Economics is Failing US College Students:

New research shows disconnect between Economics curricula and the societal and economic issues students are most concerned about

October 2022

Rethinking Economics USA Network

Rethinking Economics

Roosevelt Institute

generation lab

Omidyar Network

Methodology Statement

Generation Lab conducts ongoing surveys that measure attitudes and views of the American youth on current issues and policies. This survey was conducted using Generation Lab's Higher Education Panel, the largest non-governmental frame of college students nationwide. The panel includes students from across the country, including those attending community colleges, HBCUs, and women-only colleges. Generation Lab utilizes a randomized list of all colleges and obtains student contacts through a set of proprietary methods. The final frame closely resembles a probability panel of college students in the United States.

A sample of students attending 4-year colleges were selected using a stratified random sampling approach from Generation Lab's proprietary higher education panel. This survey of students was fielded from May 24th to June 8th, 2022 with the final sample size of 2,089. The number of respondents majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) was limited to 250. These results were weighted based on gender, race, and type of institution using data from the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, adjusted for the STEM major sample cap. The results from the general student sample are reported in the first section (in blue).

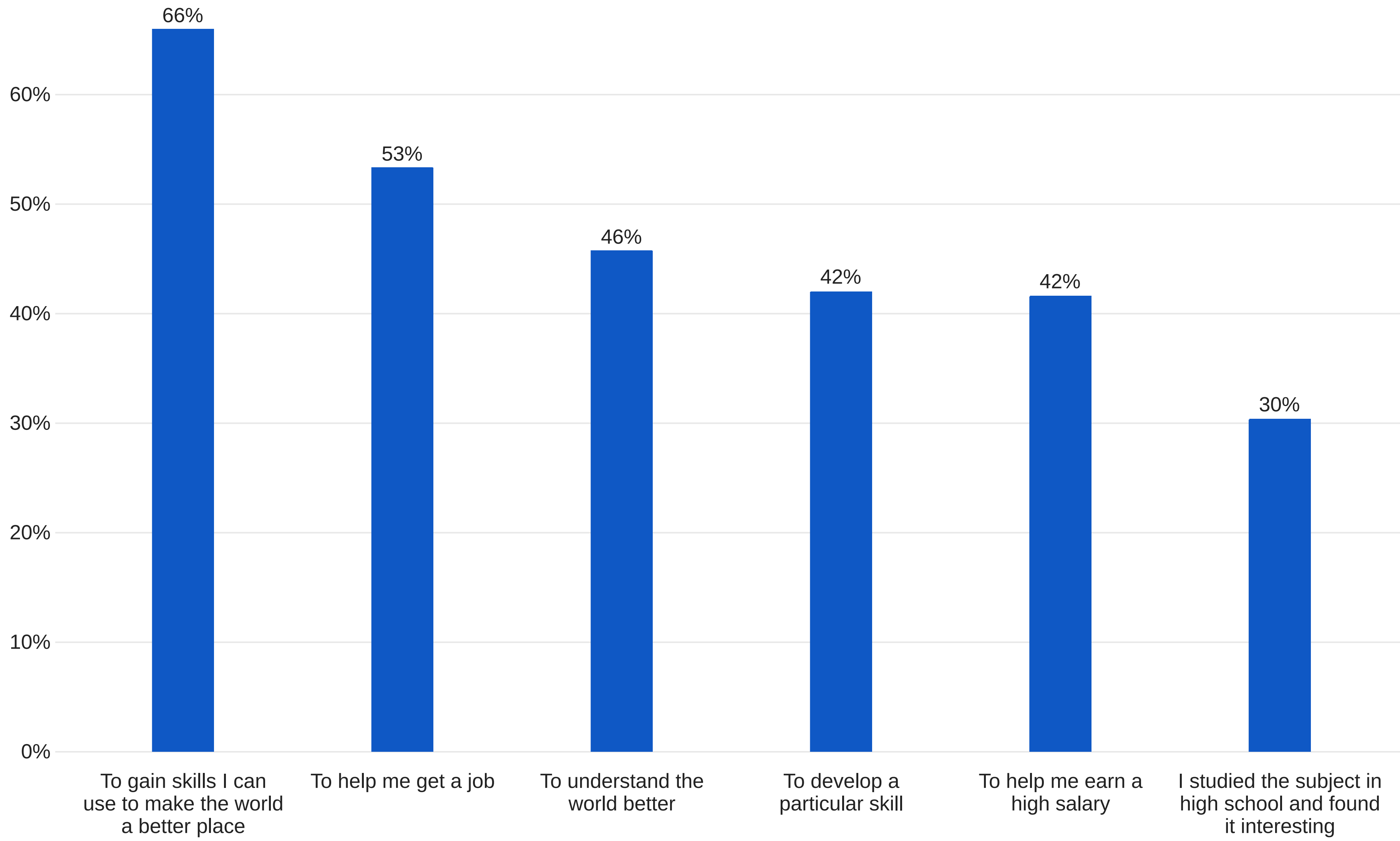
Additionally, Generation Lab obtained an over-sample of 101 economics majors from June 16th to June 20th, 2022. The aggregated response from all economics majors (those in the general student sample and the over-sample) are reported in the second section (in orange). These results were not weighted due to a lack of population-level statistics. The final sample size of economics students is 338.

The survey was conducted online and delivered using verified email addresses. Respondent identity was verified using email addresses and screening question in the survey. Throughout the polling process, Generation Lab utilizes a variety of features to ensure the highest integrity of the data that we collect, including survey protocols prohibiting multiple responses, preventing speeding, flagging invalid inputs, and straight-lining.

Generation Lab is a polling and research firm studying young people and the trends that shape their world. For more information about the survey methodology and details, please contact media@generationlab.org.

General Student Sample

1 - What are your main motivations for pursuing your field(s) of study? (Select your top 3 motivations)



2 - In your opinion, what are the most pressing issues in the United States today?

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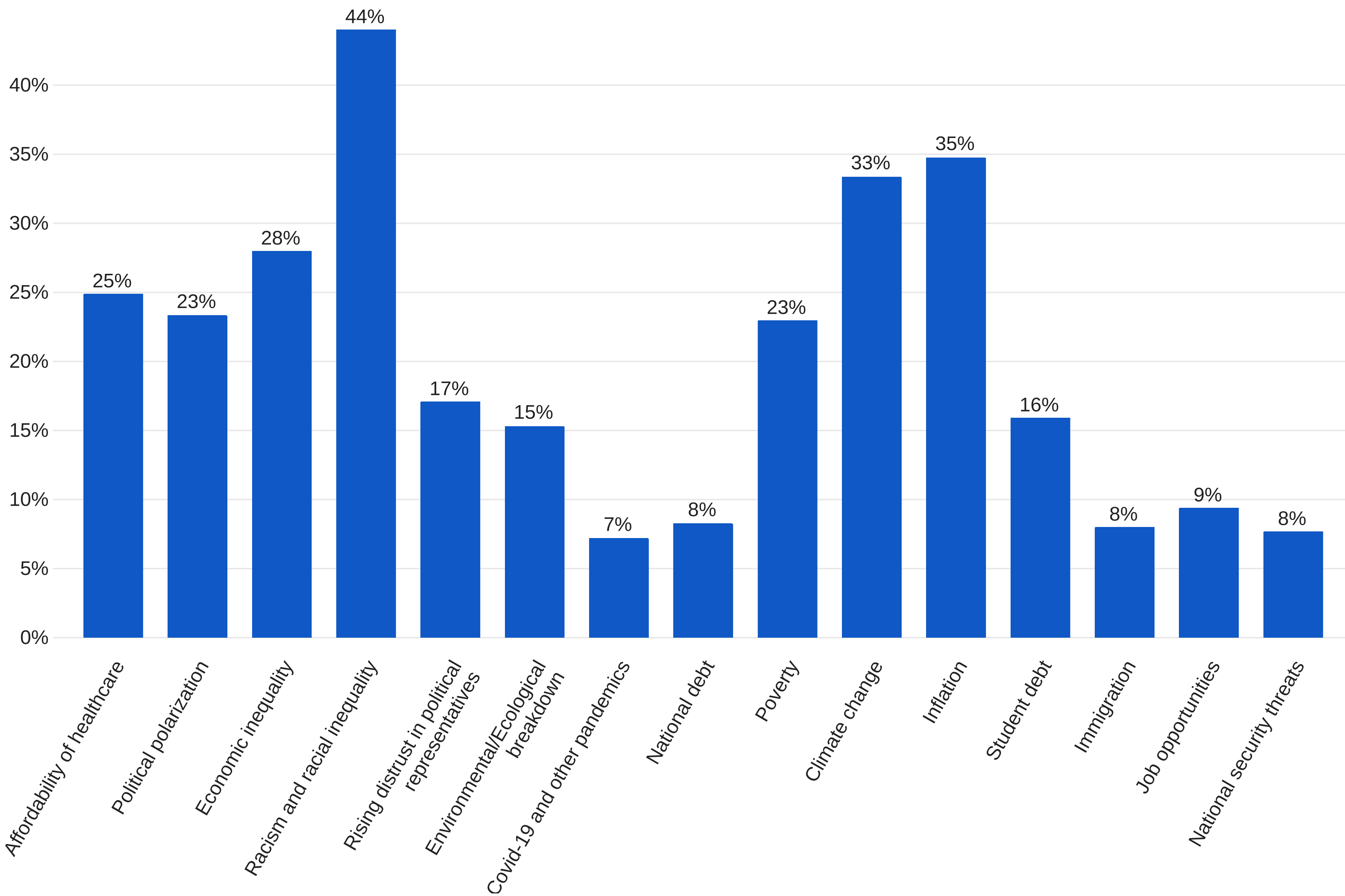
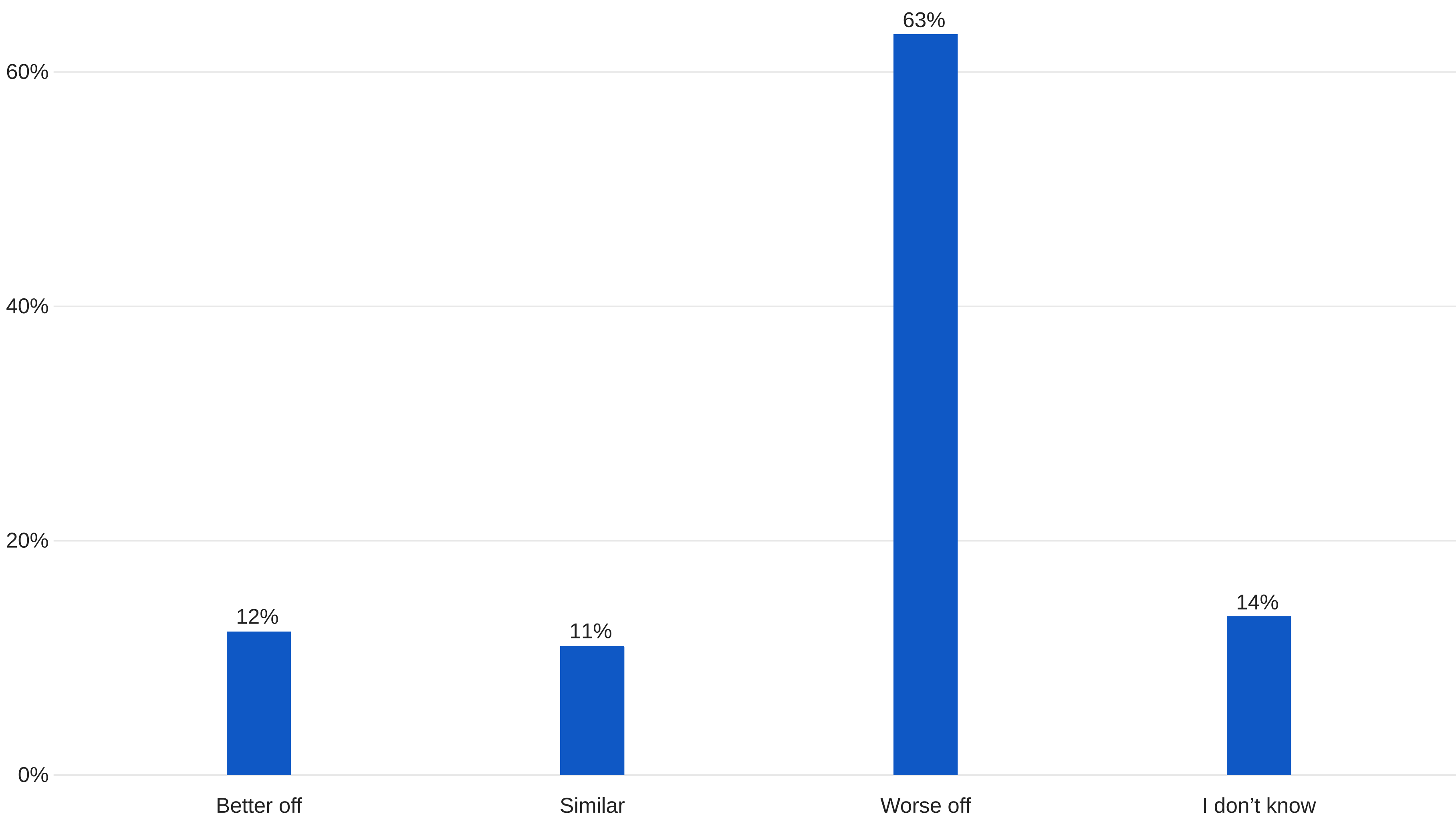
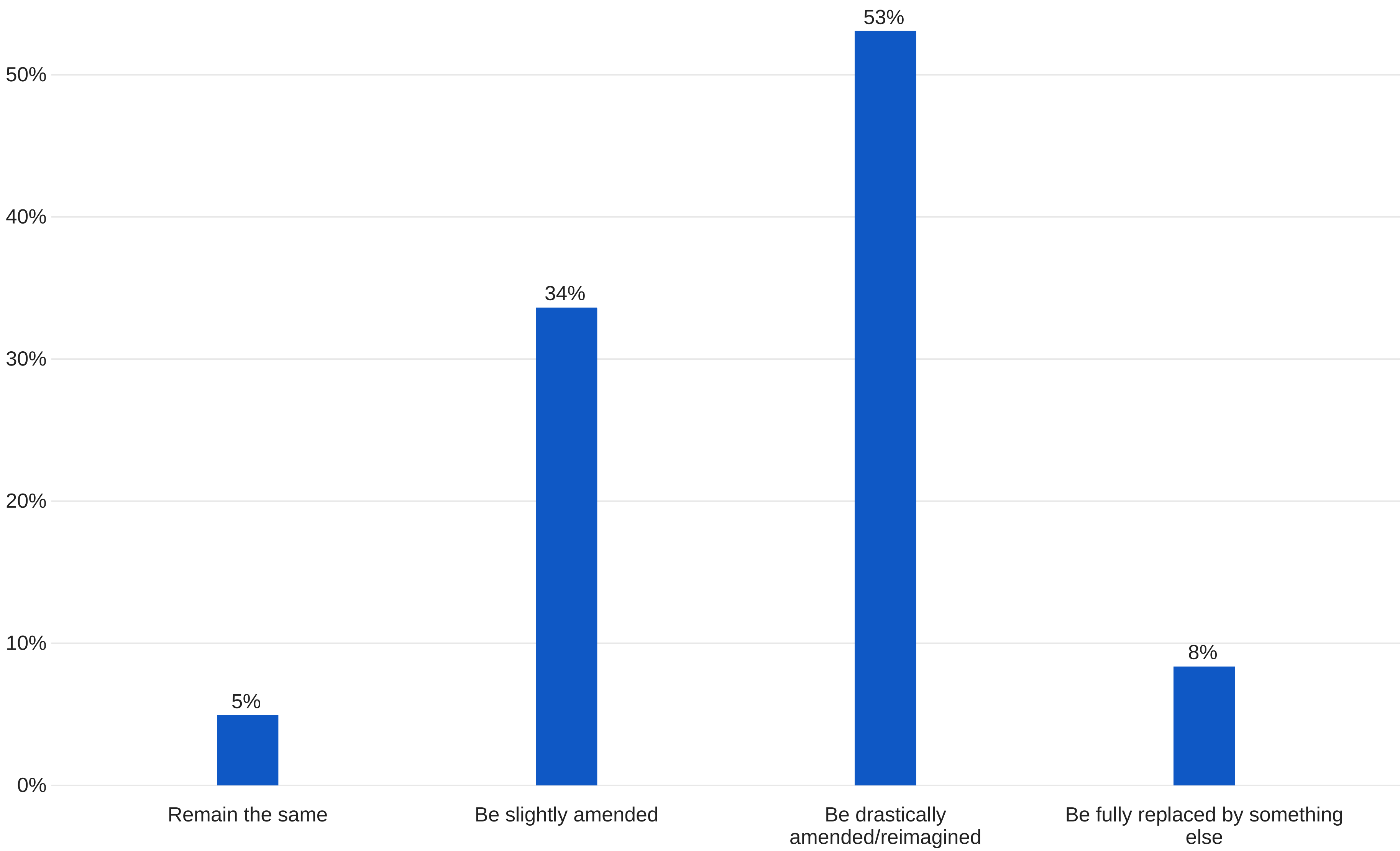
3 - Which of these issues are you more concerned about? (Select the 3 most important issues)



4 - Do you believe your generation is better or worse off than the older generations (i.e “the Baby Boomers”) in terms of economic prospects?

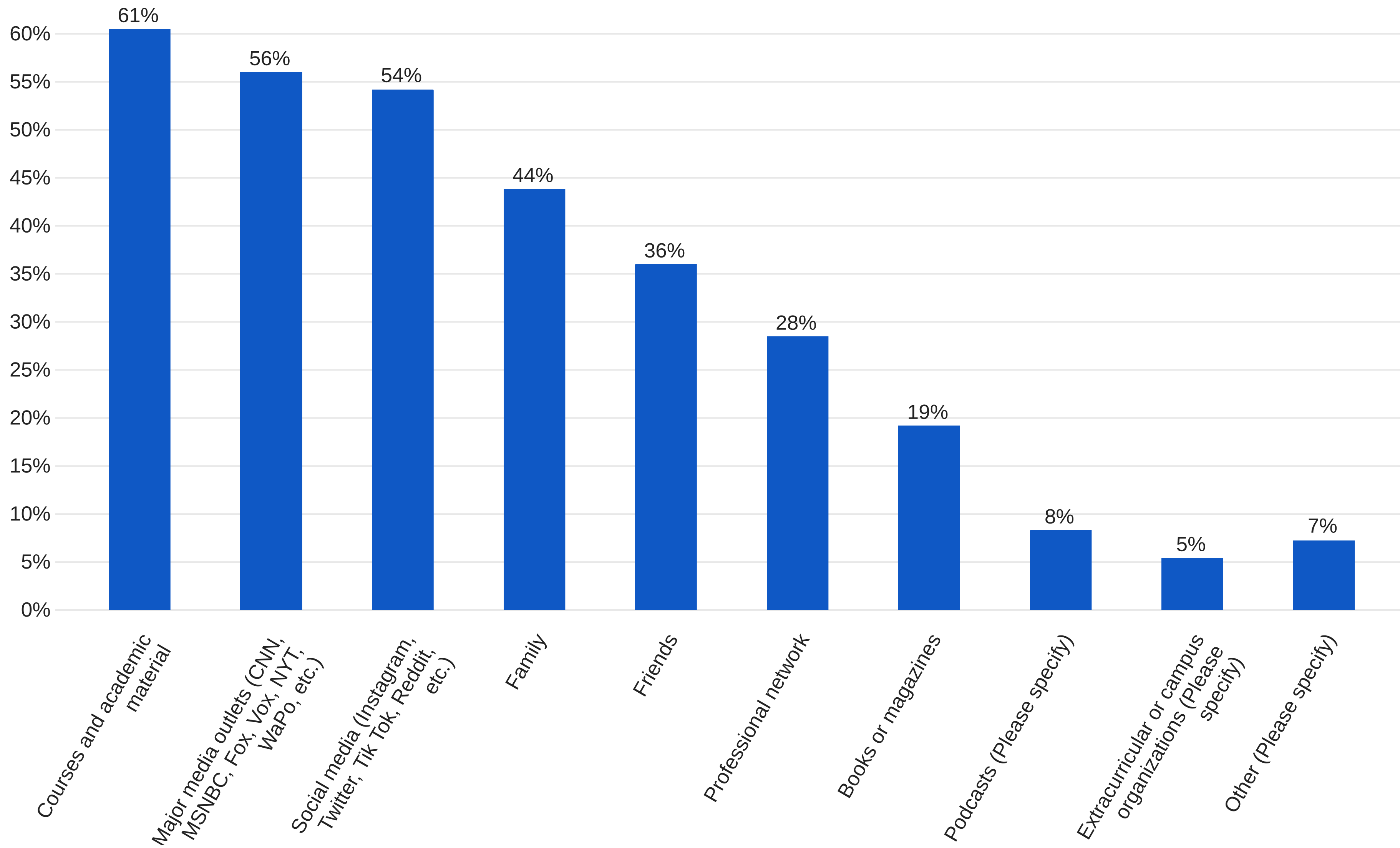


5 - Do you think that the current economic system in the US should …?



6 - In 3 words or phrases, please describe what you think of the economic system in America.

7 - Of the following, where do you turn to understand the issues facing the US economy and democracy? (Select all that apply)



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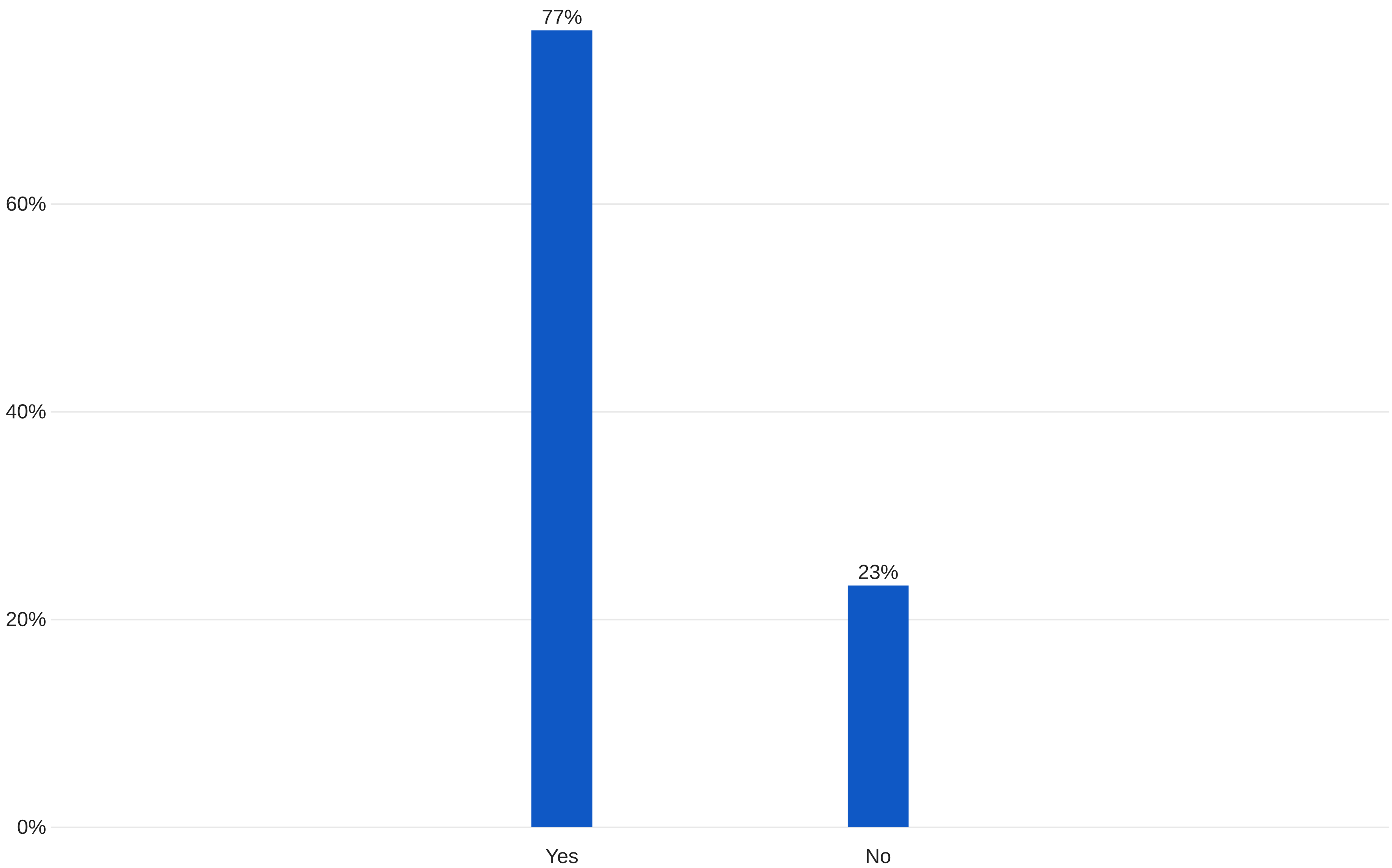
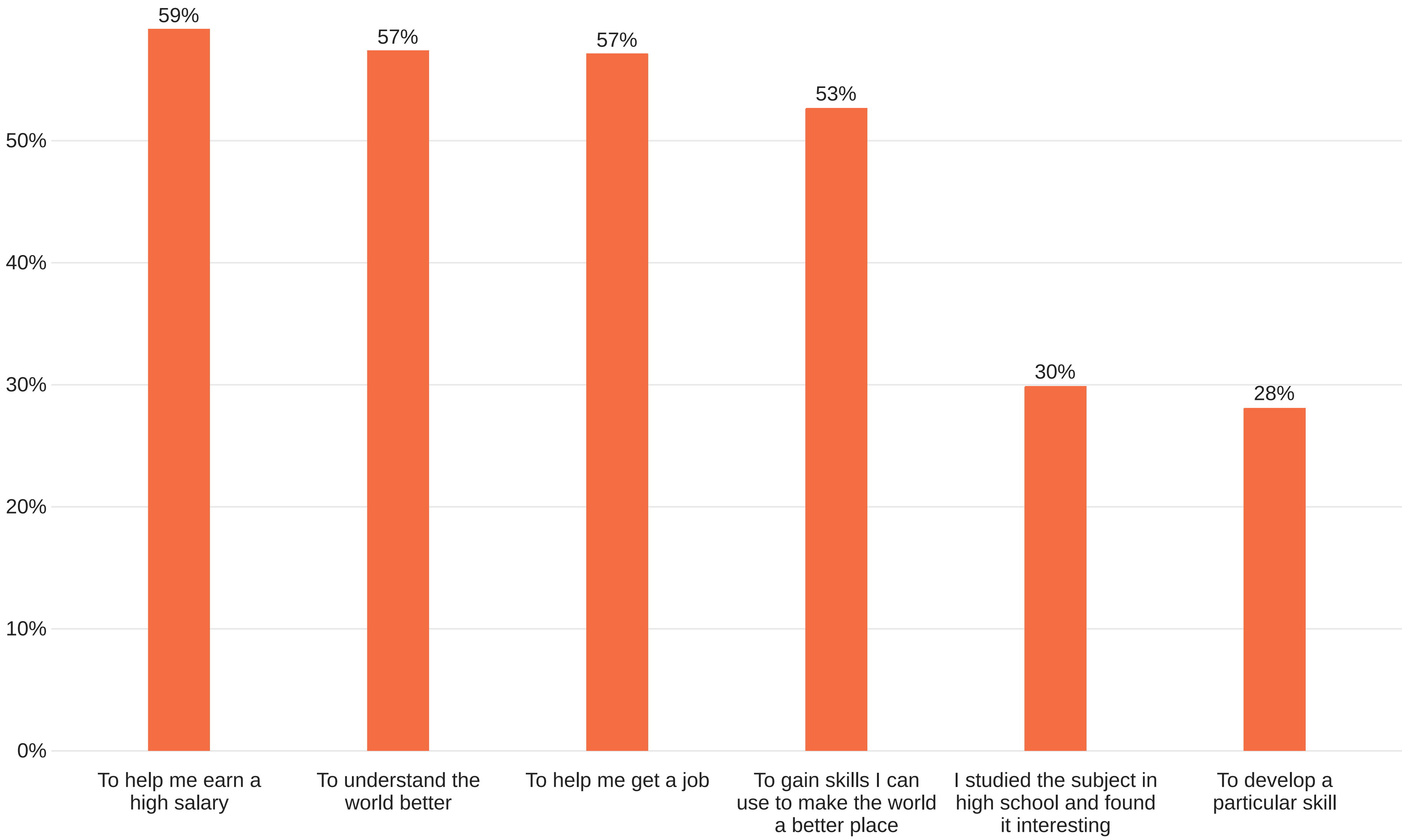
8 - Have you taken an economics class in high school or college?



Economics Student Sample

E1 - What are your main motivations for pursuing your field(s) of study? (Select your top 3 motivations)



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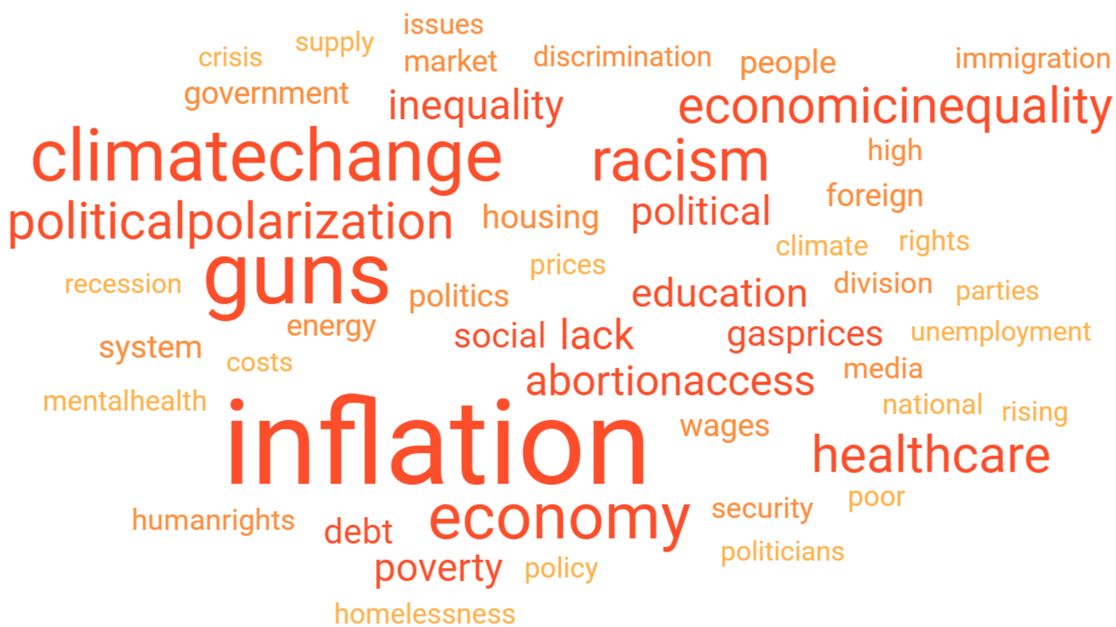
E2 - In your opinion, what are the most pressing issues in the United States today?



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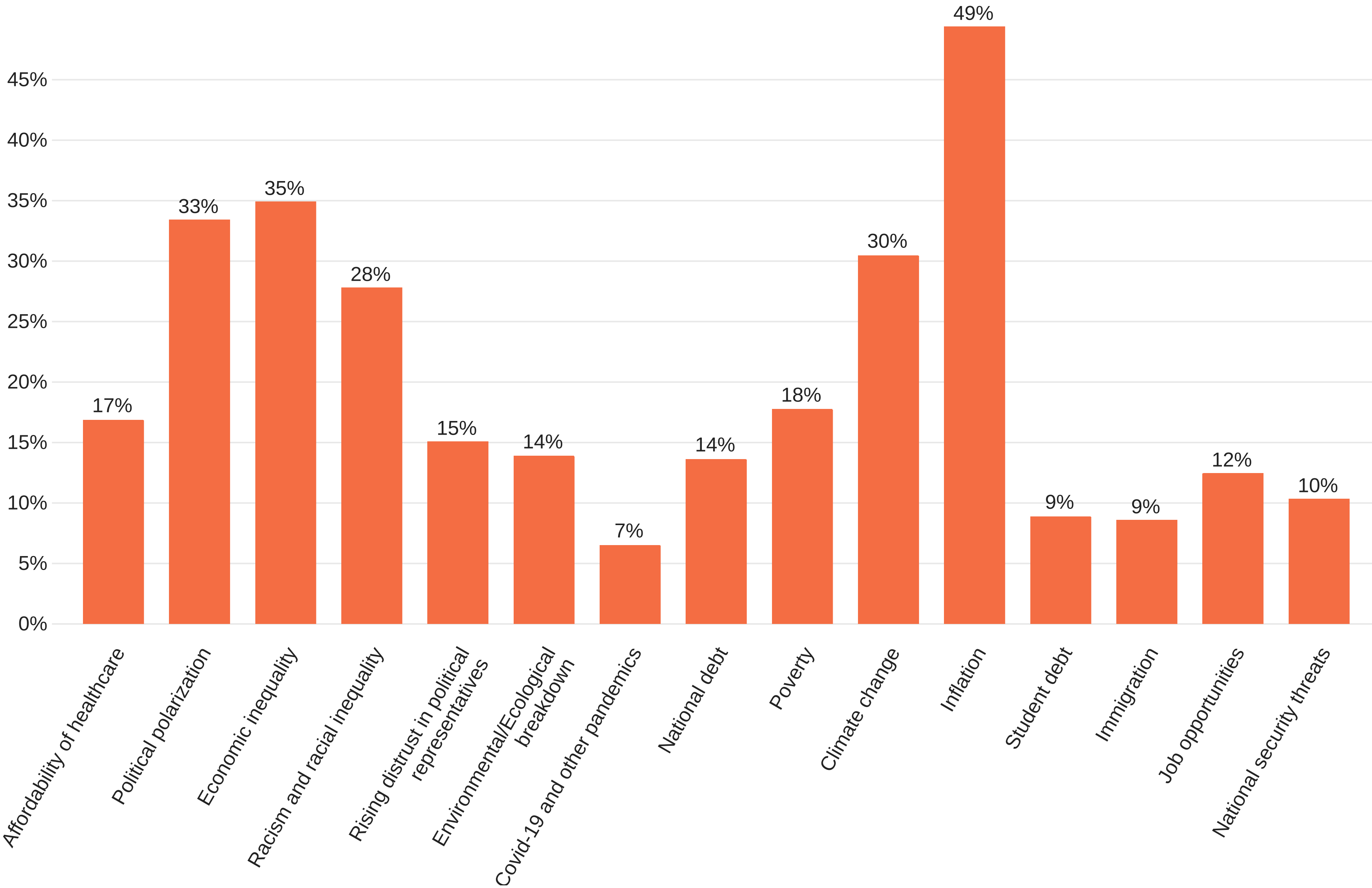
E3 - Which of these issues are you more concerned about? (Select the 3 most important issues)



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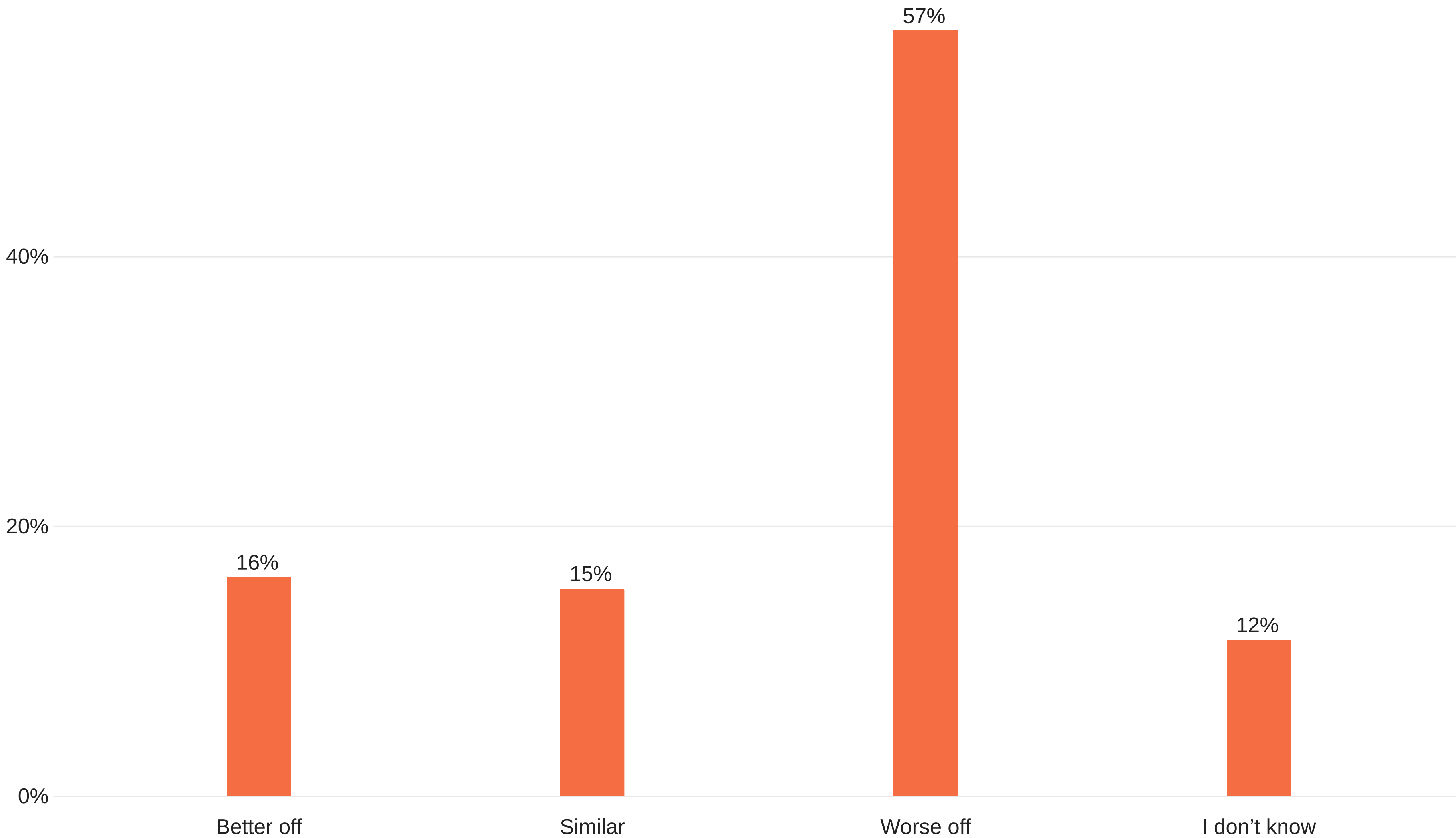
E4 - Do you believe your generation is better or worse off than the older generations (i.e “the Baby Boomers”) in terms of economic prospects?



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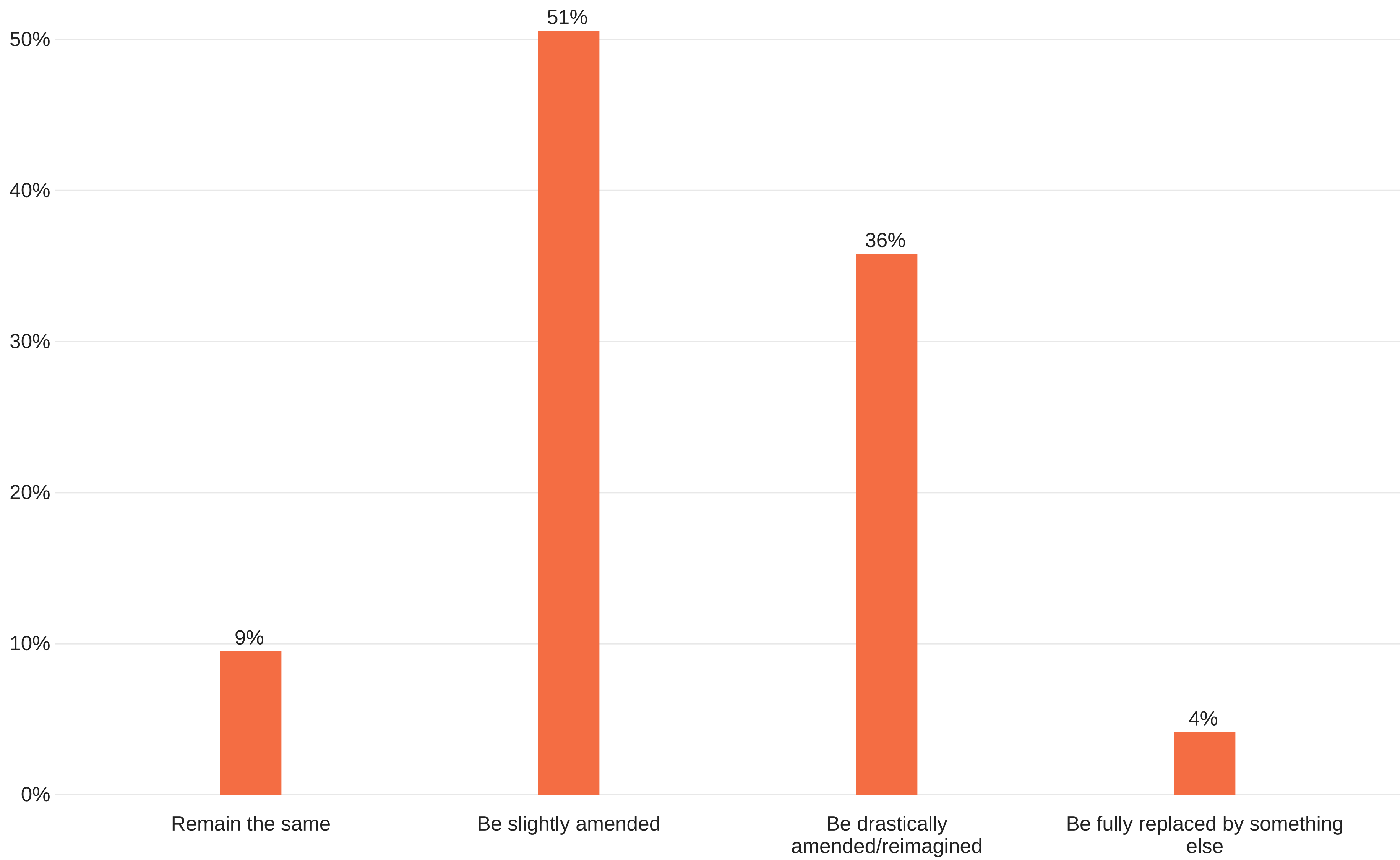
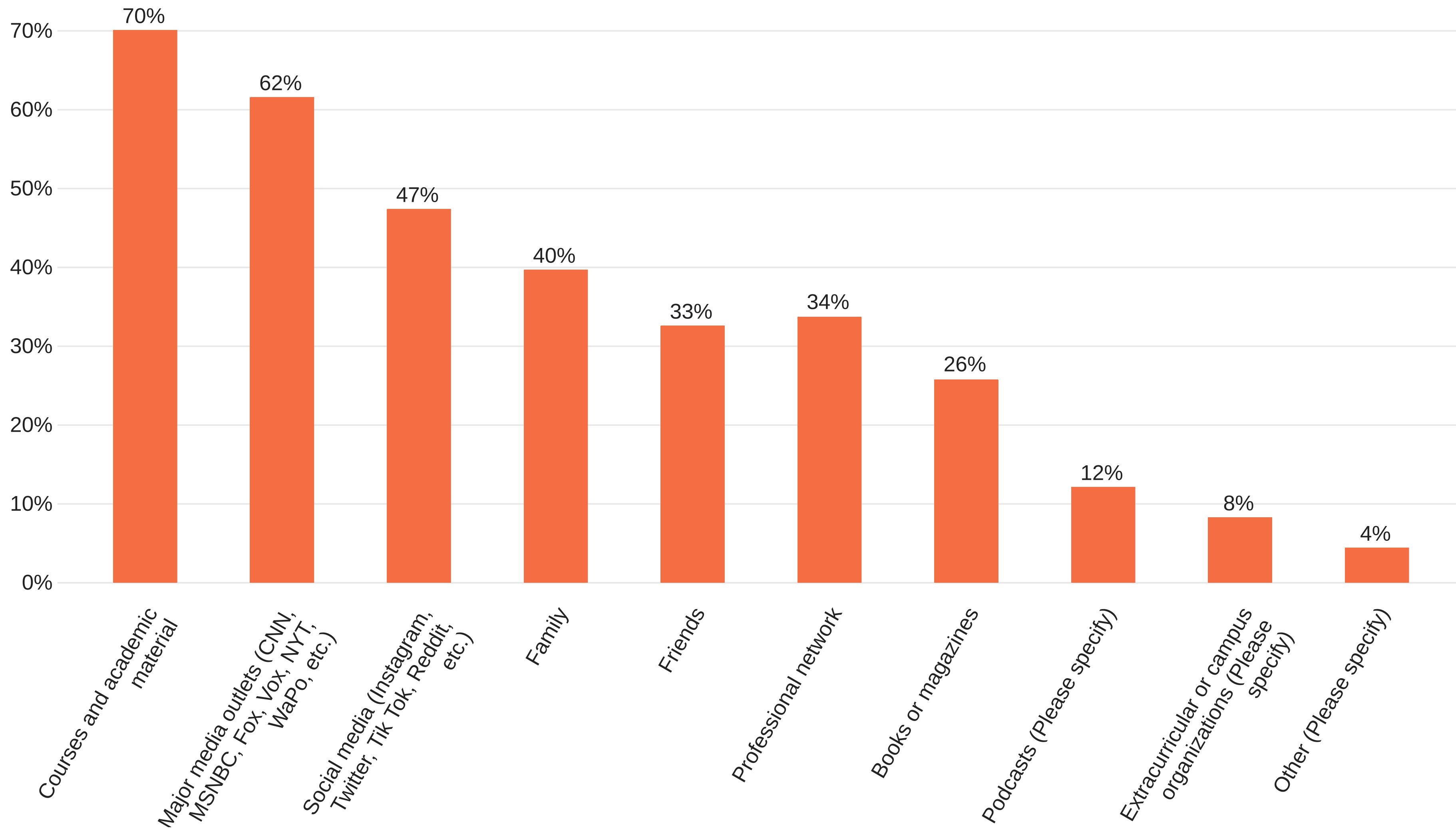
E5 - Do you think that the current economic system in the US should …?

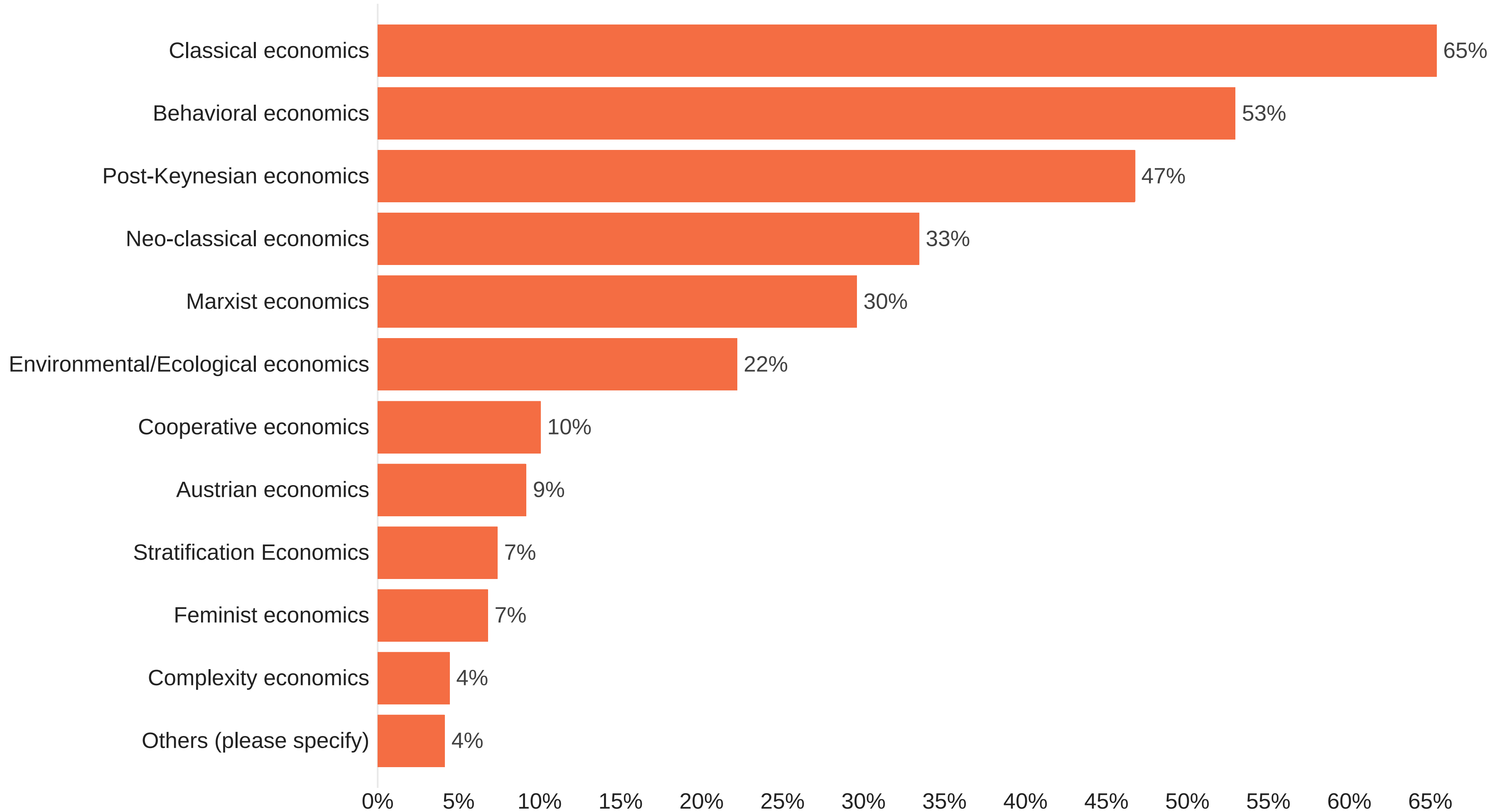


E6 - In 3 words or phrases, please describe what you think of the economic system in America.

E7 - Of the following, where do you turn to understand the issues facing the US economy and democracy? (Select all that apply)



E8 - Which of the following schools of economic thought have you learned about in your economics education? (Select all that apply)



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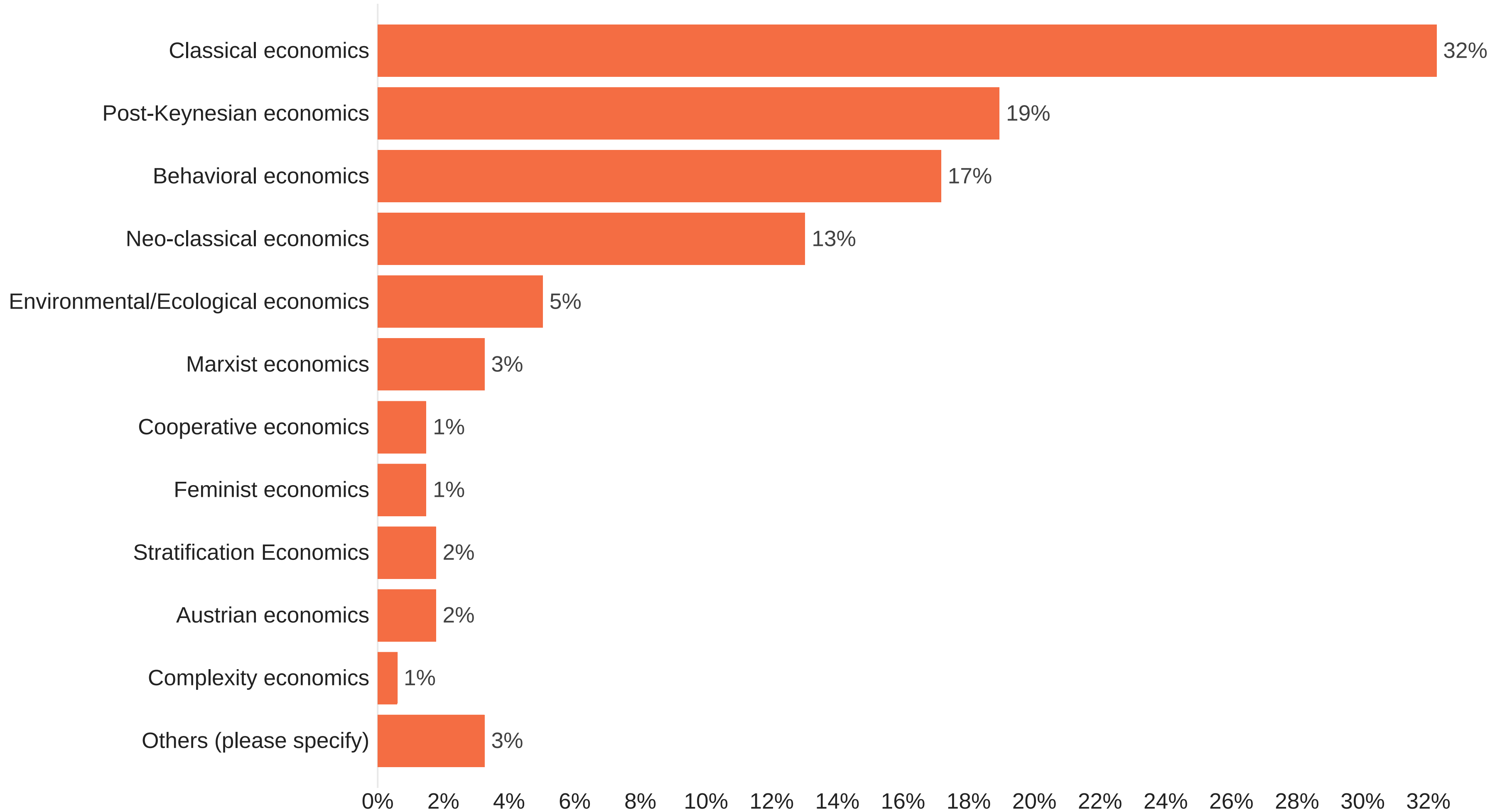
E9 - Which of the previously listed schools of thought do you think has/have been most dominant in your economics education?



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E10 - Have you ever heard of heterodox economics?