

Perceptions, Misperceptions and the Media

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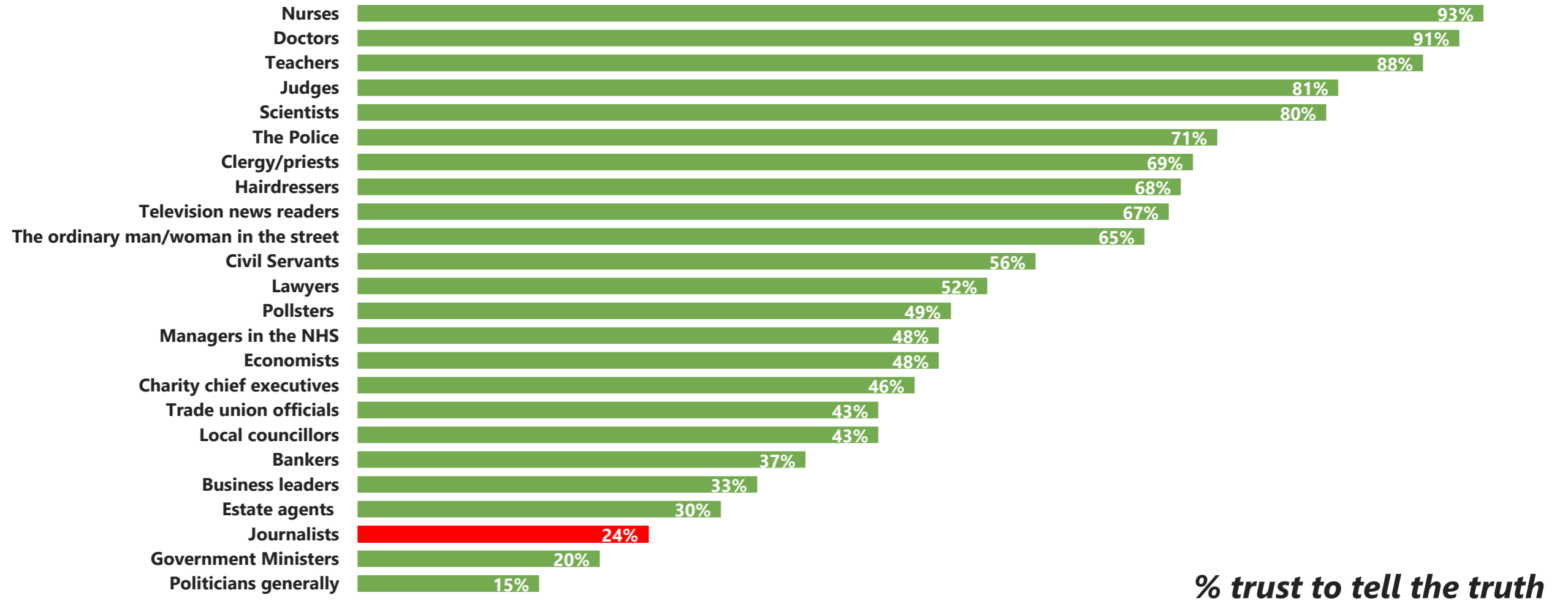
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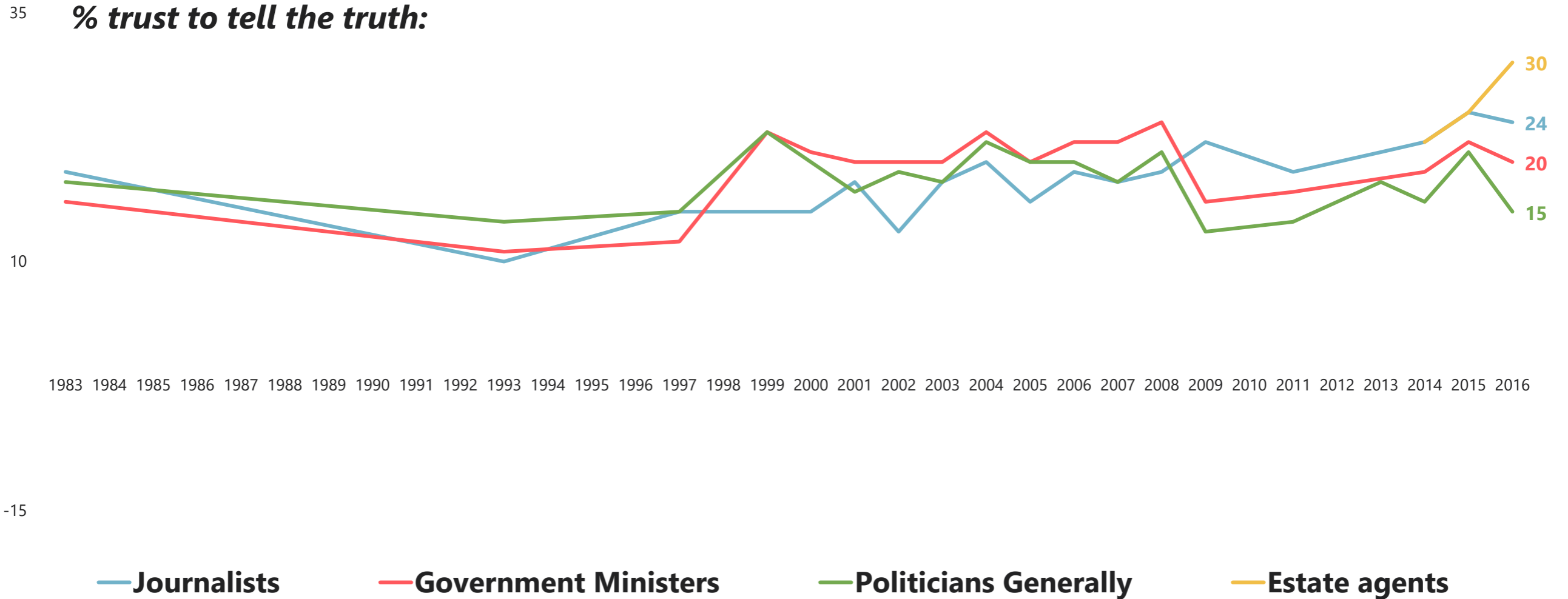
Who do we trust?

"Now I will read you a list of different types of people. For each would you tell me if you generally trust them to tell the truth, or not?"

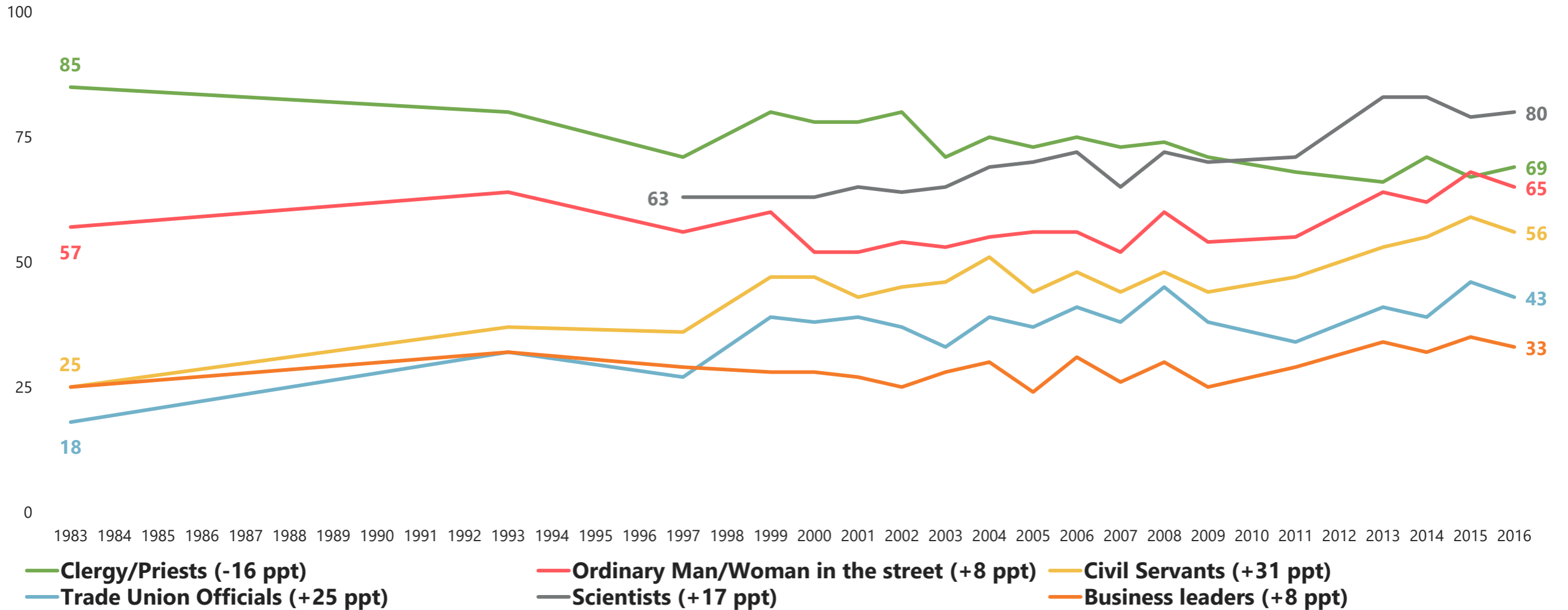


% trust to tell the truth

Trust in journalists – up from 19% in 1983 to 24% now...



Key movers in public trust over time



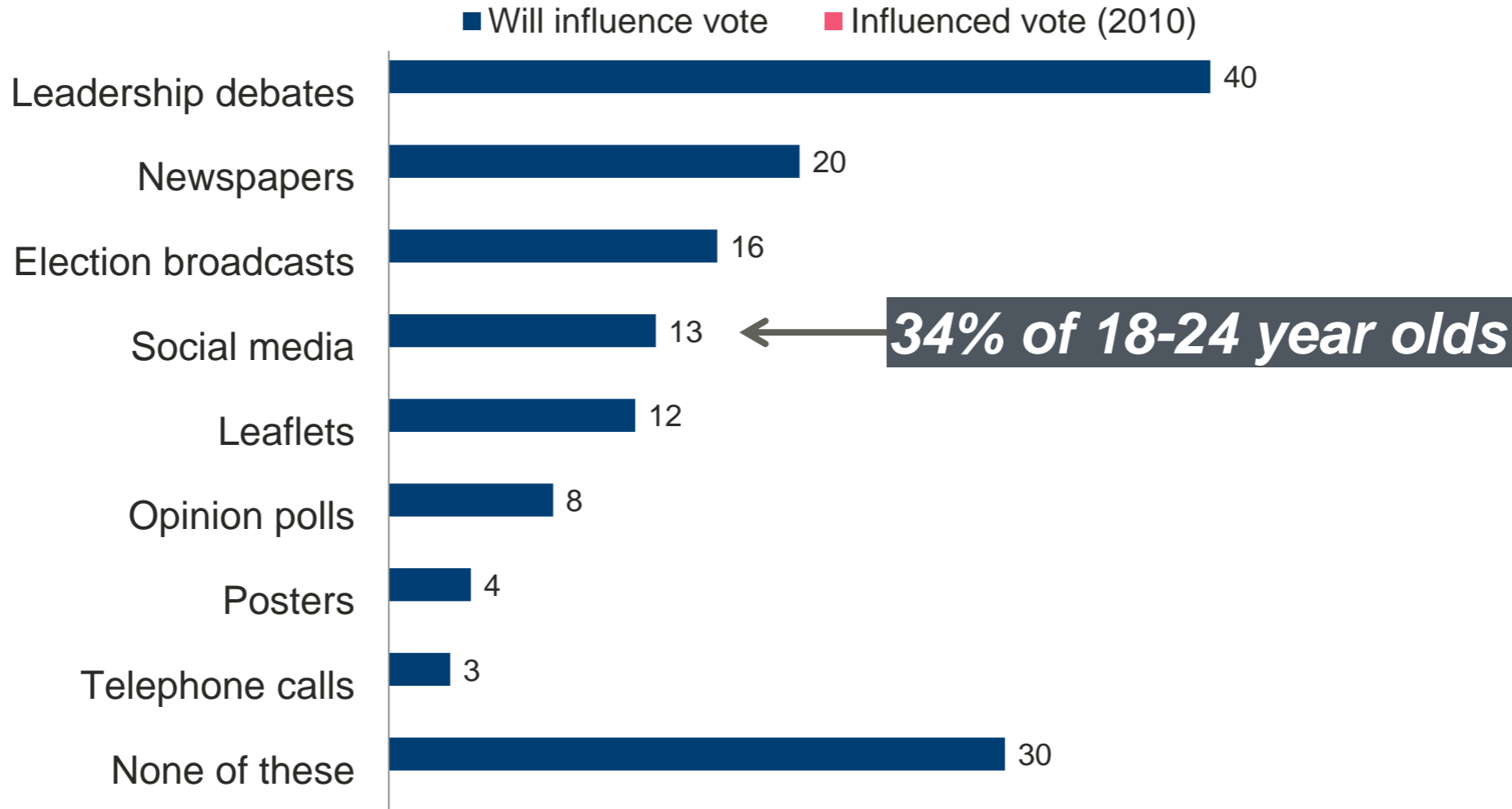


But what influences people?

Public expect TV debates to play a big role...

WHAT WILL INFLUENCE VOTE... VERSUS... WHAT DID INFLUENCE VOTE IN 2010

6

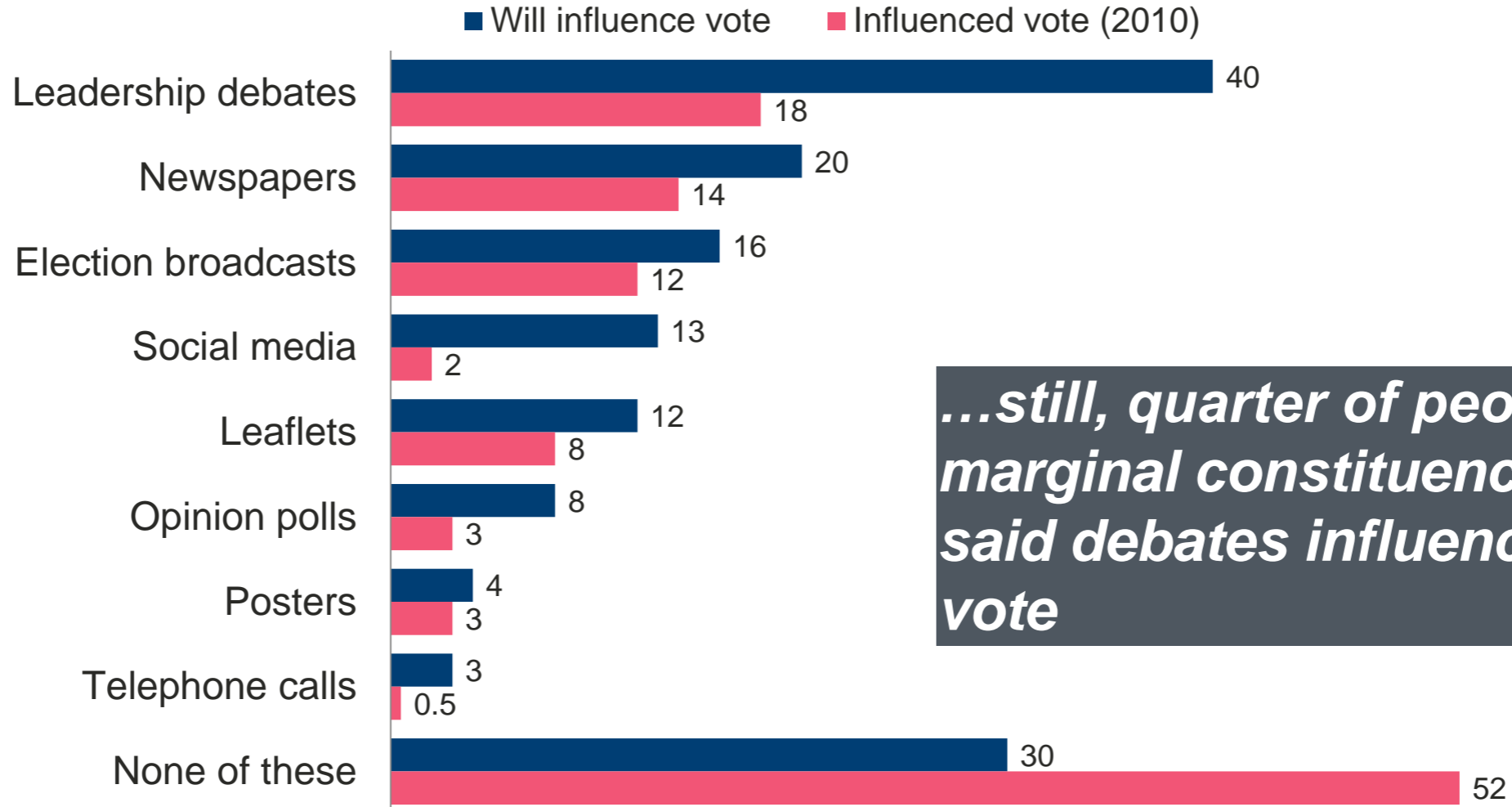


Base: 1,142, GB adults 18+

...although we admit to less impact from past debates...

WHAT WILL INFLUENCE VOTE... VERSUS... WHAT DID INFLUENCE VOTE IN 2010



7



...still, quarter of people in marginal constituencies said debates influenced vote

Base: 1,142, GB adults 18+,

People are really bad at identifying influences – analysis can show what most associated – and how shifting...



You are what you read?
How newspaper readership is related to views
BY BOBBY DUFFY AND LAURA ROWDEN

In 2005, top four factors related to immigration as an issue were all newspapers...

Most likely to see as important issue to Britain

Read the Daily Mail

Read the Daily Express

Read the Sun

Owner-occupier

Vote Conservative

Work full-time

Immigration



Least likely to see as important issue to Britain

Read the Guardian

Satisfied with govt

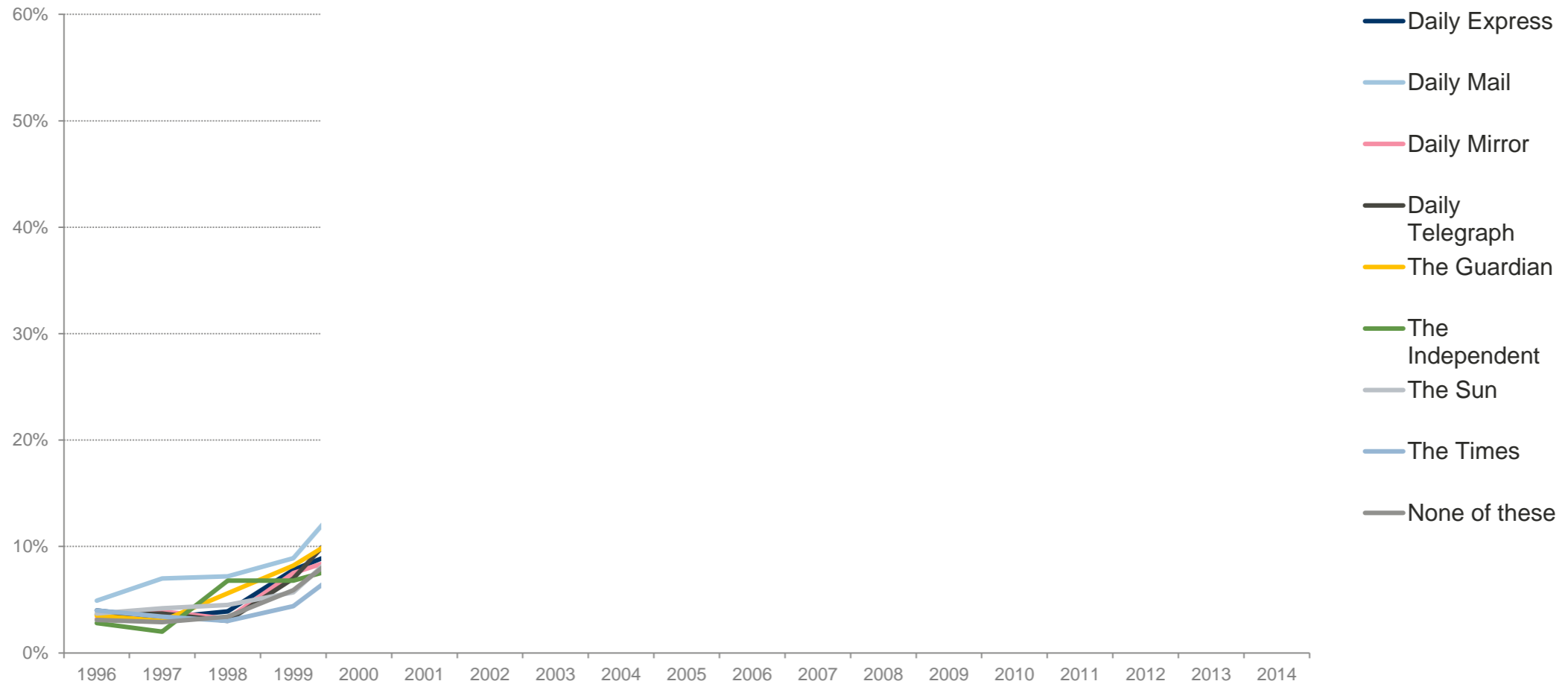
Social classes AB

*Cause and effect
tricky...*

Not surprising when see difference in views...

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE/OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING BRITAIN TODAY? IMMIGRATION

10



Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index

...but now... politics has displaced/caught up/something?

Most likely to see as important issue to Britain

- Vote UKIP
- Read Daily Mail
- White ethnic group
- Read the Sun
- Vote Conservative
- Aged 65+

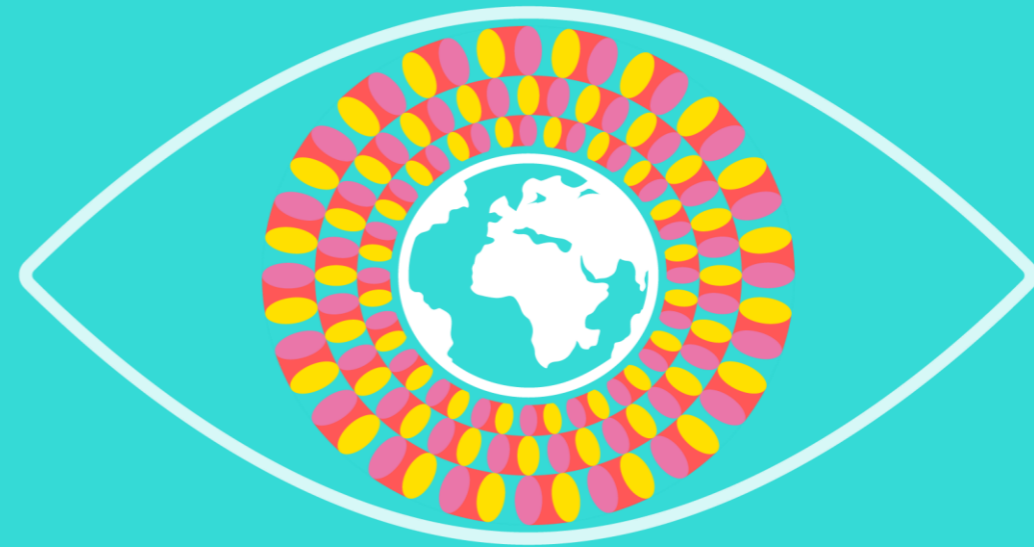


Least likely to see as important issue to Britain

- Vote Green
- Read the Guardian
- Scotland
- Aged 18-24
- Degree/post-grad
- Vote Labour
- Greater London

Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index, Jan-Oct 2014

**Finally, we're
pretty shaky
on the facts –
susceptible to
spin and
emotion...**



Perils of Perception



5%
of the population
are Muslim...

**...we think
21% are**



13%
of the population
are immigrants...

**...we think
24% are**



3%
of teenage girls
get pregnant
each year...

**...we think
16% do**

The Mail

AUGUST 3, 2014 £1.50

ON SUNDAY

SUNDAY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

NHS TO FUND SPERM BANK FOR LESBIANS

*“That’ll be a
Daily Mail effect”*

But we're far from being the worst...



**French
think 31%
(actual 8%)**



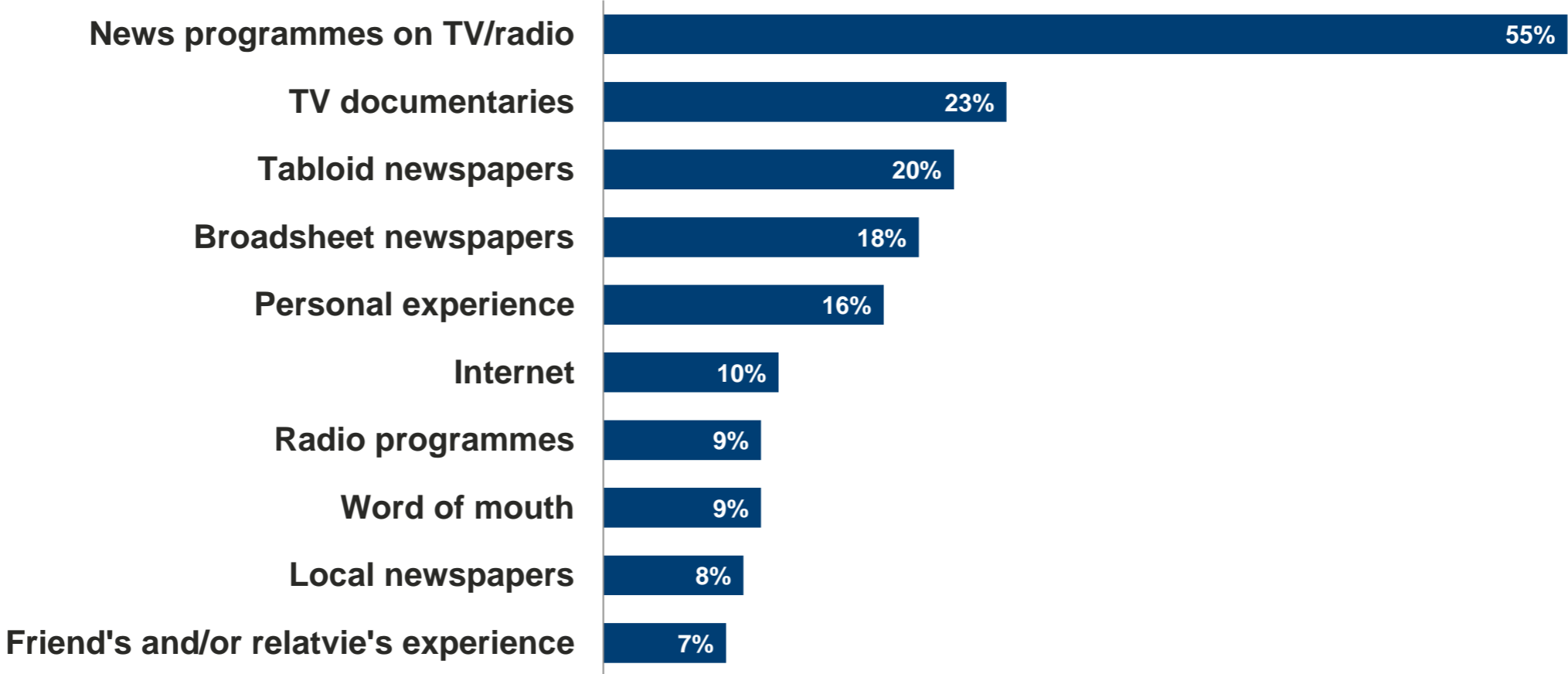
**...Italians
think 30%
(actual 7%)**



**...Americans
think 24%
(actual 3%)**

Where do people say they get their information on immigration?

People get their information about immigration and asylum in Britain from many sources. From this list, which two sources would you say provides you personally with most of your information about immigration and asylum in Britain?



Sources: Ipsos MORI,

...but there is also this...

According to the last Census in 2011, the percentage of the UK population that was born in another country is actually 13%. Why do you think the percentage is much higher?

People come into the country illegally **so aren't counted**

56

I still think the proportion is much higher than 13%

46

What I see in my local area

36

What I see when I visit other towns/cities

34

I was just guessing

23

Information seen on **TV**

19

Information seen in **newspapers**

16

The experiences of friends and family

10

I misunderstood the question

1

Other

1

Don't know

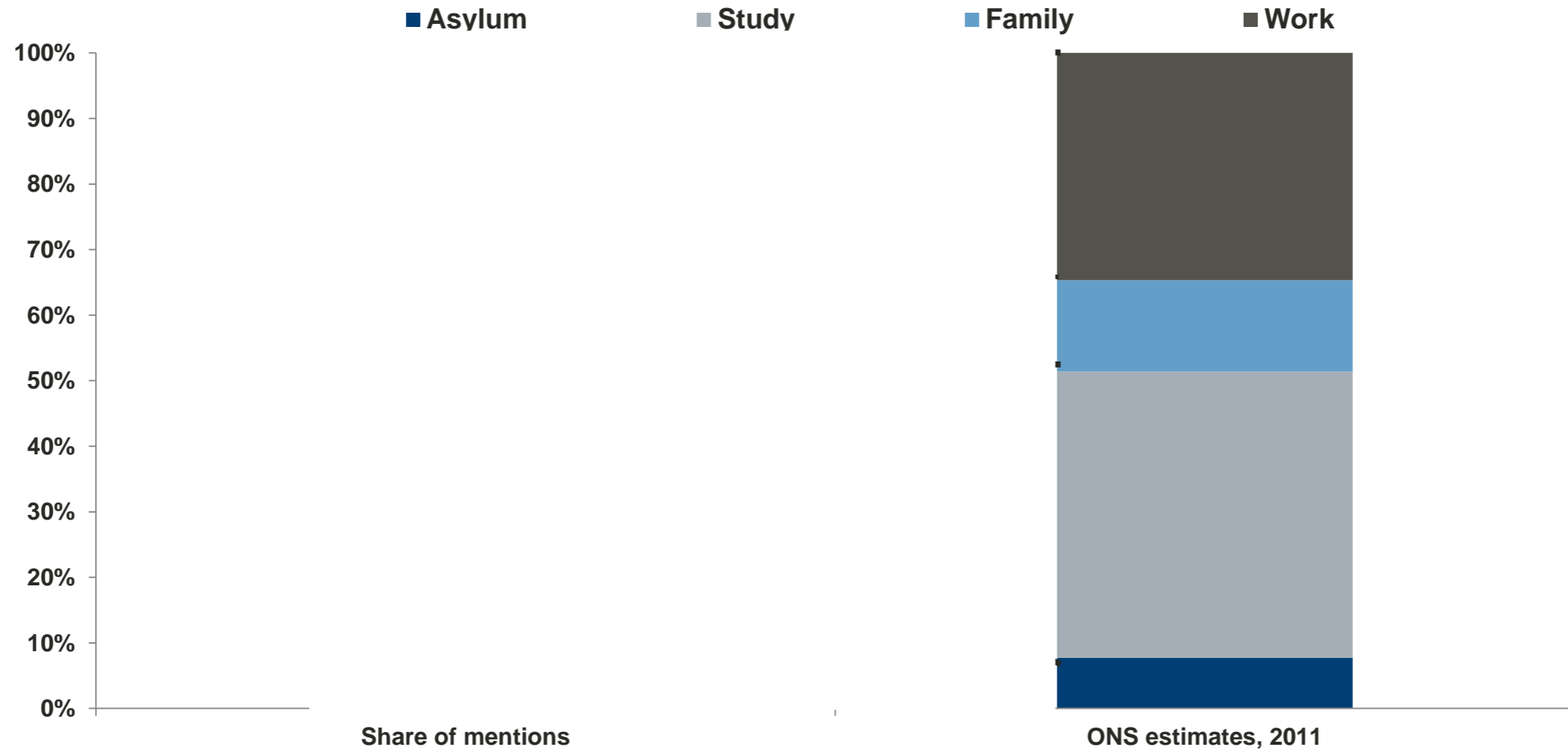
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Base: All respondents who thought the percentage of immigrants in the UK was 26% or higher

Source: RSS/Ipsos MORI,

We also have a very wrong view of types of immigration – we think of groups that worry us more... “imagined immigration”

‘Imagined immigration’ vs actual composition of long-term international migration 2011



Source: ONS Long-term International Migration Estimates; Ipsos MORI/ Oxford Migration Observatory, Nov 2011



WHAT PROPORTION OF
TOTAL HOUSEHOLD WEALTH
DO YOU THINK THE
WEALTHIEST 1% OWN?

Actual...

Guess...



23%

59%



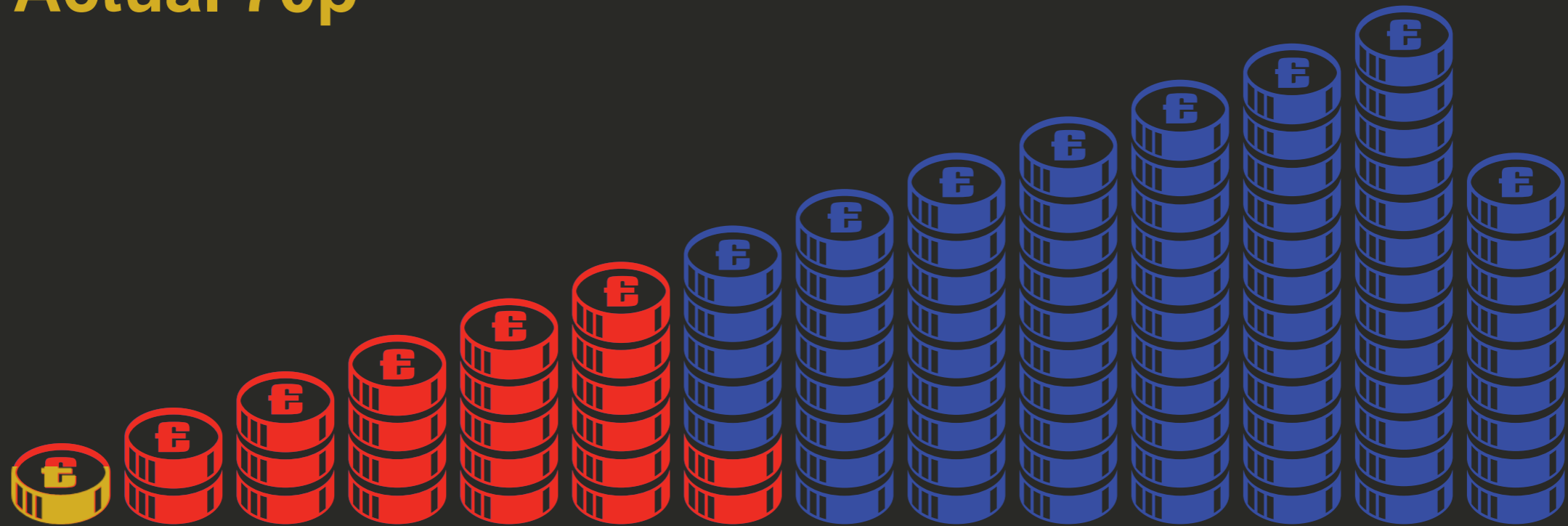
70%

53%

Out of every £100 spent from the welfare budget, can you tell me how much of that is claimed fraudulently (i.e. people who dishonestly claim more benefits than they are entitled to)?

Mean estimate £24

Actual 70p





Moment a benefits cheat who used **THREE** identities to falsely claim **£100,000** in handouts as she built a **£1million** property empire is confronted by fraud investigators

- Angel Jackson
- She was confronted
- Moment of her
- She created lie

amazonfresh £10 off your next shop
No minimum spend required
[Learn more >](#)

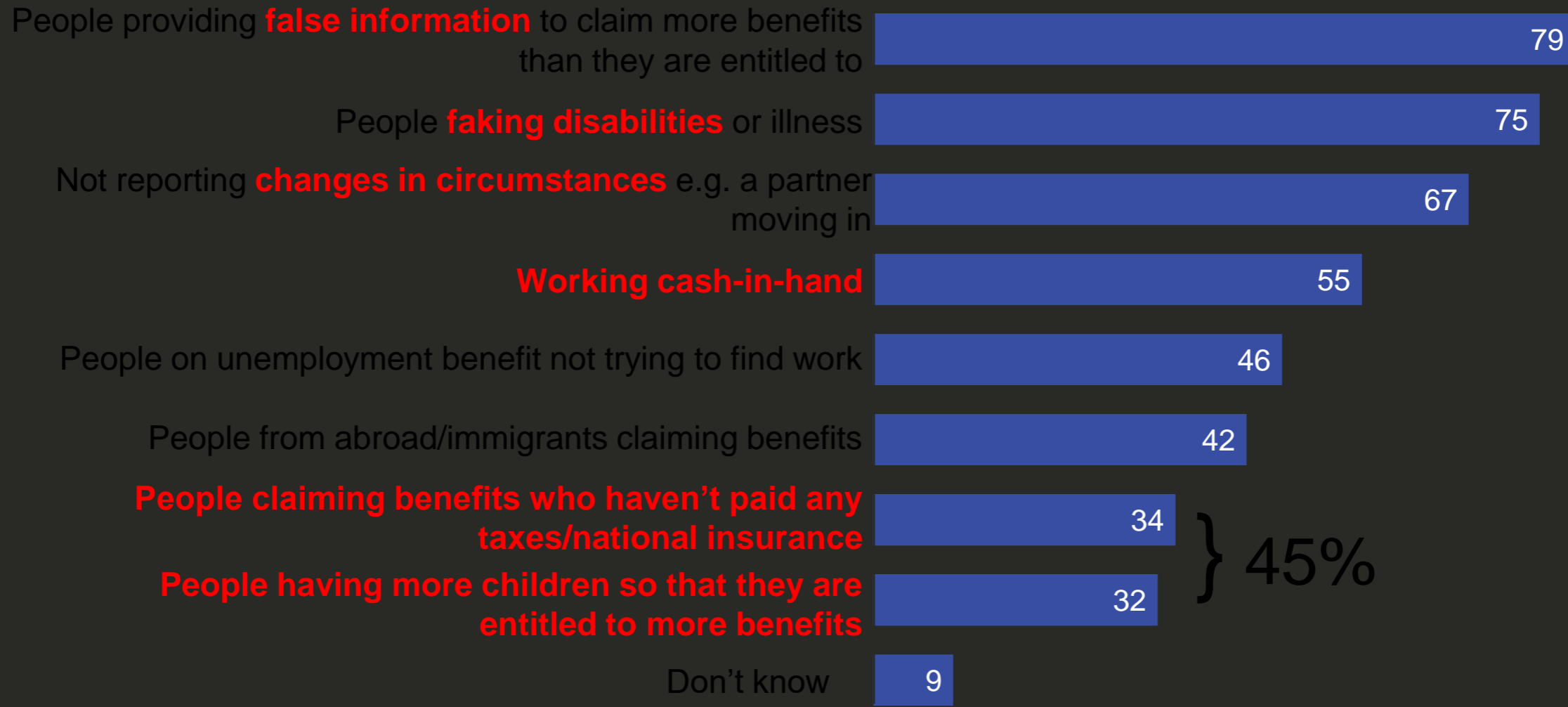
All I Want For Xmas is... a CRUISE!
Caribbean-loving benefits cheat who claimed £150,000 by saying she couldn't walk and needed an oxygen tank is JAILED after being caught on
Mother-of-five, 50, who scammed £140,000 in benefits screams 'oh my God' as she is jailed for one year while her 'dirty old seaman' husband walks free

Bride, 25, who claimed she was a hard-up single mother is caught out in a £22,000 benefits scam after she put her wedding pictures on Facebook with the caption: 'Love my husband'

- Chanice Bowen lied to benefits officials that she was a hard-up single mother
- 25-year-old from Barry, South Wales, also hid her secret marriage to her fiancé
- But she was caught when officers found wedding slideshow she posted online
- Bowen admitted dishonestly failing to disclose details but she avoided jail today

'Arrogant' model jailed for £50,000 benefits fraud after posting pictures of her glamorous round-the-world life on Facebook is given four weeks to pay it back

When you were answering the last question, which of the following activities, if any, were you thinking of as fraud?



2. Why is it important?

Quality of life

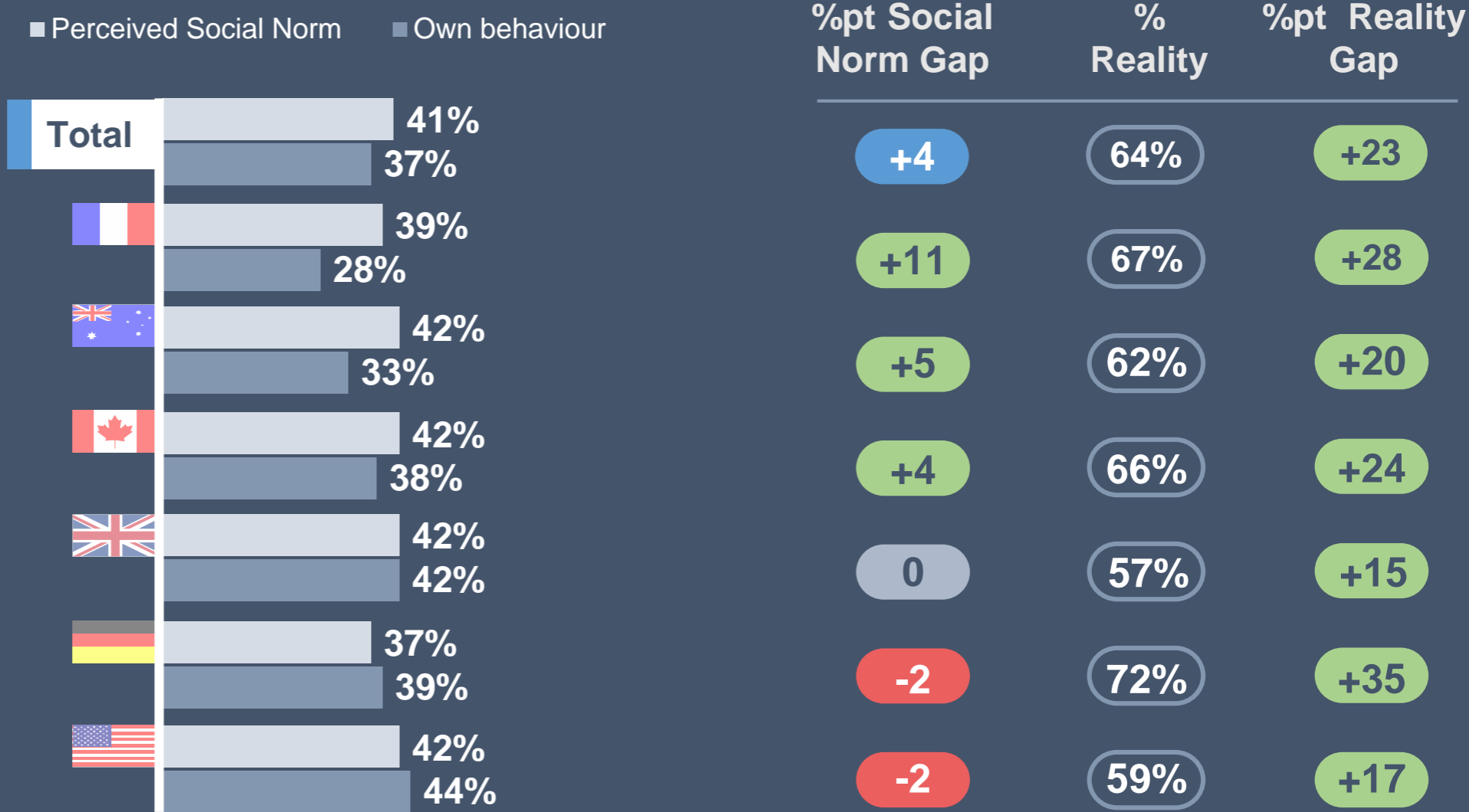
Political consequences...

Decisions people make...

Comparing what we say we do, what we think others do and what they actually do...

Out of every 100 people in [country], how many do you think do the recommended amount of physical activity each week? [walking briskly for 30 minutes or more five times a week or taking more vigorous exercise for 20 minutes three times a week]

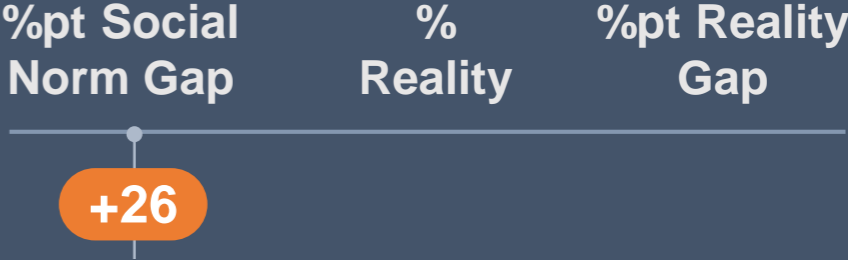
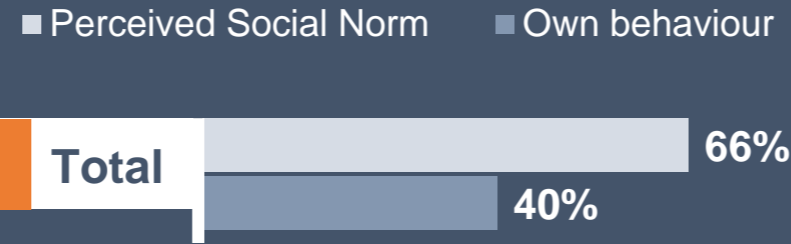
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I do the recommended amount of physical activity each week?



Bit different on sugar consumption... but similar over-estimation of the negative...

Out of every 100 people in [country], how many do you think eat more sugar than the recommended daily limit? [recommended daily limit is 50g of sugar, which is the equivalent of 12 tablespoons]

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I eat more sugar than the recommended daily limit



How do we raise issues without normalising?

- “Obesity epidemic” and role of sugar...
- “Inactivity epidemic”...

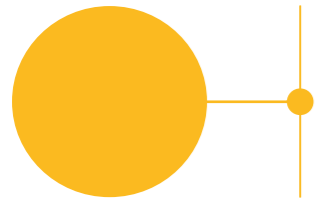


Influences our own behaviour?

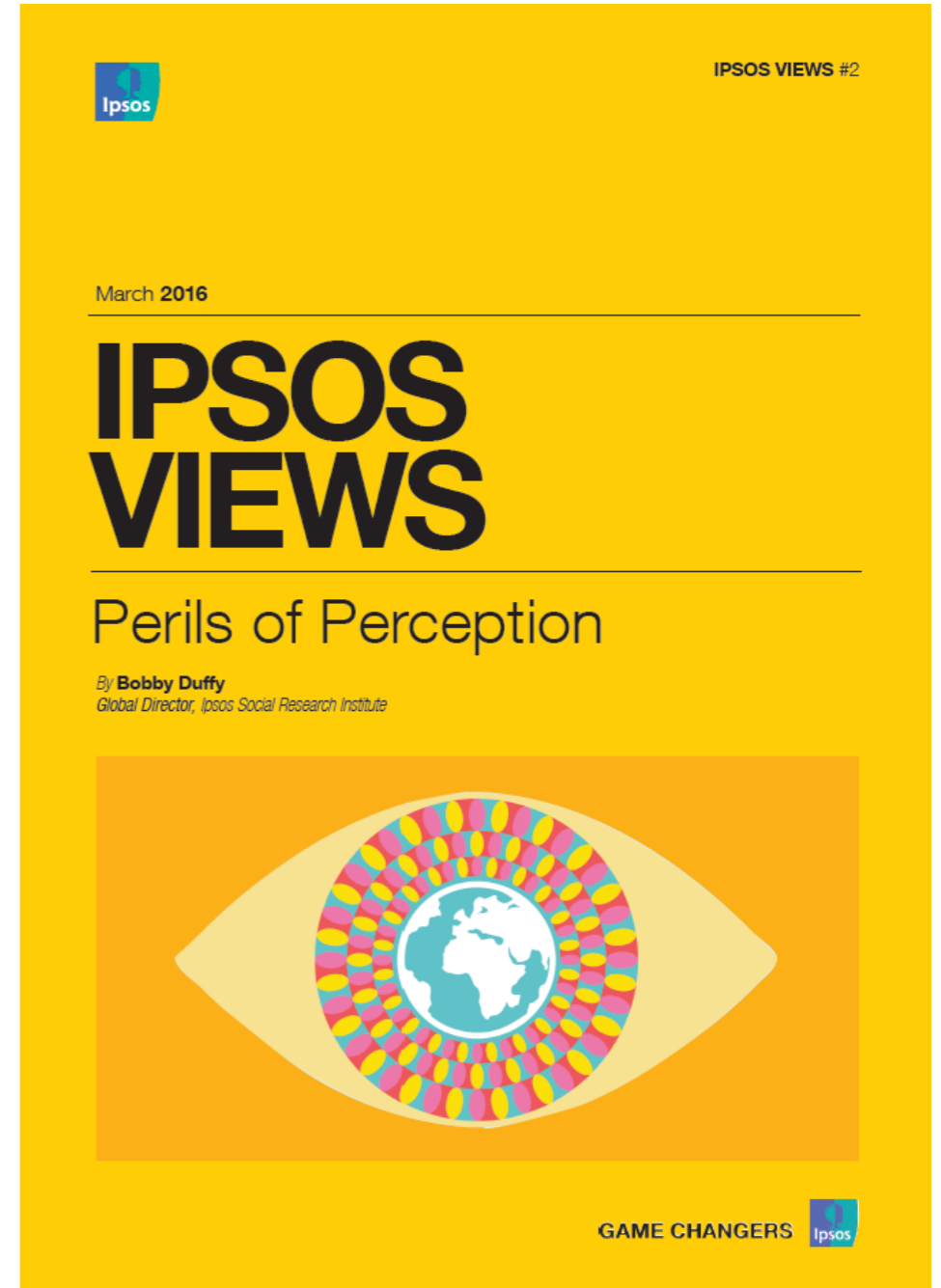
- **We get the norm wrong - and that's a problem:** we think negative behaviours are more common than they are (across countries), and our understanding of norms are important to our own behaviour
- **Difficult line for policymakers/communicators:** raising profile of issue through communicating scale versus normalising the behaviour...

[communicators] should avoid the tendency to send the normatively muddled message that a targeted activity is socially disapproved but widespread. Cialdini (2003)

3. Why are we wrong?



Drawing on behavioural science – importance of understanding “fast thinking”, social norms and emotional responses, as well as context...



The Ignorance Equation - Why are we so wrong?

**Mathematics/
statistical
ability**



**Biases and
heuristics**



**Emotional
innumeracy**



**Media
impact/
the power
of anecdote**



**Rational
ignorance**

**Cognitive
capabilities**

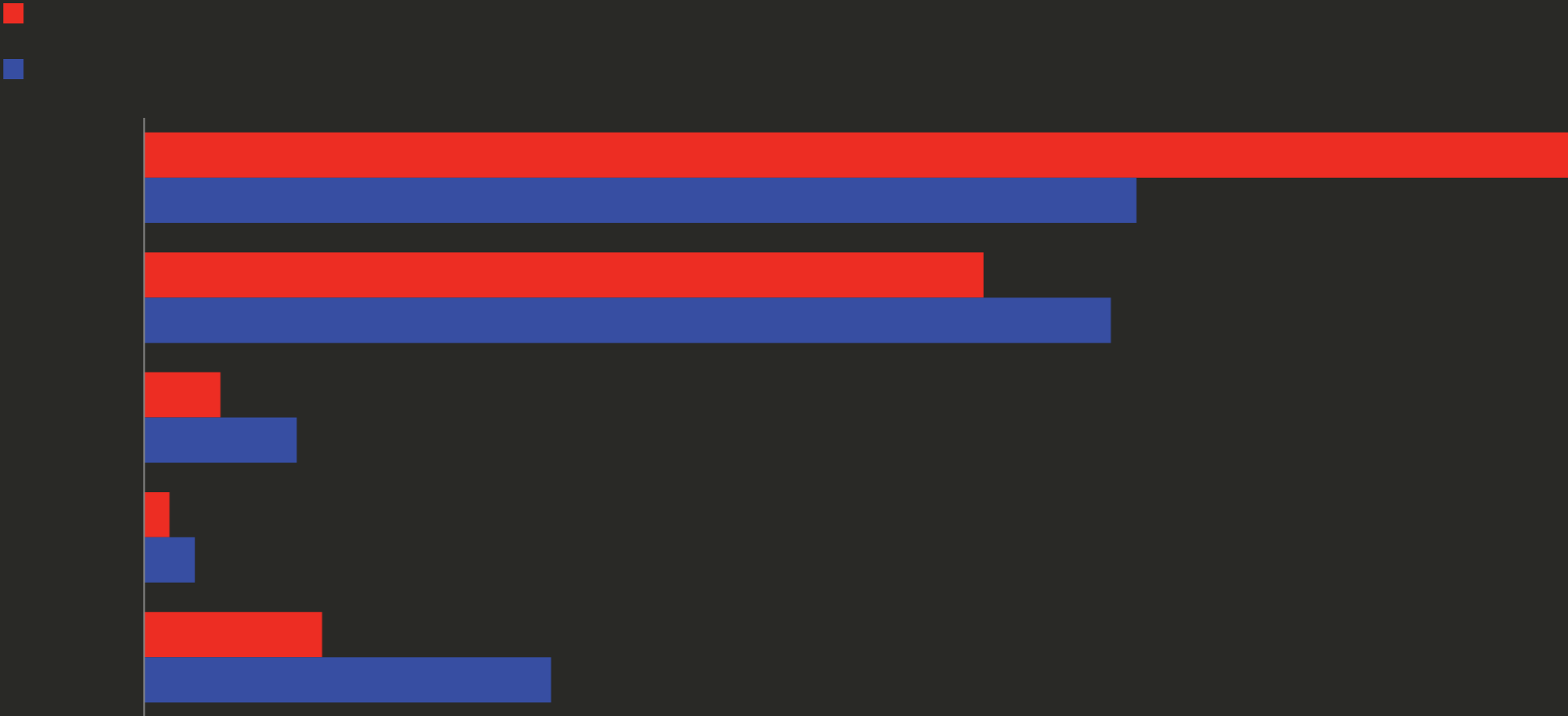


**External
context**



We focus on negative information...

Imagine you have a life-threatening illness and your doctor has told you that you need an operation to treat it. How likely, if at all, are you to have this operation if your doctor tells you that...



Base: c. 500 British adults aged 16-75

Source: RSS/Ipsos MORI 2013

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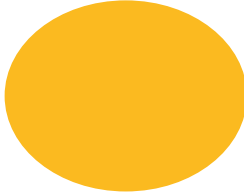
**Rational
ignorance**

**Cognitive
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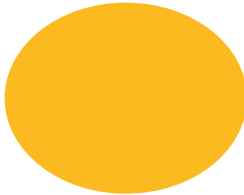


**External
context**

Role of the media...



Relatively trusted source of information, particularly broadcast...



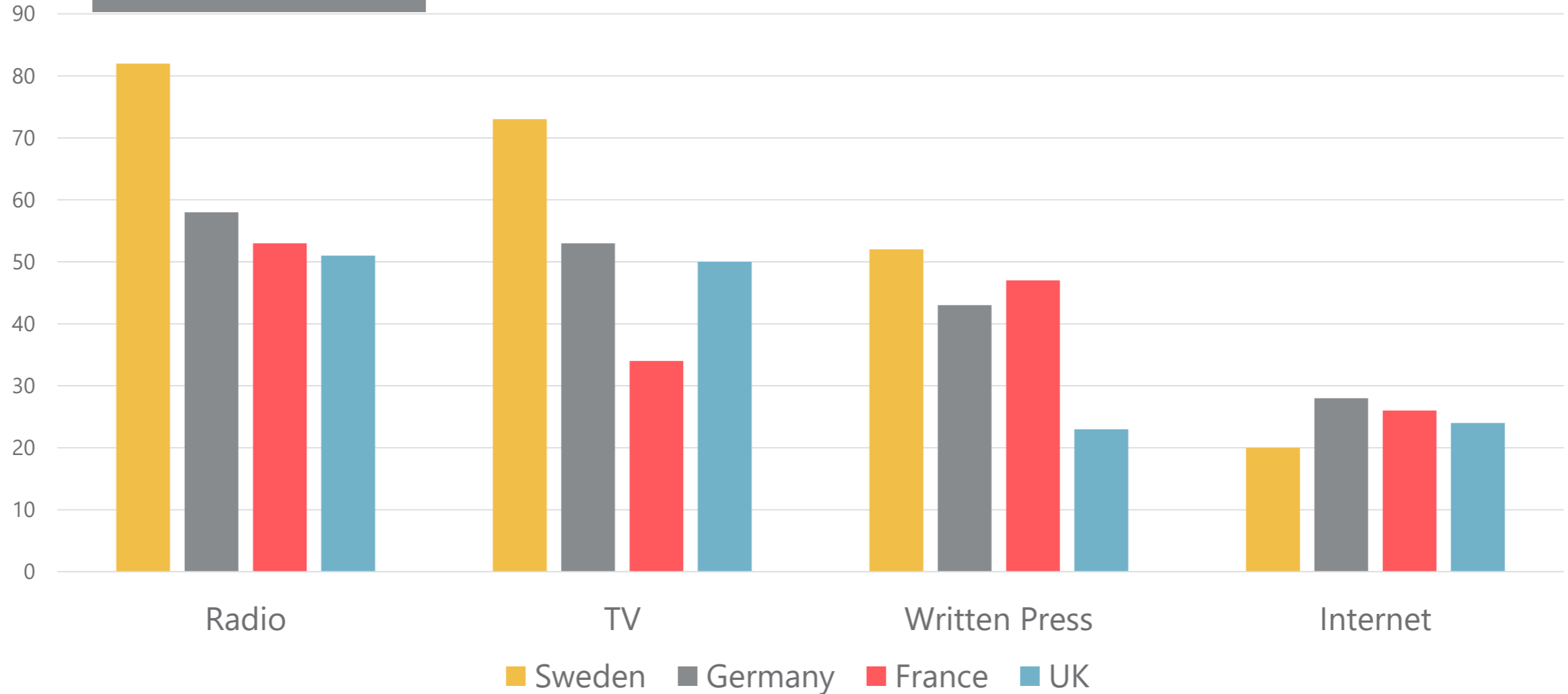
Causal impact of media coverage on perceptions/misperceptions just about impossible to unpick:

Long history of studies that show it

Eg media portrayal of crime more violent than real-world crime AND heavier consumers of media on crime have higher levels of fear

Our trust in broadcast media in line with many other countries – not so much for newspapers...

% Tend to trust



All points represent > 200 responses



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Source: Eurobarometer

And now? Panic about secret psych-ops on Facebook



In close elections any media can matter



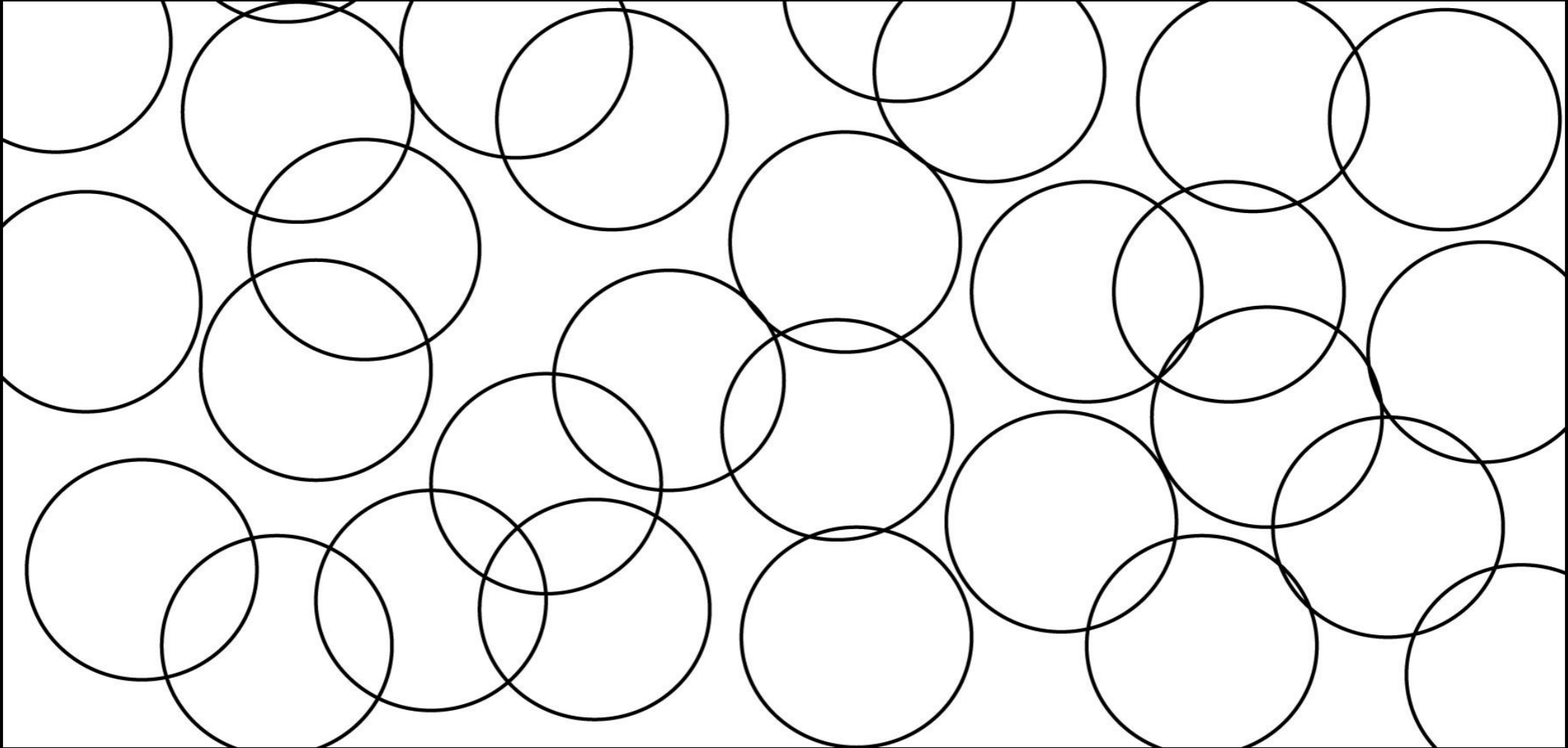
What are the implications?

Emotional reactions require emotional responses...

Advantage for the negative: we remember it more...

Focus on the solutions/what works - needs to be overweighted?

Vital implication: myth-busting alone will have limited impact



Thank you

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