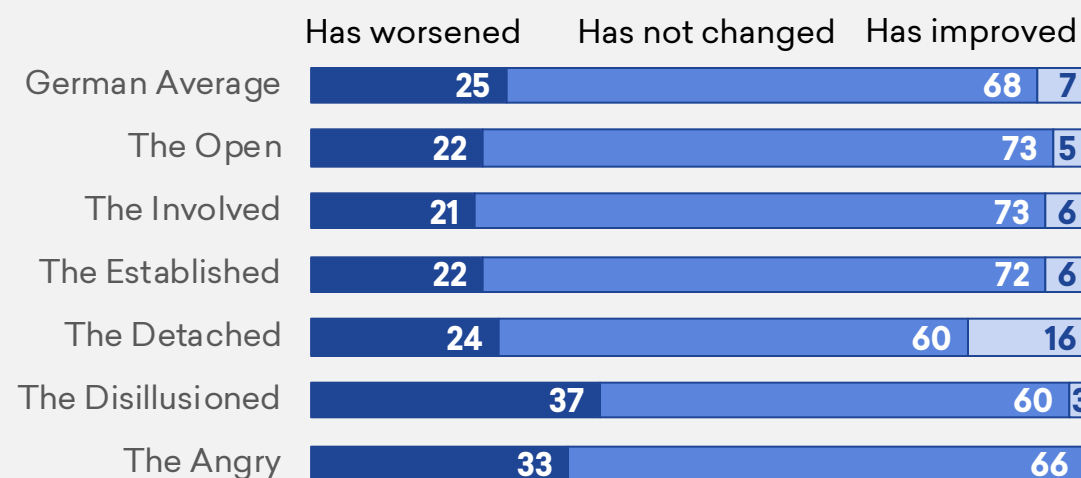


Family Life



Numbers in %

Financial situation



Numbers in %

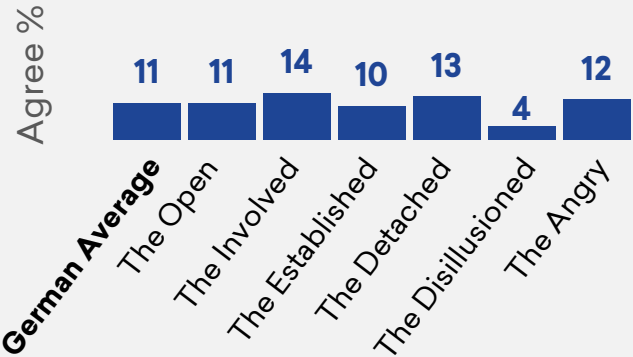
Question: To what extent are the following aspects of your life different due to the COVID-19 pandemic?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Impact of COVID-19 on personal networks

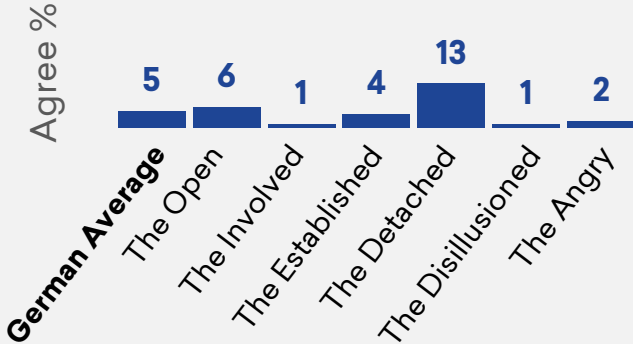


“Do you personally know someone who...?”

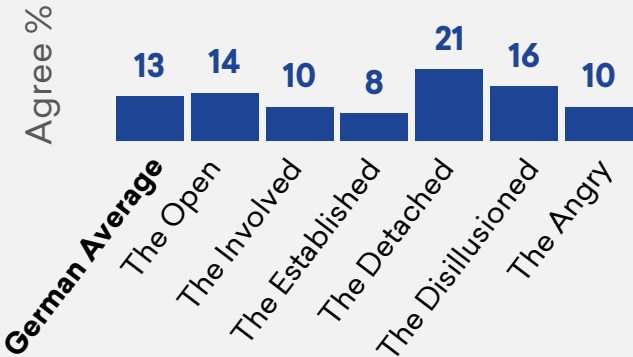
Has been ill with COVID-19



Has died from COVID-19



Who has lost their job or employment due to COVID-19



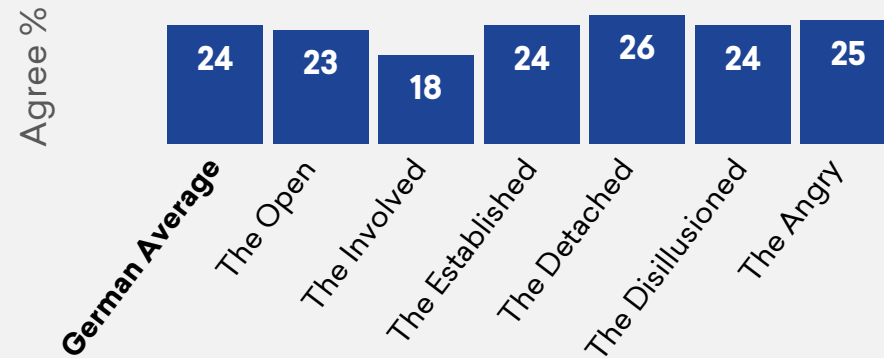
Question: Do you personally know someone who...?

Fears for the Future (1)

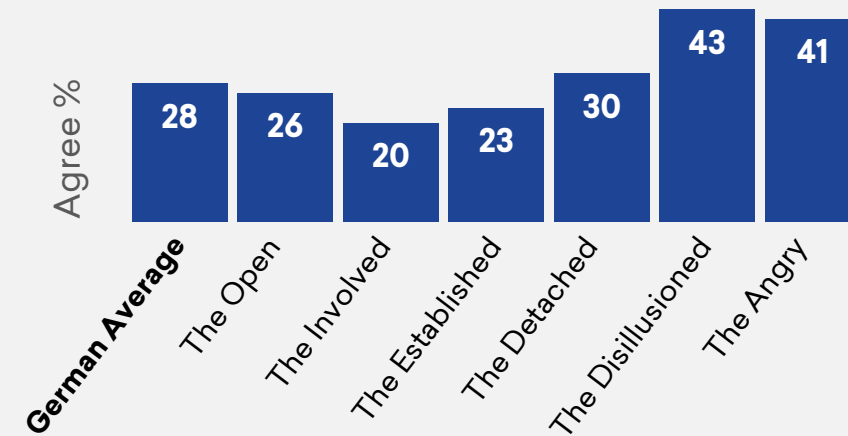


Worried about...

Loss of job or employment*



Financial difficulties



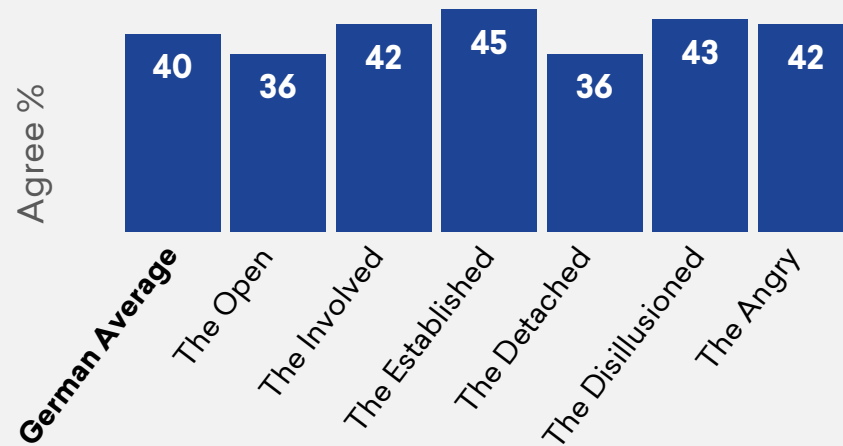
Question: To what extent are you currently worried or not worried that....? *Note that these percentages exclude respondents who responded "Does not apply to me".

Fears for the Future (2)

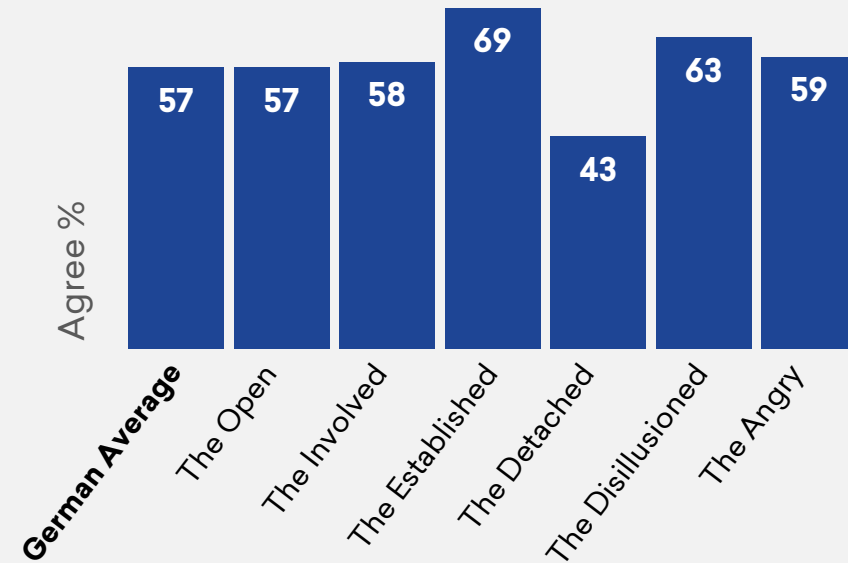


Worried that...

That someone among their friends & family will get ill with COVID-19



That there will be future waves of COVID-19 infections and lockdown in their country



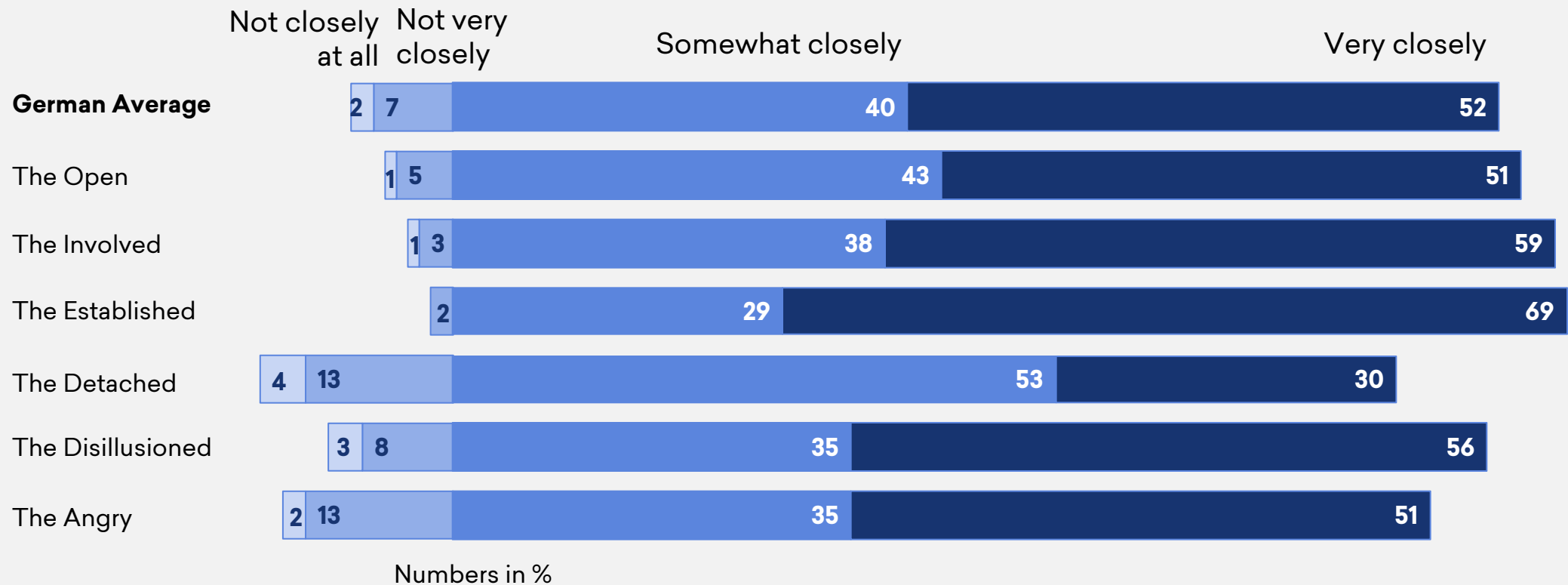
Question: To what extent are you currently worried or not worried that....?

II. Collective Experience under COVID-19

Lockdown & Restrictions (1)



How closely did people abide by COVID-19-rules?

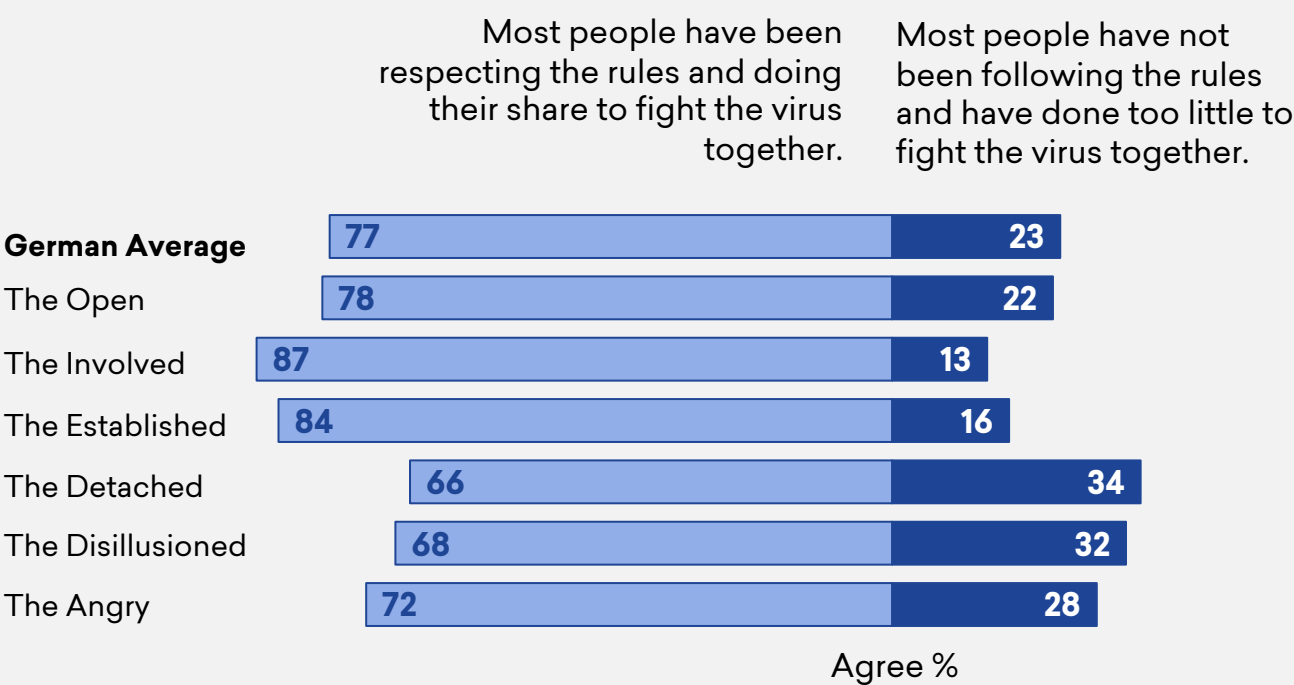
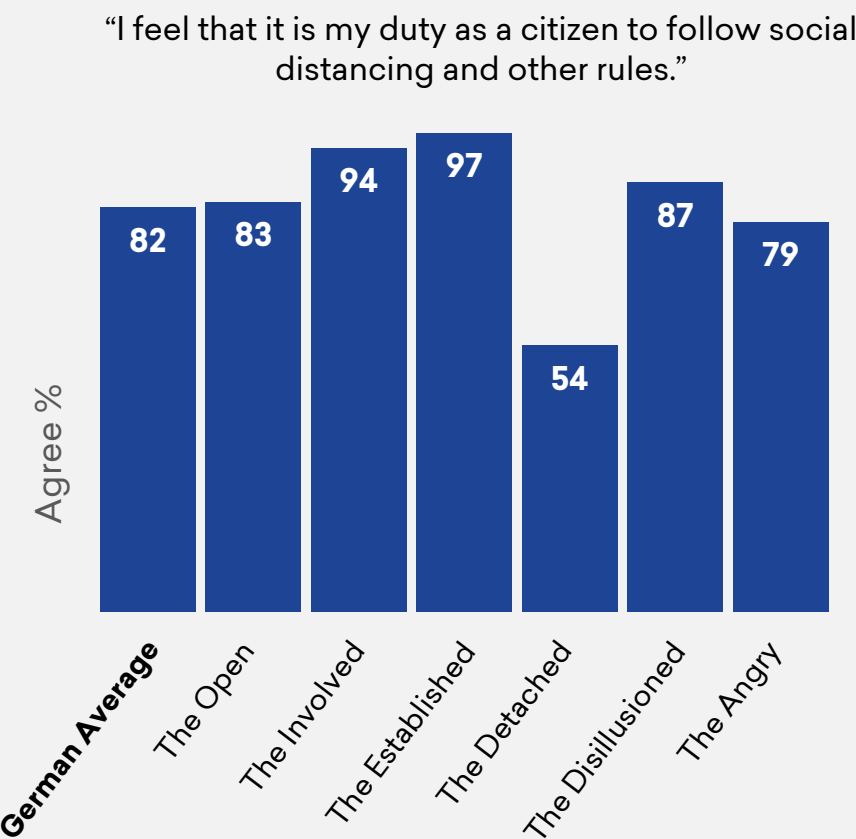


Question: When it comes to the COVID-19 social distancing rules that have been put in place in your area (wearing a mask, staying home, etc.), would you say that you have followed the rules...?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Lockdown and Restrictions (2)



Civic Duty of Social Distancing and Respecting Rules

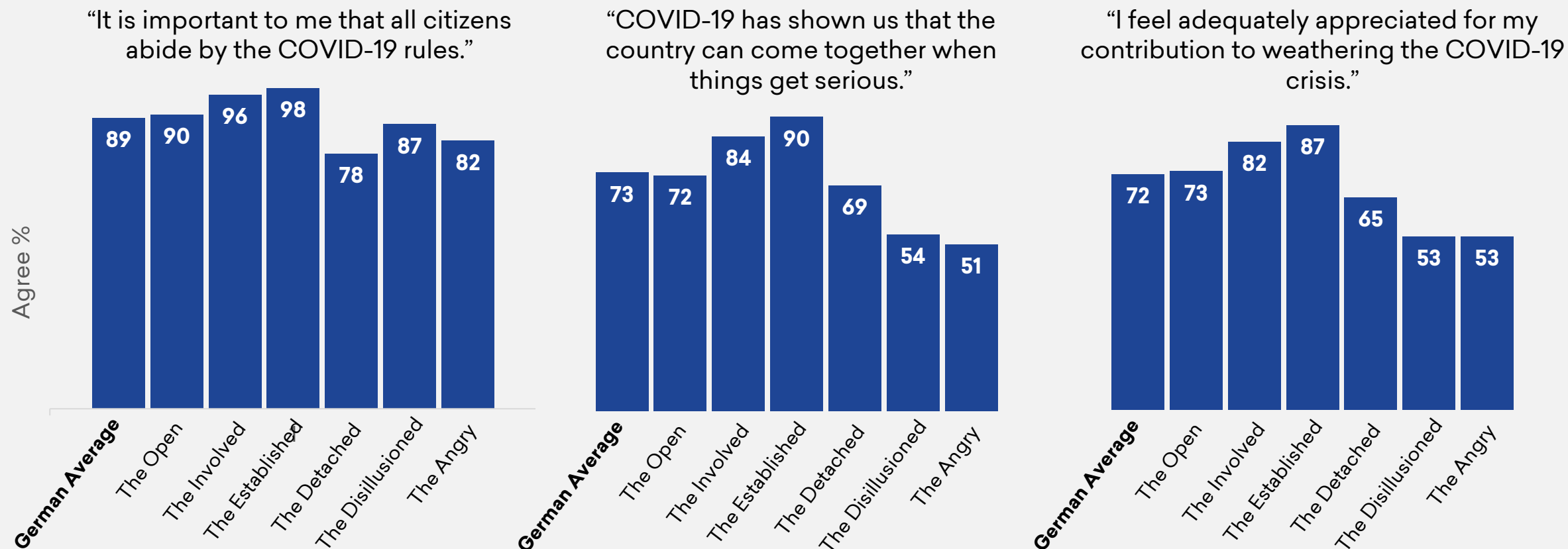


Question: Which of the following statements do you agree with more?; To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Coming together against COVID-19?



Germans' perception of others' behavior during the pandemic...

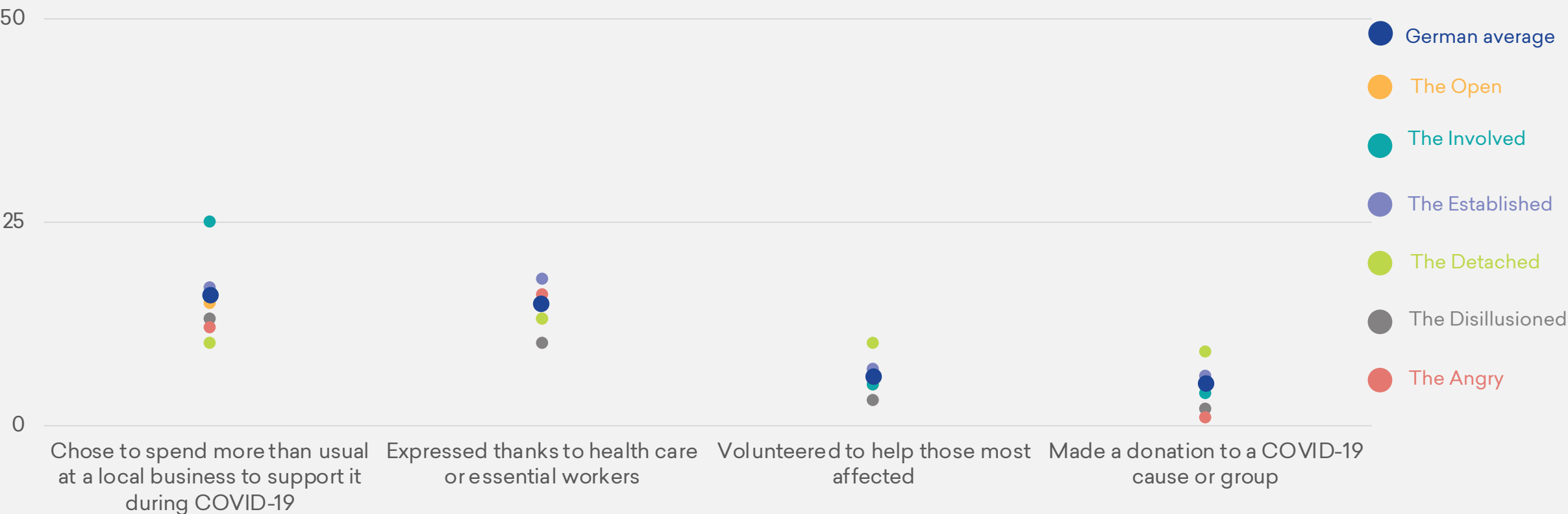


Question: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Engagement & Contribution



Participation in COVID-19 relief activities

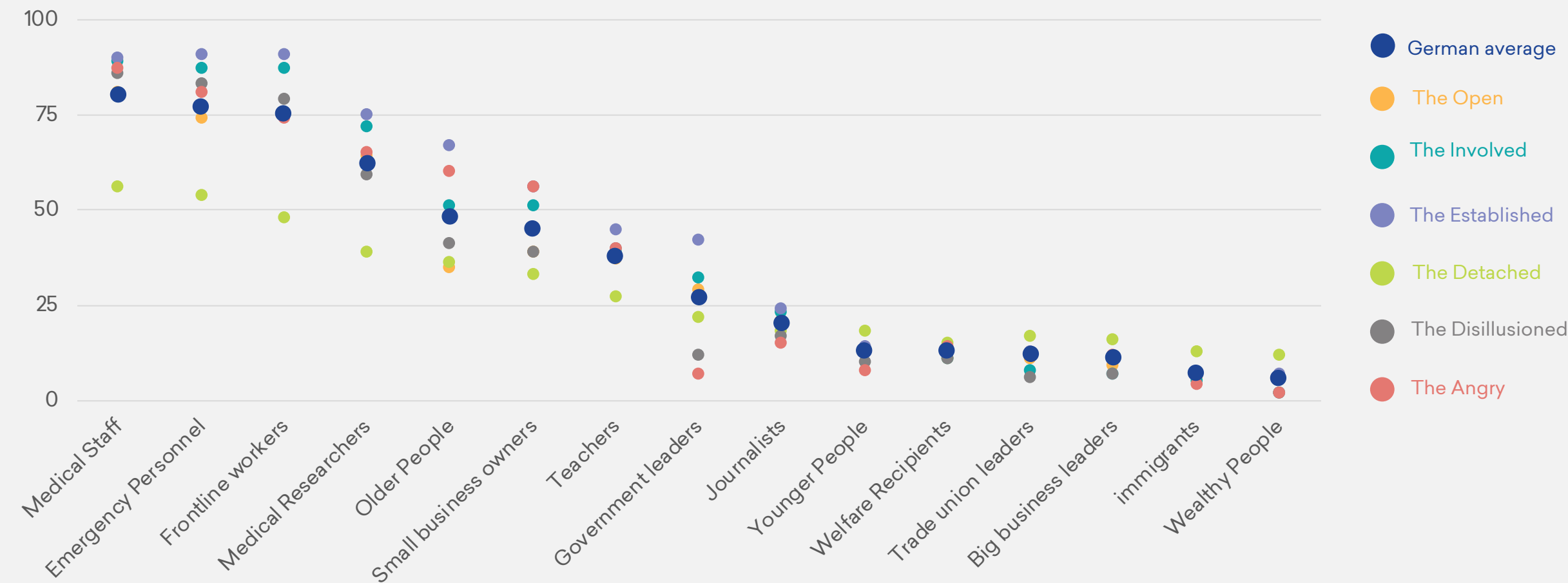


Question: In which of the following activities have you participated since the COVID-19 pandemic began, if any?

Groups in Society: Who Deserves Praise?



Groups that deserve particular praise

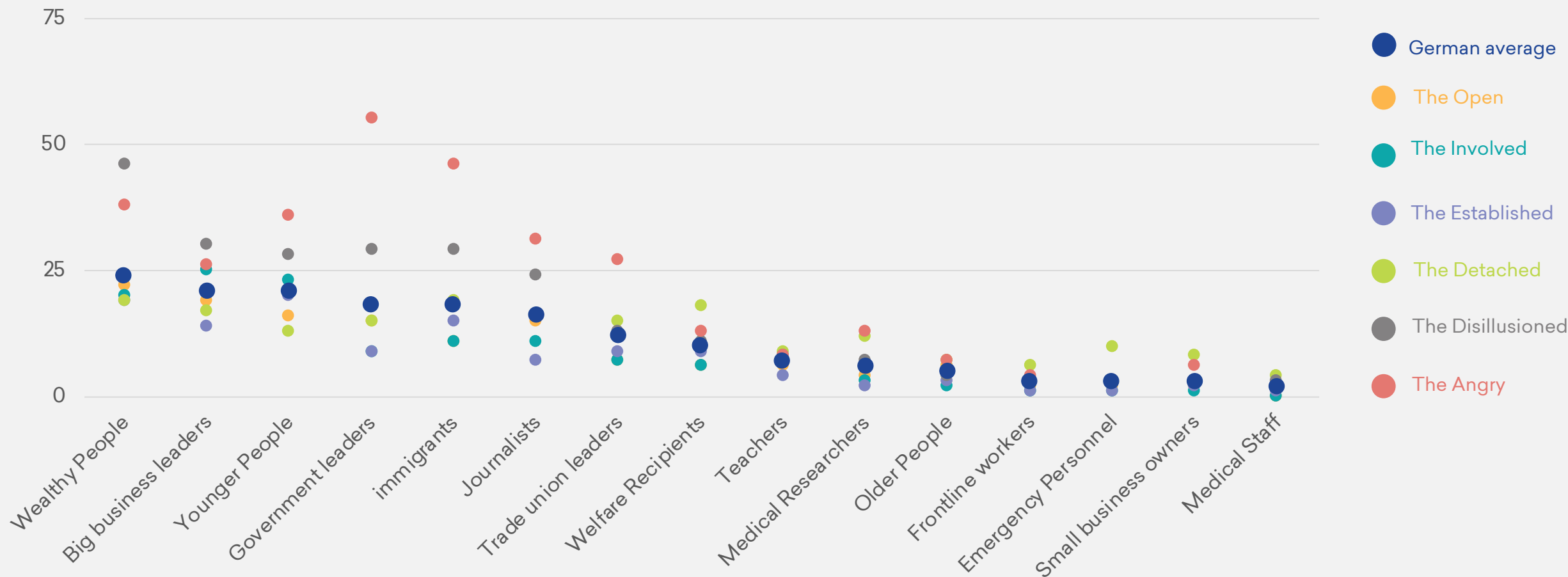


Question: When you think of how different people have acted in the COVID-19 pandemic so far: Please indicate whether the following groups of people deserve particular praise for their actions, deserve particular blame for their actions, or whether they deserve neither particular praise nor particular blame for their actions.

Groups in Society: Who Deserves Blame?



Groups that deserve particular blame

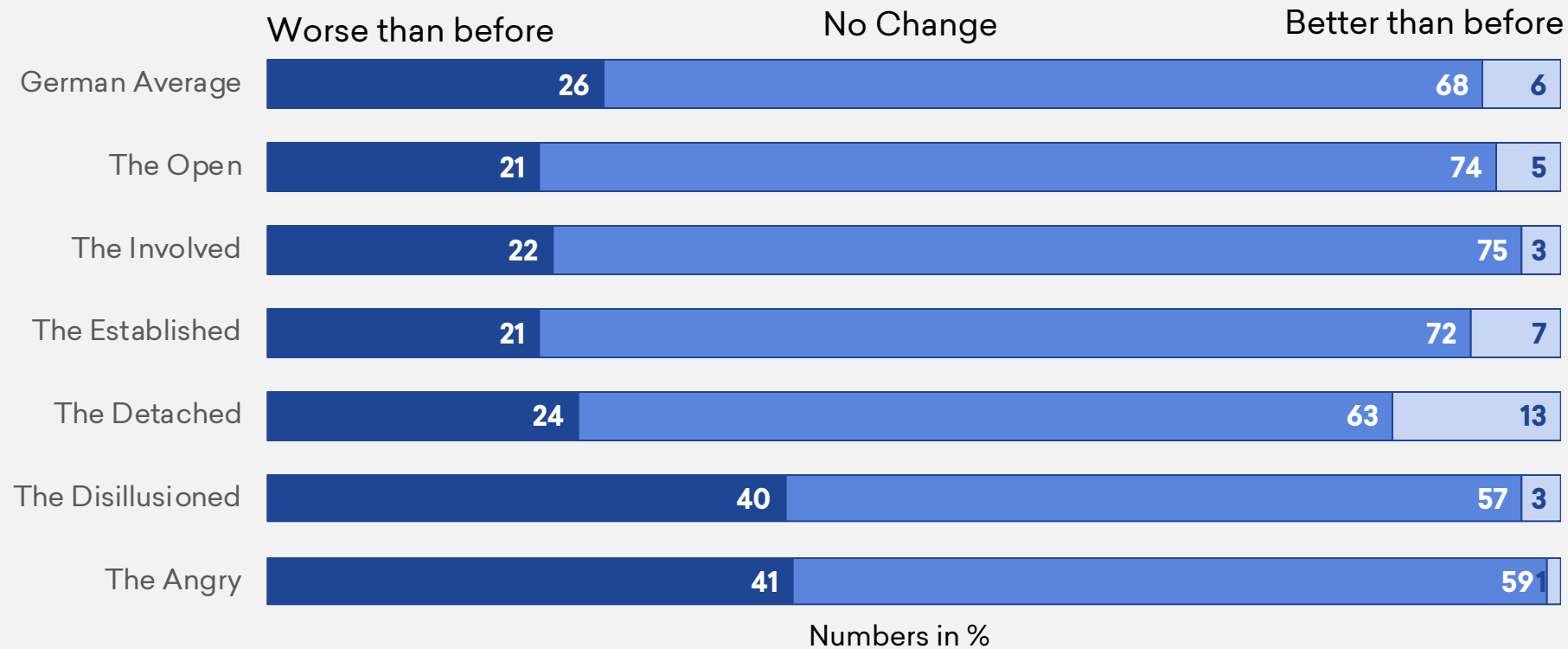


Question: When you think of how different people have acted in the COVID-19 pandemic so far: Please indicate whether the following groups of people deserve particular praise for their actions, deserve particular blame for their actions, or whether they deserve neither particular praise nor particular blame for their actions.

Trust in Others



How has people's trust in others changed during the crisis?



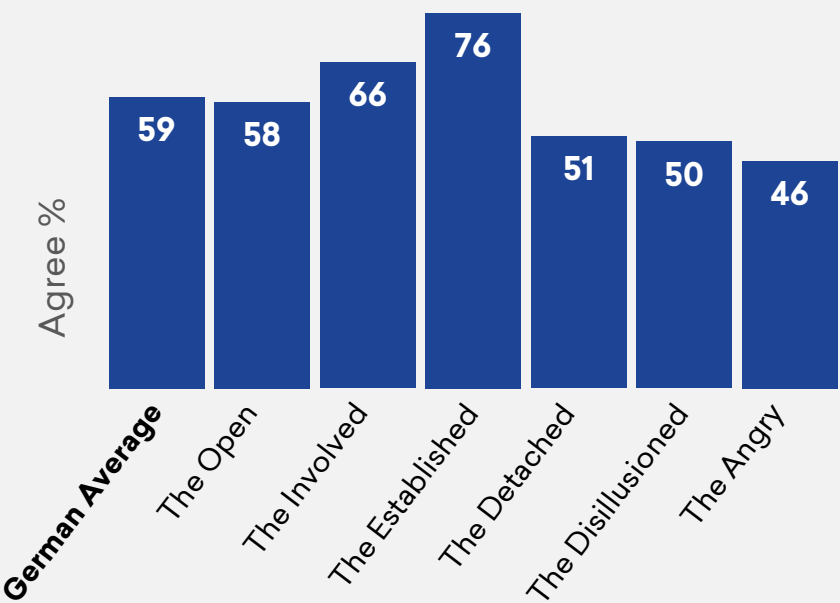
Question: To what extent are the following aspects of your life different due to the COVID-19 pandemic?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Empathy and Shared Humanity

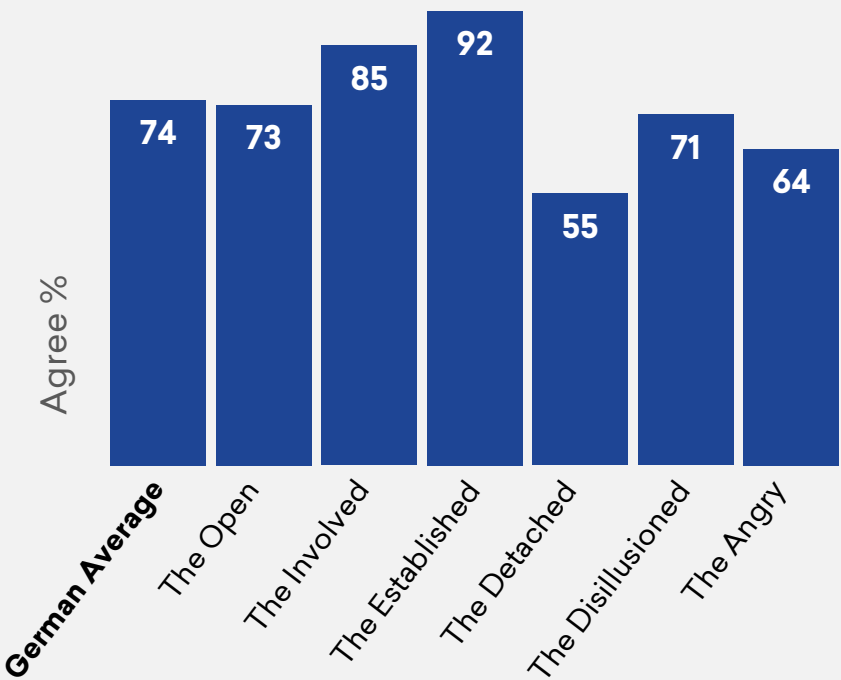


Awareness of others' living conditions and views on humanity

“The COVID-19 pandemic has made me more aware of the living conditions of other people in this country.”



“The COVID-19 crisis has reminded us that no matter where we are from, as humans we are fundamentally the same.”

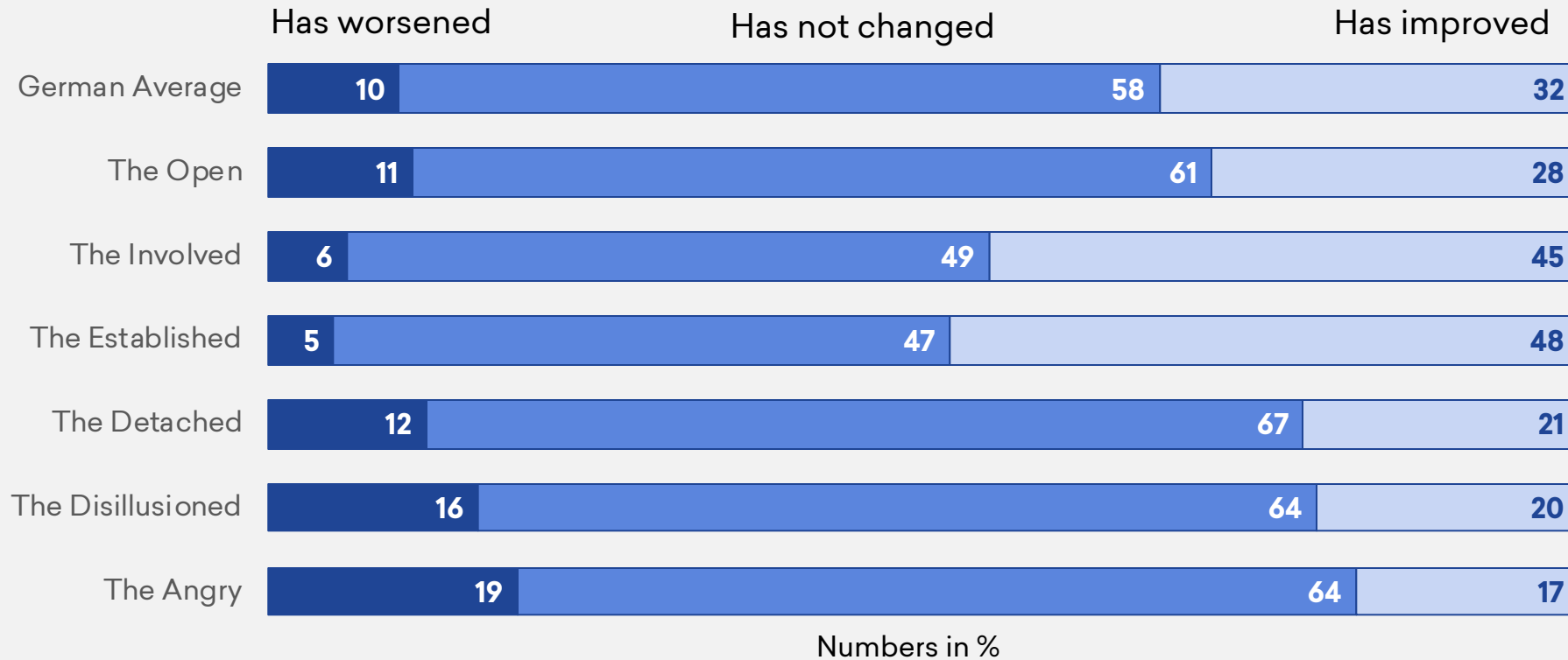


Question: To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

Concern for Others



The impact of COVID-19 on perceived levels of concern for each other

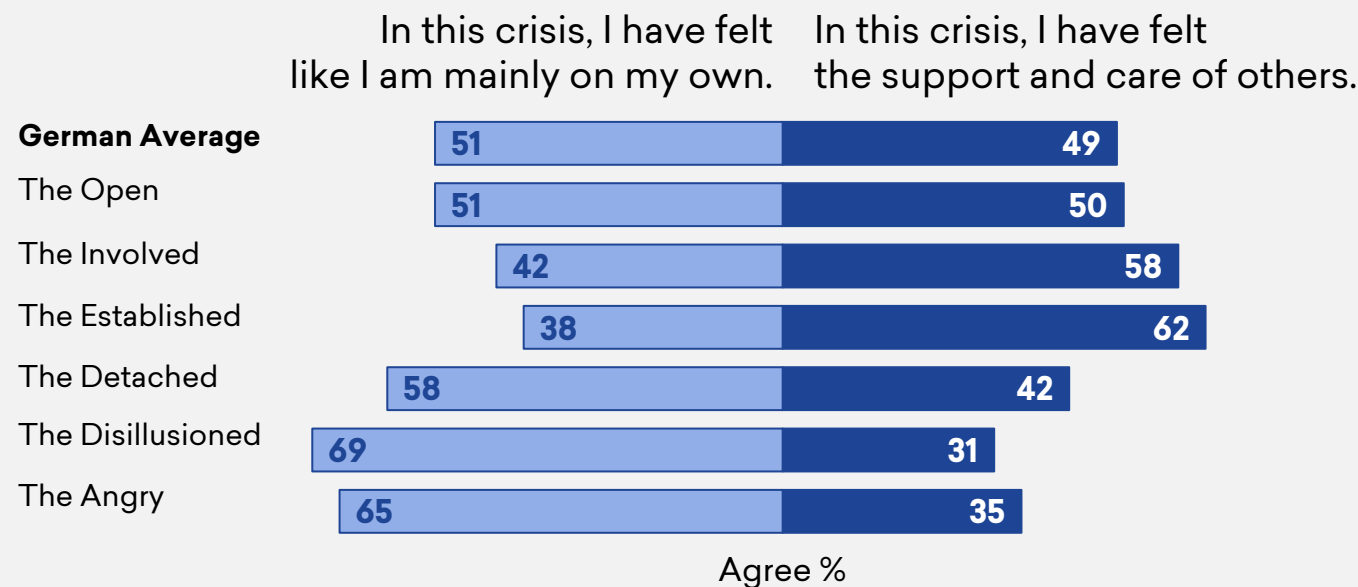


Question: Since this pandemic began, how have the following things changed in [COUNTRY], if at all? People's concern for each other.
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

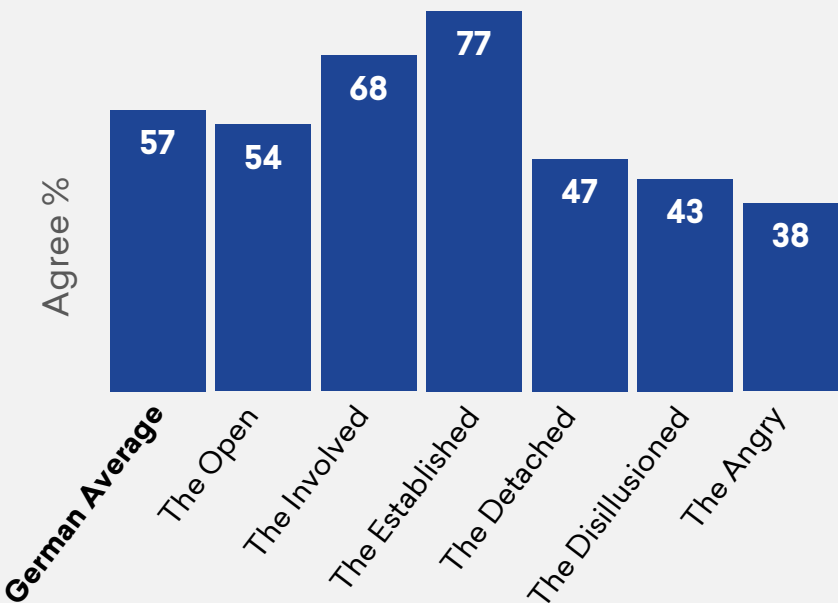
Support and Care



Feelings of mutual support or isolation



“The COVID-19 pandemic has shown me that most people in our country care about each other”



Question: Which of the following statements do you agree with more?; To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

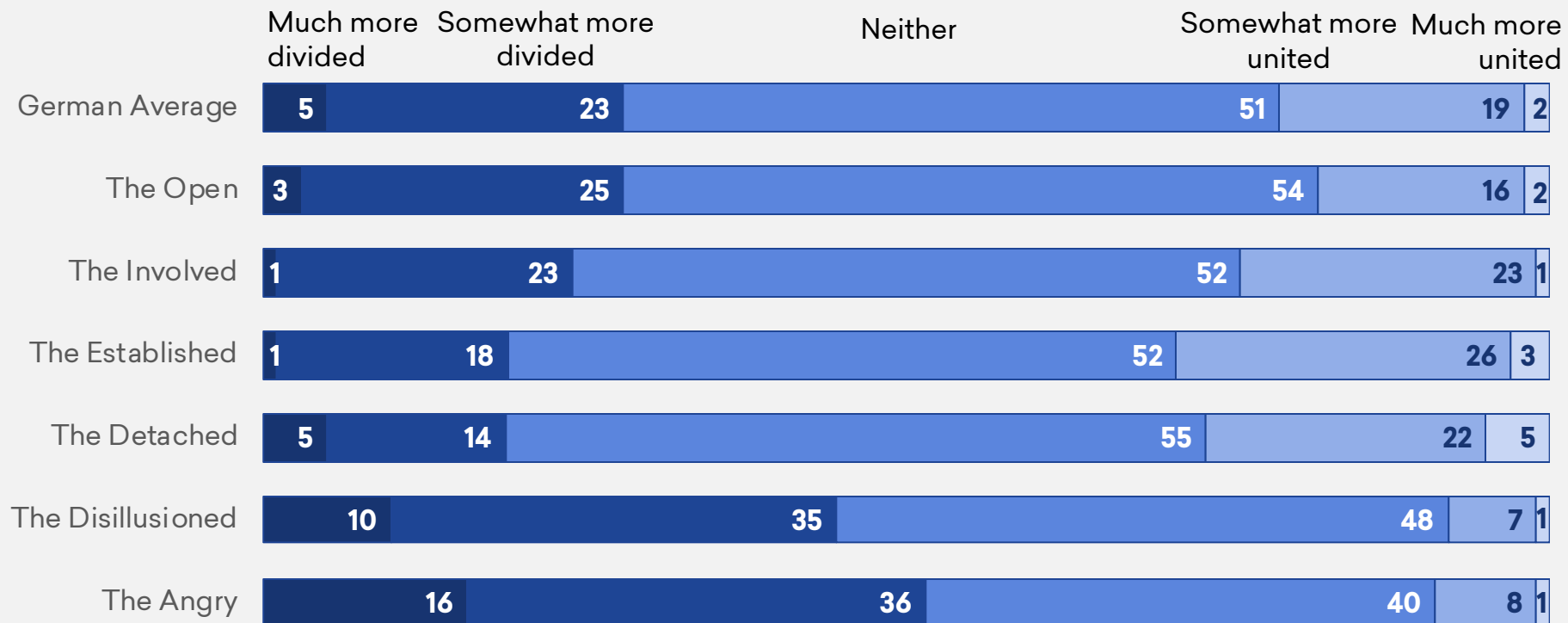
III. Power, Institutions and the Media



Unity vs. Division



More united or divided since COVID-19?



Numbers in %

Question: Since the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, how have your perceptions of [COUNTRY] changed, if at all? Is it...?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

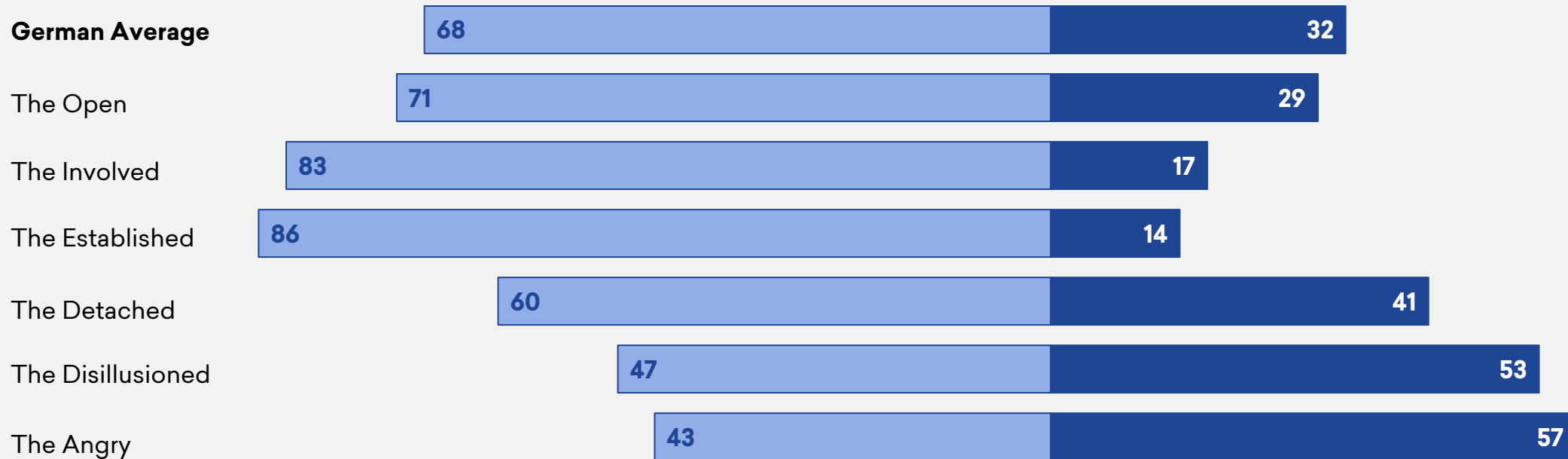
Feelings towards country in handling the crisis: Pride or Disappointment?



My country's handling of the crisis has made me feel **prouder** of my country.

My country's handling of the crisis has left me **disappointed** in my country.

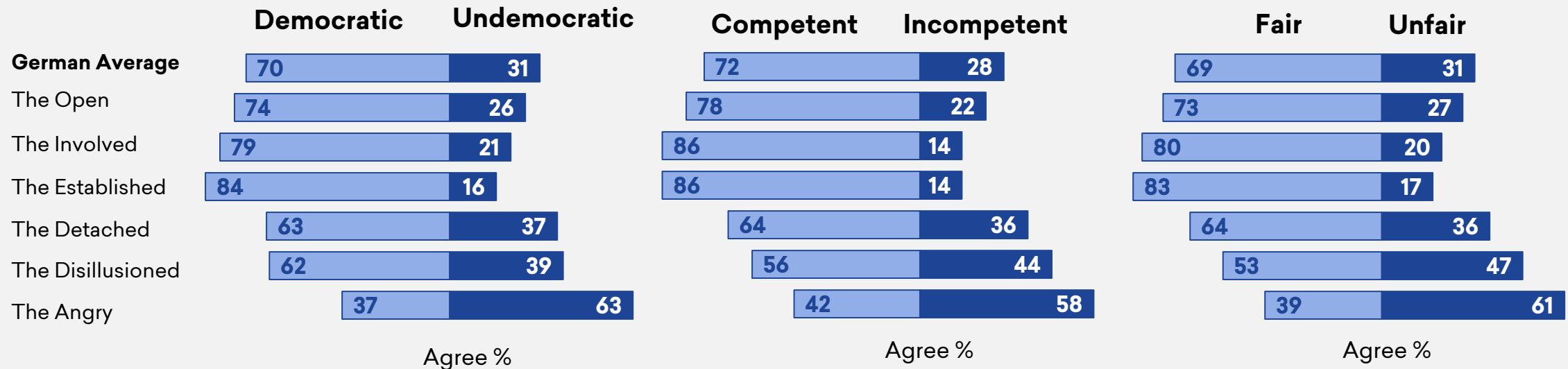
German Average



Agree %

Question: Which of the following statements do you agree with more?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Perception of government action during the crisis



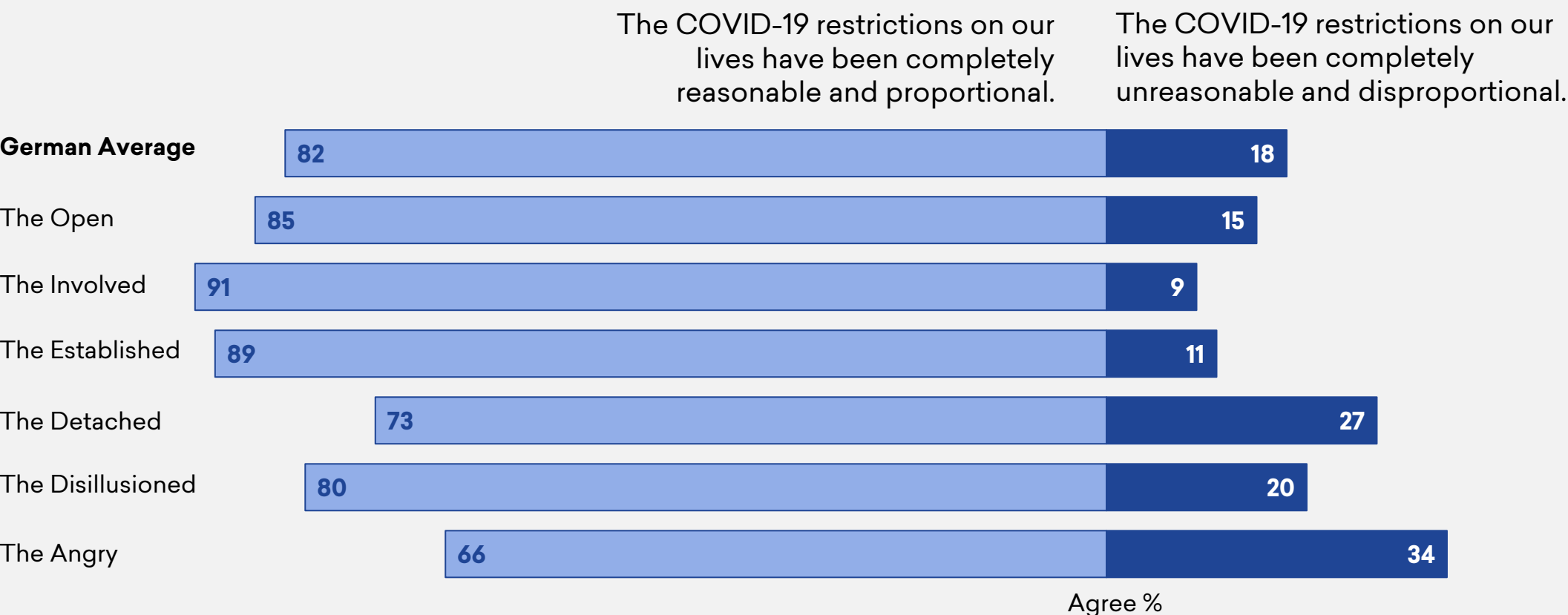
Question: When you think of how the [NATIONALITY] government has managed the COVID-19 situation so far, which of the following opposing terms describes government action better?

Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Perception of COVID-19 rules



Proportional vs. Disproportional

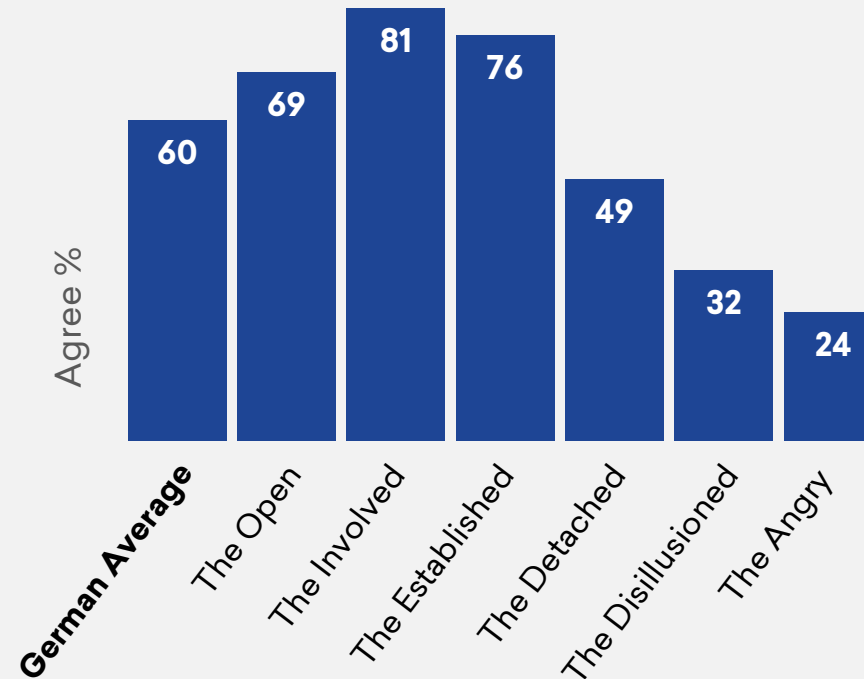


Question: Which of the following statements do you agree with more?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Confidence in Government Ability



„I am confident in our current government's ability to tackle the challenges ahead of us.“



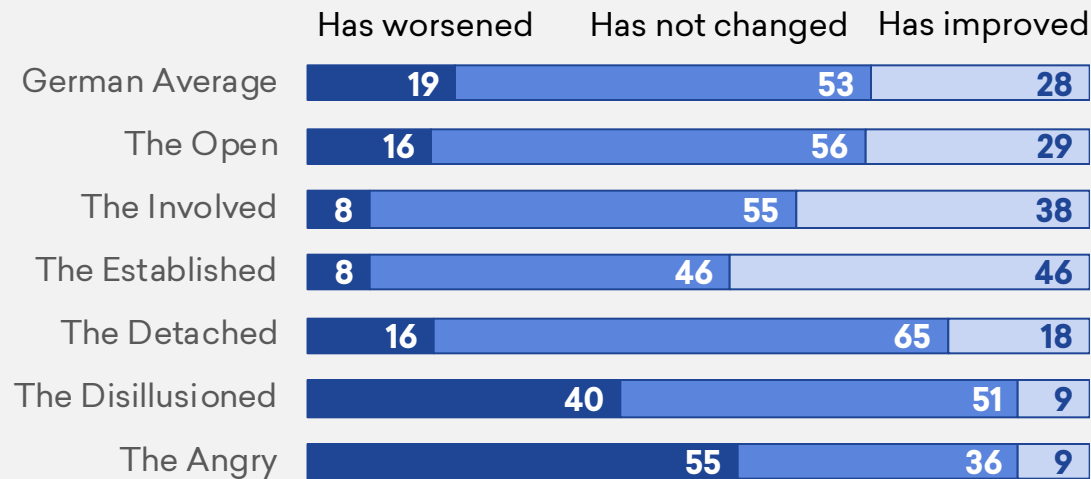
Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Trust in Government



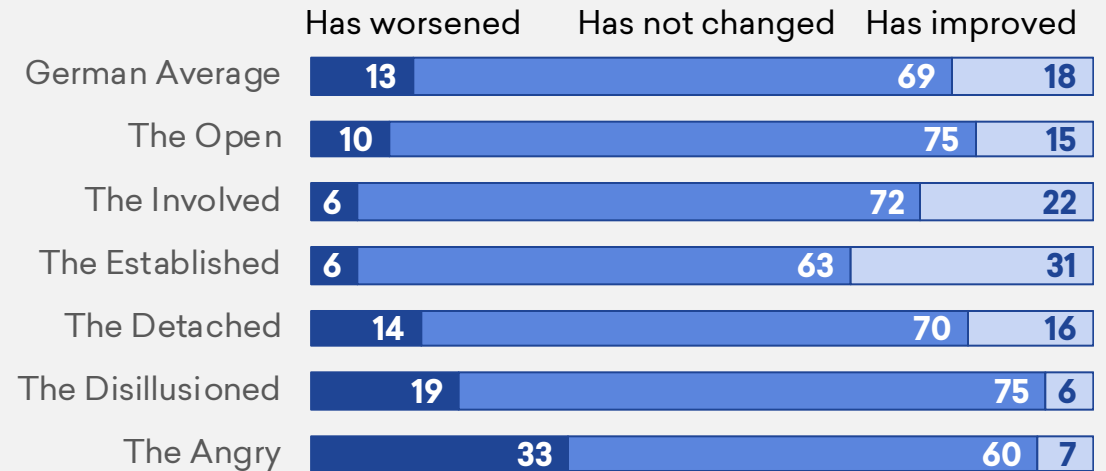
National vs. Local Government

Trust in National Government



Numbers in %

Trust in Local Government



Numbers in %

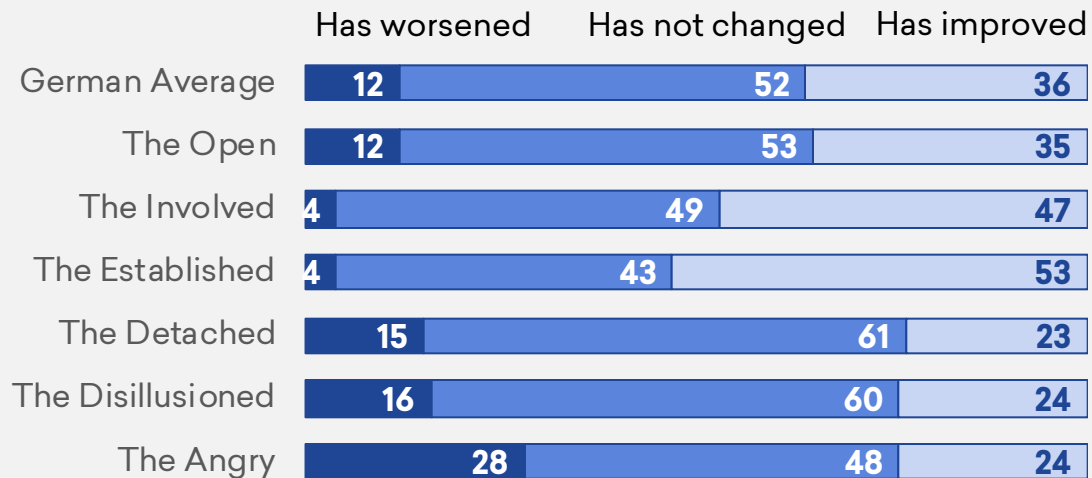
Question: Since this pandemic began, how have the following things changed, if at all?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Trust in the Health and Welfare System



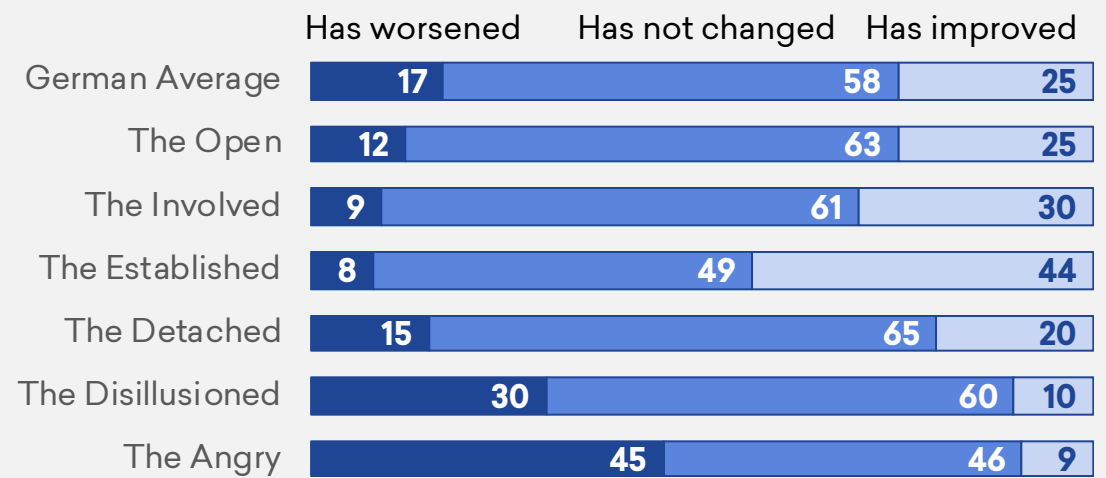
Health & Welfare System

Trust in Health System



Numbers in %

Trust in Welfare System



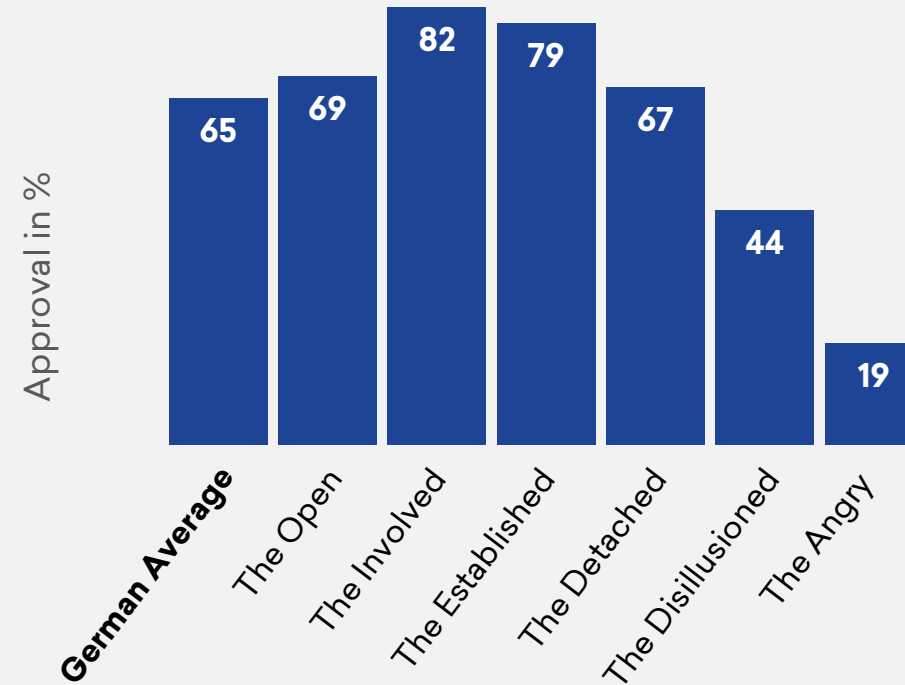
Numbers in %

Question: Since this pandemic began, how have the following things changed, if at all?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Head of State Approval



Approval of Chancellor Angela Merkel

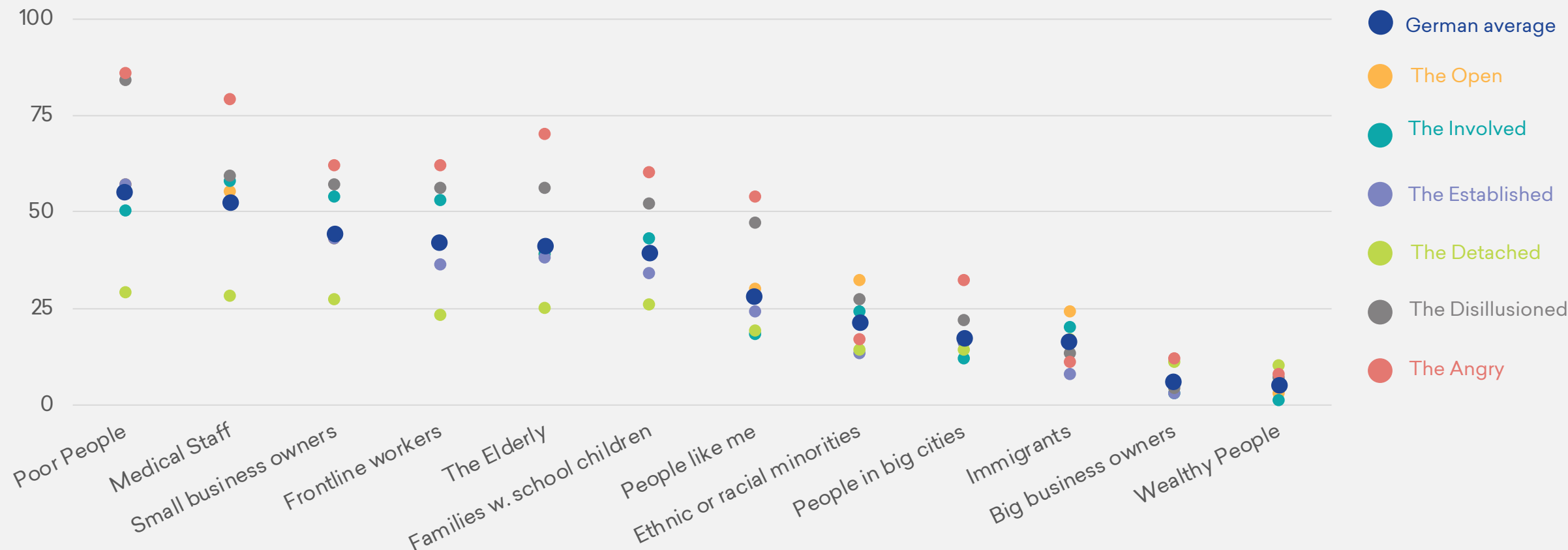


Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the way [HEAD OF GOVERNMENT / STATE] is doing his/her job?

Government Cares Too Little About...



Groups that government cares too little about

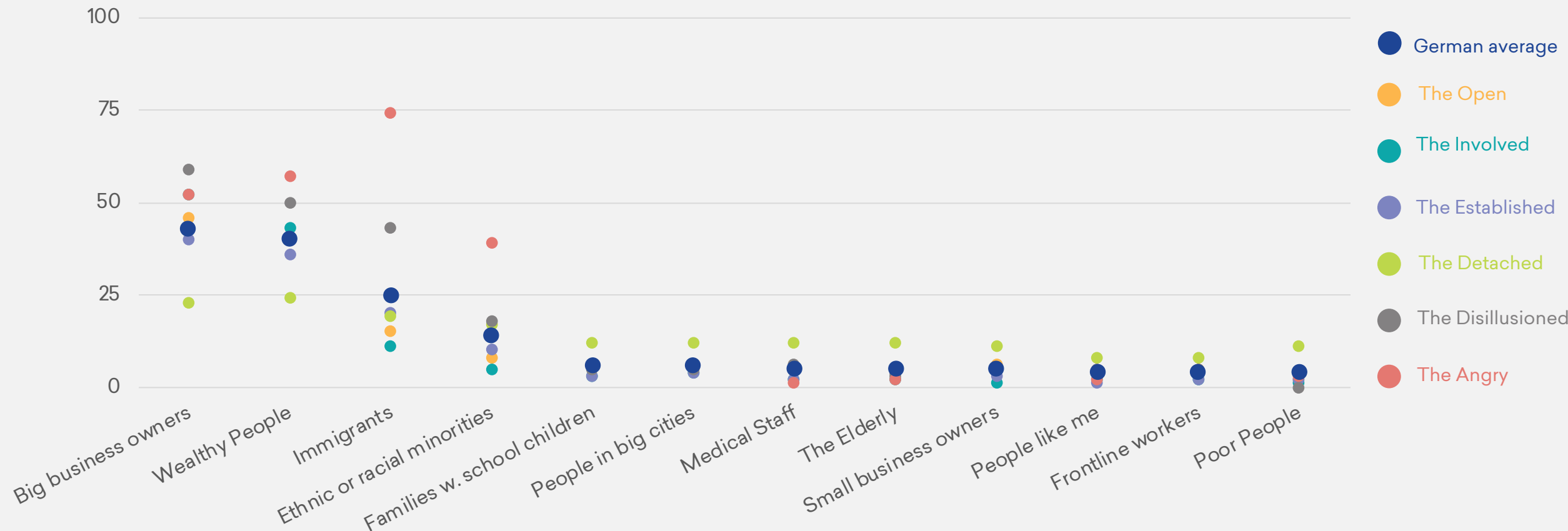


Question: Please indicate how much the [NATIONALITY] government seems to care about the following groups in its response to the COVID-19 situation...

Government Cares Too Much About...



Groups that government cares too much about

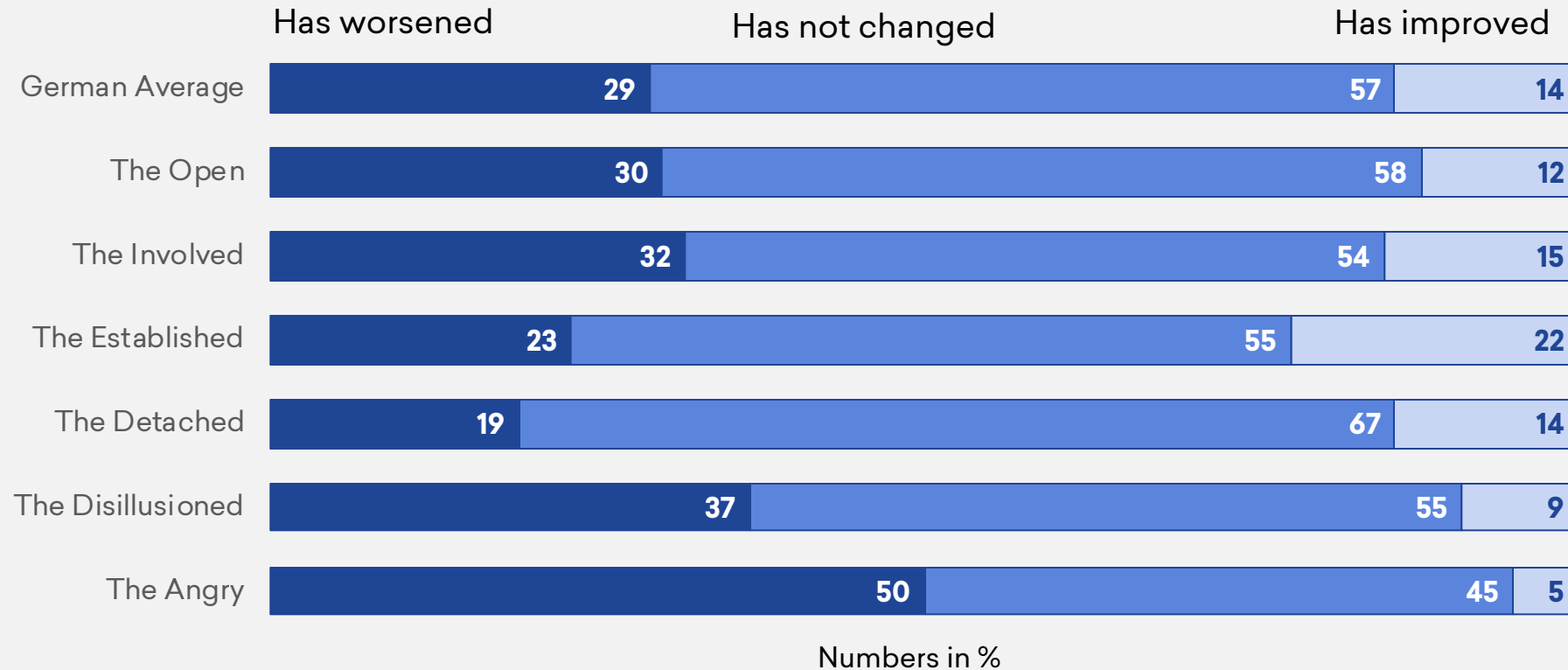


Question: Please indicate how much the [NATIONALITY] government seems to care about the following groups in its response to the COVID-19 situation...

The Tone of Public Debate



How has the tone of public debate in Germany changed during the crisis?

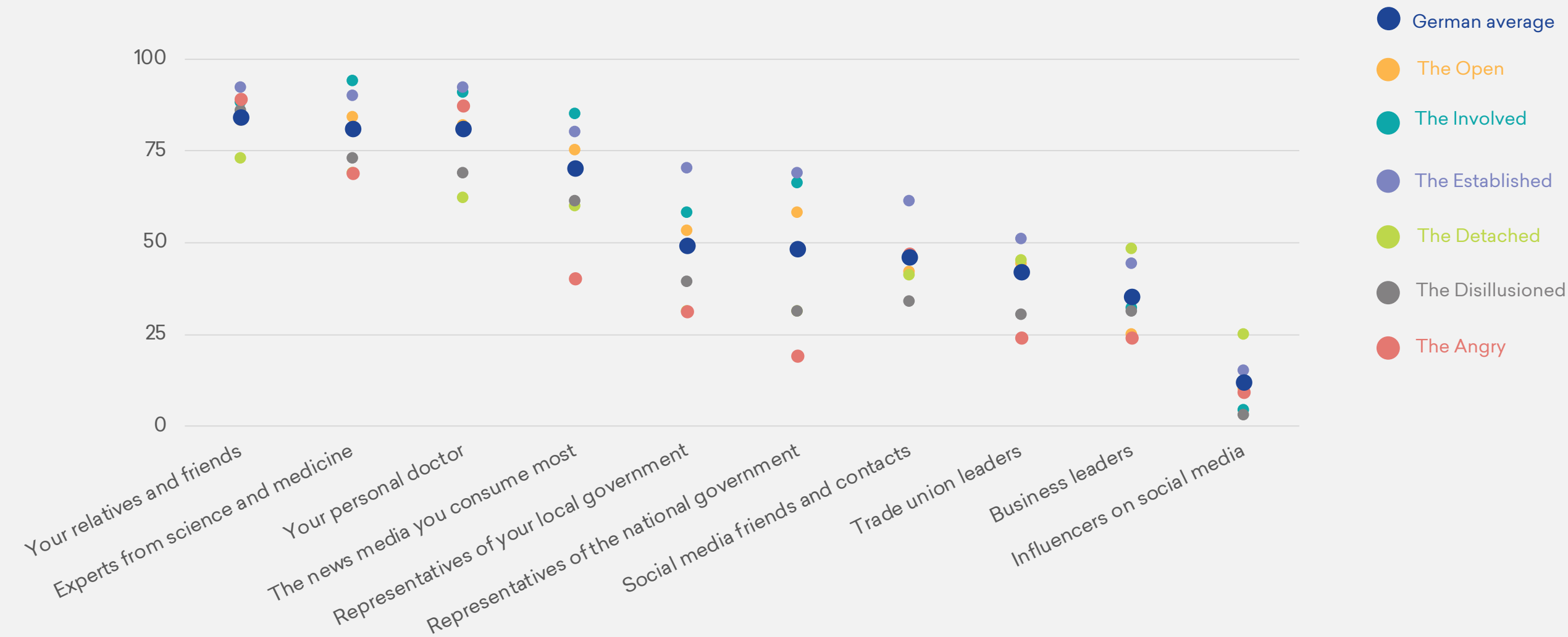


Question: Since this pandemic began, how have the following things changed in [COUNTRY], if at all?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Trust in information sources on COVID-19



Who do people trust for reliable information on COVID-19?



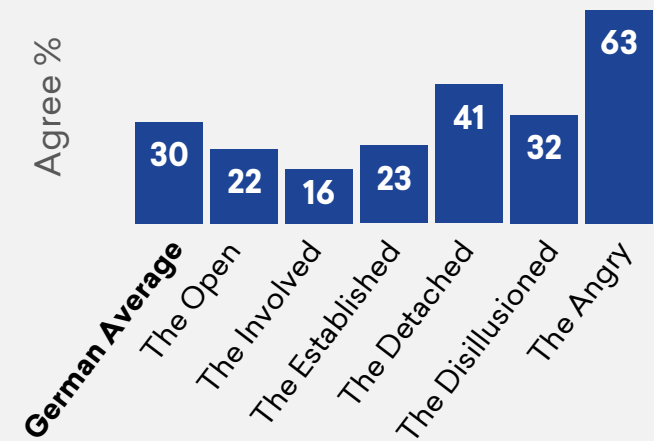
Question: Please indicate to what extent, if at all, you trust these groups of people or institutions when it comes to accurate and reliable information on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Suspicion & Conspiracy

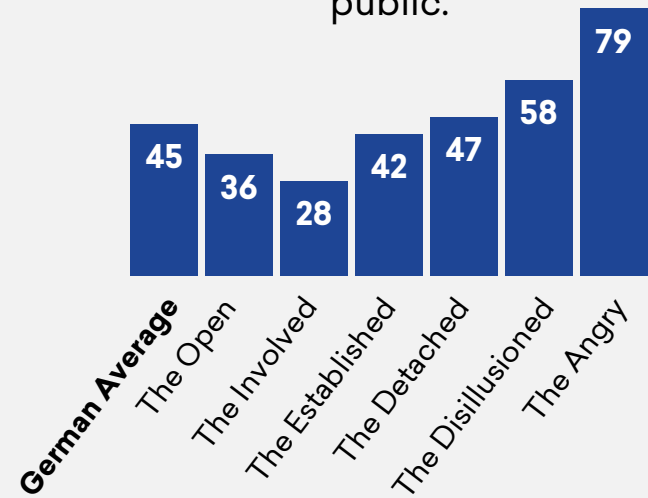


Are people suspicious of government and media?

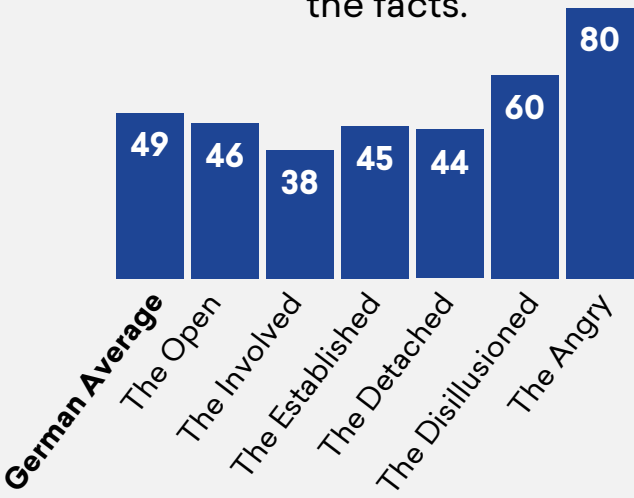
“The government is making this crisis seem bigger than it is to push through their own agenda.”



“The government knows things about COVID-19 that it is hiding from the public.”



“The media seem to be pursuing their own agenda rather than simply reporting the facts.”



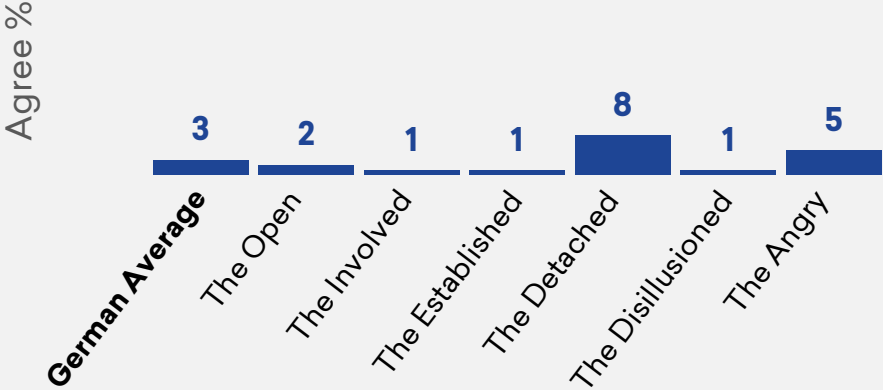
Question: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Participation in Anti-Government Protest

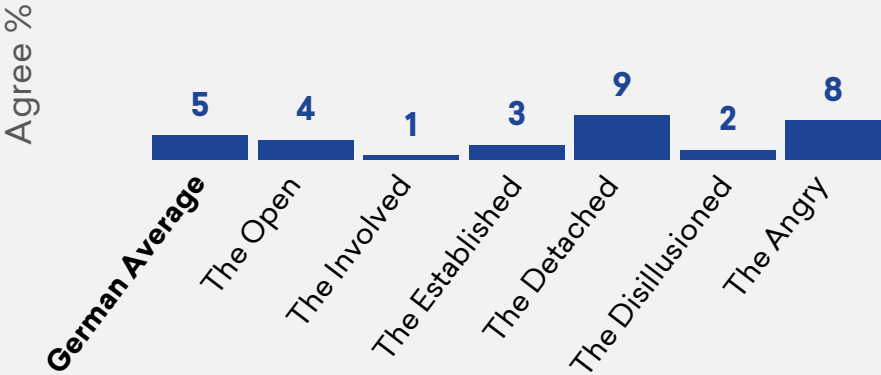


Opposition to COVID-19 policies

Attended a protest against COVID-related government policies.



Posted on social media against COVID-19 government policies.



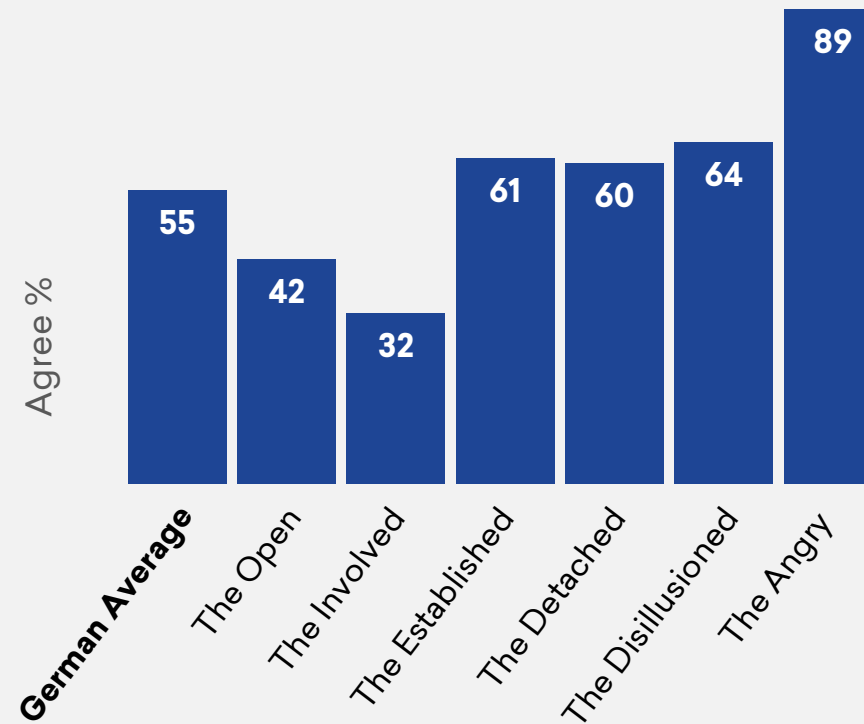
Question: In which of the following activities have you participated since the COVID-19 pandemic began, if any?

Authoritarianism



Desire for a 'strong leader'

„To put our country in order, we need a strong leader who is willing to break the rules.“

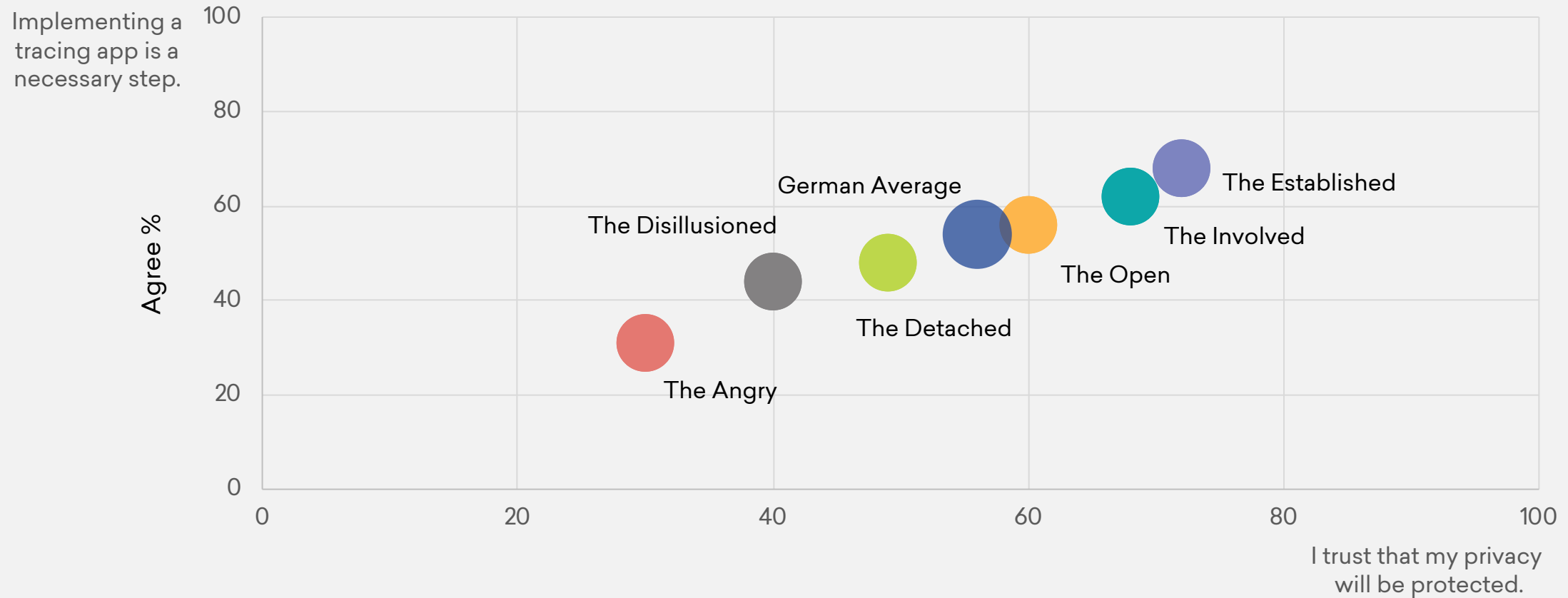


Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Acceptance of Mobile Tracing Apps



Views on Tracing Apps

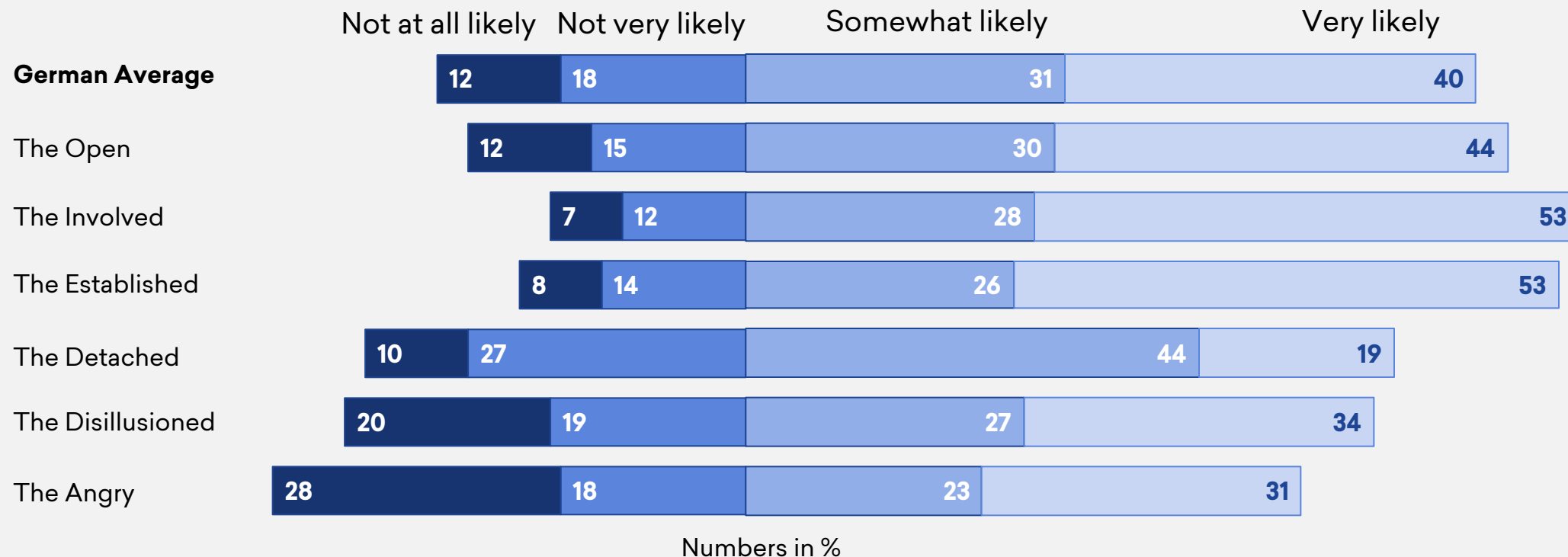


Question: Many governments are debating or rolling out mobile tracing apps to manage and reduce the spread of COVID-19. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Vaccination against COVID-19



Willingness to get vaccinated



Question: If a safe and effective vaccine against COVID-19 is developed, how likely would you be to get vaccinated?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

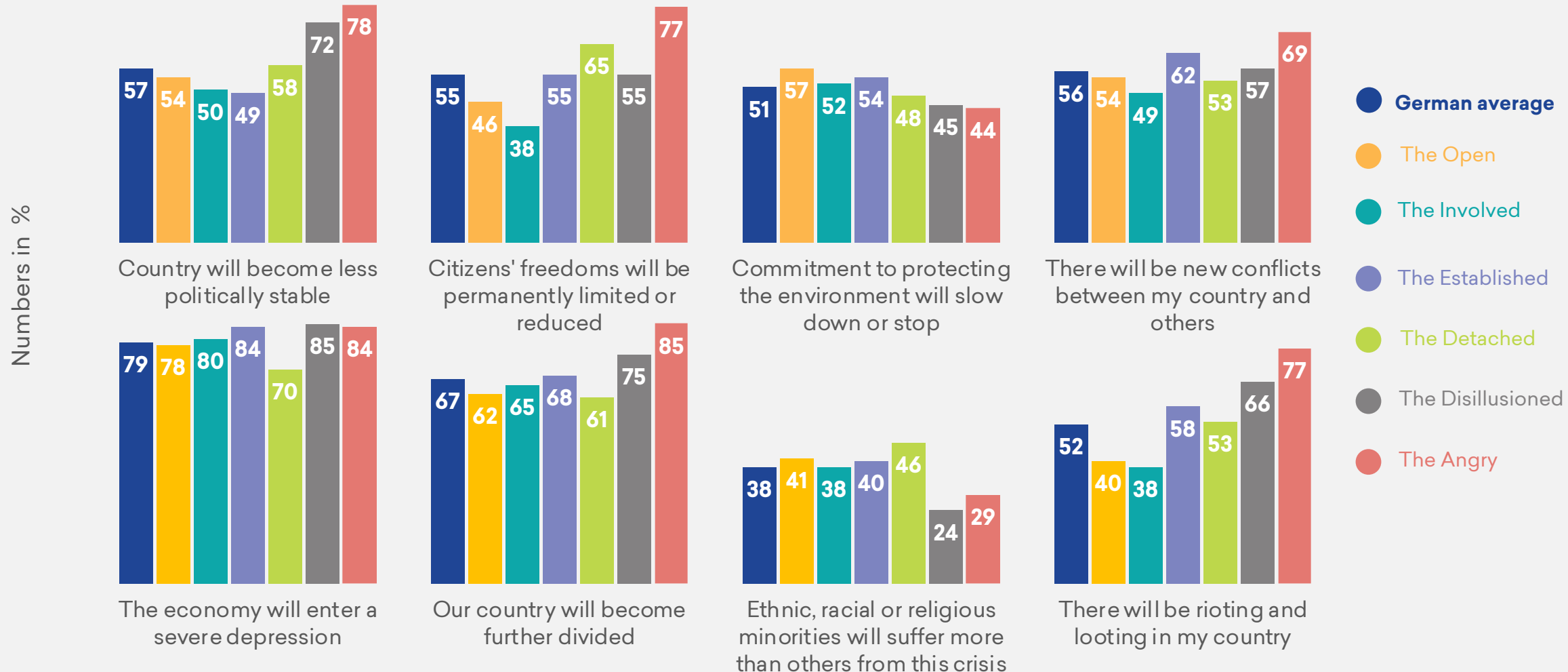
IV. After COVID-19



Worries About Country and Society



Worried that...



Question: To what extent are you currently worried or not worried that....?

Political Priorities for the Months Ahead



	German Average	The Open	The Involved	The Established	The Detached	The Disillusioned	The Angry
Protecting climate and environment	31	38	40	33	22	32	16
Supporting individuals and families in greatest need	28	23	32	29	21	39	33
Improving our health system	24	25	19	26	24	19	29
Reducing immigration and refugee intake	23	16	9	22	18	39	58
Fighting crime and violence	23	17	16	30	20	25	39
Improving our education system	22	26	31	19	14	22	20
Supporting small businesses	21	21	29	23	14	22	23
Reducing unemployment	19	16	19	23	19	23	16
Reducing economic inequality	19	23	23	18	15	17	15
Addressing racism in our society	17	22	22	18	14	13	6
Protecting democratic rights and freedoms	14	17	17	13	9	14	15
Reducing terrorism	11	7	4	17	17	8	14
Improving cooperation between countries	10	11	13	10	9	9	3
Reducing political division	8	10	9	3	10	5	5
Strengthening European integration	7	10	11	6	7	2	2
Working towards gender equality	4	4	4	2	7	2	2
Protecting ethnic, racial and religious minorities	3	3	2	1	6	2	0

Question: Besides containing the COVID-19 pandemic, which of the following issues should the government prioritize addressing in the months ahead? Please select the top 3.

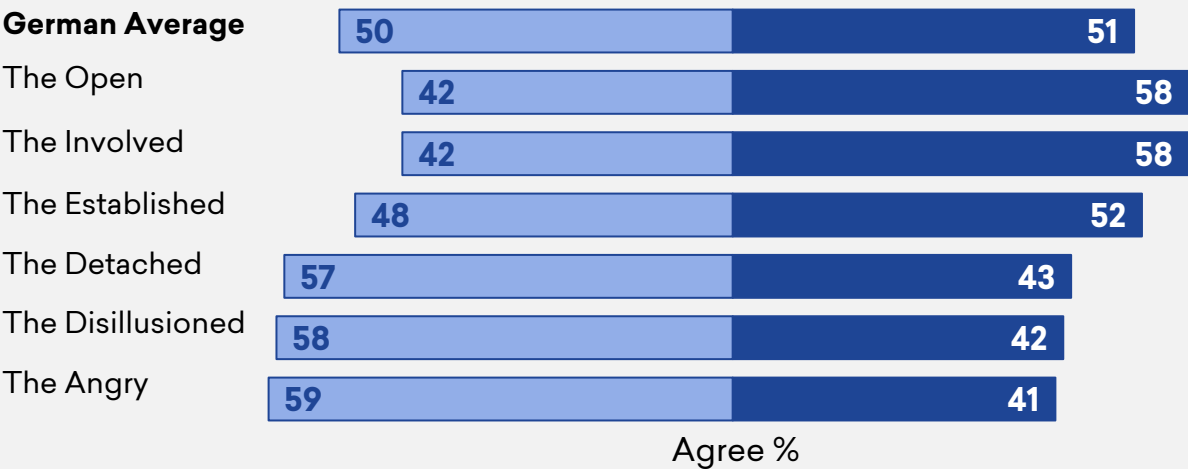
Desire and Expectations for Change



Post-pandemic change vs. a return to normal

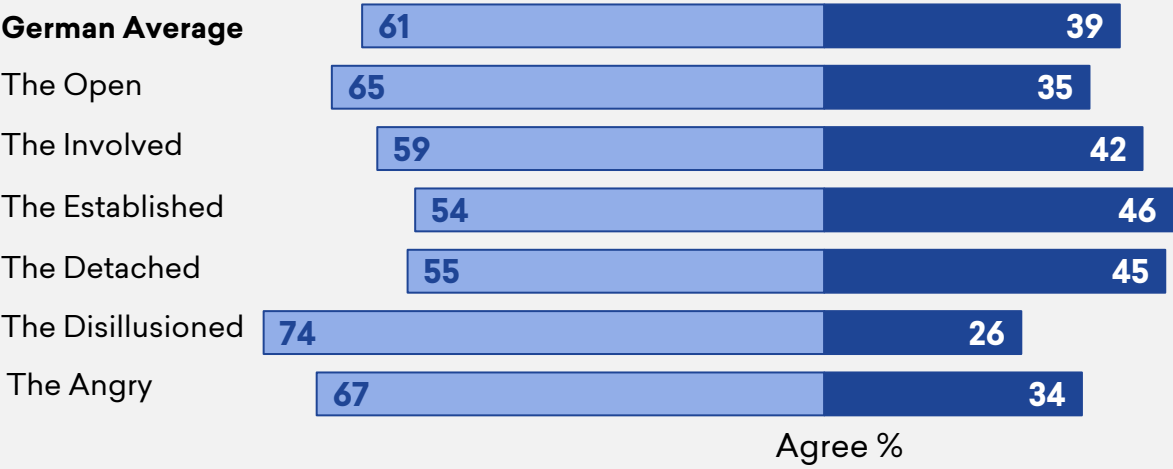
I mostly just want things to return to normal, to how they were before the pandemic.

We should seize the opportunity of COVID-19 to make important changes to our country.



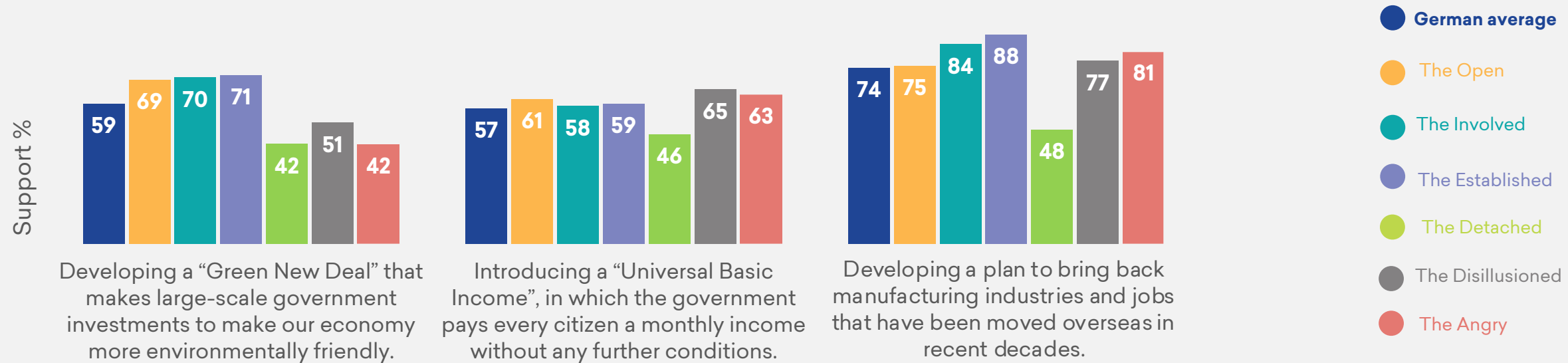
I doubt that much will change in our country after the pandemic is over.

I think that significant changes will happen in our country after the pandemic is over.



Question: Which of the following statements do you agree with more?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Support for Visionary Policies: Green Deal, UBI and Onshoring jobs

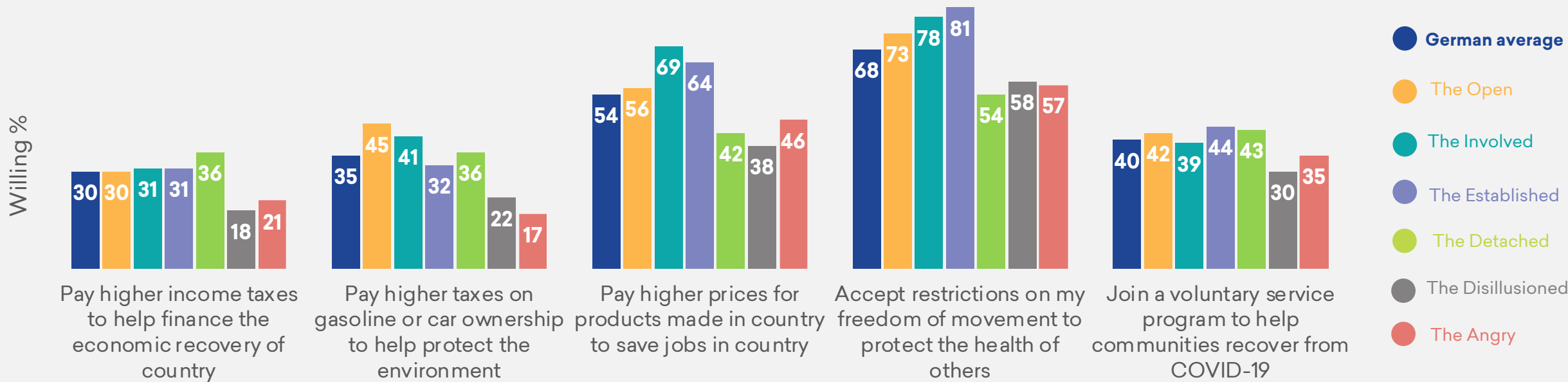


Question: There is currently debate about different political measures. Would you support or oppose the following proposals?

Personal Willingness for Sacrifice

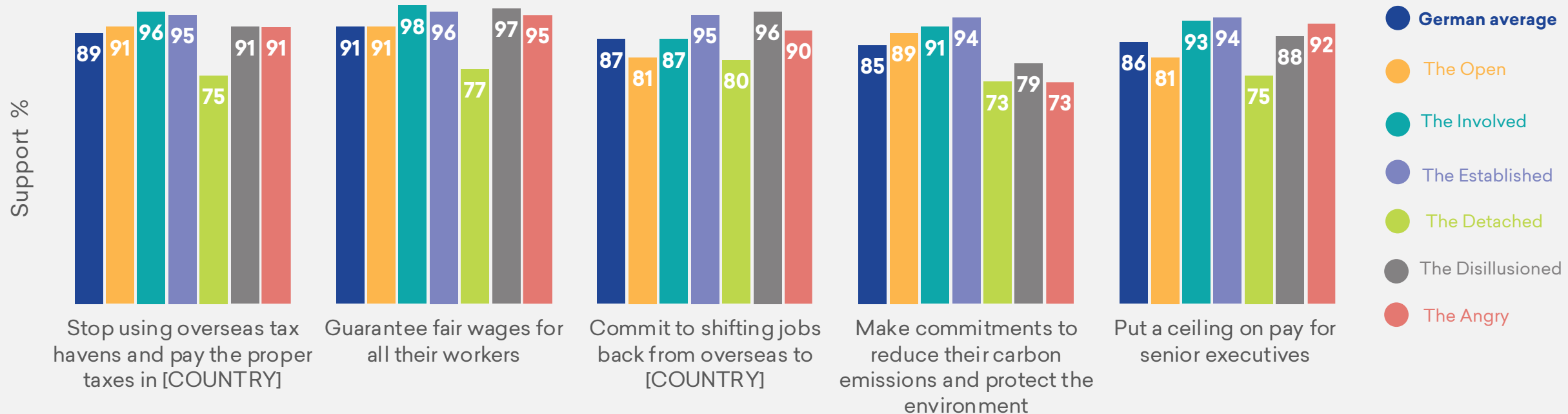


People are willing to make a sacrifice for recovery



Question: When it comes to your actions during and after the crisis, would you personally be willing or not to do the following...

Conditions on Rescue Packages for the Private Sector



Question: The government is currently working on measures to help the economy and support businesses. What do you think: To what extent would you support or oppose requiring companies to fulfil the following criteria if they are to receive government aid?

Aspirations: Country should become more...



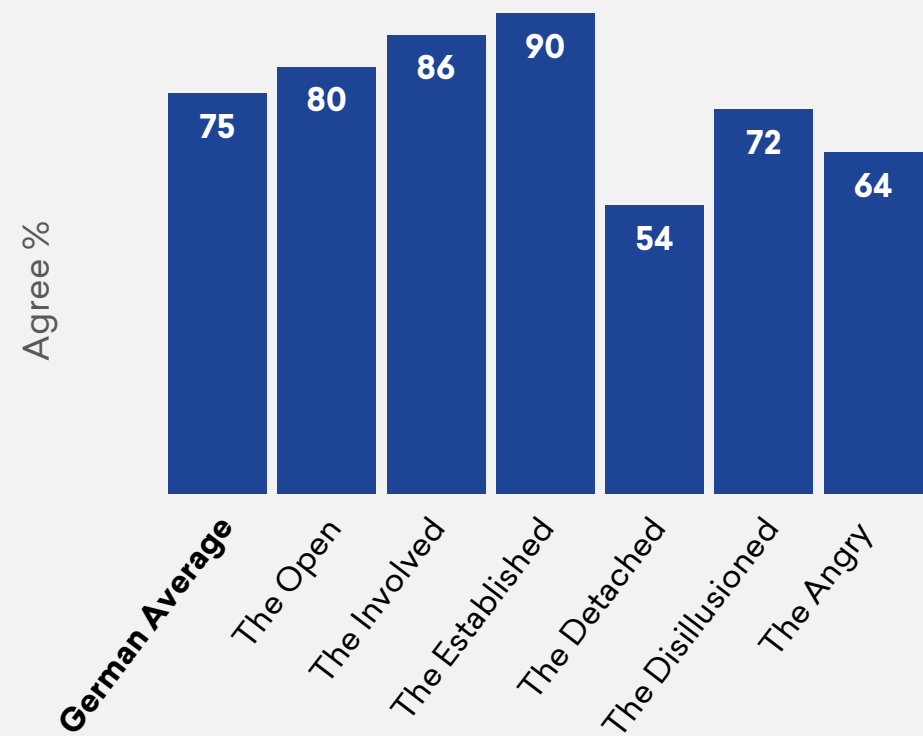
	German Average	The Open	The Involved	The Established	The Detached	The Disillusioned	The Angry
Environmentally-friendly	38	47	49	46	23	31	22
Fair	33	37	36	32	20	47	33
Family-oriented	26	26	26	33	18	28	28
Safe	25	19	17	32	21	33	36
Tolerant	19	26	27	16	12	17	8
Democratic	17	18	14	15	15	19	27
Healthy	14	14	12	16	16	11	9
United	14	13	18	19	9	12	13
Self-confident	13	15	18	14	9	9	15
Educated	13	19	19	9	9	10	8
Traditional	11	5	4	13	12	13	27
Compassionate	10	10	13	7	11	12	5
Equal	8	12	11	6	8	4	3
Patriotic	7	5	6	6	7	9	19
Christian	5	3	3	7	6	4	7
Hard-working	4	5	1	3	7	4	5
Prosperous	3	4	1	2	6	3	4

Question: Which of the following qualities do you think [COUNTRY] should focus on the most? [COUNTRY] should become more...(max. 3)

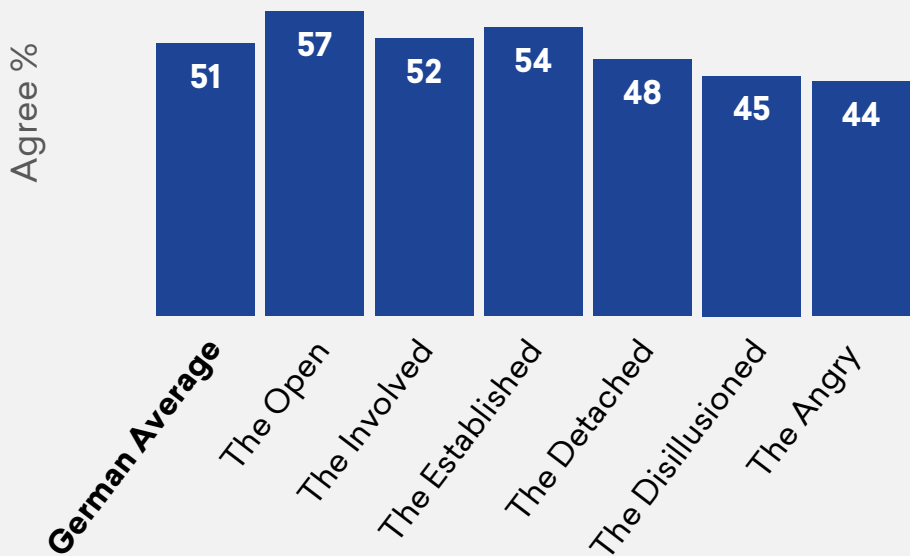
Climate and the Environment (1)



“The drop in carbon emissions that was seen during the COVID-19 lockdown shows that we can reduce our impact on the environment if we really want to.”



Worried that commitment to protecting the environment will slow down or stop

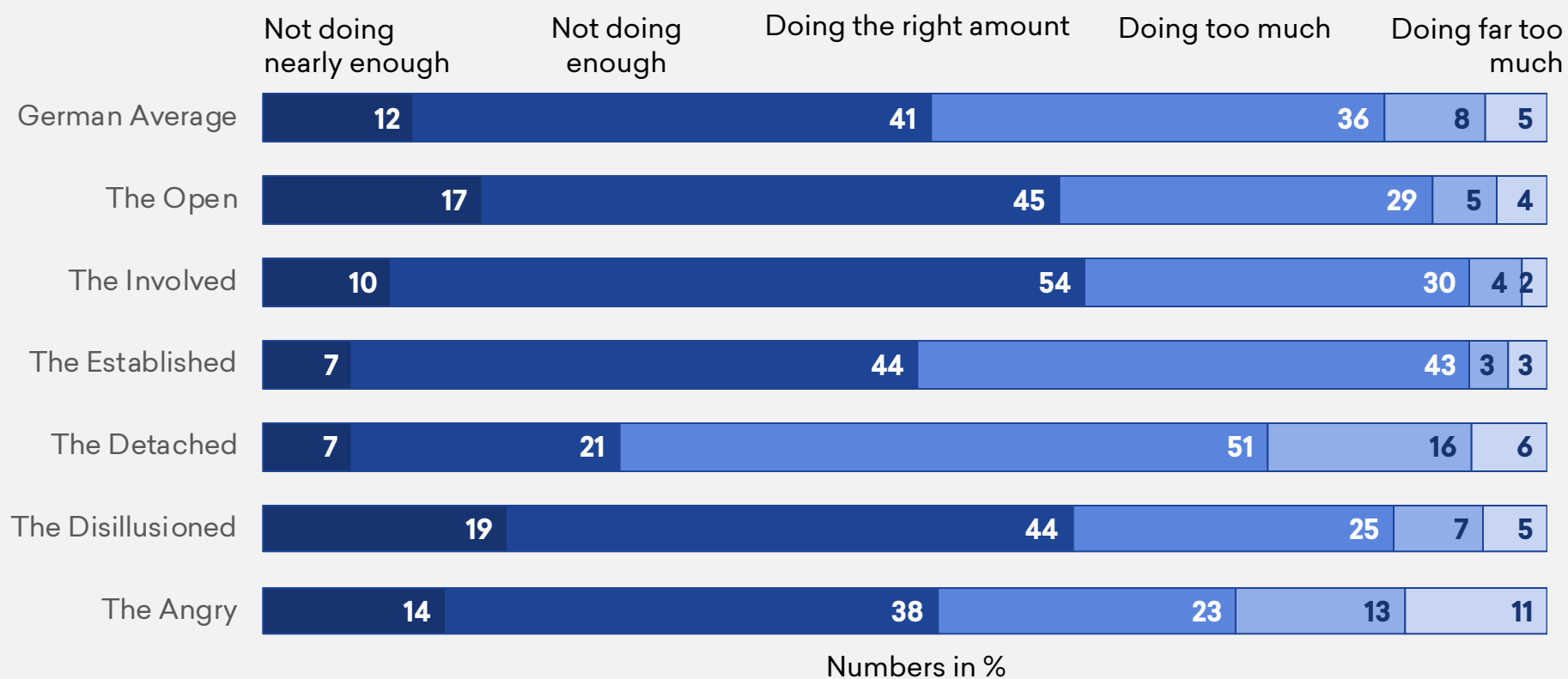


Question: To what extent do you agree with the following statement?; To what extent are you currently worried or not worried that...?

Climate and the Environment (2)



On the environment, the government is...

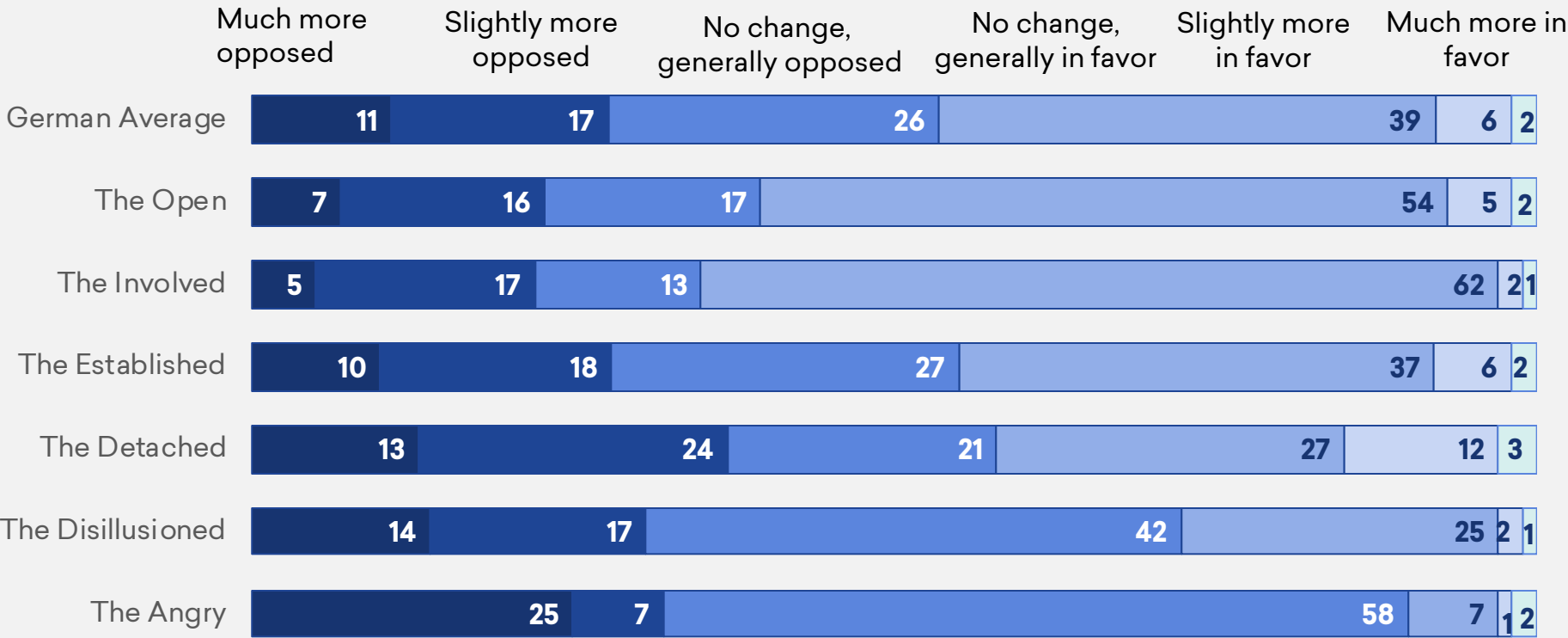


Question: Thinking about the current situation, which of the following statements do you agree with most? On the environment, the government is...
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Migration



Change in views on Migration since COVID-19



Numbers in %

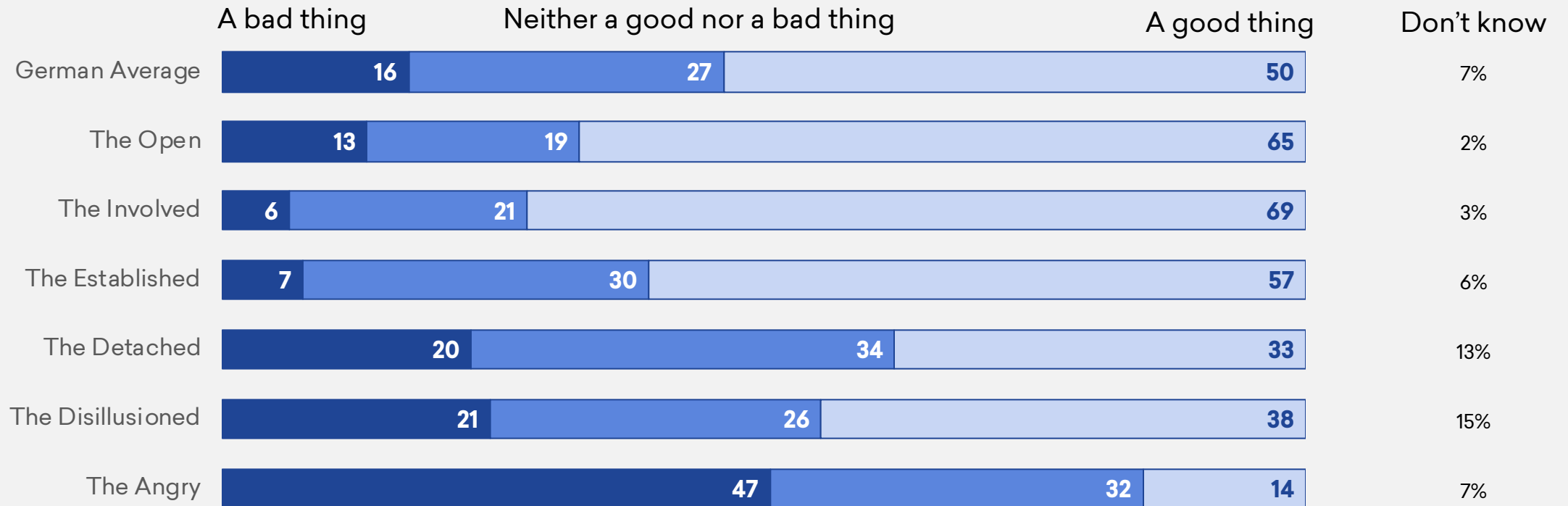
Question: Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, how have your views changed about accepting migrants into [COUNTRY], if at all?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

V. Views on the European Union, European Policies and Social Cohesion in Europe

Views on EU Membership



EU membership is...



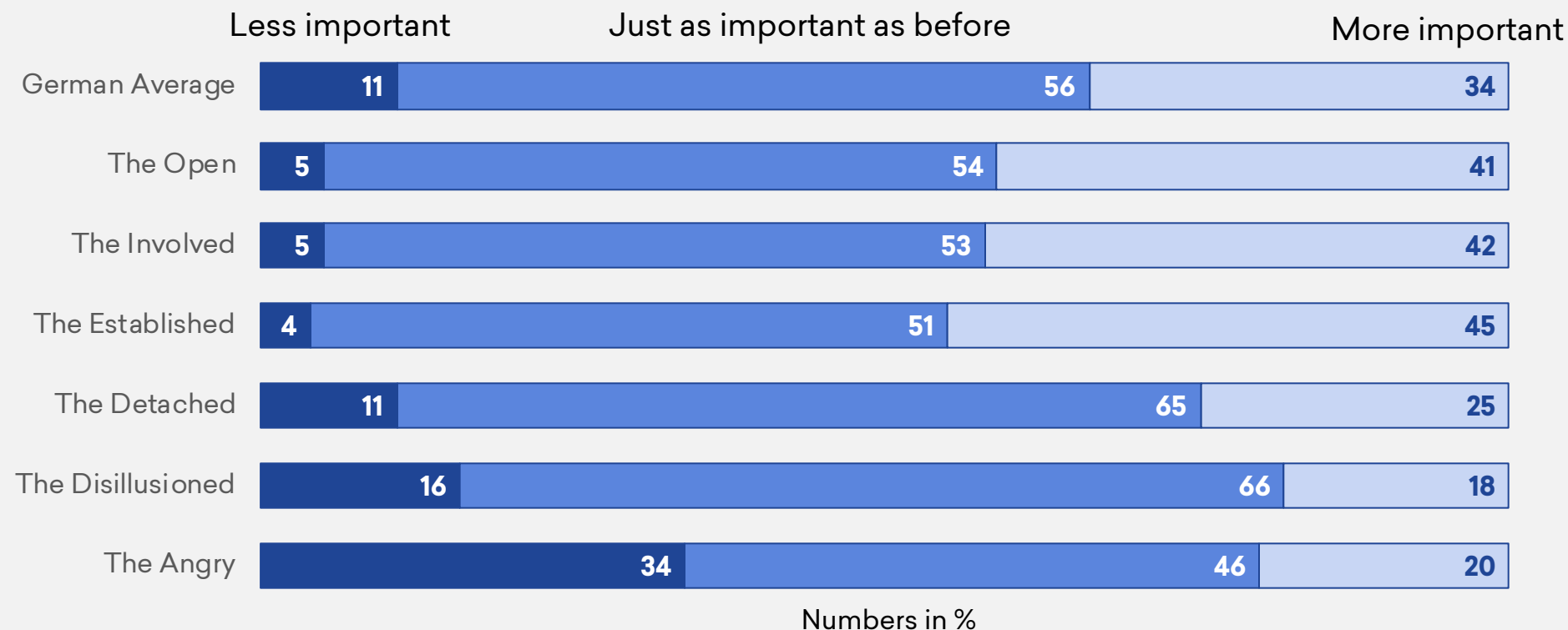
Numbers in %

Question: Generally speaking, would you say that [COUNTRY's] membership of the EU is...?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

EU Membership: Looking Ahead



EU Membership will be...

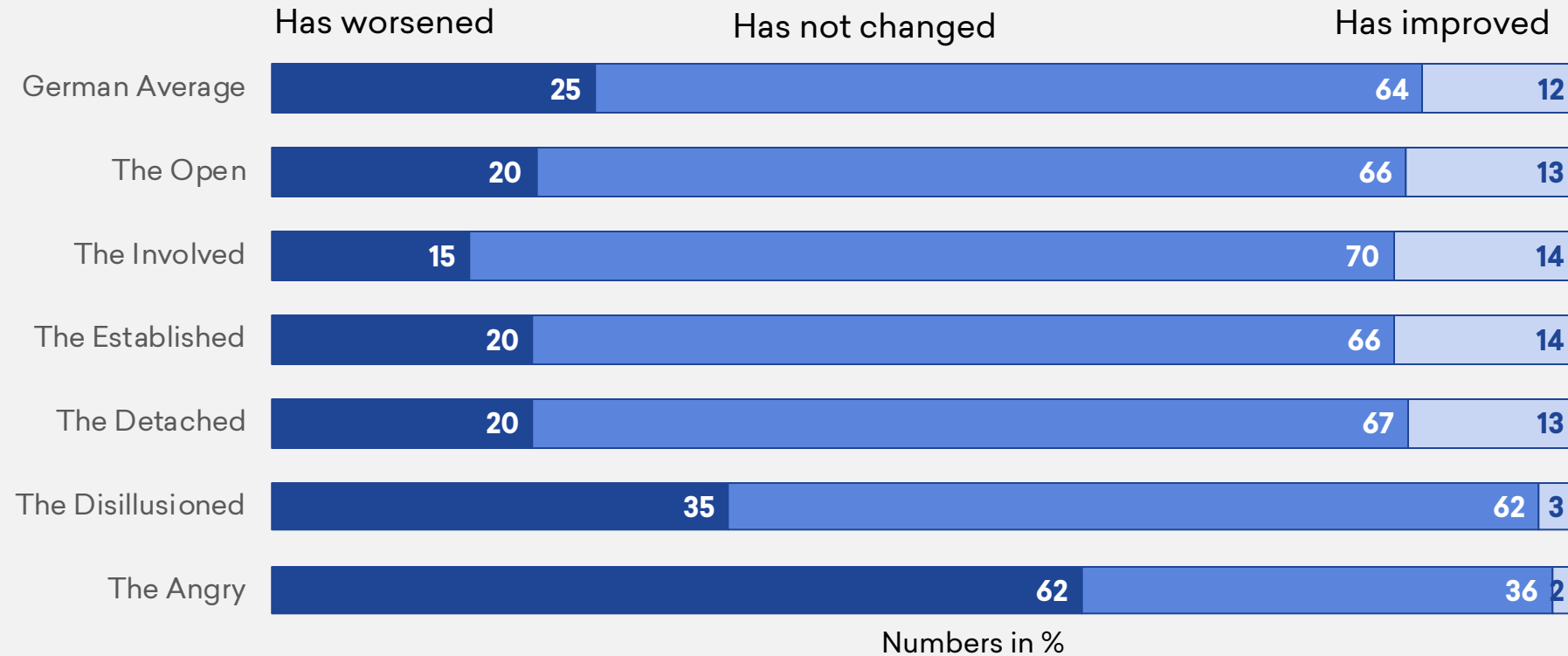


Question: In the coming years, [COUNTRY]’s membership in the EU will be...
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Trust in the EU



Since the COVID-19 pandemic, trust in the EU...



Question: Since this pandemic began, how have the following things changed, if at all?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

EU Solidarity



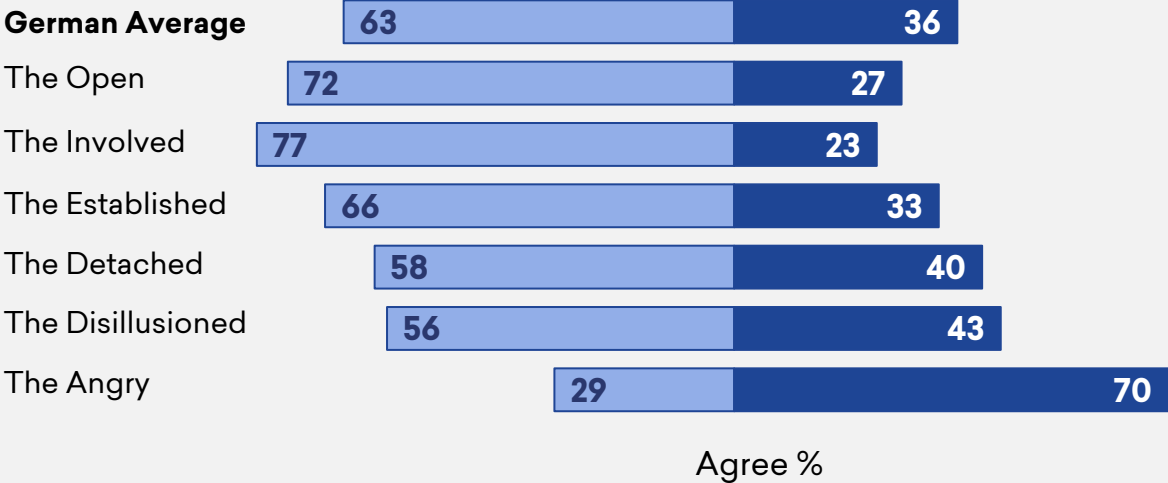
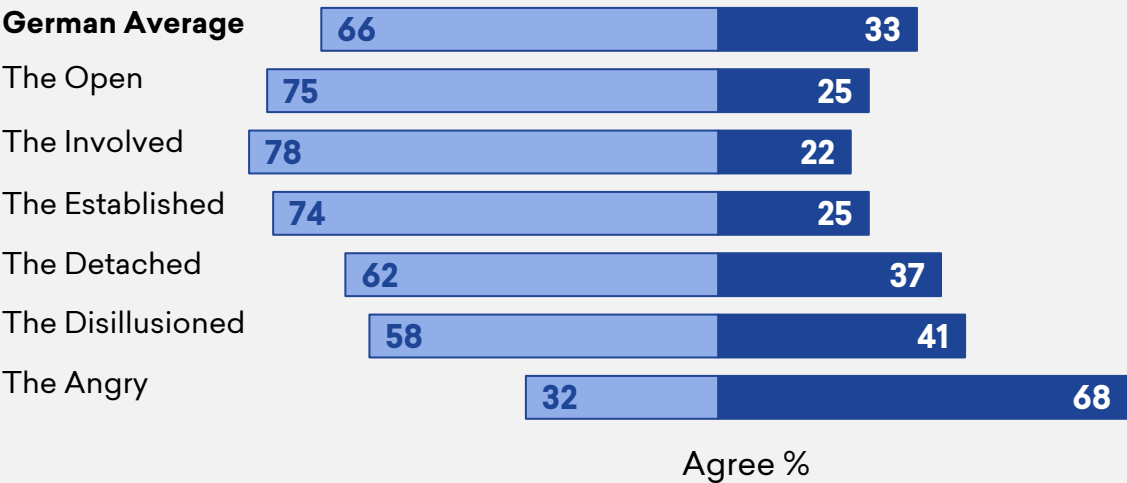
Solidarity and Cooperation

Within the European Union, we now need to do everything we can to help countries in need.

Demands for solidarity between European countries are currently being pushed too far.

For our country, more European cooperation is the best way out of this crisis.

For our country, more national control over our decision-making is the best way out of this crisis.



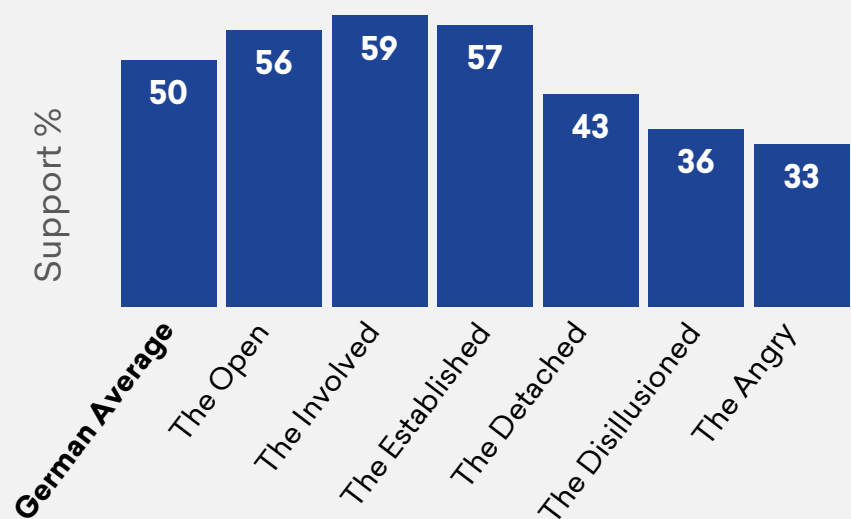
Question: Which of the following statements do you agree with more?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

European Policies for Recovery

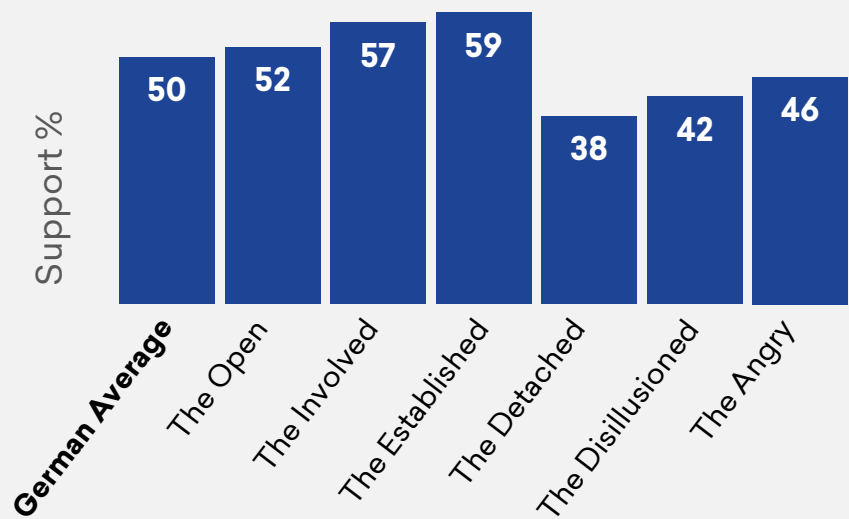


Appetite for big ideas?

A **European Reconstruction Fund** to help economic recovery in the European Union, for which the European Commission takes on common debt to be paid back by member states.



A **European community service program**, in which young Europeans would undertake community service in another country.



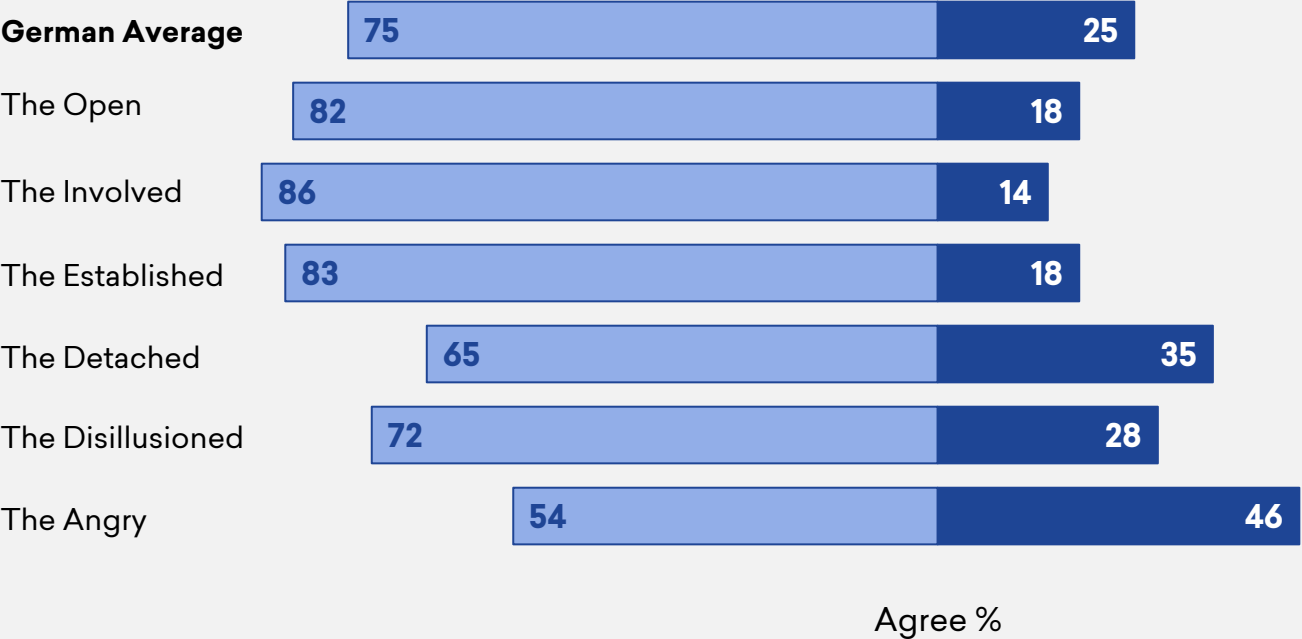
Question: There is currently debate about different political measures. Would you support or oppose the following proposals?

International Cooperation



This crisis shows we need to work more closely with other countries and international institutions to address major challenges like pandemics and climate change.

This crisis shows we can't rely on other countries and international institutions for support when we face major challenges like pandemics and climate change.



Question: Which of the following statements do you agree with more?
Please note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.



Thank you

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