Briefing on ALLEA Working Group "Truth, Trust and Expertise"

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When Experts Disagree

WEXD

PEriTiA

Policy, Expertise and Trust

The ALLEA Discussion Papers

- An initiative to provide up to date and informed perspectives from the academic world on some of the most pressing issues facing societies across Europe and beyond.

- The objective is to contribute to and connect debates in the fields of science, society and policy

About the Working Group
https://allea.org/truth-trust-and-expertise/#toggle-id-2

Members of the Working Group

- Baroness Onora O'Neill (Co-Chair) – British Academy and Royal Society
- Ed Noort (Co-Chair) – Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)
- Maria Baghramian – Royal Irish Academy
- José van Dijck- Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)
- Luke Drury – Royal Irish Academy (RIA)
- Göran Hermerén – Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities (KVHAA)
- Gloria Origgi – Institut Jean Nicod
- Christiane Woopen – Köln University

Contributing Experts

- Ash Amin – British Academy
- Yesim Arat – Science Academy Istanbul
- **David Boucher – Learned Society of Wales**
- Boris Grozdanoff – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
- Katherine Hawley – Royal Society of Edinburgh
- Lisa Herzog – Global Young Academy
- Cathrine Holst – University of Oslo
- Vassil Kirov – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
- Stephan Lewandowsky – University of Bristol

- Antonio Loprieno – Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences
- **Susan Owens – British Academy**
- Mike Schäfer – University of Zurich
- **Judith Simon – University of Hamburg**
- **Günter Stock – Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities**
- Nikolay Vitanov – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
- **Helen Wallace – British Academy**
- Erika Widegren – Re-Imagine Europa
- Milena Žic Fuchs – Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts

Why the topic of "Truth, Trust & Expertise"?

Division of cognitive and epistemic labor is essential to the functioning of any society; we simply cannot all know everything.

The division has become deeper and more pervasive in advanced technological societies which depend on specialized knowledge

Both our personal lives and modes of public governance are deeply influenced by the specialized knowledge that experts in various fields provide.

Epistemic trust, i.e. trusting that we can receive accurate information from others, is essential to the function of this cognitive division.

A Crisis of Trust?

- The 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer claimed that trust is in crisis around the world.

- Claim: general population's trust four key institutions of business, government, NGOs, and media has declined broadly, "a phenomenon not reported since Edelman began tracking trust among this segment in 2012".

- Also, since Brexit and Trump, widespread impression that there is a decline in trust in experts in general and in science in particular.

- The perceived decline has been linked with rise of populism and a rejection of the "rule of elites and technocracies".

PEOPLE ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO THINK TRUST HAS FALLEN OVER THE LAST TWENTY YEARS THAN INCREASED

Over the last twenty years or so, do you think the proportion of people in [COUNTRY] who say they trust each of the following has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

% global average across 24 countries

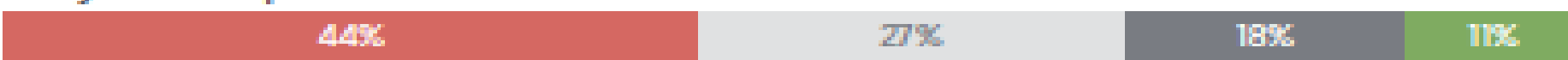THINK FEWER PEOPLE TRUST THEM | ABOUT THE SAME | DON'T KNOW | THINK MORE PEOPLE TRUST THEM

The government

| 59% | 16% | 15% | 10% |

The press

| 53% | 22% | 16% | 9% |

Major companies

| 44% | 27% | 18% | 11% |

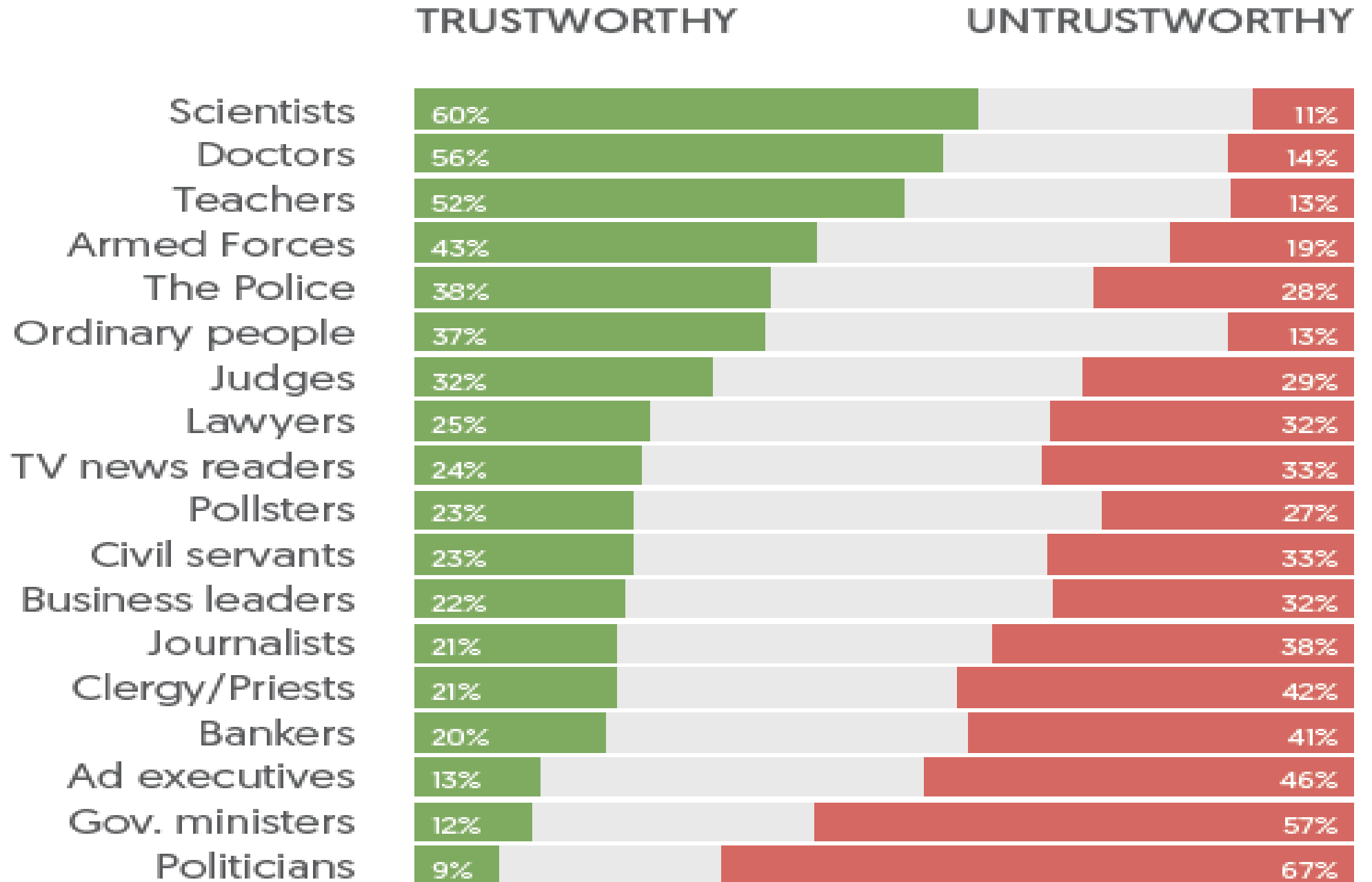## Other people

| 36% | 32% | 23% | 9% |

Real picture less clear

- There are marked differences in the levels of general trust in European countries

- Over the last 20 years, the level of trust has increased in a number of countries in northern and central of Europe – Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Poland and the Czech Republic.

- Decreased in the Mediterranean countries of Spain, France and Italy, and also Romania and Slovenia.

(Source: Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey analysed by Ipsos Mori 2019 Report. The Trust about Trust, p. 16)

Simple explanation in terms of economic prosperity or geographical location is not enough
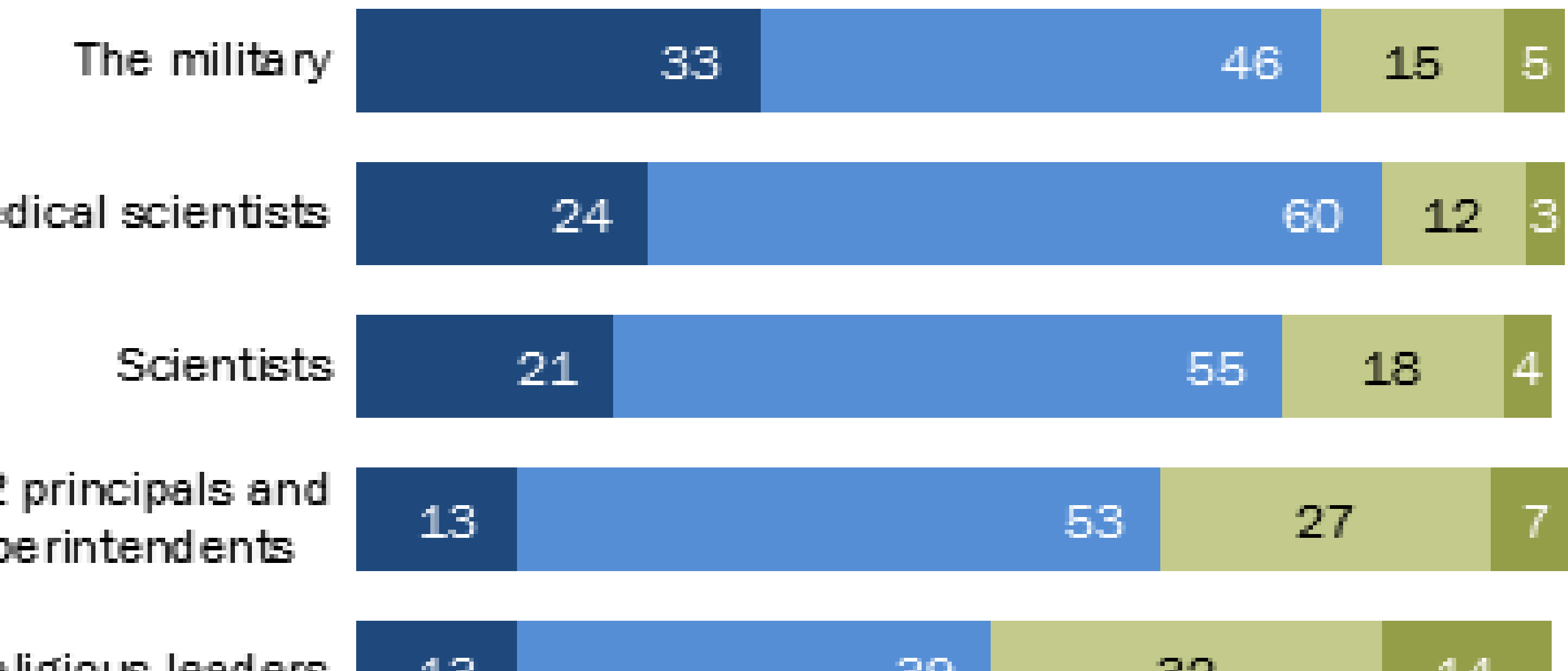
What about Trust in Science?

	TRUSTWORTHY		**UNTRUSTWORTHY**
Scientists	60%		11%
Doctors	56%		14%
Teachers	52%		13%
Armed Forces	43%		19%
The Police	38%		28%
Ordinary people	37%		13%
Judges	32%		29%
Lawyers	25%		32%
TV news readers	24%		33%
Pollsters	23%		27%
Civil servants	23%		33%
Business leaders	22%		32%
Journalists	21%		38%
Clergy/Priests	21%		42%
Bankers	20%		41%
Ad executives	13%		46%
Gov. ministers	12%		57%
Politicians	9%		67%

...dults who say they have _____ of confidence in each of the groups to act in the best interests of the public

■ A great deal ■ A fair amount ■ Not too much ■ No confidence

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not too much	No confidence
The military	33	46	15	5
...dical scientists	24	60	12	3
Scientists	21	55	18	4
...principals and ...erintendents	13	53	27	7
...ligious leaders				

TRUSTWORTHINESS OF SCIENTISTS WORLDWIDE

In general, do you think scientists are trustworthy or untrustworthy in your country?

	TRUSTWORTHY		UNTRUSTWORTHY
Russia	76%		12%
Argentina	74%		6%
Mexico	72%		8%
Turkey	70%		10%
Italy	67%		9%
India	67%		12%
Spain	67%		8%
China	63%		14%
GB	62%		7%
Australia	62%		8%
Poland	59%		10%
France	59%		9%
Hungary	58%		11%
Canada	58%		12%
Sweden	56%		11%
Belgium	56%		11%
US	55%		9%
Saudi Arabia	53%		15%
Brazil	53%		15%
Germany	52%		8%
S Africa	50%		13%
S Korea	42%		17%
Japan	40%		11%
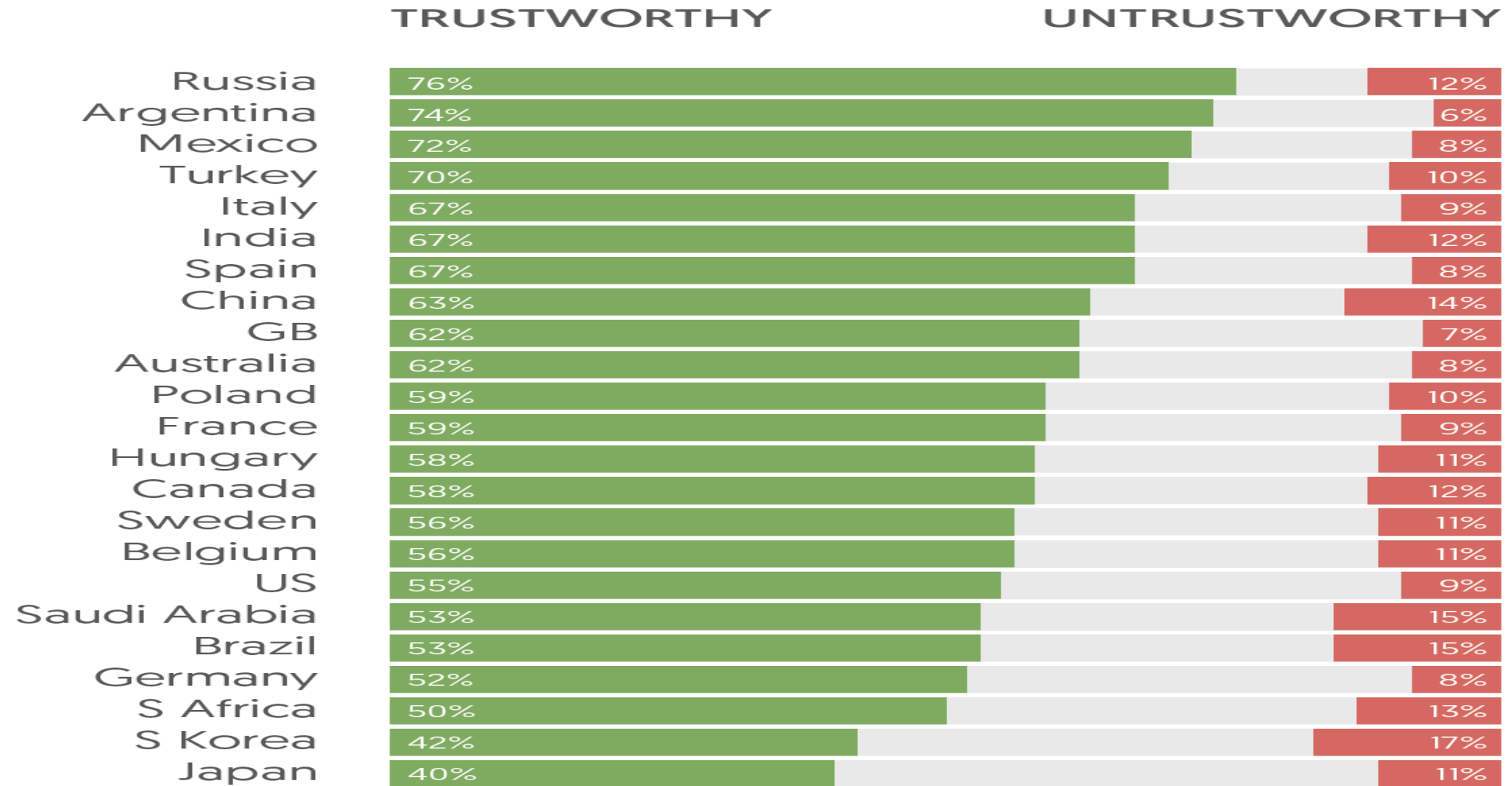
Specific cases of break down of trust

- But evidence of decreased levels of trust in specific areas

- Since 2010, uptake of measles-containing vaccine such as MMR has decreased in 12 EU member states: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. (Data from WHO, WHO-UNICEF , 2017).

- Similar results comparing 2016 with 2018

Climate Change

A complex picture also emerges when we look at the level of trust shown in scientific results on climate science. While European surveys of attitudes, including those conducted in Ireland, indicate a high level of trust in the science of climate change, this apparent trust is not translated into a willingness to adopt, enact or abide by the type of environmental policy recommended by the same scientists.

Luke also will discuss an array of sceptical attitudes towards science.

Foundational Question: What is trust?

- Quite a complex philosophical question

- Simple answer: Trust is reliance +.

- Reliance necessary but not sufficient for trust. We can find people or organisations reliable, because of their high level of competence, but not trustworthy because of doubts about their motivations or truthfulness.

- " Trusting is the kind of **reliance** that makes the trusting person **dependent** on **the good will** of those she trusts". (Annette Baier's 1986)

- The TTE working group focused a great deal on the question of trustworthiness rather than just trust.

Characteristics attributed to trustworthy experts

- Competence. They know what they are doing and hold great many true beliefs in the area relevant to their expertise. (Goldman, 2001)
- Integrity and honesty: They will not knowingly mislead their interlocutors (O'Neill, 2002)
- Credibility: They provide true/correct information (Wilholt 2013)
- Track record: The have a positive record showing their competence, integrity and credibility.
- **But Also <u>Benevolence</u>**: They are, by an large, disposed to act in the interest of relevant others (Mayer et al. 1995). They have good will.

Why benevolence?

- Exercise of trust invokes dependence on other people.
- In showing trust we are exposing ourselves to the possibility of harm or hurt.
- We are also taking a chance and thus are open to the possibility of betrayal.
- There is a leap of faith in trust. Where one has complete evidence or proof, trust becomes redundant.
- Trust must therefore run ahead of proof, as a result, it is always possible to place it badly.

Crucial Elements of Trust

In addition to reliability

- Psychological component: acceptance of dependence on another, even in cases when we don't have certitude.

- Emotional component: trust is often associated with feelings of positive expectation and safe dependency. A **feeling** of confidence in another person.

- Normative dimension : Trustworthiness is morally praiseworthy. To betray trust is to invite moral condemnation.

- Social dimension. Trust is the glue that binds social groups.

- To understand, measure and foster trust we need to take these normative, affective `and social dimensions into account.

- So, trust in experts is not determined by epistemic factors only.

Complicating factors:
1. The impact of the internet and social media

- The relationship between expert and layperson: every citizen or organisation can nowadays generate, publish, and disseminate content.

- Knowledge increasingly seen as something one can 'search and find' on the internet.

- The digital channels for spreading   knowledge often give users little clarity about who says what in which context and on the basis of what authority or expertise.

- There is 'context collapse' on the internet and social media which changes the conditions of trust.

- Luke will discuss some of the ways in which social media in particular affects trustworthiness.

Do we require a new aunderstanding of trust for the digital age?

Signs that we are getting there

Trust in Media: Traditional Press vs. The Internet (2006-2018)

TRUST IN THE WRITTEN PRESS VS TRUST IN INTERNET IN EUROPE

For each of the following media and institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?

THE WRITTEN PRESS

THE INTERNET

Source
Eurobarometer

Base
Average across 29 European countries
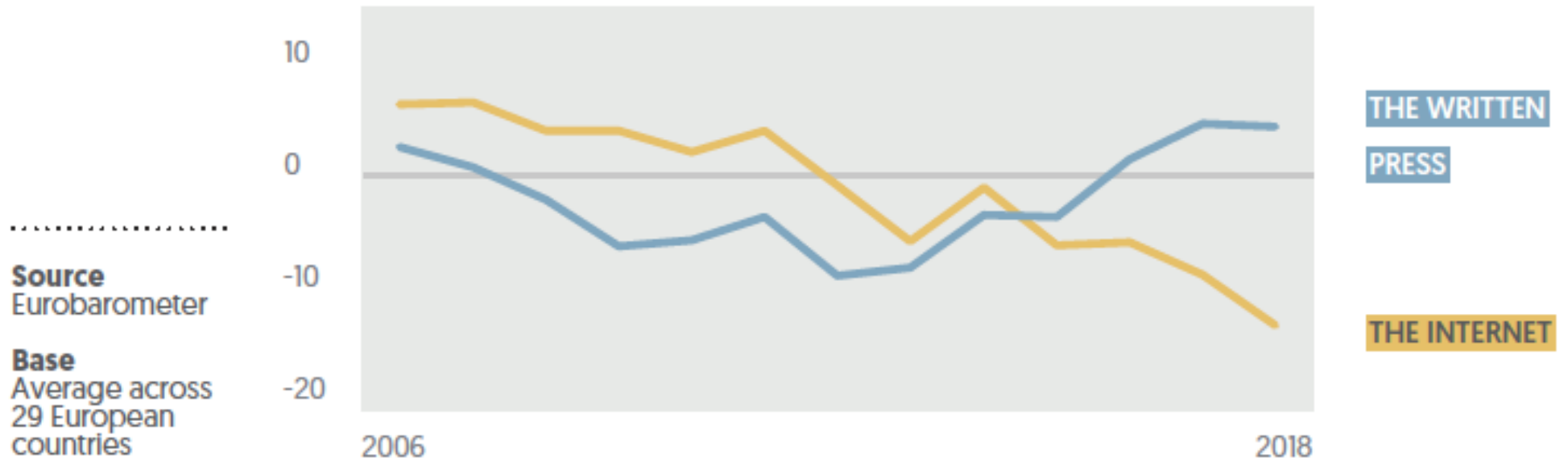
2. Concerns regarding the nexus of science, policy and corporations

Ensuring trust in experts through reliance on a regulatory and accountability framework tends to lead to narrow and at times perverse incentives.

Increased emphasis on fostering 'innovation', which is often understood as useful industrial application helps to entrench the perception that science is increasingly government and industry-driven and hence not trustworthy.

IPSOS TRUSTWORTHINESS MONITOR

Please look at the list of different types of organisations and institutions. In general, do you think each is trustworthy or untrustworthy? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very trustworthy and 5 is very untrustworthy
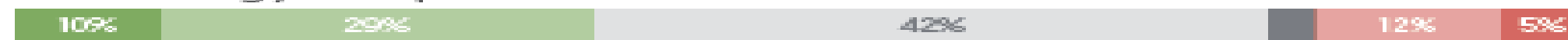
VERY TRUSTWORTHY   **TRUSTWORTHY**   **NEITHER**
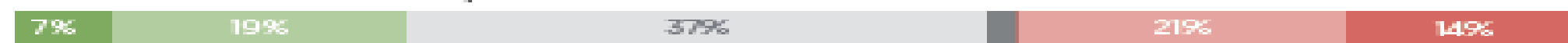**DON'T KNOW**   **UNTRUSTWORTHY**   **VERY UNTRUSTWORTHY**

Technology companies

| 10% | 29% | 42% | | 12% | 5% |

Public services

| 5% | 21% | 42% | | 18% | 11% |

Food and drink services

| 5% | 20% | 44% | | 19% | 9% |

Pharmaceutial companies

| 7% | 19% | 37% | | 21% | 14% |

Banking companies
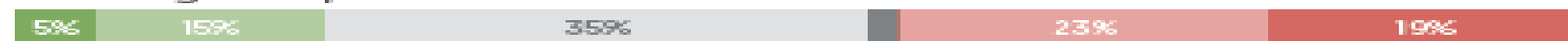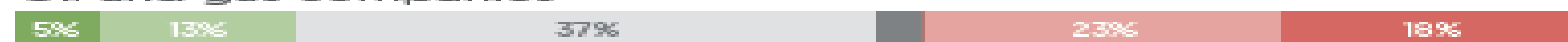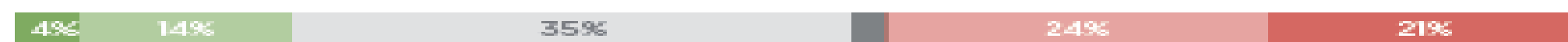
| 5% | 15% | 35% | | 23% | 19% |

Oil and gas companies

| 5% | 13% | 37% | | 23% | 18% |

The media

| 4% | 14% | 35% | | 24% | 21% |

The government

| 4% | 10% | 27% | | 22% | 34% |

3. The effect of polarization on trust

Western societies and politics are becoming increasingly polarized

As Luke will elaborate, social media contribute to that process.

Polarization often involves convergence around some core values and norms.

Trust is given to those whose values we share.

Thus greater chances of a breakdown of trust across polarized groups, coupled with increased levels of in-group trust.

Where to now?

PEriTiA

Policy, Expertise and Trust

PERITIA – Policy, Expertise and Trust in Action –an international research project exploring the nature and conditions of trust in expert opinion that shapes public policy.

- Aims:

To achieve a theoretical and empirical understanding of the nature and conditions of public trust in experts.

To use these findings to establish tools and indicators for assessing the trustworthiness of the agents and institutions involved in social and political decision making.

The project uses the specific case of trust in climate science to test its theoretical and empirical findings and to engage actively with citizens and policy makers.

'PEriTiA - Policy, Expertise and Trust in Action',

- A three-year research project, led by [Professor Maria Baghramian](#) of [UCD](#) will investigate the role of science in policy decision making and the conditions under which people should trust and rely on expert opinion that shapes public policy.

- The project is a follow up to the Irish Research Council funded '[When Experts Disagree](#)', led by Professor Baghramian and Professor Luke Drury (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies).

- The Members of the ALLEA TTE Working Groups are either Work Package Leaders or Advisers.

- ALLEA is a major partner in the project and will send invitations to member Academies to contribute to or participate in various activities of the project.

- Drury and Baghramian will look at the ethical issues relevant to trust in science

About the Project

- The investigation is carried out in three phases

Phase 1 Theoretical

- Trust and the Conditions for Successful Policy Advice Mechanisms
- Trust in a Changing Media Landscape
- The Ethics of Trust
- Scientific Reputation and Trust
- The Psychology of Trust

Phase 2: Empirical

- Data Collection through Surveys and Analysis of Existing Data on Trust: Ireland, UK, Norway, Germany, Poland, Italy, France
- Experimental Measures of Trust
- Behavioural Determinants of Trust and Distrust

Phase 3: Practical recommendations and outreach

- Behavioural Tools for Building Trust
- Citizen Fora (held in participating academies in Dublin, Berlin, Warsaw, London, Yerevan)
- Essay Competition "European Youth on Trust" (through participating academies via ALLEA)
- Policy Recommendations and Dialogue with Policy Makers (Brussels)